



University College London  
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**Subtitling Gender Stereotypes into English:  
The Case of Comedy Italian Style**

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# **Declaration of Originality**

I, Vincenzo Alfano, confirm that the work presented in this thesis is my own. Where information has been derived from other sources, I confirm that this has been indicated in the thesis.

**Vincenzo Alfano**

## Abstract

Building on the research framework of the Descriptive Translation Studies, this thesis discusses the ways in which gender stereotypes in the cinematic genre of Comedy Italian Style have been subtitled into English. Developing from the late 1950s to the early 1970s and reaching its climax in the 1960s, the *Commedia all'italiana* is a cinematographic genre which centres on the satire of a rapidly changing society by targeting booming consumerism, entrenched religious and civil institutions, old gender stereotypes and new sexual mores. Comedy Italian Style therefore constitutes an ideal audiovisual corpus to explore the potential manipulation of gender that can result from the subtitling activity and this study focuses on the seven films released by the Criterion Collection. The analysis pays special attention to the strategies used by professionals when dealing with gender representation, and avails itself of a taxonomy of translation strategies for culture-specific references, modified and adapted for the translation of gender stereotypes. Ultimately, the main goal of the study is to gauge the degree of similarity or discrepancy that can be found between the way gender stereotypes are conveyed in the original and in the subtitled versions, and to assess whether the subtitled versions transmit the same, or different, gender stereotypes. The main questions addressed in the analysis are whether the gender stereotypes are kept, modified or deleted and whether the gender representation in the subtitled versions is similar, reinforced or softened. One of the principal trends highlighted in this thesis is the tendency to maintain source culture and intercultural gender stereotypes through the use of literal translation, although the extent to which other gender stereotypes are deleted, manipulated or even added to the subtitled versions of the films is also noteworthy considering the traditional perception of subtitling as a translation mode which remains closer to the source text.

## **Impact Statement**

A cursory look at the literature on gender in AVT shows that research so far conducted in this field is fairly limited. Indeed, when the foundations of the present research project on the English subtitling of Comedy Italian Style were being laid, only a few in-depth studies or short contributions on the translation of gender in AVT had been published. This is the reason why the research framework which underpins this thesis has also been expanded to, and integrated with, studies on gender stereotypes, mainly carried out in the field of social sciences, as well the literature on gender an Italian cinema. Thus, this study fills a gap in the extant literature on the manipulation of gender, by investigating the challenges encountered in the transfer of stereotypes in the field of subtitling.

One of the main issues discussed in the present thesis is the ubiquitous, fluid and partly elusive nature of gender stereotypes and representations, which complicates the task of scholars and professional translators, when it comes to identifying, translating or elucidating such representations. The present research, with its focus on the categorisation of gender stereotypes and the translation strategies which can be used for their translation, is a contribution to a better understanding of some of the issues, dynamics and challenges involved in the translation of gender in the field of subtitling. This research project also suggests some ways in which the results obtained can be applied to the AVT classroom and contribute to a more gender-sensitive approach to translation.

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My parents have always told me that I am a hard-headed person. It may be true, to some extent, and it may have even helped me persist with my research project at difficult times, but it was my family and life companion that I could really count on when I felt overwhelmed and their affection and support always helped me put things in perspective.

As a part-time PhD student, I completed some of my research project while I was still working at the University of Hull. I would like to thank all the colleagues for supporting me while I was there and, particularly, my colleagues and friends in the Italian section. Donatella De Ferra, Simona Rizzardi, Alice Farris, Laura Rorato, Rachel Haworth, Stefania Triggiano, Cecilia Brioni, Giorgia Faraoni: thank you for asking, for caring, for putting a smile on my face.

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## Abbreviations

|     |   |
|-----|---|
| AD  | Audio description                               |
| AVT | Audiovisual translation                         |
| CSR | Culture-specific reference                      |
| IC  | Intercultural                                   |
| DTS | Descriptive Translation Studies                 |
| GS  | Gender stereotype                               |
| GSA | Gender stereotype allusion                      |
| GSR | Gender stereotype reference                     |
| SC  | Source culture                                  |
| SDH | Subtitling for the deaf and the hard-of-hearing |
| SL  | Source language                                 |
| ST  | Source text                                     |
| TC  | Target culture                                  |
| TL  | Target language                                 |
| TS  | Translation Studies                             |
| TT  | Target text                                     |

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# Chapter 1

## Introduction

### 1.1 Comedy as a mirror of Italian society

*Sedotta e abbandonata* [Seduced and Abandoned] is one of the most famous *commedie meridionalistiche* [Southern comedies] belonging to the prolific, Italian cinematic genre of the 1960s known as *commedia all'italiana* or Comedy Italian Style. Set in Sicily, the intricate plot of the film could very simply be reduced to its title, which tells of a woman who has been seduced and forsaken by a man. The woman is very young, her name is Agnese and she has been led astray by the older Peppino, 'twice a traitor' in the words of Agnese's father, Don Vincenzo, as he has not only 'dishonoured' Agnese, but also cheated on her sister Matilde, to whom he is engaged. But for all the threats and chutzpah displayed by Don Vincenzo, aiming to force Peppino to agree to a 'reparatory wedding', the seducer rejects the 'dishonoured' girl because, in his own words, he does not want *una buttana in moglie* [a whore as a wife], i.e. a woman who gave in to him before the wedding, thus becoming, in his eyes, nothing else than a whore. In very simple terms, this constitutes the essence of *Seduced and Abandoned* both with reference to the plot and the interplay of the gender stereotypes of the Sicilian society represented in the film. The games played by the parties involved, such as Peppino's flight to seek refuge in Regalbuto by his uncle and avoid marrying Agnese, her brother's grotesque attempt at a pseudo-western *vendetta* humorously punctuated by a western soundtrack and the secret machinations behind the scenes leading to the final, tragicomic kidnapping, all revolve around the fact that Agnese has lost what Don Vincenzo calls their 'only treasure': his family's 'honour'. The latter is the fundamental concept that governs relationships between the sexes in the Sicilian microcosm of the time and

commands that every woman must bring the prize of virginity to the groom on the wedding day (Günsberg, 2005), failing which she will be branded a whore and her family will be dishonoured beyond repair in the eyes of the whole community.

Pietro Germi's *Seduced and Abandoned* was released in 1964, but even more than 50 years later, the director's scathing caricature of the Sicilian society of the time has lost none of its tragicomic zest. Watching the film retrospectively, from the point of view of today's society, we may even feel inclined to dismiss the above-mentioned gender stereotypes as belonging to the sexual mores of a 'retrograde' and 'uncivilised' society, in the words used by Don Vincenzo himself at the end of the film to describe the local community staring reproachfully at his dishonoured family. Yet, even in contemporary Italian society, equally virulent and alarming forms of sexism seem to be still alive and kicking, judging by a recent, furious debate around one of the participants at the 2020 Sanremo music festival, which shows the extent to which the issues of sexism and gender inequality are rooted in this country.

Held annually for over 70 years, watched regularly by millions of Italians and followed up by countless media commentaries, gossip, arguments and debates about not just the songs but also the singers and the celebrities involved, the Sanremo Festival does not represent just another song contest, but a significant, social and cultural event, which is broadcast by the Italian public television service (RAI). By comparison, the famous Eurovision Song Contest, which every year brings entertainment and fun into millions of homes around the world, is totally eclipsed in Italy by the Sanremo's tradition. Yet, even before the controversy around the participation of rapper Junior Cally to the event broke out, the last edition of the festival at the time of writing, Sanremo 2020, did not seem to get off to a very good start. The first polemics were sparked by no less than the TV presenter of the event himself, Amedeo Sebastiani, better known by

his stage name, Amadeus, who, in the press conference introducing the female contestants, was particularly interested in emphasising their outstanding beauty more than any other artistic or intellectual talents (Corriere dell’Umbria, 2020). Despite grabbing the headlines (Ansa, 2020; La Repubblica, 2020; Pavanello, 2020), this seemed like a relatively mild incident a few days later, when even more heated arguments were caused by the admission of Cally as a contestant to the festival. The reason for the general outrage was the explicit, almost graphic content of a previously released song by Cally, *Strega* [witch], including some vitriolic lines against women which are reproduced below, together with their English translation:

| Original lyrics   | English translation   |
|---|---|
| Lei si chiama Gioia, ma beve poi ingoia<br>Balla mezza nuda, dopo te la da [sic]<br>Si chiama Gioia perchè [sic] fa la troia<br>Sì, per la gioia di mamma e papà<br>Questa frate non sa cosa dice<br>Porca troia, quanto cazzo chiacchiera? | Her name is Gioia, but she drinks then swallows<br>She dances half naked, then she gives it to you<br>Her name is Gioia because she is a whore,<br>Yes, for the joy of mum and dad<br>This one, brother, does not know what she says<br>Piggy whore, how much the fuck does she chat? |
| L’ho ammazzata, le ho strappato la borsa<br>C’ho rivestito la maschera  | I killed her, I grabbed the bag from her<br>And used it to cover my mask  |

(www.angolotesti.it, my translation)

The young man later tried to explain that his lyrics had been misunderstood, that he was against any form of violence, but ‘unfortunately [...] there are some girls who post certain pictures on Instagram to get a like or someone to follow them’ (Il Fatto Quotidiano: online, my translation). In any case, the fact that, in 2020, a candidate regurgitating sexist hatred and incitement to kill women would be considered for admission to a cultural event of the importance and social impact such as the Sanremo Festival, even broadcast on the public service television, RAI,

speaks volumes about the unsolved issues of sexism and gender inequality in this country.

I grew up in Sicily, traditionally the setting of many Southern comedies, including three of the seven films which constitute the corpus of the present thesis, i.e. *Divorzio all'italiana* [Divorce Italian Style], *Seduced and Abandoned* and *Mafioso* [Mafioso]. However, stereotypical Sicilian characters also appear in *I soliti ignoti* [Big Deal on Madonna Street], *Il Sorpasso* [The Easy Life] and *I Compagni* [The Organizer], as the old-fashioned, gender stereotypes of a backward Sicily seem to be ingrained in the imaginary of the Italian society. The significance of the South of Italy, and particularly Sicily, in the mechanics of Comedy Italian Style, as well as my personal interest in cultural issues and gender representation, have been two crucial factors for the selection of the filmic corpus that is discussed in more detail below.

## **1.2 Research background and corpus**

The exploration of gender issues in the field of Translation Studies (TS) first came to the fore in the 1990s, as a further development of what has come to be known as the 'cultural turn', a new approach to the study of translation spearheaded by influential scholars such as Snell-Hornby (1988) and Bassnett and Lefevere (1990). Developed to some extent from the Polysystem Theory propounded by Even-Zohar (1978) and the Descriptive Translation Studies (DTS) paradigm put forward by Toury (1980, 1995/2012), and discussed below, this new school of thought advocated the need for a cultural approach to the discipline of TS, which should build on the linguistics approach and be more interested in the translated product than in the translation process. In the particular field of audiovisual translation (AVT), studies focused on the cultural dimension began to proliferate around the start of the new millennium with works concentrating on the transfer of culture-specific references (CSRs), such as Katan's (1999), Ramière's (2007),

Ranzato's (2013), and Pedersen's (2011). A line of research which goes beyond the generalist approach to the translation of CSRs is De Marco's (2012) investigation into the cultural and ideological differences, as well as the manipulation or retention of gender stereotypes (GSs), portrayed in UK and US cinema when dubbed into Italian and Spanish. With her discussion of the relevance and importance of interdisciplinary research in the area of translation, De Marco's (*ibid.*) study sits successfully at the intersection between culture, gender and translation. Her methodological and analytical framework not only rests upon the premises put forward by the DTS and the "cultural turn" in TS, but it also draws substantially on Gender Studies per se (Cameron, 1992; Kimmel, 2001; Coates, 2004) and on seminal works that discuss translation in connection with ideology (De Loblitière Harwood, 1991; Simon, 1996; von Flotow, 1997; Santaemilia, 2005). De Marco's (2012) investigation convincingly demonstrates how some gender stereotypes portrayed in cinematic narratives and discourse can be strengthened when travelling abroad, through manipulation strategies performed during the dubbing of the films. However, the role of the other main audiovisual translation mode, i.e. subtitling, still remains uncharted territory when it comes to this topic.

The intention to step into such debate and further pursue De Marco's (*ibid.*) line of research has been a crucial, contributing factor to the final choice of subject and cinematic genre, i.e. Comedy Italian Style. Developing from the late 1950s to the early 1970s and reaching its climax in the 1960s, thanks to influential directors such as Germi, Monicelli and Risi, the *commedia all'italiana* is a cinema genre which centres on the satire of a rapidly changing society, by targeting booming consumerism, entrenched religious rituals, bureaucratic civil institutions, old gender stereotypes and new sexual mores (Brunetta, 1991; d'Amico, 2008; Comand, 2010). As Comand (2010) points out, the hold of the Christian Democratic Party and the Catholic Church over Italian society was so strong at the time that the latter could only be lampooned or satirised in comedy

rather than 'serious' cinema. With its ubiquitous sexual and gender representation, strictly banned by censorship in other cinematic genres, Comedy Italian Style therefore constitutes an ideal corpus for the investigation of the portrayal and subsequent translation of gender stereotypes.

One problem which needed to be addressed before carrying out the present research project was the fact that only a very limited number of the endless film productions spawned by Comedy Italian Style have actually been subtitled for the English speaking countries. From the point of view of the Polysystem Theory (Even-Zohar, 1978; Toury, 1980, 1995/2012), this may be due to the peripheral position of Italian audiovisual productions in general, and Comedy Italian Style in particular, within the Italian cinema canon, which includes only very few unanimously accepted masterpieces belonging to this cinema genre, relegating the rest to the role of popular cinema for entertainment purposes. Over the last few decades, Comedy Italian Style has gone from representing just a popular kind of cinema to being partly rediscovered and reevaluated by the critics (Giacovelli, 1995; Fullwood, 2015). However, despite being very successful with Italian cinema audiences, the status of its films and film directors has never been comparable to that of canonical filmmakers such as Rossellini, Fellini or Antonioni, apart from some well regarded exceptions, which have usually been subtitled, rather than dubbed, into English. This makes the choice of the corpus more challenging for the researcher, as I was not in a position of being able to pick and choose from a wide range of films but, rather, could only make a selection from a limited range of productions which had actually been released with English subtitles.

One particular hurdle, which this state of affairs implied, relates to the consistency of the corpus. Following the principles and advice outlined by Díaz Cintas (2004) when it comes to the selection of a corpus in research projects based on DTS, I intended to avoid an overambitious approach. To this end, I

decided to focus on a self-contained corpus that would allow me to map out the translation norms guiding professional subtitling practice in a particular time frame and in a given language combination. However, since their original release in Italy, the above-mentioned, internationally acclaimed productions have gone through various subtitled reincarnations for the English speaking countries. In addition to the theatrical releases, which are very difficult to access as they are dispersed in different film and cinema archives, the productions can also be found on VHS tapes and DVD discs, with a different set of subtitles on most occasions. This dispersion of material represents a further challenge from a research perspective because it is very difficult to ascertain either the authorship or the year in which the translations have actually been performed, since film credits very rarely mention the name of the professional responsible for the subtitles or the year when the actual translation was executed. A professional reality like this is a prime example of what is meant by 'the translator's invisibility', to use Venuti's (1995/2008) terminology, and the 'inferior' status of subtitling when compared to other practices like literary or drama translation, as it is arguably a form of AVT only recently recognised as a proper form of translation (Díaz Cintas and Remael, 2007). As information on the actual translations is very rarely provided, it is rather impossible to know, unless a detailed comparison is performed, if the subtitles used for a particular DVD release were directly transferred from the cinema print, for example, from a previous DVD or even from a VHS version, or whether they were the result of an altogether new translation. The latter approach is a fairly common practice in the industry, since subtitling can be produced rather quickly, it does not involve too many professionals and is not too financially onerous and, for that matter, much more economical than dubbing.

These obstacles were finally overcome when I discovered that the Criterion Collection ([www.criterion.com](http://www.criterion.com)) had released a number of masterpieces of Comedy Italian Style in DVD format. The Criterion Collection has been dedicated

to publishing important classic and contemporary films from around the world in editions that often include restored film transfers along with commentary tracks and other kinds of supplemental features. Ever since its launch in 1984, Criterion has been working closely with filmmakers and scholars to ensure that each film is published in an edition that will deepen the viewer's understanding and appreciation of the art of cinema. When it comes to translation, all their foreign-language titles have optional English subtitles but not in other languages because, as they claim, they have the rights to publish their releases only in the film's original language and/or an English-language version.

To date, they have published a total of seven Comedy Italian Style films (section 3.2.4), all of them with “new English subtitle translation” or “new and improved English subtitle translation”, for the North American market (region 1). This provided me with an operative corpus of films and subtitles released between 2001 and 2016, a 15-year time frame in which some of the most representative films of the genre, including Germi's *Divorce Italian Style*, Risi's *The Easy Life* and Monicelli's *Big Deal on Madonna Street*, had been released by one particular film studio, which helped make my corpus consistent from the point of view of the DTS methodological framework (Díaz Cintas, 2004).

One particular feature of this collection, highlighted in the back covers of the DVDs, in the accompanying booklets as well as on their website, deserves further elaboration, i.e. the allegedly ‘new’, and on occasions also ‘improved’, quality of the new subtitles which were part of these film releases. Criterion does not further elucidate such claim, as it does not provide any information about which previous subtitle translation, or translations, it is referring to as term of comparison, be they cinema prints, VHS tapes or DVD versions. The idea that Criterion's subtitled versions are of better quality cannot therefore be taken at face value, since such claim is both vague and unsubstantiated. On this front, Bywood (2016) conducted research on a similar case in which the subtitles of one

of the commercial DVD versions of *The Tin Drum* (Volker Schlöndorff, 1979) were considered to be of improved quality. Her results show that the main difference between the new and the old subtitles is the higher lexical density in the new subs, implying a lower degree of condensation in the actual translation. Such results are also substantiated by a study (Alfano, 2018) I conducted on two different sets of subtitles of the film *Divorce Italian Style*.

Coming back to the filmic material used in this thesis, the films selected for analysis make up a fairly homogenous corpus, as they all belong to one cinema genre with a strong focus on the representation of gender and they were all released in a particular time span, soon after the advent of digitisation, from 2001 to 2016, with new subtitled versions. A further advantage of the Comedy Italian Style corpus is that the booklets accompanying the Criterion Collection DVDs provide the names of the professionals who carried out the actual translations, although no mention of these specialists is made in the actual film credits. Knowing whether the films were subtitled by one or several professionals provides us with information which is particularly useful when trying to unravel the translation norms and regularities of the present corpus from the point of view of the DTS. In the case of Comedy Italian Style corpus, various subtitlers have been involved in the translation process. John Gudelj is the subtitler that has contributed the most to the translation process, being credited, exclusively or in collaboration with other professionals, for the subtitling of four of the seven films included in the corpus. The other professionals credited by Criterion in the booklets accompanying their DVD releases are: Angela Arnone, Paola Bonaiuti, Tommaso Cammarano, Bona Flecchia, Stephanie Friedman and Bruce Goldstein, all of them having participated in the (co-)subtitling of one of the films. The details of the subtitler, or subtitlers, who were responsible for the subtitle translation of each film are listed in section 3.2.4, which includes brief summaries of the film plots, as well as other details, such as the year of the Criterion release and the English title under which they have been commercialised.

### 1.3 Research questions

The principal research hypothesis in this project is that, similarly to dubbing, the subtitling process can also lead to different types of manipulation of gender stereotypes, including ideological manipulation<sup>1</sup>, i.e. instances of “unfair” and “unscrupulous” manipulation which “unbalance the relationship between source and target product” (*ibid.*: 285), as in the case of the sexist reinforcement of female gender stereotypes analysed by De Marco (2012). The main research hypothesis is also based on the assumed peripheral position of the Italian language and Italian film productions in the global cinematic polysystem, as postulated by Díaz Cintas (2004), and discussed in Chapter 4 as part of the methodological framework of the present study. Within the Italian cinema canon, Comedy Italian Style plays a marginal role at best, even after the various academic attempts over the last few decades to rescue this cinema genre from the category of lowbrow popular cinema (Giacovelli, 1995; Fullwood, 2015). Hence, not only is Italy and its culture less well-known to the US citizens than the US society is to Italians, but Comedy Italian Style is arguably also not the most popular Italian cinema genre in the USA. As a result, when subtitling a Comedy Italian Style film into English for the US market, the power relations between the source language and culture (SL/SC) and the target language and culture (TL/TC) are potentially subject to the influence of the Anglocentric domesticating manipulation practices, as theorised by Venuti (1995/2008) and also found in the field of subtitling, in what Gottlieb (2009, 2018) knows as upstream translation, i.e. the verbal transfer from a minor language into a major one, very often English.

Articulated around this premise, the present thesis will specifically seek to answer the following research questions:

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<sup>1</sup> A more detailed discussion of the concept of ideological manipulation can be found in section 5.3.9, before the analysis of the translation choices which appear to have been influenced by ideological bias.

1. How can stereotypes<sup>2</sup> be classified in the context of the present study?
2. What are the stereotypes that materialise in the original and the subtitled films?
3. What are the translation strategies used by the subtitlers to deal with the transfer of gender stereotypes from Italian into English?
4. Can the implementation of such strategies be explained by the technical constraints of subtitling or do they appear to be ideologically driven?
5. What is the nature of the manipulation process, i.e. to which extent are gender stereotypes kept, deleted or modified?
6. What is the likely impact that the various translation strategies used by the subtitlers can bear on the representation and perception of gender stereotypes?

In addition to this set of questions, the proposed study will also seek to determine whether the perception of subtitling as a translation mode which remains closer to the ST than other practices like dubbing (Ulrych, 2000; Sánchez, 2004; Ramière, 2007; De Marco, 2012) can be confirmed or contradicted by the results yielded in this research.

#### **1.4 Methodology and structure**

The study follows in the footsteps of the above-mentioned research, notably centred on cultural aspects of audiovisual translation, and is mainly based on the theoretical premises that underpin the Polysystem Theory and the Descriptive Translation Studies. These two paradigms, which arose in Translation Studies in the 1970s and 1980s, have been reviewed and successfully applied to the field of audiovisual translation by authors such as Díaz Cintas (2004). In his argumentation, the researcher explains that the Polysystem Theory is based on

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<sup>2</sup> Various general definitions of the concept of gender stereotype can be found in section 3.2.1, while the relationship between gender stereotypes and CSRs in the context of the present study is dissected in detail in Chapter 4.

the existence of different cultural systems which strive to achieve centre position in any given society. From the perspective of the Polysystem Theory, all semiotic systems, from canonical literature to marginal works, genres and translations, are considered valid in their own right. Under this new prism, and in the field of cinema – Díaz Cintas (*ibid.*) goes on to illustrate – dubbed or subtitled films cease to be viewed as inferior products of the original films and they acquire the same status as the products of national cinema as they also engage with and affect the cultural dynamics of the target community.

Building on the polysystem model, the DTS construct has the virtue of doing away with the traditional conception of translation according to structuralist/linguistic theories of strict, formal equivalence, characterised by a high degree of prescriptivism. Instead, this novel approach proposes to view translation as a “norm-governed activity” (Toury, 2012: 61) that takes place within a given society at a given time and, as such, is subjected to diachronic changes throughout history. Against the backdrop of an academic tradition based on prescriptive precepts that had been standard practice in the early, scholarly debates on translation, the advantage of such new, exploratory angle is that it gives priority to the investigation of translation practice as a *sine qua non* step to inform the debate about translation theory, rather than “throwing up abstract ideas unsupported by empirical data” (Díaz Cintas, 2004: 26). After illustrating the nature of the study, its corpus and general methodology, the following paragraphs provide a brief summary of the various chapters into which the thesis has been divided.

Chapter 2 addresses the main theoretical issues that surround the professional practice of subtitling and provides some illustrative examples of the manipulation of gender. Special emphasis is placed on the role of translators and on the way in which their work can be influenced by the technical constraints of

subtitling, on the one hand, and by ideological forces, on the other hand, be they their own or imposed by other stakeholders taking part in the subtitling process.

Chapter 3 presents a theoretical framework for the analysis of gender representation and stereotypes. To this end, I review the general taxonomies of gender stereotypes which have been proposed following research mainly conducted in the USA, but also in Germany and the Netherlands, as well as research carried out on Comedy Italian Style. The latter focuses particularly on the works that, from the perspective of cinema studies, have analysed the representation of gender in this film genre (Reich, 2004; Günsberg, 2005; Fullwood, 2015). This approach has the advantage of integrating various sources and research strands, which can ultimately pave the way for an analysis of gender portrayal as comprehensive as possible. The last part of the chapter further expands on the theoretical framework by looking at gendered theories of translation (Simon, 1996; von Flotow, 1997; Santaemilia, 2005), which can then be used as analytical instruments to identify potential examples of feminist translation, on the one hand, or sexist manipulation, on the other hand.

In Chapter 4, the above-mentioned principles of the Polysystem Theory and DTS paradigms are discussed in detail, followed by an exploration of the different taxonomies of CSRs as well as of the potential strategies that can be applied for the translation of CSRs, as postulated by various authors. In particular, this chapter reviews the different taxonomies of CSRs proposed by scholars like Newmark (1988), Nedergaard-Larsen (1993), Leppihalme (1997), Antonini and Chiaro (2005), Díaz Cintas and Remael (2007) and Pedersen (2007, 2011). It also looks into some of the most important classifications of translation strategies that can be used for the transfer of CSRs and that have been previously put forward in the field of TS in general (Mailhac, 1996; Ivir, 1987; Newmark, 1988; Leppihalme, 1997) and AVT in particular (Nedergaard-Larsen, 1993; Díaz Cintas and Remael, 2007; Pedersen, 2007, 2011). After presenting a detailed overview, I propose my

own categorisation of gender stereotypes and endorse a new taxonomy of translation strategies which can be employed as a heuristic tool for dealing with the cultural construction of gender, based on Ranzato's (2013) categorisation of CSRs and Díaz Cintas and Remael's (2007) classification of translation strategies for CSRs, respectively.

Chapter 5 concentrates on the actual analysis of the corpus at a macrolevel, adhering to Toury's (1980, 1995/2012) framework of DTS as adapted by Díaz Cintas (2004) for AVT, and at a microlevel, in order to explore the cases where the manipulation of gender in film speech can be observed. The analysis focuses on the nature of the translation choices made by the subtitlers, the degree to which different strategies have been used and their potential impact on the representation of gender stereotypes in the translated version. From the point of view of the nature of the manipulation process, the analysis considers not only those instances in which the use of these strategies may be influenced by the technical constraints of subtitling, such as reading speed, space limitations and synchronisation, but it also pays attention to departures from the source text (ST) which can be ascribed to ideological rather than technical forces.

Following this detailed analysis, I will draw my overall conclusions in Chapter 6. It is difficult to say at this stage what the results of the present research will be, particularly in terms of manipulation levels. The exact answer to this question will largely depend on the specific translation strategies activated when subtitling the Comedy Italian Style corpus into English, which, in turn, are affected by a number of factors, such as the translation mode and the translation norms followed by the professionals. In this respect, I expect that subtitling, as a translation mode traditionally associated with SL-oriented translation strategies (Ulrych, 2000; Sánchez, 2004; Ramière, 2007; De Marco, 2012), will contribute to the deployment of these strategies, on the one hand, and that the tendency to the manipulation of gender representations in AVT (Joyce, 1997; Feral, 2011a,

2011b; De Marco, 2012) will lead to the activation of TL-oriented strategies, on the other hand. These are also the general results obtained from a previous study including the analysis of Criterion's English subtitled version of *Divorce Italian Style* (Alfano, 2018). However, despite being all released by Criterion and belonging to the same cinema genre, the seven films which make up the corpus under scrutiny can potentially more be more or less consistent with the trends observed for *Divorce Italian Style* (*ibid.*). In my final conclusions, I will attempt to clarify to what extent such trends can be observed in the present corpus and the way in which the compromise between SL and TL norms has been reached (Toury, 1980, 1995/2012) in the English subtitling of the Comedy Italian Style corpus.

All authors and researchers referred to in the thesis are included in the bibliography, while the general details of the Criterion Collection editions of the films which form the corpus of this research can be found in the filmography. In addition, three appendices have been also included, with extra materials that offer a further insight into different aspects of this research, including a compilation of all the meaningful translation examples found in the corpus (Appendix 1); a smaller list of translation instances in which a sexist manipulation of gender stereotypes has been observed (Appendix 2); and the complete list of English adjectives with their Italian translations used by Williams and Best (1990) to investigate the cross-cultural dimension of gender stereotypes (Appendix 3), also discussed in Chapter 3.

## Chapter 2

### Theoretical and Technical Issues of Subtitling

#### 2.1 Audiovisual translation

Over the last decades, the concept of Audiovisual Translation (AVT) has gained ground in many languages to refer to the translation of texts in which there is an interaction between verbal and nonverbal channels of communication such as moving images and sound. Despite being nowadays a well-established term preferred by many, several other definitions have also been suggested in the short history of this translation field, including ‘constrained translation’ (Titford, 1982), ‘film and TV translation’ (Delabastita, 1989), ‘film translation’ (Fawcett, 1996; Ulrych, 2000), ‘(multi)media translation’ (Bollettieri Bosinelli *et al.*, 1996; Gambier and Gottlieb, 2001), ‘multimodal translation’ (Remael, 2001), ‘multidimensional translation’ (Gerzymisch-Arbogast and Nauert, 2005) or ‘screen translation’ (Mason, 1989; Georgakopoulou, 2003; Chiaro *et al.*, 2008; Tveit, 2009) to name but a few. The apparent lack of terminological consensus can be seen as symptomatic of the developing status of this rather new academic discipline and the willingness of scholars to come up with a term as inclusive as possible that can subsume within it an ever increasing remit of translational practices.

Understood as an umbrella term, AVT encompasses different ‘traditional’ modes of translation discussed by authors like Luyken *et al.* (1991), Gambier (1996), Díaz Cintas (1999, 2020), Chaume (2004a, 2013) and Gottlieb (2005a), while at the same time including other translation modes which have more recently been integrated into the audiovisual taxonomy, such as subtitling for the deaf and the hard-of-hearing (SDH) and audio description (AD) for the blind and the partially sighted. It is not my intention to carry out a detailed analysis of each

and every mode within AVT, though it is hoped that the following overview will enable the reader to better understand the defining characteristics of subtitling in relation to other forms of translation used for dealing with the translation of films and other audiovisual genres. In the context of the present work, the following discussion will place special emphasis on the impact that the technical constraints, typical of audiovisual translation, may have on the portrayal of gender. References will also be made to the various translation issues highlighted by scholars researching into the same language combination and translation direction as the ones under analysis, i.e. subtitling from Italian into English (Taylor, 2003; Tortoriello, 2011).

## **2.2 Audiovisual translation modes**

When it comes to the translation of audiovisual productions for their international distribution, the various ways in which they can be translated into other languages have been discussed by many authors over the years, of which the typologies presented by Chaume (2013) and Díaz-Cintas (2020) are perhaps the most recent and complete. The following principal modes can be distinguished:

- *Interlingual subtitling*: (see section 2.3 onwards) can be said to be the most widespread form of AVT and involves the addition to the original programme of a written translation in a given target language, usually placed at the bottom of the screen, that aims to account for the source language soundtrack and any inserts seen on screen in the form of written text. Both scholars and professionals agree that one of the main characteristics of subtitling is the quantitative reduction of text that takes place in comparison with the original speech, primarily due to the spatial and temporal constraints that regulate the delivery of subtitles (Díaz

Cintas, 1999; Castro Roig, 2001; Leiborero Enríquez and Poza Yagüe, 2001; Díaz-Cintas and Remael, 2007).

- *Dubbing*: consists in the substitution of the original speech with a new soundtrack containing the dialogue exchanges in the TL. The translated text must ensure synchrony with lip movements and body language of the actors, technically referred to as phonetic and kinetic synchrony respectively, as well as with the length of the utterances and pauses, professionally known as isochrony (Chaume, 2004a, 2012).
- *Voiceover*: implies that the original speech is superimposed with, rather than replaced by, a new soundtrack containing the TL. The SL is clearly audible before each translation starts and after it stops. It is only slightly audible in the background when the translation is superimposed on the original speech. This AVT mode bears similarities both to subtitling and dubbing. Like the former, it implies an addition rather than a substitution of text and, similarly to dubbing, it involves a language transfer from oral to oral speech, although the TL soundtrack is not normally synchronised with the lip movements of the actors. Researchers like Luyken *et al.* (1991), Gambier (1996), Chaume (2004a) and Franco *et al.* (2010) share the view that the practice of allowing the original sound to be heard for several seconds at the onset of the speech contributes to foregrounding the 'exotic' flavour of the source text (ST) and to enhancing a sense of authenticity and truthfulness towards the original, a perception that has been queried by authors like Díaz-Cintas and Orero (2010).
- *Intralingual subtitling*: is primarily intended for the deaf and the hard-of-hearing audiences and consists in the addition of same-language subtitles in synchrony to the SL soundtrack. These subtitles tend to reproduce the original speech either verbatim or very closely and, among other details,

include information about the music heard on the soundtrack, the people who are speaking, the paralinguistic dimension (tone of voice, pitch, loudness) and the sound effects that are important for the diegesis of the programme, such as screaming, crying, whispering or presence of silence (De Linde and Kay, 1999; Neves, 2005; Zdenek, 2015).

- *Audio description*: is an intersemiotic translation mode aimed at visually impaired people (Fryer, 2016). According to the detailed definition provided by Remael *et al.* (2015: 9-10), audio description is an access service that:

offers a verbal description of the relevant (visual) components of a work of art or media product, so that blind and visually impaired patrons can fully grasp its form and content. [...] The descriptions of essential visual elements [...] have to be inserted into the "natural pauses" in the original soundtrack of the production. It is only in combination with the original sounds, music and dialogues that the AD constitutes a coherent and meaningful whole.

### **2.3 Similarities and differences between subtitling and dubbing**

From a semiotic point of view, one of the main differences between subtitling and dubbing resides in the addition of the translated text in the former as opposed to the substitution and replacement of the SL soundtrack with its TL translation in the case of dubbing. In other words, subtitling adds another channel of communication to the untouched original product, whereas in dubbing a substitution occurs whereby the original dialogue is deleted and replaced by the recorded target exchanges. This difference is crucial from a psychological perspective since it is at the origin of what is professionally known as the 'feedback effect' in subtitling (Gottlieb, 1994: 105). The possibility for the audience to listen to the original film dialogue whilst reading the translation in their language opens up the rather unique opportunity for viewers to be able to compare the ST with the TT, evaluate the work of the subtitler and form an opinion about the quality of the language transfer that has taken place. This

specific and rather unique context is what makes subtitling a case of ‘vulnerable translation’, as theorised by Díaz Cintas (2003). Indeed, in addition to the spatial and temporal limitations that constrain its textuality, subtitling is also subject to the judgement of viewers. More often than not, the pressure of this cohabitation of source and target language in the same audiovisual programme results in a subtitled version in which the translation solutions are arguably closer to the original ST than in dubbing (Ulrych, 2000; Sánchez, 2004; Ramière, 2007; De Marco, 2012), since in the case of the latter the viewer/listener does not have access to the original language version and cannot thus carry out an immediate linguistic comparison.

Another reason why dubbing is arguably less bound to the original dialogue than subtitling lies in one of its technical limitations, namely lip synchronisation, whereby the translation is adapted “to the articulatory movements of the on-screen characters” (Chaume, 2012: 68). As aptly argued by Ranzato (2010: 28), this visual constraint is often invoked as a pretext to take otherwise inexplicable liberties with the TL linguistic output. This is particularly important to shed light on some of the research questions of the present study, i.e. to what extent can subtitling impact the representation of gender on screen; especially in comparison with dubbing, where, according to the findings foregrounded in De Marco’s (2012) study, the level of ideological manipulation can be considerable. Since, in principle, subtitling seems to allow for less textual reorganisation than dubbing, it would be reasonable to expect that a study on the English subtitling of gender stereotypes in films representative of the Comedy Italian Style would not unravel the same degree of ideological manipulation as that shown in De Marco’s (*ibid.*) study on dubbing, notwithstanding that the latter looks at translation from English into Italian and Spanish rather than from Italian into English.

The two other investigative projects on the subject of gender representation through subtitling have been conducted by Joyce (1997) and Feral (2011a). The former outlines how gender discourse in the English subtitling and dubbing of Pedro Almodóvar's *¡Átame!* (1990) is made to conform to society's male-dominated discourse, while Feral's (2011a) investigation focuses on the way in which feminist discourse in *Sex and the City* (Star, King and Kohan, 1998-2004) has been rendered in the French subtitles. In both cases, the scholars conclude that subtitling leads to less textual manipulation than dubbing.

However, it can be argued that the degree of manipulation, whether technical or ideological (Díaz-Cintas, 2012), is not just determined by the translation mode used but also by the relationship between source and target languages and cultures. With respect to the translation approach adopted for the dubbing of *Comedy Italian Style* into German, for example, Heiss (2000) has argued that a certain number of specific translation strategies are used because of the proximity between source and target cultures. Important variables for the study of translational norms such as the nature of the corpus, the relative closeness or distance between the SC and TC being compared, as well as the overall translation approach (Toury, 1980, 2012; Venuti, 1995/2008) are further investigated in Chapter 5. What is important in the context of the present chapter is the fact that the different technical constraints affecting the various AVT modes can have a dissimilar impact on the ensuing translation and, consequently, on the construction and representation of gender in the TL.

## **2.4 The polysemiotic nature of audiovisual materials**

In addition to the differences that separate them, it is also important to highlight the features that the above-mentioned AVT modes share, especially in relation to the polysemiotic nature of audiovisual materials (Delabastita, 1989; Chaume

2004b). Particularly useful in this respect is the classification of film signs proposed by Delabastita (1989: 199) as follows:

- verbal signs transmitted acoustically (dialogue, monologue, songs);
- nonverbal signs transmitted acoustically (background noise, instrumental music);
- verbal signs transmitted visually (credits, letters, documents shown on the screen);
- nonverbal signs transmitted visually (clothes, gestures).

All forms of AVT will ultimately be confronted with, and judged by, their degree of consistency with these various channels of communication, or lack thereof. The jarring ‘feedback effect’ produced by the cohabitation of the written translation with the original speech and any text inserts in the SL, as well as the more or less idiosyncratic cultural significance of the images, such as body language or gestures, and the messages expressed through (instrumental) music, are all prime examples of how differently semiotic channels interact among themselves and contribute to the complexity of film meaning. For professional subtitlers, having to consider all these layers of information when coming up with a translation means running the risk of producing a translation that may be inconsistent with one or more of these communicative channels. An example drawn from the Comedy Italian Style corpus will help clarify the complexities and challenges posed by the interaction between different channels of communication in AVT.

This particular instance of gender representation based on the polysemiotic nature of audiovisual materials stems from Mario Monicelli’s *Big Deal on Madonna Street*, which is unanimously acknowledged as one of the greatest masterpieces of Comedy Italian Style. The film tells the story of a bunch of petty criminals whose unrealistic aspirations provide numerous opportunities of irresistible sarcasm about their incompetence. Yet, the humour created around this group of would-be criminal masterminds and their ‘scientific’ sting is paralleled by the tragicomic reality of fundamentally good-natured men coping as

best as they can with a life of poverty and deprivation and the inability to escape the world of criminality (Fagioli, 2001). Such reality clearly surfaces at the end of the film, where the characters seem to appreciate a traditional, hearty meal, such as pasta and chickpeas, more than anything else:

Example 2.1 – *Big Deal on Madonna Street*

| <p><b>Context:</b> In an iconic scene of a film itself synonymous with Comedy Italian Style, our gang of would-be criminals have just botched up their attempted burglary by making a hole into the wrong wall. When they find comfort in the pasta and chickpeas cooked by the maid currently dated by Peppe, Ferribotte takes the opportunity to make the following comment on her culinary skills:</p> |   |
|---|---|
| Original dialogue   | English subtitles   |
| <p>01:41:53,239 --&gt; 01:41:59,675</p> <p>Dalle nostre parti diciamo: <b>fimmina piccanti</b> pigghila per amanti, <b>fimmina cuciniera</b>, pigghila pi mugghiera.</p> <p>[Where I come from, we say: spicy woman, take her as mistress, good female cook, take her as wife.]</p>   | <p>01:41:53,239 --&gt; 01:41:56,834</p> <p>At home we say:<br/><b>saucy woman</b> makes a good mistress,</p> <p>01:41:57,343 --&gt; 01:41:59,675</p> <p><b>bland woman</b> a good wife.</p> |

This is a very interesting translation example from different perspectives and for various reasons, which will be examined in detail in the corpus analysis conducted in Chapter 5. For the purposes of the present discussion on semiotic cohesion in subtitling as an AVT translation mode, the main issue which needs to be addressed is that of Ferribotte’s stereotypical categorisation of Sicilian women into two simple categories, i.e. good cooks to obediently serve their man at home and spicy lovers to satisfy their sexual appetite. Such reductive approach constitutes a typical example of gender representation and stereotyping in Comedy Italian Style, as well as a very good instantiation of semiotic interplay which has ultimately been eliminated in the English translation. Indeed, the information conveyed through the auditory channel of communication in Italian, that is, the reference to the gender stereotype of the *fimmina cuciniera*, only makes sense when it is linked to the visual semiotic channel, which shows the gang sitting around the table and relishing the pasta and chickpeas cooked by the house maid. On the other hand, by erasing the original gender stereotype about

the assumed cooking abilities of Italian women for no clear reason, Ferribotte's Sicilian saying may sound rather vague and therefore out of context for the viewers of the English subtitled version. Arguably, the impact of the translation rests on the pun contained in the English word 'saucy', used in the subtitles to refer to the first of the two categories of women, which sits in opposition to 'bland', as both relate to the culinary semantic field.

If, on the one hand, the polysemiotic nature of the audiovisual programme may be seen as a challenge for subtitlers, such "intersemiotic redundancy" can also be understood as "positive feedback from visuals and soundtrack" (Gottlieb, 2005: 19), since it has the potential of facilitating the translation process as in the case of Italian gestures and body language. Indeed, the latter may be self-explanatory and express the same message as the one delivered by the verbal acoustic channel, which therefore does not need to be translated, freeing up space and time that can be used for the translation of more important information and subtitles. Among the few researchers who have investigated the practice of subtitling from Italian into English, Taylor (2003: 101), for example, has illustrated how the 'multimodal transcription' model, originally developed by Thibault (2000), can be applied to the analysis of audiovisual programmes in an attempt to distinguish between the different channels of communication, identify the semantic value of Italian body language and facilitate the linguistic condensation process normally required by subtitling. Similarly, Tortoriello (2011) demonstrates that the meaning of body language may be self-evident on occasions but she also illustrates cases where it may need some type of verbal explicitation in the subtitles if it is to be successfully understood in another language and culture. In both cases, the subtitler will have to be aware of the communicative value of body language and tactfully decide whether the message may well be grasped directly from the visual channel, hence helping with the condensation process, or whether it needs to be lexically translated and explicitated, with the risk of burdening the textual make-up of the subtitles.

## 2.5 Subtitling: diagonal translation

One final feature that makes subtitling stand out from dubbing and other AVT modes is what Gottlieb (1994) calls 'diagonal translation'. Subtitling is the only AVT mode, and possibly the sole translation practice, in which not only a 'horizontal' transfer takes place, from one language to another, but also a 'vertical' one, from oral speech to written text, with considerable implications for the transition. Researchers like Card (1998), Assis Rosa (2001), Jäeckel (2001) and Guillot (2008), among others, have discussed the potential challenges which the shift from the oral to the written mode of communication can pose to subtitlers. Gambier (1994: 280), in particular, has stressed the difficulty of translating an original, which has all the features of oral communication, into the corseted conventions of writing, with its "norms of good usage [and] readability", in addition to its higher discursive status.

When it comes to the subtitling of Comedy Italian Style into English, it should be stressed that one of the consequences of this diagonal translation is the potential reduction, or even the complete deletion, of taboo language, as these lexical items are considered to stand out more when written on screen than when they are 'just' heard by the spectator (Díaz Cintas, 2001; Tveit, 2009). Last but not least, subtitling seems to require a higher degree of elimination of lexical items of the source dialogue than dubbing because of the spatial and temporal restrictions affecting the former (see section 2.3), which adds to the translation challenge. One particular type of taboo language which tends to be frequently deleted is that of sexual references, as they are sensitive discursive elements that some members of the audience may find offensive (Shochat and Stam, 1985; Lung, 1998; Díaz Cintas, 2001; Mattson, 2006). In this respect, a particularly useful study is the one commissioned by the Broadcasting Standards Council (BSC), and carried out by Millwood Hargrave (1991), on the use of bad language on British television. The findings of this survey show that among the different types of words which constitute bad language, such as blasphemies, racist terms,

expletives or words related to sex, the latter are the ones considered least appropriate for television, which could easily explain the tendency to prune the subtitles out of such terms. Another interesting finding relates to the fact that the acceptance or rejection of bad language heard on screen is directly linked to the respondents' expectations regarding the context in which those terms are uttered. From this point of view, participants in the survey tended to justify the use of bad language if its appearance contributed to heightening the realism of the audiovisual programme in question or was associated with specific types of comedy such as *Monty Python* or with men rather than women, whereas they tended to object to the gratuitous display of swearwords or their use in programmes to which children would be exposed. One specific situation in which bad language was indicated as a source of embarrassment was its inclusion in programmes watched in the company of others, epitomised in some of the respondents' comments: *"I'd be offended if watching these with my mum" or "I'd be embarrassed when watching with my family if there's a lot of swearing on"* (*ibid.*: 21).

In this context, however, a distinction must be made between films subtitled for television broadcast and films subtitled for cinema or, at the time, video. The survey showed that bad language was considered more acceptable in the latter two categories rather than television. Working on this topic and analysing the BSC findings, Díaz Cintas (2001: 52) argues that this more permissive attitude towards the use of swearwords in cinema and video is associated with the individual "act of will and choice", which means that people who take the active decision of going to the cinema or of renting/purchasing a film know what to expect.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> The research obviously does not consider the distribution of programmes via streaming offered by such service providers as Netflix, Amazon Prime, or the British Film Institute, all of which have been introduced more recently. Further research is therefore needed to ascertain the impact that these new forms of watching and consuming cinema may have on these rather old perceptions.

A further consideration that comes into the equation with respect to Comedy Italian Style is the relationship that exists between ST and TT culture. Although there is a dearth of research focussed on the subtitling of taboo and coarse language from English into Italian, the few studies on the Italian dubbing of US films seem to show that one of the reasons why the TL translations contain less bad language than the original resides in the different level of acceptability of such type of language in the TT language and culture (Pavesi and Malinverno, 2000: 82; Parini, 2011: 241). On the other hand, it may seem paradoxical that in a society like the USA, where many films resort frequently to the use of swearwords and sexual references, the opposite, prudish approach is also heavily activated when utterances which are considered obscene are often bleeped out from the soundtrack (Díaz Cintas and Remael, 2007). In this case, therefore, opposite tendencies seem to be at play when it comes to the way in which sensitive language in audiovisual media is dealt with by the industry, both in the original productions and in their translated counterparts. This, in turn and together with the fact that English is spoken in many different countries and cultures, makes it difficult to gauge the level of acceptability that such bad language found in subtitled Italian films, as is the case with Comedy Italian Style, may have in a given English-speaking audience.

Last but not least, the use of taboo language or sexual references in a cinema genre so markedly characterised by stereotypical gender representations such as Comedy Italian Style must be considered from the point of view of the historical and social context in which these films were deeply steeped, that is, the Italian society of the 1960s. As various researchers (Comand, 2010; d'Amico, 2008; Fournier Lanzoni, 2008) have pointed out, one of the reasons which contributed to the success of the nascent *commedia all'italiana* in the early 1960s consisted in the new opportunities to engage with social satire, which this new type of cinema afforded both to film directors and cinema audiences. At that stage in the history of the Italian society, comedy was still seen as a relatively harmless

cinema genre and was therefore considerably less exposed to the attack of censorship, especially when compared to the explicit criticism of social and public institutions in other types of cinema. On the other hand, this does not mean that Comedy Italian Style directors were free to say or show anything they wanted in their films and the language they used, particularly taboo language such as swearing, sexual references or blasphemy, had to be kept within certain limits for their artistic creations to make it past the censors and reach the Italian public.

To sum up the discussion on taboo language in Comedy Italian Style, we should remember that all these considerations may be, consciously or subconsciously, taken into account by subtitlers when they deal with the transfer of lexical items related to sex, or with swearwords in general. Likewise, they may also constitute an issue when having to translate gender stereotypes, since the use of swearwords as sexist insults or sexual references focussing on the objectification of the female body tend to be a key contributing factor for the perpetuation and strengthening of stereotypes about women and their sexuality (De Marco, 2012).

## **2.6 Technical constraints of subtitling and gender**

After situating subtitling in the wider audiovisual mediascape, a closer look at this particular translation mode will help illustrate the main technical constraints which make it a challenging professional practice. Despite the fact that subtitling has been a long established professional practice, whose origins date back to the late 1920s (Izard Martínez, 2001; Orero, 2008; Ivarsson, 2009), different subtitling companies have always applied different conventions and there is, to date, no real consensus over its formal aspects. In an effort to contribute to standardisation, various scholars have attempted to systematically classify its conventions by proposing codes of professional subtitling practice, such as Ivarsson and Carroll's (1998) *Code of Good Subtitling Practice*, ratified by the

European Association for Studies in Screen Translation (ESIST, [www.esist.org](http://www.esist.org)), as well as the codes and guidelines put forward in the publications by Karamitroglou (1998), Díaz Cintas (2003) and Díaz Cintas and Remael (2007). More recently, companies like Netflix (Brewer, 2018) have also contributed to this debate with the free distribution online of their subtitle style guides in over 30 languages, and some professional associations have decided to produce guidelines in languages like Croatian, Danish, Dutch, French and Norwegian (AVTE, n.d.).

In addition to illustrating best practice from a technical perspective, Díaz Cintas and Remael's (2007) *Audiovisual Translation: Subtitling* – to this day one of the most comprehensive theoretical and practical textbooks on subtitling – also discusses how professional trends can be dictated by patronage instigated by economic or cultural forces. It may be queried, as posited by Perego (2008: 212) in her study of syntactic segmentation in subtitling, whether academic research can ever contribute to setting “unanimously recognized and valid criteria” in the practice of subtitling, which will also be accepted by language service providers and other stakeholders outside academic circles. Nonetheless, the above-mentioned codes of subtitling practice, which are based both on academic research and professional practice, share many of the proposed standards and are a useful instrument for the researcher intending to carry out a descriptive study of potential manipulation activity in subtitling, as these guidelines and style guides can be used to distinguish between technical and ideological manipulation (Díaz Cintas, 2012).

The following sections offer an overview of the spatial and temporal constraints which influence the adoption of such conventions and are largely based on the work of the above-mentioned scholars and professionals. While an understanding of such constraints and their potential impact on the subtitling of gender is essential, the present work is not strictly concerned with the technical

features of subtitling, whose overview will therefore be kept concise. It is also important to stress the fact that the following considerations mainly refer to the subtitling of films released on DVD, rather than those screened in cinemas, broadcast on television or streamed via internet, since these are the materials from which the corpus of the present work has been extracted.

### *2.6.1 Spatial constraints*

Historically, the first publications on subtitling tended to stress its formal limitations and consider it more a form of adaptation than translation proper (Laks, 1957; Marleau, 1982; Titford, 1982). Although nowadays the status of subtitling and the rest of audiovisual modes as proper forms of translation seems to have been recognised (Díaz Cintas and Remael, 2007; Gambier, 2008), nobody disputes the fact that technical limitations are defining characteristics of subtitling, which need to be reckoned with both in professional practice and academic debate. In this sense, technical constraints in subtitling are closely related to the two dimensions that impinge on the textuality of the target message, namely space and time. Spatial constraints include the following main features:

- font type and font size of target text;
- position of subtitles on the screen;
- layout and line breaks;
- maximum number of lines allowed;
- maximum number of characters allowed per line.

Ivarsson and Carroll (1998) argue that research conducted in the field of fonts for the printing press can also be applied to the case of subtitling and conclude that the most appropriate fonts for text on screen are those without serifs, as they

boost legibility.<sup>4</sup> Díaz Cintas and Remael (2007: 84) recommend Arial 32 as font type and size but acknowledge that other sans serif font types of equivalent size, such as Helvetica or Verdana, are also common in the industry. In this debate, it must be borne in mind that, if the size of the font used is too large, the number of characters available for subtitling will be reduced but, on the other hand, a font size which is too small risks hampering legibility. It is therefore essential to reach a fine balance between the appropriate font size and the need for comfortable legibility depending on the different screen sizes, which is the reason why some current platforms allow viewers to manipulate the size of their subtitles. To enhance the contrast between the text and the images, the letters used in the subtitles are usually white with a black contour, white against a black box or coloured in pale yellow.

Subtitles are normally placed horizontally at the bottom of the screen in order to avoid obstructing the image, but they can be moved elsewhere, usually to the top of the screen in the case of films shown in cinemas, if important information shows on the bottom of the screen, e.g. credits or letters, or if the background reduces legibility. The lines are normally centre-aligned so that the eyes of the viewer concentrate where most of the action takes place and do not need to move too much across the screen.

When positioning subtitles on screen, there is a safe area worked out around ten percent of the screen size from the top, bottom and side edges, as illustrated in Fig. 2.1 below:

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<sup>4</sup> One example in point is *tiresias* ([www.bbc.co.uk](http://www.bbc.co.uk)), the sans serif font used for subtitling for the deaf and the hard-of-hearing by the BBC, originally created for blind and partially sighted people. Netflix (Brewer, 2018) have also designed their own proprietary font called Sans.

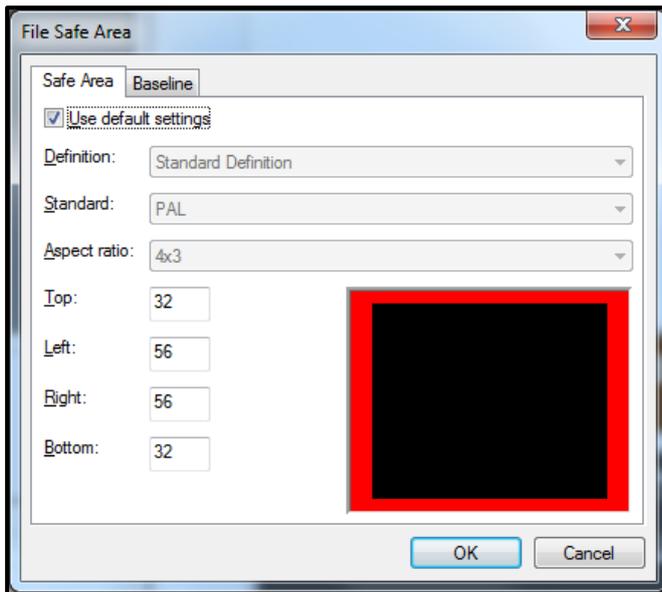


Figure 2.1 – Safe area created in the commercial subtitling program Wincaps Q4

The safe area needs to be respected for several reasons. Going over the safe area of TV screens may produce distortion of the letters on the edges, particularly in the case of curved screens which used to be common until not too long ago. It may also simply mean that the subtitle is too long and part of the text will not appear on screen. Fig. 2.2 displays a subtitle contained within the safe area, in the commercial subtitling program Wincaps Q4:



Figure 2.2 – Example of subtitle included within the safe area in Wincaps Q4

The number of lines in a given subtitle varies from one to a maximum of two, with the exception of subtitles for the deaf and the hard-of-hearing as well as bilingual subtitles in two languages, which can accommodate up to four lines.<sup>5</sup> While two-liners occupy all the potential space allocated to subtitles, one-liners can be positioned in the first or second line from the bottom. The opinion that one-liners should be fitted into the bottom second line, so as to minimise pollution of the image, seems to be the most widely held. However, some television studios and subtitling companies prefer one-liners to go into the first line following the rationale that the reader's eye becomes accustomed to subtitles appearing always in the same place on screen, whether they consist of one or two lines. Regarding the choice between one or two lines, the general consensus is that, if possible, the text should be fitted into one line as in this manner the subtitle impinges less on the image.

When dealing with two-line subtitles, it is recommended that the lines be split in a way that respects logical syntactic connections (Ivarsson and Carroll, 1998; Karamitroglou, 1998; Díaz Cintas and Remael, 2007). It is traditionally believed that this way of segmenting text enhances readability, as evidenced by Perego's study (2008). Although in a subsequent work, Perego *et al.* (2010) argue that the findings from their experimental research show the opposite, namely, that syntactic segmentation has no effect on subtitles readability, most researchers agree that segmenting text on the basis of syntactic nodes constitutes one of the rules of good subtitling practice, possibly because of the link between this translation mode and the above-mentioned higher discursive status of writing (Gambier, 1994). An example of erratic line breaking may be observed in the following scene from the film *Big Deal on Madonna Street*, set in a prison:

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<sup>5</sup> Bilingual subtitles are frequently used at film festivals, for language learning purposes and in countries where more than one official language is spoken such as Belgium, Finland, Israel or Malaysia.

Example 2.1 – *Big Deal on Madonna Street*

| <b>Context:</b> Cosimo, one of the petty criminals in the film, wants to be released as soon as possible from prison, as he has found out from another prisoner crucial information for a potential, ‘sensational’ sting. After being unable to obtain what he wants from his solicitor, he dismisses him by jokingly saying: |  |
|---|--|
| Original dialogue   | English subtitles  |
| 00:04:56,557 --> 00:04:58,548<br>Forse te chiamo il giorno del testamento.<br>[Maybe I call you the day of the will.]   | 00:04:56,557 --> 00:04:58,548<br><br>Maybe I'll call you again when<br>I need to draw my will. |

Here, the English translation consists of 53 characters, but it remains on screen just for 1 second and 991 milliseconds (24 frames). Therefore, this solution results in an uncomfortable reading speed of more than 26 cps (characters per second), being considerably higher than the display rate which tends to be used for DVD, i.e. 180 wpm or 17 cps (Díaz Cintas and Remael, 2007).<sup>6</sup> In addition, since the subtitle is too long to be fitted into one line without trespassing the screen safe area, it has been split into two lines of 30 and 23 characters each. However, syntactic segmentation does not seem to have been a consideration in this case, as it is not based on the node between the independent and dependent clause, which starts with ‘when’ at the end of the first subtitle, while the rest of the clause continues in the second subtitle. A more careful solution which, in addition to complying with the rules of syntactic segmentation and facilitating readability, keeps the top line shorter minimising pollution of the image would have been the following layout:

Example 2.2 – *Big Deal on Madonna Street*

| Italian original  | English subtitles  |
|---|--|
| 00:04:56,557 --> 00:04:58,548<br>Forse te chiamo il giorno del testamento.<br>[Maybe I call you the day of the will.] | 00:04:56,557 --> 00:04:58,548<br><br>Maybe I'll call you again<br>when I need to draw my will. |

<sup>6</sup> A more detailed discussion of the temporal parameters applied to the analysis of the corpus can be found in the introduction to Chapter 5.

Opinions about how to best deal with the spatial parameters of subtitling may vary and translators should be aware of such differences in order to be able to take informed decisions. The semiotic nature of the audiovisual programmes as well as the actual content included in the subtitle are other parameters to bear in mind. Subtitlers may well decide, for instance, to have a one-liner in the bottom line to minimise pollution of the screen or to break long subtitles into two lines to boost readability. Ultimately, what must be avoided is any unnecessary inconsistency, such as subtitles randomly going from left to centre alignment or the other way round.

Another important function of two-liners is to show the different turns of a dialogue exchange between two different speakers (Ivarsson and Carroll, 1998; Karamitroglou, 1998; Díaz Cintas and Remael, 2007). On these occasions, one way of proceeding is for dashes to be “used before the first character of each of the lines of a two-line subtitle (with a space character inserted each time) to indicate the exchange of speakers’ utterances, namely a dialogue” (Karamitroglou, 1998: online). An example from Pietro Germi’s *Divorce Italian Style* is given below in Figure 2.3:



Figure 2.3 – Use of dashes and spaces before subtitles to indicate dialogue turn-taking

However, professional practice is heterogeneous in this respect and it is not unusual for studios that normally use centre-aligned subtitles to resort to left-aligned subtitles for dialogue exchanges, or to delete the blank space between the dash and the text.

The maximum number of characters per line, which, as already mentioned, is determined by the dimensions of the screen safe area and the use of a legible font size, has traditionally hovered around 35 to 39 characters per line. According to Díaz Cintas and Remael (2007: 84), both “for cinema and DVD a maximum of 40 characters [per line] seems to be the norm”, while Netflix (n.d.) advocates lines of a maximum of 42 characters, which is becoming increasingly more common in the streaming industry.

Generally speaking, the assumed reading speed of the typical viewer has increased over the years and the average maximum number of characters per second (cps) or words per minute (wpm) has also tended to increase accordingly (see section 2.6.2), based on the assumption that viewers have become more accustomed to subtitling and to reading text on screen (Gottlieb, 2005; Díaz Cintas and Remael, 2007). Nonetheless, there are obviously limits to this trend as a higher number of characters per second may end up in uncomfortable reading speeds for viewers, who may spend too much time on reading the text and too little in appreciating and enjoying the images.

With the advent of digitisation, however, these traditional line-length limitations have become less relevant as the maximum number of characters per subtitle is now calculated on the basis of proportional lettering, rather than monospacially, taking into account the actual physical space available for writing the text and the letters used in the configuration of the written text (Georgakopoulou, 2003; Díaz Cintas and Remael, 2007). The letters ‘w’ or ‘m’, for example, take up considerably more space than the letters ‘l’ or ‘j’; therefore,

according to this new parameter, the maximum number of characters that can be fitted in one line is determined on the basis of the actual space occupied by each of the letters. This way of rationalising the space gives the professional more leeway for the number of characters that can be used whilst remaining within the limits of the screen safe area. A clear example is given in the screenshot from *The Easy Life* shown in Figure 2.4, where the two lines seem to have more or less the same length, but the first one contains a considerably higher number of characters (27) than the second one (23):



Figure 2.4 – *The relevance of proportional lettering*

### 2.6.2 Temporal constraints

As can be inferred from the previous section, spatial and temporal constraints are almost two sides of the same coin, as variation on the spatial dimension is often likely to have a knock-on effect on the temporal one and vice versa. The temporal dimension also involves a series of variables which need to be carefully considered in order to produce appropriate subtitles that can be comfortably read by viewers. The various temporal constraints impinging on subtitles are related to:

- the spotting or timing of the subtitles;
- their synchronisation with the soundtrack and the images;
- their maximum and minimum duration on screen;
- the assumed reading speed of the target audience.

The practice of spotting subtitles, also known as cueing and timing, consists in identifying the moment in which subtitles should appear on the screen (time in) and the moment in which they should leave it (time out). This is strictly linked to the synchronisation of subtitles with the original soundtrack and, to be properly done, spotting also has to consider shot changes, on the one hand, and respect the established maximum and minimum duration of subtitles, on the other. Spotting is a crucial technical process in the production of subtitles and it can greatly influence the perceived quality of the end product. In this respect, timing has been facilitated enormously by recent technological developments in the field of subtitling software, such as the automatic detection of shot changes as well as the identification of the exact time in which the actors start and finish speaking, thanks to the use of sound waves (Díaz Cintas, 2015).

According to Díaz Cintas and Remael (2007: 88-89), the golden rule when spotting is that subtitles should appear on screen right when the speakers start talking and disappear when they stop. On the other hand, researchers such as Ivarsson and Carroll (1998) and Karamitroglou (1998) recommend showing subtitles a few frames after the initiation of speech to allow the brain time to register the start of the speech act and to be able to identify the speaker. In any case, perfect synchronisation with the original soundtrack is a general rule of thumb which, as previously mentioned, needs to be reconciled with other constraints, such as respect for shot changes and maximum and minimum duration of subtitles. In addition to the importance of complying with the film syntax, it is generally agreed that subtitles shown over shot changes may confuse the brain of the viewer into believing that a new subtitle has appeared on screen

thus triggering a rereading process (Baker, 1982; Georgakopoulou, 2009).<sup>7</sup> It is therefore considered good practice to respect shot changes whenever possible, by avoiding subtitles crossing over.

Regarding the duration of subtitles on screen, research seems to be a bit outdated and new experiments need to be conducted in order to better account for the technical changes introduced by the digital revolution and to obtain a more accurate picture of the new profile of viewers. The available studies by authors like D'Ydewalle *et al.* (1987), Brondeel (1994) and Díaz Cintas and Remael (2007) support the idea that in order to comfortably read a full two-liner made of some 74 characters, average viewers need about 6 seconds. One would therefore expect the optimum reading time for a full one-liner of some 37 characters to correspond to roughly half that time. However, as Karamitroglou (1998) points out, one-liners do not trigger a faster reading process which the perception of longer text normally activates with two-liners and, therefore, the time needed to comfortably read a full one-line subtitle actually corresponds, in his opinion, to 3 ½ seconds, though professional practice tends to allow less time on screen. An exposure time longer than six seconds for a full two-line subtitle would literally be a waste of time, since, in principle, all viewers would have read the whole text in six seconds. Any time above six seconds could instead be used to start a new subtitle. Thus, rather than having a subtitle on screen for seven seconds, it will be better, in line with professional practice, to split the content into two subtitles of five and two seconds, or four and three seconds or any other potential combinations.

In addition to the six-second maximum exposure time, there is also a minimum exposure time of at least one second for short subtitles in order to

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<sup>7</sup> Some authors have questioned this assumption, claiming that “most viewers do not re-read subtitles” because of shot changes and basing their argument on the findings obtained in an empirical study conducted with various participants and using eyetracking (Krejtz *et al.*, 2013: 1). Nonetheless, the authors confirm that subtitles straddling shot changes are still disruptive to the viewing experience and should be avoided.

allow the brain sufficient time to register the text and avoid a flashing effect. A gap of a few text-free frames, between two and six, is similarly interposed between two consecutive subtitles in order for the viewer to be able to perceive that there has been a change of text.

Reading speed values are decided according to the assumed profile and abilities of the target audience, which of course means that this parameter can vary considerably depending on whom the intended addressees of the subtitles are meant to be. Substantial changes have taken place since the VHS was substituted by the DVD and viewers were empowered with a greater degree of control over the experience of watching an audiovisual programme, which these days has been succeeded by streaming. One of the many changes observed in the industry has been the increase in the assumed reading speed of the target viewer (Gottlieb, 2005; Díaz Cintas and Remael, 2007). Though little empirical research has been conducted on the topic, these changes have been understood as a consequence of the digital revolution of the 1990s, which produced better resolution of the image and increased legibility, and as a spinoff of the assumption that viewers have gradually become more familiar with watching audiovisual programmes and more skilled subtitle readers. Díaz Cintas and Remael (2007: 97-99) provide useful and detailed tables indicating the number of words per minute and characters per second available to the subtitler, based on the reading speeds normally applied to the subtitling of programmes to be broadcast on television or to be distributed on DVD. They point out that the six-second rule, corresponding to approximately 145 wpm, applies more to television than DVD and cinema, and derives from the need to cater for a greater variety of TV audiences with their different age and levels of (digital) literacy. In any case, they argue, the rule functions more as a general guideline than a strict requirement and some broadcasters often apply different values, such as 160 wpm or even higher, following the generalised assumption of the improved reading skills of viewers. As for DVD, we have already mentioned that “180 words

per minute is increasingly becoming the norm” (*ibid.*: 98), a statement that can be easily extended to the Blu-ray market and the VOD streaming distribution.

### *2.6.3 The potential impact of technical constraints on the subtitling of gender stereotypes*

All the above-mentioned spatial and temporal constraints tend to result in a challenging decision-making process for the translator, who will often need to establish which restrictions are most important and take priority over the rest in different parts of the audiovisual production. On many occasions, some of the challenges will allow for a myriad of solutions. For instance, subtitlers may decide to adjust the lead in and lead out time by a few frames if the dialogue to be translated is deemed to be very dense and the decision is taken that viewers will need more time to read the subtitle. They will also be confronted with the choice between synchronisation with speech or respect for shot changes, in the cases in which the film itself shows asynchrony between the two. Other technical constraints are more binding, though some room for manoeuvre is normally allowed. The professional will, more often than not, need to abide rather strictly by some of the above-mentioned temporal rules of subtitling, particularly as far as the minimum and maximum exposure times are concerned. Finally, some of the choices may fall outside the translator’s remit and be dictated by subtitling providers, distribution companies or clients with their own subtitling agenda. In this sense, and as previously indicated, some variation can be observed in the maximum number of characters allowed per line between cinema, DVD, television and, more recently, video on demand streaming. Another example that stems from the film *Seduced and Abandoned* will help illustrate the kind of choices that professionals have to contend with and the ways in which they may impact the subtitling of gender issues in the context of the present research project.

Two subtitled versions are compared and contrasted in this case. The first translation comes from the English subtitled version of the Italian studio, Cristaldi, while the second has been executed by Criterion and forms part of the present corpus. However, since the translations are very similar, it is worth comparing and contrasting both similarities and differences and their resulting impact on the gender representation of the original. This sequence must be seen in the context of the film story, after Agnese’s seduction by Peppino, who is actually engaged to her sister Matilde. After discovering that Agnese is pregnant and in order to preserve the family’s honour, the patriarch Don Vincenzo has secretly forced Peppino to withdraw his wedding promise to Matilde, so that he can marry Agnese instead. To comfort the desperate Matilde lamenting Peppino’s inexplicable decision, Don Vincenzo goes to visit a penniless baron, who is then invited for a meal at the Ascalones’ with the clear intent of making him a substitute for Peppino, as Matilde’s new fiancé. The following exchange takes place during the meal, just after the baron has guessed that the second course is going to be a *babalucci* [snails] dish, with *babalucci* translated as ‘rhum baba’, i.e. “a rich yeast cake often containing raisins and sometimes filled with cream, soaked in a rum syrup” (Oxford English Dictionary, 2020: online). Proud to have correctly guessed the second course, the baron goes on to quote a traditional Sicilian saying:

Example 2.3 – *Seduced and Abandoned (Cristaldi)*

| <b>Context:</b> While extolling the virtues of the housewife’s cuisine, the baron quotes a traditional Sicilian saying:   |   |
|---|---|
| Italian original  | English subtitles   |
| 00:36:44,807 --> 00:36:55,847<br>“Babalucci a sucari, e fimmini a basari non ponnu mai saziari.”<br>[“Babalucci to suck, and women to kiss can never satiate you.”] | 00:36:44,807 --> 00:36:49,358<br>“Babalucci to eat<br><br>00:36:50,287 --> 00:36:53,245<br>kiss a girl so sweet,<br><br>00:36:53,287 --> 00:36:55,847 |

|  |   |
|--|---|
|  | satisfaction a thing<br>you'll never meet!" |
|--|---|

In this excerpt, the translation has been divided into three centre-aligned subtitles, of which the first two are one-liners positioned in the bottom line, whereas the last one is a two-liner. As postulated by some scholars, translation is a matter of constantly taking decisions (Levy, 1967) and reaching the right balance between priorities and restrictions (Zabalbeascoa, 1999), a process which becomes arguably more complex in the case of subtitling, due to its numerous limitations. In the example at hand, there is a lot at stake, among which: the poetic rhyme of the Italian saying, the need for synchronisation between the subtitles and the actor's speech, and the respect that should be due to the director's choice of shot changes, all of them compounded by the restrictions resulting from the inherent spatial and temporal constraints. In the English subtitles, the solution evidences that the translator has opted for giving priority to the rhyming effect rather than respecting the director's shot changes, although the attempt to render the poetic effect of the original is partly hampered by the distorted syntax of the translation. Indeed, the director's montage in this scene is based on the alternation between close-ups of the speaker and the family attentively listening, where one of the subtitles remains on screen across the shot changes, as displayed in Fig. 2.5 and Fig. 2.6 below:



Figure 2.5 – *The baron pronouncing his awkward Sicilian saying (Cristaldi)*



Figure 2.6 – *The disconcerted look on the Ascalones' faces as they listen to the baron (Cristaldi)*

As previously discussed, the subtitler has also opted for presenting the information as a two-liner in the case of the last subtitle (Fig. 2.7), which consists of a total of 39 characters and could therefore have been reduced to a one-line subtitle, thereby minimising pollution of the director's mise en scène, as is further explained below.



Figure 2.7 – *The baron reaching the climax of his parallel between consumption of food and women (Cristaldi)*

All in all, the subtitler has been able to keep in English the rhyming effect of the Italian original but has not respected either speech synchronisation, shot changes, or temporal constraints. Since the first subtitle consists of only 16 characters and lasts 2 seconds and 958 milliseconds (24 frames) and the second subtitle consists of 21 characters and lasts 4 seconds and 551 milliseconds (14 frames), both remain on screen long enough to produce a rereading effect. In this context, it can also be argued that aesthetic considerations come second to semantic connotations. With its sexual innuendo, the saying highlights the double standards of an androcentric society firmly based on masculinity and the repression of women's sexuality. Although it could have been appropriate in the *circolo* [men's club], where Ascalone and his friends boast, among other things, about how many loads a man shoots in his lifetime, it is a highly inappropriate topic when pronounced in the presence of women. In this context, the substitution of the culture-specific reference to a typical dish of the Sicilian culinary tradition, i.e. the *babalucci* [snails], with *rum baba* ultimately determines also the different verb choice, 'to eat', which collocates with *babalucci*. This, in turn, results in a translation which is substantially different from the original *babalucci a sucari* [snails to suck], where the dialectal *sucari* does not just refer to one of the ways in which snails are consumed in Sicily, but is also the term which carries the strongest sexual innuendo in this scene of the film. Such 'inappropriate' references explain the disconcerted look on the faces of the Ascalone family (Fig. 2.6), which do not make as much sense when watched against the English subtitles.

As for the third subtitle, shown in Fig. 2.7, the choice of a two-liner has a considerable impact on the director's *mise en scène*, as the two lines completely cover the image of the pasta dish the congregation is enjoying while commenting on the second course, i.e. the snails. In this sequence, the metaphorical value of the images and the action reinforce the linguistic message, since the baron is literally attacking and then visibly savouring the pasta dish, almost in an attempt

to demonstrate what he means with his reference to the infinite pleasure represented by the consumption of food and women.

By comparing Cristaldi’s translation of this Sicilian saying with Criterion’s solution, we can see that, from the linguistic point of view, the subtitles are very similar, albeit not identical:

Example 2.5 – The baron pronouncing his awkward Sicilian saying (Criterion)

| <b>Context:</b> While extolling the virtues of the housewife’s cuisine, the baron quotes a traditional Sicilian saying: |                               |
|---|-------------------------------|
| Italian original  | English subtitles             |
| 00:38:41,619 --> 00:38:49,922   | 00:38:41,619 --> 00:38:44,520 |
| “Babalucci a sucari, e fimmini a basari, non ponnu mai saziari.”  | "Snails to eat...             |
| ["Babalucci to suck, and women to kiss, can never satiate you."]  | 00:38:45,690 --> 00:38:47,715 |
|   | a girl so sweet –             |
|   | 00:38:48,125 --> 00:38:49,922 |
|   | an inexhaustible treat!"      |

The first difference which needs to be highlighted is the explicitation in the Criterion subtitle of the culture-specific reference to the dish: ‘snails to eat’ as opposed to ‘babalucci to eat’ in Cristaldi’s translation. Yet, the action is once more expressed by the verb ‘to eat’, although, having translated *babalucci* literally into ‘snails’, the professional could, theoretically, have retained the cultural reference to the manner in which snails are consumed by many Sicilians, i.e. by sucking them out of their shells, thus maintaining the strong sexual connotations found in the original. From a technical point of view, the first two subtitles present the very same issues discussed above in relation to Cristaldi’s translation. Both the first and second subtitle consist of 17 characters each, but remain on screen 2 seconds and 901 milliseconds (22 frames ) and 2 seconds and 25 milliseconds

(0.6 frames), respectively, with the potential risk of a rereading effect, which may distract viewers from the director's complex mise en scène and montage.

On the other hand, the last subtitle has been shortened to a one-liner, which does not completely cover the pasta dish (Fig. 2.8), thus allowing viewers to appreciate the details represented in the visual channel of communication, which reinforce the parallel between the consumption of food and women:



Figure 2.8 - *The baron reaching the climax of his parallel between consumption of food and women (Criterion)*

Finally, from the point of view of the synchronisation between text and images, and contrary to what happens in Cristaldi's version, Criterion's subtitles are more technically minded and do not cross over the shot changes, thus avoiding a confusing effect. The in and out times of the two subtitles have been adjusted so that the first subtitle leaves the screen with the shot change and the second subtitle starts when the shot has already changed to the image of the family around the table, as is clearly shown in Figure 2.9 below:



Figure 2.9 – *The disconcerted look on the Ascalones' faces as they listen to the baron (Criterion)*

Irremediably, something needs to be sacrificed from a translational viewpoint in such a semiotically dense scene punctuated by such rich dialogue. From the perspective of the current research, one of the questions to be addressed with this example is whether any alternative strategies are possible when it comes to the translation of gender stereotypes. And, in this respect, Criterion's subtitles confirm that alternative solutions to Cristaldi's linguistic transfer are indeed possible, whilst at the same time paying closer attention to synchronisation between text and images and, ultimately, to the director's *mise en scène*.

In this complex example of the representation of gender in a film bent on satirising the gender roles of an archaic society, it can be argued that the connotative dimension of the Italian saying should take precedence over the linguistic form. In addition, the creation of meaning in film rests not only on the semantic formulation but also on the film's own syntax and montage. In this particular instance, the asynchrony between what is being actually uttered and the deliberate changes of the camera is clearly a strategy adopted by the director, Pietro Germi, in order to provoke a sharp contrast between the delighted baron pronouncing his awkward saying, on the one hand, and the family listening with embarrassment and dismay, on the other. With a slight delay in the lead in time of

the second clause, *e fimmini a basari* [and women to kiss], the Criterion's subtitler has ensured synchronisation with the shot change, thus reducing any perceptual confusion that could be induced by the camera movement and the same subtitling text straddling different images. Similarly, the choice of a one-liner for the last subtitle instead of a two-liner has the benefit of partly freeing the image and allowing the spectators to have a clearer view of the pasta dish and appreciate the baron's parallel between the consumption of food and women.

Finally, this is a good example that illustrates the potential offered by a comparative analysis between two different versions of subtitles but also the difficulty in verifying Criterion's claim about the improved quality of their subtitled version, as there is no information about which other subtitled version(s) the company is referring to. Indeed, in the case of this particular example, Criterion's subtitles do show a greater awareness of the importance of the director's *mise en scène* and the significant role played by good synchronisation between text and images, which does not seem to be reflected in Cristaldi's version. However, since Cristaldi does not provide any information about the year in which the translation was executed, or the name of the subtitler, for that matter, and Criterion does not specify which previous version(s) it is referring to, no firm conclusions can be drawn on the company's claim about their "new and improved subtitle version".

## Chapter 3

### Gender: Stereotypes and Translation

#### 3.1 Introduction

Although academic studies are by definition based on previous research, it is not infrequent for researchers to be confronted with a lack of specialist literature on a particular subject and this also applies to the subject matter of the present chapter. Ideally, in order to investigate how Italian gender stereotypes in Comedy Italian Style have been subtitled into English for the US market, researchers would avail themselves of previous studies identifying the nature of such stereotypes, as well as the similarities and differences that may have been broached in the way in which Italian and US gender stereotypes are portrayed. However, although a number of researchers have worked on the classification of gender subtypes<sup>8</sup> (Deaux *et al.*, 1985; England, 1988, 1992; Edwards, 1992; Eckes, 1994; Carpenter and Trentham, 1998; Vonk and Ashmore, 2003), most studies have been conducted in a very small number of countries, with special emphasis on the USA, and have focussed on fairly general subtypes. As far as the nature of gender stereotypes in Italian society and culture is concerned, even such general studies on the main subtypes seem to be missing.

This chapter deals with three main areas of research on gender, i.e. the above-mentioned studies on gender stereotypes in general, the representation of gender in the cinematic genre of Comedy Italian Style (Reich, 2004; Günsberg, 2005; Fullwood, 2015) and, last but not least, gendered theories of translation (Simon, 1996; von Flotow, 1997; Santaemilia, 2005). The three areas are

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<sup>8</sup> 'Gender subtypes' is used in the literature to refer to subcategories of women and men, thus coinciding with what the layman normally refers to as simply gender stereotypes, e.g. 'playboy' or 'career woman'. Hence, for the purposes of the present research, the term 'gender subtypes' is used as a synonym of gender stereotypes.

themselves divided into three sections. The first section deals with the main classifications of gender subtypes that have been put forward by some scholars, as well as the usefulness and limitations of this research for the purposes of the present study. The second section discusses gender and gender stereotypes in Comedy Italian Style by looking at the available literature on the topic and unpicking the nature of culture-specific as well as intercultural (IC) gender stereotypes. The third section considers gendered theories of translation, the special case of AVT and their intersections with gender stereotypes.

## **3.2 Research on gender stereotypes**

Despite the caveats regarding the general nature of gender subtypes identified in the literature and the geographical limitations of the research carried out so far, the studies conducted in this field can provide an understanding as well as useful examples of gender stereotypes by way of definition and classification. Perhaps even more important is the fact that some of these general gender stereotypes identified in the above-mentioned classifications are likely to emerge from the corpus analysis conducted in Chapter 5. Hence, by illustrating such taxonomies at an earlier stage, I will potentially be able to refer back, in the corpus analysis, to the gender subtypes corroborated by previous research. After providing some definitions of gender stereotypes and a detailed overview of Rosenkrantz *et al.*'s (1968) seminal work on the topic, the last section reviews the main taxonomies of gender subtypes and pays special attention to Williams and Best's (1990) cross-cultural study on sex trait stereotypes.

### *3.2.1 Definitions*

Despite the recurrence of gender stereotypes in most types of discourse in society, and particularly in the media, the attributes of such stereotypes are only rarely defined. Before analysing the actual subtitling strategies that have been

applied to deal with these instances in the translation of the films under scrutiny, it is therefore essential to provide operative definitions of such key concepts.

Deaux *et al.* (1985: 145) write that “the human race can be divided rather easily into the two groups of males and females. A consequence of this fact is the development of cognitive categories to describe and process gender-related information, a categorisation process that can be termed ‘gender stereotyping’”. Along the same lines, but also in keeping with their main research tool, i.e. a list of adjectives to be rated by the participants in their study as being “more characteristic of one sex than another”, Williams and Best (1990: 15) define gender stereotypes as “generally held beliefs concerning differences in the ‘psychological makeup’ of women and men”. Most researchers also agree that an essential characteristic of gender stereotypes is that they “are strongly held overgeneralizations” (Basow, 1992: 3); that is, they are applied to all women and men regardless of individual differences, such as the stereotyping of all men as ‘aggressive’ and all women as ‘nurturant’. For the purposes of the present discussion, the latter is a simple, working definition which can be kept as a reference point by the reader in order to understand the essence of the gender stereotypes discussed in these pages, unless further specifications are provided.

### *3.2.2 A review of studies on gender stereotypes*

Despite being more than 50 years old, and therefore referring to perceptions which will have at least partly changed, one of the most influential studies often cited in the literature is Rosenkrantz *et al.*'s (1968) investigation on gender stereotypes in the USA. The authors asked 74 male and 80 female undergraduate college students to name all the “behaviors, attitudes and personality characteristics which they considered to differentiate men and women” (*ibid.*: 287). From the trait-descriptor items gathered, they selected the ones which had been mentioned by at least two respondents and came up with a questionnaire

containing 122 trait-descriptor items. Subsequently, they administered the questionnaire to the students and asked them to rate the extent to which each trait-descriptor item was typical of one sex or the other, on a bipolar scale ranging from one to sixty. From the responses obtained, they proceeded once more to select those items which at least 75% of both male and female subjects had agreed were more typical of the average man or average woman. Finally, a list of 41 sex-role stereotypic items was obtained, which is displayed in Figure 3.1 below:

| STEREOTYPIC TRAITS  |   |
|---|---|
| Male-valued traits  |   |
| Aggressive<br>Independent<br>Unemotional<br>Hides emotions<br>Objective<br>Easily influenced<br>Dominant<br>Likes math and science<br>Not excitable in a minor crisis<br>Active<br>Competitive<br>Logical<br>Worldly<br>Skilled in business<br>Direct<br>Knows the way of the world | Feelings not easily hurt<br>Adventurous<br>Makes decisions easily<br>Never cries<br>Acts as a leader<br>Self-confident<br>Not uncomfortable about being aggressive<br>Ambitious<br>Able to separate feelings from ideas<br>Not dependent<br>Not conceited about appearance<br>Thinks men are superior to women<br>Talks freely about sex with men |
| Female-valued traits  |   |
| Does not use harsh language<br>Talkative<br>Tactful<br>Gentle<br>Aware of feelings of others<br>Religious   | Interested in own appearance<br>Neat in habits<br>Quiet<br>Strong need for security<br>Appreciates art and literature<br>Expresses tender feelings  |

Figure 3.1 – Rosenkrantz et al.'s (1968) list of sex-role stereotypic items

In the way in which it elucidates and tests the material collected from the informants, Rosenkratz *et al.*'s (*ibid.*) study is at the basis of all three major methods of assessment of gender stereotypes developed by Ashmore *et al.* (1986: 72), which are commonly used in this line of research and also adopted in other studies under review in this section (Deaux *et al.*, 1985; England, 1988, 1992; Edwards, 1992; Eckes, 1994; Carpenter and Trentham, 1998; Vonk and Ashmore, 2003). It is fair to say that the study has had a lasting influence on further research, particularly on Williams and Best's (1990) cross-cultural exploration on gender stereotypes involving 30 countries. Before examining the cross-cultural perspective, however, it makes sense to discuss a number of taxonomies of gender stereotypes that have been proposed by various researchers, starting with Carpenter and Trentham (1998).

Carpenter and Trentham's (*ibid.*) investigation is useful for the results it yields but also for the exhaustive summary it provides of gender stereotypes previously identified by other scholars. The study builds on earlier research on categories of subtypes, such as interpersonal or sexual, as well as the target and perceiver's influence on subtypes, i.e. the fact that specific subtypes are more associated with men than women or vice versa and the influence of the subject's gender or gender role orientation in the perception of such attributes. Before presenting their own classification, Carpenter and Trentham (*ibid.*: 681) usefully combine in one taxonomy the subtypes identified by some of the main, prior researchers such as Deaux *et al.* (1985), England (1988, 1992), Edwards (1992), and Eckes (1994), who had focussed on the classification of gender stereotypes. The resulting taxonomy, combining previously identified gender subtypes, is displayed in Fig. 3.2:

| <i>Classification</i>                                   | <i>Women</i>       |                        | <i>Men</i>         |           |
|---|--------------------|------------------------|--------------------|-----------|
| <b>Family Roles (A, B)<sup>a</sup></b>                  | housewife          | (2, 3, 4) <sup>b</sup> | family man         | (1, 2)    |
| <b>Work Roles (A, B)</b>                                | career woman       | (3)                    | career man         | (3)       |
|   | professional woman | (2)                    | blue collar worker | (2, 4)    |
|   | businesswoman      | (4)                    | businessman        | (1, 2, 4) |
|   | secretary          | (3)                    | manager            | (3)       |
| <b>Affiliative Groups (A, B)</b>                        | society lady       | (3)                    | social climber     | (3)       |
| <b>Ideology (A); Beliefs (B)</b>                        | bourgeois          | (3)                    | bourgeois          | (3)       |
|   | punk               | (3)                    | hippie             | (3)       |
|   | feminist           | (3)                    |                    |           |
|   | libber             | (3)                    |                    |           |
| <b>Physical Features (A, B)</b>                         | athlete            | (4)                    | athlete            | (1, 4)    |
| <b>Personal Features (A, B)</b>                         | intellectual       | (3)                    | jock               | (3)       |
|   | confident type     | (3)                    | intellectual       | (3)       |
|   | naïve type         | (3)                    | confident type     | (3)       |
|   | conformist         | (3)                    | softy              | (3)       |
|   |                    |                        | egoist             | (3)       |
| <b>Subtypes Not Classified into Previous Categories</b> | bunny              | (2)                    | playboy            | (3)       |
|   | vamp               | (3)                    | ladies' man        | (1)       |
|   | sexy woman         | (4)                    | macho man          | (2, 3, 4) |
|   | wallflower         | (3)                    | loser              | (1)       |
|   |                    |                        | bum                | (3)       |

<sup>a</sup> A = classifications of Gordon (1968); B = classifications of Ostrom (1975).  
<sup>b</sup> Numbers in parentheses refer to researchers who identified the particular subtypes: (1) Edwards (1992), (2) England (1988 & 1992), (3) Eckes (1994a & 1994b), and (4) Deaux et al. (1985).

Figure 3.2 – Carpenter and Trentham's (1998) taxonomy combining previously identified gender stereotypes

As a snapshot of the research conducted on the classification on gender subtypes, this taxonomy is a useful exploration tool for the analysis of general, intercultural stereotypes that can be found in the source material, before actually looking at the translation strategies used for subtitling them into English. Some of these gender stereotypes emerge in the films under analysis including housewife, naïve type and sexy woman for female characters. The male subtypes, on the other hand, are almost all represented in the corpus under scrutiny with a clear numerical prevalence over female stereotypes. The reasons for this state of affairs will become clearer in section 3.3, where the representation of gender in Comedy Italian Style is dissected in detail.

After analysing the various categories of gender stereotypes and the specific subtypes that had been identified by previous researchers, Carpenter and

Trentham (*ibid.*) conclude that additional categories are needed for the elaboration of a comprehensive classification and suggest the inclusion of two extra categories, one for negative subtypes and another one for sexual subtypes. On this basis, they carried out a study with 67 female and 63 male students from Vassar College and 76 female and 67 male undergraduate students from the University of Alabama in Huntsville, both located in the USA. Participants were asked to name as many 'types' of men and women as they could think of, knowing that they had only two minutes in which to complete their task. Once the same subtypes had been put together, the resulting 567 subtypes were assigned to the categories previously identified in the literature by the authors as well as by a postgraduate student working independently. In the last stage of the study, the scholars and the student finally met to discuss their results. At this point, a number of rules were agreed, which defined the different categories, and the latter were classified as belonging to one of five groups, namely (1) personal, (2) interpersonal, (3) collective, (4) evaluative or (5) other. The following Figure 3.3 summarises the results of the study:

| <i>Category &amp; Number of Subtypes</i>   | <i>Criteria for Classification</i>  | <i>Examples</i>                                   |
|--|---|---|
| <b>PERSONAL</b>  |   |   |
| Talents & Mental Abilities (26)  | Level of learning, IQ   | Airhead, genius, scholar                          |
| Ideology (26)  | Politics, religion, social issues, etc.   | Atheist, feminist, racist                         |
| Interests (53)   | Hobbies, entertainment, relaxation behaviors                                      | Biker, outdoorsman, shopper                       |
| <b>INTERPERSONAL</b>   |   |   |
| Power (23)   | Attempts or actual exhibitions of strength/control/dominance                      | Aggressor, push-over, tough guy                   |
| Popularity & Sociability (33)  | Respectability, likability, social prestige; Interpersonal competence or interest | Frat rat, outcast, extrovert                      |
| People with Expectations (17)  | People who demand others behave in particular ways in their presence              | Goody two shoes, perfectionist, spoiled rich brat |
| Interpersonal Roles (45)   | Duties or obligations between people  | Family man, lover, wife                           |
| Sexual Preference/ Style (22)  | Expression of sexuality and/or others' interpretation of that expression          | Bisexual, lesbian, virgin                         |
| Physical Appearance (14)   | Physique and attractiveness   | Amazon, fox, pretty boy                           |
| Appearance & Sexual Style (13)   |   | Butch, drag queen, playboy                        |
| Appearance/ Sociability/Talents and Mental Abilities (8)   |   | Barbie, cheerleader, dizzy blond                  |
| <b>COLLECTIVE</b>  |   |   |
| Occupations & Work Roles (140)   | Behaviors, roles that could be considered a job; Obligations at work              | Boss, accountant, receptionist                    |
| Demographics (34)  | Ethnicity, religion, age, educational level                                       | Hispanic, divorced, college grad                  |
| <b>NEGATIVE EVALUATION</b>   |   |   |
| Derogatory (38)  | Terms carrying no meaning beyond dislike or hostility                             | Bitch, geek, weirdo                               |
| Inadequacies (42)  | Negative, identifiable behaviors  | Busybody, loser, whiner                           |
| <b>OTHER</b>   |   |   |
| Miscellaneous (22)   | Terms not fitting previous categories   | Doll, hero, participant                           |
| Uncodeable (11)  | Terms with multiple meanings  | Clown, killer, queen                              |
| <i>Note: Numbers in parentheses indicate the number of different subtypes within a category.</i> |   |   |

Figure 3.3 – Carpenter and Trentham's (1998) taxonomy of gender stereotypes

The last classification of gender subtypes that will be reviewed in these pages, before moving on to discuss Williams and Best's (1990) cross-cultural research, is part of Vonk and Ashmore's (2003) study and is of interest mainly for two reasons. Firstly, because Vonk and Ashmore (*ibid.*) are the ones to have

conducted the last in-depth study of its kind, after which research has tended to concentrate on the exploration of particular subtypes rather than on devising new heuristic classifications. Secondly, because their study, partly conducted in the Netherlands with local subjects, provides an interesting illustration of the kind of translation challenges that the transfer of culture-specific gender stereotypes often creates.

According to the academics, the study was designed to test “the cognitive organization of female and male types” (*ibid.*: 257) beyond the basic opposition established between male and female. From this point of view, the authors indicate that, for example, although ‘businesswoman’ and ‘athletic woman’ are female subtypes, they are more associated with typical masculine rather than female traits and may therefore be perceived as having more in common with traditional male gender stereotypes such as ‘businessman’ and ‘athletic man’. Following this hypothesis, they go on to argue that classifications founded exclusively on male/female opposition may not be the only way to approach the categorisation of gender stereotypes.

Their study is organised in three broad parts. After eliciting a taxonomy of gender stereotypes in the first part, the second and third ones focus on the complex analytical methods designed to test the initial hypothesis on a number of attributes that can be considered different from the female/male, polarised dimension. Three of these attributes, which they also call dimensions, have already been considered in previous literature and correspond to (1) feminine-masculine, (2) modern-traditional and (3) nonsexual-sexual. In addition to these, the authors look at further dimensions derived from Osgood *et al.* (1957: 267), which they consider “relevant in thinking about people in general, namely (4) Evaluation, (5) Potency and (6) Activity”. To these, they also add the (7) incompetent-competent dimension proposed by Rosenberg (1977), as well as three new dimensions which seemed relevant to the results obtained, i.e. (8) Age,

(9) Settled and (10) Choice. The final results are rather mixed and support the assumption that the cognitive organisation of gender stereotypes is based both on the traditional female/male opposition and on some bipolar dimensions, such as traditional-non-traditional, age, settled and choice, but not all of them: most prominently, the non-sexual-sexual and evaluation dimensions did not fit into the new bipolar model. However, what is even more interesting for the purposes of the present research is the general classification of gender subtypes obtained in the first part of their investigation.

Study 1 of Vonk and Ashmore's (2003) project included 46 male and 48 female subjects living in the Netherlands. Of these, 25% were university students whilst the rest were high school or professional school students. The study also included participants who were not students but were unemployed or covering various occupations and the subjects were distributed evenly across two age groups (17-34 and 35-53). Participants were shown drawings of taxonomies of animals and were subsequently instructed to complete the taxonomy of people by naming as many subgroups of men and women as possible. In a later stage, the interviewer went back to each of the named subtypes and asked the participant to describe the characteristics of the said subtype in order to facilitate the future categorisation of types. The classification obtained by Vonk and Ashmore (*ibid.*) is explored below.

As with the other taxonomies so far presented, most of the gender subtypes included in Vonk and Ashmore's (*ibid.*) classification appear to be rather general, covering intercultural gender stereotypes. In the discussion on their taxonomy, however, the authors point out some translation issues with reference to two culture-specific subtypes. One is the female gender stereotype of the *snobbish woman*, with types such as "*princess* and *prude* (included because the Dutch noun for *prude*—'*tutje*' or '*tut*'—connotes snobbishness in addition to sexual prudishness)", but also "a wide variety of labels which cannot be

translated” (*ibid.*: 264). The other example given by the authors is the subtype *frat*, “which refers to people, mostly males, who are arrogant, dominant, loud, politically conservative, wear ties, and speak in a snobbish way” (*ibid.*: 265).

At the beginning of this chapter, the lack of gender stereotype taxonomies resulting from studies conducted in Italy was noted. After presenting a number of taxonomies compiled in the USA, Germany and the Netherlands, this does not appear to be a crucial gap for the researcher investigating the subtling of Italian gender stereotypes into English. It is true that by comparing and contrasting the above-mentioned taxonomies, there appear to be some different gender stereotypes in each one of them. However, what is even more interesting is the substantial degree of similarity of results between the studies which have been conducted in the USA (Deaux et. al, 1985; England, 1988, 1992; Edwards, 1992; Carpenter and Trentham, 1998) and those which have been carried out in countries like Germany (Eckes, 1994) and the Netherlands (Vonk and Ashmore, 2003). In fact, the researchers’ need to group and categorise similar results in order to be able to present them in a working taxonomy implies a certain degree of generalisation of the gender stereotypes included in their classifications and, as a consequence, some similarity of results between explorations conducted in different countries can be detected. This does not mean that there are no differences, as illustrated by the difficulties encountered when trying to translate the culture-specific gender stereotypes in Vonk and Ashmore’s (*ibid.*) study. Nevertheless, on balance, the majority of gender stereotypes included in these taxonomies appear to have cross-cultural validity, as many of the differences are likely to be lost in the categorisation process, in which specific gender stereotypes are clustered together with similar ones.

To sum up the discussion so far, the taxonomies reviewed show a considerable degree of similarity among the various gender stereotypes found in different studies and countries, which corroborates the argument in favour of the

existence of some general, intercultural gender stereotypes. These results are also confirmed by the only intercultural study of gender stereotypes including Italy and the USA (Williams and Best, 1990), and it is to this topic that the discussion now turns.

### *3.2.3 Research on intercultural gender stereotypes*

In 1980, Williams and Best first published the most complex cross-cultural study on gender stereotypes including data from 25 countries, which rose to 30 in their revised edition of 1990. Although the title of the publication, *Measuring Sex Stereotypes*, as well as the above-mentioned geographical scope might sound like the perfect cross-cultural study to support the present research project, there are some interesting insights and a number of limitations that need to be raised, so that its findings can be applied to the English subtitling of gender stereotypes that populate Comedy Italian Style.

Williams and Best's (1990) main research instrument was the Adjective Check List (ACL). The ACL consisted of 300 sex-trait stereotypes, which university students in each country were asked to rate as "more frequently associated with men rather than women, or more frequently associated with women than men" (*ibid.*: 51). On the basis of the results compiled, the authors determined a considerable number of variables according to diverse theories and analysed in different chapters, i.e. Item-Level Analysis, Affective Meaning Analysis, Ego-State Analysis and Psychological Needs Analysis. The main findings related to the above-mentioned task with university students were reported in the Item-Level Analysis and are by far the most interesting and reliable of all the results. With regard to the other three types of analysis, however, the authors readily admit that "the probability of American bias at the scoring level seems equally likely in all three systems, since in each case judges from the United States were used to determine which ACL adjectives were associated with each

theoretical concept” (*ibid.*: 61). One example will suffice to explain the relativity of these results.

The affective meaning theory deployed by Williams and Best (*ibid.*) is derived from the work carried out by Osgood *et al.* (1957: 84), who focussed on the “connotative or affective meaning associated with words or concepts” and which is based on three main dimensions: evaluation, potency and activity, i.e. whether a particular characteristic attributed to men or women is seen as good or bad, strong or weak, active or passive. In their study, Williams and Best (1990) warn that the mean affective meaning scores for male- and female-associated items obtained from the countries under scrutiny are based on the ratings of the ACL items by university students in the USA. The different ‘profile’ for each country is determined by applying the affective meaning scores decided in the USA to the focussed stereotypes of a specific country, that is, the ACL items which at least 67% of respondents in that particular country assigned either to men or to women. The upshot of this section of the research is that while in some countries male stereotypes tend to be evaluated more favourably than the female stereotypes, and vice versa, all countries tend to associate the male stereotype with strength and activity much more than they do with the female stereotype. However, since the favourability, potency and activity values of male- or female-associated items were not rated independently in each country, these findings are not only fairly general but also not sufficiently reliable. The same problem of insufficient reliability, due to the shortcomings in the methodological approach, applies to the Ego-State Analysis and the Psychological Needs Analysis. The Item-Level Analysis, i.e. the percentage of people who assigned a sex-trait stereotype to the male or female sex, is also based on the translation of the 300 ACL items into the particular language of each country which participated in the study. However, according to the authors, the translation of the ACL was carefully executed, including a process of translations and back-translations in which a committee of bilingual individuals was involved. In addition, the translations into Italian have

been double-checked for reliability and are available in Appendix 3 for the readers to verify. On the whole, the majority of these items are given a fair rendition in Italian, considering the difficulty of translating single, decontextualised adjectives, and in spite of some debatable solutions.

To sum up, it makes sense to discuss and concentrate on the variables which are both more reliable in terms of research methodology and more relevant to the English subtitling of the gender stereotypes found in Comedy Italian Style. Particularly interesting from this perspective are the attributes that allow for the US and the Italian scores to be compared and contrasted in detail, based on the percentage of respondents who assigned particular sex-trait stereotypes differentially to men and women. These variables are:

1. The percentage of ACL items more frequently associated with men and the percentage of items more frequently associated with women in each country.
2. The variance of stereotyping or tendency to allocate a higher or lower percentage of trait-descriptor items to one of the two sexes – for example, “a large number of items that were highly associated with one sex or the other” (*ibid.*: 84) in one country as opposed to a relatively balanced distribution between items highly/lowly associated with men and/or women in another country.
3. The common variance of items highly associated with men rather than women or vice versa. Simply put, this makes reference to the degree of agreement that can be perceived between two countries, which tend to assign items differentially to men rather than women, or vice versa.

In relation to the first variable, Italy is the top country on the list with 63.5% of ACL items mainly associated with men and 36.5% with women. The data for the USA, on the other hand, show a more balanced distribution between the

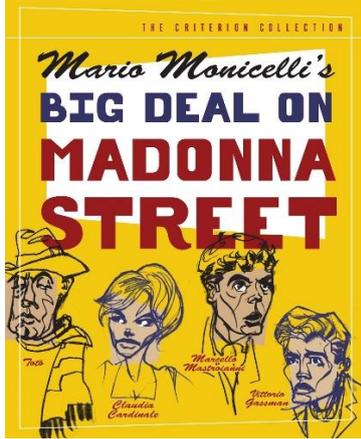
percentage of ACL items more frequently assigned to men, i.e. 52.3%, and the percentage of items more frequently assigned to women, that is, 47.7%. As for the variance of stereotyping in the USA and Italy, this was not significantly different from the average. However, when one compares these two countries in terms of common variance, the 31% 'agreement' score appears to be a relatively low one if compared with the highest score found between Australia and England at 88% and the lowest score between Venezuela and Pakistan at 18%.

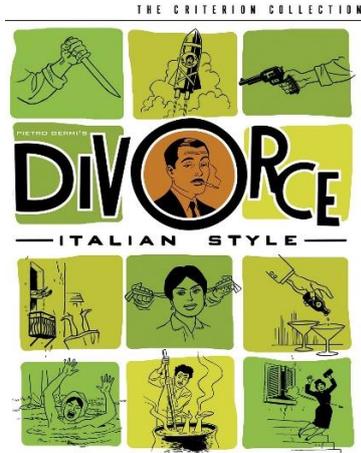
Generally speaking, the trends highlighted by Williams and Best's (*ibid.*) cross-cultural investigation of gender stereotypes do confirm the overall results from the above-mentioned taxonomies. Many of the sex-trait stereotypes the authors analyse appear to have a cross-cultural validity, although some differences can also be observed, especially when the researcher descends into the minute details of the comparison and contrast between the USA and Italy. On the other hand, the authors do not actually look at gender subtypes as identified in the previously created taxonomies. Rather, they use the 300 ACL items to concentrate on sex-trait stereotypes, i.e. "psychological characteristics or behavioral traits that are believed to characterize men with much greater (or lesser) frequency than they characterize women" (*ibid.*: 16). But when dealing with gender stereotypes in audiovisual translation, the subtitler is more often than not confronted with gender stereotypes in the form of specific subtypes, such as *cornuto* [cuckold], or gender-specific allusions, such as the pervasive reference to the concept of *onore* [honour] indirectly implying many different, Sicilian gender stereotypes in *Divorce Italian Style*, rather than the trait-descriptor adjectives such as 'ambitious' or 'attractive' utilised by Williams and Best (*ibid.*). This also happens because many of the adjectives included in the ACL are not often used to describe a person. The authors themselves admit as much when they say that "our relative methodology leads to the identification of a number of stereotypic adjectives that are used infrequently in the description of persons of either sex" (*ibid.*: 57).

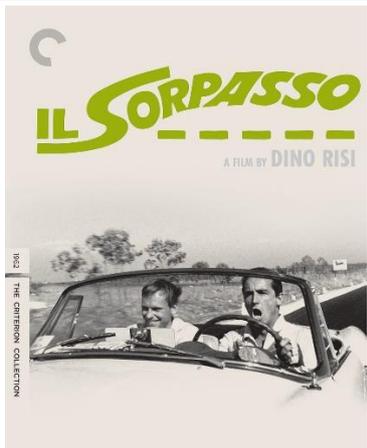
Finally, it is important to remind the reader that Williams and Best (*ibid.*) cautiously assume from the start that their study will reveal more similarities than differences. They review part of the previous literature, which also seems to point to these cross-cultural similarities, and explain that they consciously take a “conservative” approach, because of “the differential effect of methodological flaws on the demonstration of cross-cultural similarities and differences” (*ibid.*: 63). In other words, evidence of cross-cultural similarity is not affected by methodological problems whereas the opposite is true of cross-cultural differences. Thus the authors’ approach is intellectually honest, but it also implies that their data need some mediation and further analysis if they are to prove fruitful in the investigation of the English subtitling of the gender stereotypes found in Comedy Italian Style.

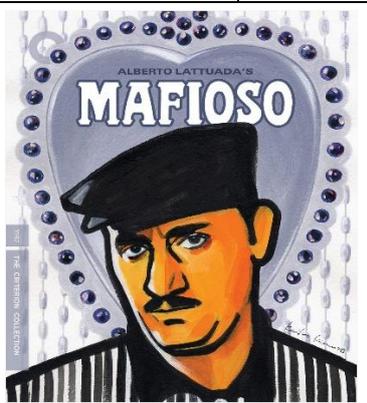
#### *3.2.4 The films of the corpus*

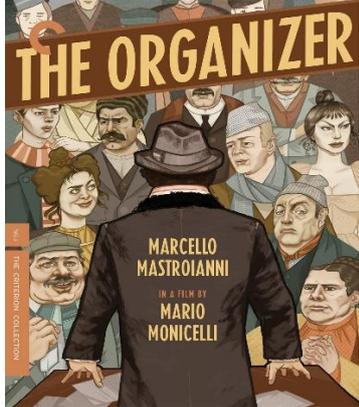
Before moving on to a discussion largely based on the films under analysis, the seven comedies making up the present corpus are briefly summarised below, so that the storyline of each film can be consulted in the overview of gender stereotypes in Comedy Italian Style which will be presented in the following subsection. Other details included are the Italian title of each film with the original year of release, the name of the director, the English title with the Criterion Collection’s year of release and the website with further details about the film. Last but not least, the information provided about the translation, whether the subtitles are simply new or new and improved, as well as the name of the professional(s) involved in the subtitle translation, are also included. The films are listed according to the original year of release.

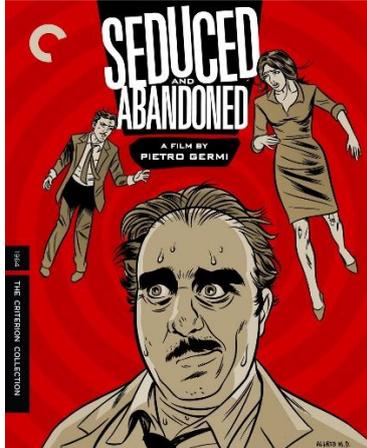
|   |  |  |               |
|---|--|--|---------------|
| <b>Original title</b>   | <i>I soliti ignoti</i> [The usual unknown]             | <b>Release</b>   | 1958          |
| <b>Director</b>   | Mario Monicelli  |  |               |
| <b>Criterion title</b>  | <i>Big Deal on Madonna Street</i>                      | <b>Release</b>   | 2001          |
| <b>Website</b>  | www.criterion.com/films/652-big-deal-on-madonna-street |  |               |
| <b>Subtitles</b>  | New English subtitle translation                       | <b>Subtitled</b>   | Bona Flecchia |
|  |  | <b>Summary of the plot</b><br><p>A gang of petty criminals, whose aspirations do not quite match up to reality, believe they can execute a 'sensational' sting, after one of them has devised a plan to penetrate into the local pawnshop and break the safe. They manage to enter the house adjacent to the pawnshop, but eventually make a hole into the wrong wall and end up in the kitchen, enjoying the pasta and chickpeas they find in the fridge.</p> |               |

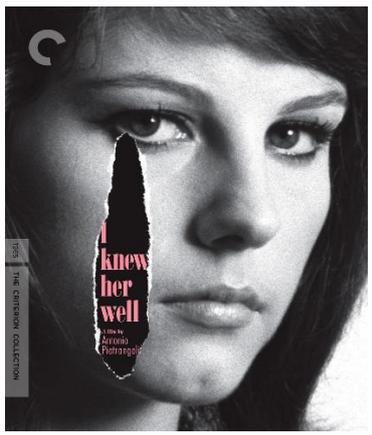
|   |  |  |                    |
|---|--|--|--------------------|
| <b>Original title</b>   | <i>Divorzio all'italiana</i> [Divorce Italian style] | <b>Release</b>   | 1961               |
| <b>Director</b>   | Pietro Germi   |  |                    |
| <b>Criterion title</b>  | <i>Divorce Italian Style</i>                         | <b>Release</b>   | 2005               |
| <b>Website</b>  | www.criterion.com/films/877-divorce-italian-style    |  |                    |
| <b>Subtitles</b>  | New and improved English subtitle translation        | <b>Subtitled</b>   | Stephanie Friedman |
|  |  | <b>Summary of the plot</b><br><p>Tired of his marriage with Rosalia, Baron Don Ferdinando Cefalù devises a scheme to rid himself of his wife and marry his beautiful and young cousin, Angela, by exploiting the law on the <i>delitto d'onore</i> [crime of honour]. According to the Italian legislation of the time, if a man killed his wife, sister or daughter upon discovering her <i>in flagrante delicto</i> with her lover, the sentence would have been much shorter than for other types of murder. All the baron needs to do is to find a suitable lover for Rosalia.</p> |                    |

|   |   |   |             |
|---|---|---|-------------|
| <b>Original title</b>   | <i>Il sorpasso</i> [The overtaking]       | <b>Release</b>  | 1962        |
| <b>Director</b>   | Dino Risi                                 |   |             |
| <b>Criterion title</b>  | <i>The Easy Life</i>                      | <b>Release</b>  | 2014        |
| <b>Website</b>  | www.criterion.com/films/28429-il-sorpasso |   |             |
| <b>Subtitles</b>  | New English subtitle translation          | <b>Subtitled</b>  | John Gudelj |
|  |   | <b>Summary of the plot</b><br><p>On a national holiday, Bruno, the stereotypical, boisterous and braggart Italian of the 1960s, goes on a car tour with Roberto, an introverted student he has just met in Rome. They share a series of adventures taking them from Roberto's childhood country house, where they visit his relatives, to Bruno's ex-wife and their daughter, 'the kid', by now a beautiful 16-year-old girl dating a much older businessman.</p> |             |

|   |   |  |                                    |
|---|---|--|------------------------------------|
| <b>Original title</b>   | <i>Mafioso</i>                                | <b>Release</b>   | 1962                               |
| <b>Director</b>   | Alberto Lattuada                              |  |                                    |
| <b>Criterion title</b>  | <i>Mafioso</i>                                | <b>Release</b>   | 2008                               |
| <b>Website</b>  | www.criterion.com/films/527-mafioso           |  |                                    |
| <b>Subtitles</b>  | New and improved English subtitle translation | <b>Subtitled</b>   | Tommaso Cammarano, Bruce Goldstein |
|  |   | <b>Summary of the plot</b><br><p>A Sicilian man transplanted to the rich North of Italy, where he has successfully advanced his career as manager in a car factory, finally has the opportunity to take his beautiful, Milanese wife and their children back home to meet his family and friends. All seems to be going well during their stay in Sicily until his past connections with the local mafia as a young man finally catch up with him.</p> |                                    |

|   |   |   |             |
|---|---|---|-------------|
| <b>Original title</b>   | <i>I compagni</i> [The comrades]            | <b>Release</b>  | 1963        |
| <b>Director</b>   | Mario Monicelli                             |   |             |
| <b>Criterion title</b>  | <i>The Organizer</i>                        | <b>Release</b>  | 2012        |
| <b>Website</b>  | www.criterion.com/films/27612-the-organizer |   |             |
| <b>Subtitles</b>  | New English subtitle translation            | <b>Subtitled</b>  | John Gudelj |
|  |   | <b>Summary of the plot</b><br><p>At the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, after yet another accident leaving one of them mutilated, the workers of a factory in Turin decide to take action to demand better work conditions. Led by the <i>professore</i>, that is, a school teacher who has made the fight for workers' rights into his life mission, they finally embark on a long strike and battle against the management.</p> |             |

|   |  |   |             |
|---|--|---|-------------|
| <b>Original title</b>   | <i>Sedotta e abbandonata</i> [Seduced and abandoned] | <b>Release</b>  | 1964        |
| <b>Director</b>   | Pietro Germi   |   |             |
| <b>Criterion title</b>  | <i>Seduced and Abandoned</i>                         | <b>Release</b>  | 2006        |
| <b>Website</b>  | www.criterion.com/films/796-seduced-and-abandoned    |   |             |
| <b>Subtitles</b>  | New and improved English subtitle translation        | <b>Subtitled</b>  | John Gudelj |
|  |  | <b>Summary of the plot</b><br><p>The young Agnese is seduced by Peppino, who is actually engaged to her sister Matilde. When her father, Don Vincenzo Ascalone, finds out that she is pregnant, he literally orders Peppino to write a letter withdrawing his wedding promise to Matilde, so that he can marry Agnese. Peppino first accepts, but subsequently refuses because, ironically, he does not want to marry a woman who is not <i>illibata</i> [undefiled].</p> |             |

|  |   |  |  |
|--|---|--|--|
| <b>Original title</b>  | <i>Io la conoscevo bene</i> [I knew her well] | <b>Release</b>   | 1965   |
| <b>Director</b>  | Antonio Pietrangeli                           |  |  |
| <b>Criterion title</b>   | <i>I Knew Her Well</i>                        | <b>Release</b>   | 2016   |
| <b>Website</b>   | www.criterion.com/films/28600-i-knew-her-well |  |  |
| <b>Subtitles</b>   | New English subtitle translation              | <b>Subtitlers</b>  | John Gudelj,<br>Angela Arnone,<br>Paola Bonaiuti |
|  |   | <b>Summary of the plot</b><br><p>After leaving behind the family's farm, Adriana, a naïve, good-natured and beautiful young woman, embarks on a difficult journey to become a successful cinema actress. Too gentle and not sufficiently unscrupulous to be able to deal with a world of cynical opportunists, used and disposed of like an object by supposed friends, promoters and cinema celebrities, Adriana goes through a series of bitter deceptions until she meets her tragic destiny.</p> |  |

The following section now turns to the analysis of the first pioneering studies on gender in Comedy Italian Style in order to throw some light on the representation and cultural specificity of a number of Italian gender stereotypes.

### 3.3 Gender stereotypes in Comedy Italian Style

As the previous debate has shown, research on the classification of gender stereotypes has been conducted in a limited number of countries – most notably in the USA – but no studies of this kind are available for Italy. In addition, research has tended to concentrate on cross-cultural, rather than culture-specific, gender stereotype taxonomies. Indeed, a quick look at the methodological scaffolding used in most of the studies shows that even the taxonomies originating in Germany and the Netherlands have more cross-cultural validity than cultural specificity. As a consequence, the researcher is once more obliged to look for other scholarly works which can support the argumentation including

not only cross-cultural but also culture-specific gender stereotypes in the corpus under scrutiny. Useful from this point of view are the first few studies published over the last fifteen years on gender in Comedy Italian Style, as well as general film studies on this cinematic genre.

It is not my intention in these pages to try and propose a taxonomy of gender stereotypes on the basis of the above-mentioned sources. Such a task would be impossible to accomplish due to the thematic limitations of the research, which specifically addresses the issues of gender representation in Comedy Italian Style. However, a review of specific gender studies on Comedy Italian Style focussing on the films included in the present corpus will assist the reader to frame such films from a gender perspective and will also help me to substantiate my argumentation in the corpus analysis (see Chapter 5), on the basis of the gender stereotypes identified below.

### *3.3.1 Commodifying passions in Comedy Italian Style*

With the chapter discussing the commodification of passions in her book on *Italian Cinema: Gender and Genre*, Günsberg (2005) was the first scholar ever to devote a long overdue study to the pervasive presence of gender portrayals in Comedy Italian Style. The scholar does not just point out the obvious function of the genre as a mirror of Italian society during the economic boom of the late 1950s and early 1960s, but she also highlights the centrality of the commodification of social relationships and of the female body. In this context, she argues that, far from being questioned, the old gender imbalance between the sexes is only just refashioned and perpetuated. As Bellassai (2004: 108) had also indicated, the men represented in this cinematic genre are perfectly happy to furnish their wives with the most modern domestic appliances, which can do the hard domestic work for them. In return, however, they expect 'their' women to be the *angelo del focolare* [angel of the hearth], as frequently represented in TV

advertising at the time, fulfilling and spreading the gender roles and stereotypes associated with housewives and their domestic environment, such as cleaning, cooking and raising children. Comedy Italian Style foregrounds these new consumerist trends by often parodying men who struggle to keep up with their wives' demands. Such perspective is particularly interesting, as it depicts women's consumerist expectations from the point of view of men, who are then stereotypically represented as the victims of female materialistic greed.

This male-dominated perspective is a fundamental characteristic of Comedy Italian Style on which critics have reached unanimous consensus. To borrow from Günsberg (2005: 62), Comedy Italian Style is a "(male) comedian comedy", i.e. a genre directed by men, played by male cinema stars and intended for male consumption. In order to corroborate her argument, the scholar draws attention to the fact that all, except for one of the 59 directors listed by Giacovelli (1995) as contributors to the genre, are men and reminds the reader that, "even when their predicaments involve relations with femininity, it is the masculine viewpoint that prevails" (*ibid.*). As an example of these dynamics, she cites the case of *Divorce Italian Style*, where the male protagonist's voiceover keeps viewers constantly aware of his perspective, while nothing is said of the feelings and point of view of his wife. Indeed, Rosalia is practically relegated to the gender stereotypes of the cheating spouse and, particularly, suffocating wife, another culture-specific gender stereotype so often depicted in Comedy Italian Style.

*Divorce* is the first one of the *commedie meridionalistiche* [Southern Comedies], centred on the tribal code of honour prevalent in the backward Sicilian society of the 1960s (Brunetta, 1991) and a perfect example of Günsberg's (2005) discourse on the commodification of women's sexuality. With *Divorce Italian Style* and *Seduced and Abandoned*, director Pietro Germi inaugurated a successful subgenre based on the binary opposition and culture-specific, stereotypical representation of women either as marriageable madonnas or

unmarriageable whores (*ibid.*: 89). From Günsberg's (*ibid.*) viewpoint, the woman is reified as a sexual object in both cases: the madonna brings the promise of her virginity to marriage, but, once this is consumed, she reverts to the role of housewife and bearer of children; while the whore, on the other hand, does not respect the code of honour that is based on virginity before marriage and can therefore be enjoyed by everyone for sexual gratification.

As for the role of men, they are not just breadwinners as in times gone by. In the brave new society of the economic boom, they must prove their successful status through financially rewarding professional careers and by acquiring status symbol goods, such as modern kitchens for their wives and the latest car model for themselves. As the films in the corpus under analysis abundantly show, the car becomes almost the alter ego of men, reflecting their virility and position in the social pecking order, as well as the gender stereotypes of countless Casanovas and career men. Hence, while Roberto, the character playing the famous arrogant actor in *I Knew Her Well*, drives an expensive sports car, the *perdenti nati* [born losers], a term coined by Giacobelli (1995: 45) for *Big Deal on Madonna Street*, end up driving dodgems at the fun fair, an ironic reference to the fact that their aspirations are not proportionate to reality. They pose as professional criminals organising a 'scientific' sting, but they eventually settle for pasta and chickpeas.

Midway between the stereotypes of successful career men and total losers is the Everyman Italian (Günsberg, 2005: 62), the Bruno Cortona of *The Easy Life* with his Aurelia Sport, the "rather decrepit status symbol" (Giacobelli, 1995: 151) of men who want to pose as youngsters even when they are approaching their 50s. The film is a road movie based on the adventures of Bruno and his travelling friend, Roberto, a shy law student initially reluctant to be dragged out of his flat. Fournier Lanzoni (2008: 90-91) draws a picture of Bruno which highlights the culture-specific, gender stereotype he represents, for Bruno is "a contagiously enthusiastic forty-year-old Casanova", "the typical free-spirited Italian type", a

living example of the quintessentially Italian “art of getting by” thanks to illegal expedients. He is impersonated in the film by Vittorio Gassman, one of the greatest stars of the genre, who, according to Giacobelli (1995: 241), often specialised in the representation of the *borghese fanfarone* [braggart bourgeois]. Bruno’s aggressive driving style, punctuated by his frequent and on occasions dangerous overtaking of other vehicles, stands for his belief that those who are not strong enough to afford a better car are left behind, both literally on the road and metaphorically in real life. Although the introverted and responsible law student, who can only think of his exams and marrying the girl next door, is in many ways the opposite of Bruno, he is also clearly influenced by the latter and, by the end of the film, seems to have embraced his carefree and often irresponsible lifestyle, symbolically represented in the scene in which Roberto gets behind the steering wheel of the car. It is with Bruno, however, that the film shows a total identification between the man, his virility and the automobile. According to Comand (2010: 104), Bruno is an incorrigible bachelor, whose erotic and aggressive drive is transferred to his car, which his ex-wife accused him of loving more than he loved her. In other words, the “typical free-spirited Italian type” (Fournier Lanzoni, 2008: 91) becomes, in the end, the object of his desire, in a prime example of the commodification process explained by Günsberg (2005).

### *3.3.2 Cinema, Gender and Everyday Space*

Focussing on the representation of gender and everyday spaces in Comedy Italian Style, Fullwood’s (2015) study is, to date, the only monograph available on the subject. This is all the more surprising, according to the author, when one considers the crucial role that gender representation and stereotyping plays in this film genre. Thus, the scholar’s contribution at least partly redresses this imbalance by focussing on four main spaces where gender is performed in Comedy Italian Style, namely beaches/nightclubs, the car, the kitchen and the office.

Similarly to Günsberg (2005), Fullwood's (2015) starting point is the objectification of women through the male gaze in spaces associated with the display of female bodies scantily dressed, such as the beach and the nightclub, and which, together with the "active/passive heterosexual division of labour", have all been discussed in Mulvey's (1999) seminal paper. Scenes set on the beach found in the present corpus include the one in Lattuada's *Mafioso* and the various brief sequences that peppered Pietrangeli's *I Knew Her Well*. With reference to *Mafioso*, Fullwood (2015: 78) dwells upon the double standard applied to the aforementioned binary opposition between the gender stereotypes of madonnas and whores, when the protagonist, Tano Badalamenti, discusses the topic of women at the beach with his Sicilian male friends. After recounting his Latin lover's adventures in Milan with various women and suddenly realising that the male gaze of his friends has now fixed on his beautiful wife, Tano's facial expression suddenly changes as he hurries to warn his friends that he is still a Sicilian. Fullwood (*ibid.*) comments on the duplicitous standard being used here, whereby women stereotypically regarded as available and promiscuous are an object for men's sexual fantasies except for family members such as mothers, wives, daughters and sisters, who are subject to the rigid gender rules of the Sicilian code of honour. By comparing these Italian comedies with US comedies produced during the same period, Fullwood (*ibid.*) also shows a fundamental difference, i.e. the fact that while the male gaze on the female body is reciprocated by the female gaze on the male in the US comedies, nothing of the kind happens in Comedy Italian Style, where the male gaze is unrivalled. In this way, the academic shows how entrenched the sexist mindset was in the Italian society of the economic boom.

Like Günsberg (2005), Fullwood (2015) also dwells upon the biased perspective of a male-dominated film genre. This is abundantly apparent from the film which is considered an early example of Comedy Italian Style and a reference

point for future directors who will contribute to its development: Mario Monicelli's *Big Deal on Madonna Street*. In this particular case, the male characters are only initially stereotyped and they increasingly acquire full character complexity as the narration unfolds (Giacovelli, 1995). Mario, for example, is initially presented as the typical, Italian *mammone*, or a man who is never able to become really independent from his mum. When he does not think about his adoptive mothers, three women who raised him after he was abandoned as a child, he plays with girls, as all Italian men are stereotypically assumed to do. Later on in the film, however, Mario turns out to be a conscientious character, when he unexpectedly pulls out of the planned burglary, pointing out the risks to his colleagues, his responsibilities toward his adoptive mothers and his intention to start a serious relationship with Carmela, Ferribotte's sister. On the other hand, however, the female characters are little more than plain gender stereotypes in a cinematic genre that is "undeniably extremely masculinist in tone and structure" and in which "attention to women for reasons other than their sex is relatively rare" (Fullwood, 2015: 11). Hence, the character of Norma in *Big Deal in Madonna Street* is introduced as Cosimo's girlfriend, a relationship that is interestingly overtranslated in the subtitles with a target language gender stereotype that presents her as 'Cosimo's moll'. Similarly, the character of Nicoletta represents the gender stereotype of the maid whose only diegetic function is to serve the sexual fantasies of other male characters.

The marginalisation of women in Comedy Italian Style is also clear from the other two spaces analysed in Fullwood's (*ibid.*) study, i.e. the kitchen and the office. As a rule of thumb, the kitchen space is represented in a male context and, once more, it is the male perspective which prevails. In some films, the author goes on to explain, the kitchen is completely confined to the background, while the camera tends to focus on men and their actions. *Big Deal on Madonna Street* is again a case in point. Here, the culture-specific gender stereotype of the Sicilian "virginity patrol" (Reich, 2004: 76) is embodied in the figure of Ferribotte. In one

of the scenes, he is shown negotiating the terms of his sister's arranged wedding with the prospective brother-in-law in a privileged foreground camera shot, while his sister, Carmela, is seen withdrawing into the kitchen behind a curtain in the background. In addition, when women are represented at work, they tend to be shown in professions which focus on the display of their female body by highlighting sexualised and stereotypical professional roles such as female dancers, singers, actresses or strippers. When they are not represented according to such gender stereotypes, women in working environments are totally marginalised; so much so that Fullwood (2015: 95) entitles the chapter of her book devoted to office spaces *Masculinity at Work*. Just as there is no alternative to the male gaze at the beach or the nightclub, there is also no alternative to men's supremacy at work other than marginal secretaries at the service of a male boss, who sometimes unobtrusively appear only to quickly disappear again from the screen.

The office is the realm of career men and social climbers and occupying a particular space in the place of work, such as having a personal office, is construed as a reflection of men's status. Fullwood (*ibid.*) analyses a number of films in which a man's status and success in society is measured by his position in the social ladder and in the work place, including (or not including) a spatial representation of the self in the personal office. Examples from the corpus under discussion include scenes from films like *Mafioso*, *I Knew Her Well* and *The Organizer*. In the first of these three films, Tano is a former *picciotto* – literally a 'young man' but also referring to the culture-specific gender stereotype of the young Sicilian 'mafioso' – who has emigrated to the industrial North of Italy and managed to build a career as a factory line manager. After being summoned to the head office where his boss wishes to see him, an Italian American originally from Sicily receives him in his spacious office representing his success. As it turns out, not only do both characters represent the gender stereotype of the successful social climber from humble origins. Tano also represents the culture-specific,

gender stereotype of the *raccomandato* [recommended], namely a man that has been able to obtain his job thanks to his useful connections. This very same topic is more fully explored in the episode *The Recommendation* that forms part of the film *The Monsters*.

### 3.3.3 Reich: Masculinity, Sicilian Style

The last important contribution to the exploration of gender in Comedy Italian Style is a book chapter in Reich's (2004) *Beyond the Latin Lover: Marcello Mastroianni, Masculinity and Italian Cinema*. The book traces the figure of the *inetto* [inept man] represented by Marcello Mastroianni in many of his film roles, despite his international star persona as a typical Italian Latin lover. One of the chapters, in particular, is devoted to the roles played by Mastroianni in the Sicilian comedies *Bell'Antonio* and *Divorce Italian Style*. By reviewing Blok's (1981) and Schneider and Schneider's (1976) research on the Sicilian code of honour, as well as an essay by the Sicilian writer Leonardo Sciascia (1979), Reich brings to light a number of Sicilian gender stereotypes which are crucial to the understanding of how gender is represented in Germi's *Divorce Italian Style* and *Seduced and Abandoned*.

The researcher starts by analysing the figure of the *gallo*, which literally translates as 'rooster' and is used as a trope to designate the mythical, sexual hyperactivity of Sicilian men. Drawing inspiration from Sciascia, his descriptions of the *gallo* in his novels and his personal comments on this gender construct, Reich (2004) shows that what is really important for Sicilian men is not so much the sexual adventures themselves, as the opportunity to boast to other men about their purported sexual prowess. This is confirmed at the beginning of *Divorce Italian Style* with the voiceover of Baron Ferdinando Cefalù, the protagonist played by Mastroianni, which sets the scene and comments on the keen interest that men have in women as a 'topic':

Ma eccoli già ritornati al loro argomento preferito. Le donne. Era un discorso inesauribile. Nell'accesa fantasia dei miei concittadini le donne si tingevano dei contorni del mito. Le favolose, invisibili, donne di Agramonte, che celavano la loro bellezza e il loro ardore dietro le grate, pardon, dietro le stecche di vereconde persiane.

[But here they are back to their favourite topic. Women. It was an endless topic. In the vivid imagination of my fellow citizens, women took on the contours of myth. The fabulous, invisible, women of Agramonte, who hid their beauty and ardour behind the grates, pardon, behind the slats of bashful shutters.]

This key passage contains, in a nutshell, the gender rules that articulate the Sicilian society represented in the film and is a useful example that helps to explain the other gender stereotypes discussed by Reich. The core of the whole social, cultural and gender role structure depicted in the film is the central notion of *onore* [honour]. Often symptomatically subtitled as 'respect'/'respectability' rather than the straightforward 'honour', *onore* is indeed a concept that embraces much more than the English semantic field may imply, as it does refer to the idea of social reputation but with particular reference to gender rules. Honoured is a family whose men are able to control the sexuality of their female members, i.e. wives, daughters and sisters. The men who are capable of preserving their honour are known as *furbi* [cunning men], who boast about the extramarital, sexual relationships that they forbid to the female members of their own families, according to the double standard already mentioned in relation to *Mafioso*.

It is not difficult to see how such inherent and apparent contradictions would make any social equilibrium difficult to preserve. This is hinted at in *Divorce Italian Style*, where the baron may think of himself as a *furbo*, but in reality he is not able to prevent his sister's intimate encounters with his prospective brother-in-law and, even if he manages to carry out his cunning plan to rid himself of Rosalia and marry his cousin Agnese, the final scene, where the latter plays footsie with the lifeguard on a sailing boat behind the baron's back, ironically reminds the audience that what goes around comes around. The absurdity of such a social system, historically documented by the thousands of

*delitti d'onore* at the time (Sesti, 1997), takes a more serious, tragicomic tone in *Seduced and Abandoned*. Again, Vincenzo Ascalone in this film may think of himself as a *furbo* nonchalantly switching from the role of the old-fashioned control freak, reading out the letters of his daughters' fiancés at the dinner table, to that of the *gallo* waiting for the next batch of high-class prostitutes visiting the *circolo* [men's club] and boasting that 'a real man shoots a load at least once a day'. However, by the end of the film we see the former macho braggart reduced to the shadow of a man, so desperate about his family's 'dishonour' in the eyes of the local community that he falls seriously ill and eventually dies of heartache. Peppino still marries Agnese, fulfilling Ascalone's desperate wishes in his death bed, but only because he has 'dishonoured' her and she is now expecting his child. By the end of the film, Matilde, the other daughter engaged to Peppino before the latter was forced to marry Agnese, is seen taking her vows, as even the baron hurriedly roped in by Matilde's father as a substitute for Peppino no longer wishes to be associated with the family. Pietro Germi's genius and intellectual acumen reside in his ability to capture and expose the above-mentioned contradictions through a whole gallery of characters and situations that are both stern and hypocritical, comic and tragic.

In the case of *Divorce Italian Style*, the film is populated by a gallery of stereotypical *galli* constantly discussing the topic of women and boasting about their virility. One of these is the character of Rosario, the typical *gallo* or *fidanzato in calore* [fiancé on heat] (Giacovelli, 1995: 231), continually flouting the gender code which prohibits intimate encounters with his fiancée Agnese, the baron's sister. As Reich (2004) points out, these recurrent scenes are one of the devices used by the film director in his parody of the baron as *inetto* [inept man] or *fesso* [fool], unable to patrol his sister and protect his family's honour. A *fesso*, the opposite of the above-mentioned *furbo*, is a man incapable of socially manoeuvring in order to turn the rigid gender codes to his own advantage by preserving the family's honour and simultaneously gaining the virile reputation

of a *gallo*. The prototypical *fesso* is the man who is not able to control the sexuality of his wife thus becoming a *cornuto* [cuckold]. Following Schneider and Schneider (1976), Reich (2004: 69-70) indicates that there are two types of cuckolds, namely “the *cornuto bastionato*, the weak man (the *fesso*), who is powerless to respond to the charges, and the *cornuto contento*, one who willingly gives his wife or daughter away”. As indicated above, women, on the other hand, are invariably depicted according to the binary, stereotypical gender representation of “marriageable madonnas and sexual, unmarriageable Eves” (Günsberg, 2005: 89).

Although deeply steeped in the insular and archaic society of the time, the title of *Divorce Italian Style* metonymically converts the island of Sicily into a metaphor for the whole of Italy, criticised in its entirety as a nation for the obsolete legal system which did not allow married couples to divorce (Reich, 2004). Further proof of the fact that the director did not consider his gender discourse limited to Sicily is provided by *Signore e Signori* [The Birds, the Bees and the Italians], another comedy directed by Germi in 1965. Despite being set in a region of Northern Italy, the Veneto, which could not be farther away from Sicily, both geographically and culturally, the two comedies show more similarities than differences in terms of gender representation.

Sicilian gender stereotypes were part of Comedy Italian Style from its early beginnings, with the portrayal of the above-mentioned Sicilian character Ferribotte in the seminal *Big Deal on Madonna Street*, who protects his sister’s honour by locking her up in the house. Thus, the film almost seemed to herald future gender representations and Mastroianni acknowledged having taken his inspiration from Ferribotte’s character when playing Baron Ferdinando Cefalù (Giacovelli, 1997: 78). For all his international reputation as the epitome of the Italian Latin lover, in *Divorce Italian Style* Mastroianni impersonates the character of the *inetto* as analysed by Reich (2004). All along the development of the plot to

rid himself of his wife Rosalia, in order to marry his beautiful cousin Angela, the baron's voiceover reveals his inner thoughts: he thinks of himself as a *furbo* able to devise a cunning plan to assassinate his wife and get away with the minimum sentence. Various key moments of the action, however, belie this self-representation by comically exposing his ineptitude through his facial tic, which promptly resurfaces every time he fails in one of his endeavours (Reich, 2004). When recording the conversations between his wife and her lover, for example, the tape runs out at the crucial moment of the betrayal; when he realises that the lovers are running away by train, he storms out of the house towards the station only to find that they have already left; or yet again, when he finally manages to find their hiding place, once more he arrives on the scene too late and realises that Carmelo's wife, Immacolata, has already shot his husband. His question to Immacolata, [*E*] *il mio?* [what about mine?], referring to his honour and asked with the desolate facial expression of the *inetto*, is both excruciatingly comical and telling.

Although Reich's (*ibid.*) study centring on the representation of the Latin lover by Mastroianni does not include *Seduced and Abandoned*, the film normally goes hand in hand with *Divorce Italian Style*, as the other Sicilian comedy by Germi dealing with the same themes of honour and gender rules (Giacovelli, 1997; Sesti, 1997). The similarity extends to the foregrounding of the absurdity of the Italian legal system, constituted in this case by the law on *nozze riparatrici* [reparatory wedding], which allowed a rapist to extinguish his crime by marrying his victim. The same barbaric, retrograde Sicilian world of *galli, furbi, fessi*, madonnas and whores is represented here, but the story and characters colour themselves with stronger, more grotesque and tragicomic contours (Giacovelli, 1997; Sesti, 1997). Giacovelli's (1997: 87-88, my translation) description of this gallery of characters is particularly valuable to understand the gender stereotypes at play and it may be useful to quote from it at some length, especially

the description of the family patriarch, who does everything in his power to save the honour of her daughter in *Seduced and Abandoned*:<sup>9</sup>

the father master Saro Urzì, who walks around the streets of the village showing off his honour to all, in its way a status symbol like a car or a beach holiday (“only one asset do we have: an honoured name”) [...] As a good Latin male, however, he is not insensitive to the call of the whores and goes around saying that a real man “should shoot at least once a day from eighteen to sixty”

[...]

Worthy of the patriarch is the Ascalones’ court and the people close to them: the firstborn Lando Buzzanca, who tries to dodge the ancestral laws not because of his courage but because of his cowardice; the Casanova of the village (Aldo Puglisi) who poses to the magistrate as a saint, as a poor devil assaulted and raped by the lusty Sandrelli.

Finally, it is important to note that none of these authors discusses the differences between men’s and women’s language and the implications that this may have when it comes to the representation of gender stereotypes in Comedy Italian Style. There is, however, a body of research with reference to the English language conducted in the USA and in the UK by such scholars as Lakoff (1975), Zimmerman and West (1975), Maltz and Borker (1983) and Coates (2004). The following sub-section will therefore provide a detailed overview of such research and its impact on the representation of gender stereotypes in the original films and the subtitled versions analysed in the present corpus.

### *3.3.4 Women’s and men’s language*

In the mid-1970s, Lakoff (1975) and Zimmerman and West (1975) published the first studies on women’s and men’s language bearing respectively on the characteristics of female talk and on the dynamics of power relationships in mixed talk, i.e. conversation between women and men. Lakoff (1975) did not put forward a proper, theoretical model on language and gender, but it must be acknowledged that she was one of the pioneering scholars to point out some of

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<sup>9</sup> The names used in the quotation refer to the actors rather than the characters they played in the film.

the features of women's language, which would then be further analysed and partly tested by other researchers. These differences include: lexis related to women's interests, for example in the domestic sphere; the use of particular adjectives not normally employed by men, such as "*divine, charming, cute*" (*ibid.*); the use of intonation, question tags and different types of hedges, which, following the author, express uncertainty and lack of self-confidence and are systematically learned by women from an early age, as "asserting themselves strongly isn't nice or ladylike, or even feminine"; the use of "hypercorrect grammar" and "superpolite forms", derived from special attention to grammatical correctness, but also from the frequent use of euphemisms and polite markers such as "please" and "thank you"; women's avoidance or less frequent use of swearwords and taboo language in comparison with men (*ibid.*). Lakoff's (*ibid.*) approach was introspective and therefore did not include any analysis of real data, but her proposed features of female language nonetheless established a reference framework by suggesting some potential areas for further research.

The other influential investigation dating from the same year, Zimmerman and West's (1975) dominance model in mixed talk, was the first study to reveal another fundamental issue related to mixed talk, namely the fact that men tend to dominate conversations with women through frequent interruptions and the tendency to dominate turn-taking. Finally, a few years later, Maltz and Borker (1983) put forward a further model based on the different characteristics of female and male talk and postulating that these constitute two completely different conversational styles, making communication between the sexes "intercultural", and frequently difficult and open to misunderstandings.

The above-mentioned seminal studies sparked a great deal of academic interest and have been followed up by considerable research, which has been systematically summarised by Coates (2004). In her introduction to a comprehensive monograph intended as a reference work as well as a source of

further insights, Coates (*ibid.*) argues that the main theoretical models postulated by Zimmerman and West (1975) and Maltz and Borker (1983) both have something to offer and goes on to review the main studies which have been carried out on language and gender after such models were proposed. Highly interesting for the analysis of GSs is her reassessment of the first claims made by researchers with regard to women's and men's language, particularly by Lakoff (1975), and the linguistic strategies employed in mixed sex talk. With regard to women's language, the author questions many of Lakoff's (*ibid.*) assumptions based on her introspective approach and therefore unsupported by real data from conversation analysis, which subsequently became the standard methodological procedure employed in this research area. Coates (2004) accepts Lakoff's argument that women use more hedges and tag questions, but shows that subsequent research has linked women's hedges to a predominantly confident use of language and tag questions to women's "facilitative" conversational style (Holmes, 1984, 1987; in Coates, 2004), that is, a type of language aiming to support the addressee and facilitate communication. Much in the same way as question tags can be used to support the addressee, women's use of "mitigated directives", as opposed to men's authoritarian tone in giving orders, seems not so much due to lack of assertiveness as to a different conversational style based on cooperation (*ibid.*).

Hence, in a similar way to translation, which was long perceived as an inferior copy of the original and therefore identified with a woman (Mounin, 1994), but moved on to claiming its right to originality and creativity with the 'cultural turn' in Translation Studies (Bassnett, 1980; Snell-Hornby, 1988) and particularly with the advent of feminist translation theories discussed in the last part of this chapter, the above-mentioned model of female talk expressing female insecurity and weakness seems to have involved a shift towards the enhancement of its strengths and positives. As regards men's talk, again, Coates (2004) does not deny the fact that men tend to dominate and interrupt in conversations with

women, thus tending to monopolise the conversation. However, the researcher demonstrates that this conversational style is also adopted among men and this approach to same sex talk is just a different strategy of creating solidarity within the male group. One interesting link between these different conversational styles and how they are reflected in mixed talk in Comedy Italian Style is men's tendency to use swearing and taboo language more frequently than women. This trend has seen considerable developments since the first studies were conducted into women's and men's talk (*ibid.*) and women seem to have claimed their own right to use this type of language. By and large, however, men's propensity to use bad language more than women remains undisputed and, together with their predisposition to dominate conversations through interruptions, this tendency constitutes the main feature that distinguishes men's from women's talk in the films under scrutiny.

With Comedy Italian Style, it must be remembered that we go back in time to a society where gender differences regarding the right to use swearwords or taboo language were even more pronounced than today. In this sense, *Seduced and Abandoned* is a prime example of submissive, tentative female talk, on the one hand, and aggressive male talk, on the other, which can best be observed in the character of the family patriarch, Don Vincenzo, constantly directing, interrupting and often even insulting the female members of the family. It is difficult to say whether the interruptions, swearing and taboo language, used almost exclusively by male characters throughout Comedy Italian Style, tend to reinforce gender stereotypes in a film genre which aims to caricature the Italian society of the 1960s, including gender representation and the relationship between the sexes in the old-fashioned Sicilian society at that time. Be it as it may, the corpus abounds in gender-specific insults, such as the numerous *puttana* [whore] and *squadrina* [slut] used by Don Vincenzo against Agnese in *Seduced and Abandoned* and by the baron against his wife in *Divorce Italian Style*. Hence, in terms of language and gender, the use of taboo language in the form of gender-

specific insults against women is arguably the main contributor to gender representation and stereotyping, and, as such, it is an essential part of the corpus analysis carried out in Chapter 5.

### **3.4 Translation and gender**

In her preface to one of the seminal works on translation and gender, von Flotow (1997: 1) writes as follows:

Gender studies and translation studies are both interdisciplinary academic fields. When they are brought into relationship with one another, a number of issues intersect: cultural gender differences, the revelation and formulation of these differences in language, their transfer by means of translation into other cultural spaces where different gender conditions obtain. Questions arise about the importance of gender politics in institutions, and the gender affiliations of the translator and the critic become an issue. Language is, of course, highly pertinent to both areas of investigation.

This extract is a useful starting point for a review of the intersections between translation and gender in that it not only foregrounds the close relationship between language transfer and the ‘politics’ of gender (and translation), but also draws attention to ‘cultural gender differences’, the way in which these are reflected in languages and the ensuing translation challenges. Considering these and further issues in translation and gender, the following sections review the relevant literature produced in TS in general (von Flotow, 1991, 1997; Simon, 1996; Santaemilia, 2005), and AVT in particular (Joyce, 1997; Feral, 2011a, 2011b; De Marco, 2012), and highlight its intersections with gender stereotypes.

### **3.5 Feminist translation theory and approaches**

Both Simon (1996) and von Flotow (1997) start their investigation by analysing the long-standing, persistent metaphor of translation as a woman, hence “necessarily ‘defective’” (Florio, 1603; in Simon, 1996: 1). From this historical

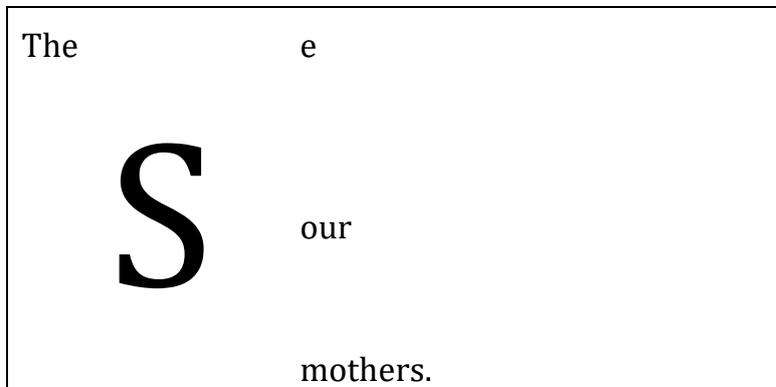
point of view, the authors go on to discuss the relationship that can be established between women and translation – as translation, rather than authorship, was for a long time the only form of writing allowed to the ‘gentle sex’ – and take issue with the position of inferiority to which the patriarchal society has relegated both. Thence, they postulate the principles of feminist translation, i.e. a rewriting of the source text which claims the same dignity for the translator that is normally associated with the original author. Feminist translation theory is strictly intertwined with feminist thinking per se and has led to fruitful collaborations between feminist writers and translators, but also to differences of opinion – much like the ones which originally developed in the feminist movement – whereby women translators have claimed the right to their own feminist beliefs to be reflected in their own translations and rewriting approaches. In this sense, de Lobtinière-Harwood (1989: 9; in von Flotow, 1997: 29) writes the following in the preface to her translation of Lise Gauvin’s *Lettres d’une autre* [Letters of another one]:

Dear reader,

Just a few words to let you know that this translation is a rewriting in the feminine of what I originally read in French. I don’t mean content. Lise Gauvin is a feminist, and so am I. But I am not her. She wrote in the generic masculine. My translation practice is a political activity aimed at making language speak for women. So my signature on a translation means: this translation has used every possible feminist translation strategy to make the feminine visible in language. Because making the feminine visible in language means making women seen and heard in the real world. Which is what feminism is all about.

‘Prefacing’, as exemplified in the above extract, is one of the approaches utilised by feminist translators in order to make the feminine visible (von Flotow, 1991). An example of de Lobtinière-Harwood’s (1989) feminist translation approach postulated in the previous quote is the translation of the French *Québécois* with the English ‘Québécois-e-s’, which retains the original French adjective but uses it in its feminine form including a hyphen to highlight the intervention. Other creative techniques include Barbara Godard’s translation in 1983 of Nicole

Brossard's novel title, *L'Amer*, combining the French words *mère* [mother], *mer* [sea] and *amer* [bitter], in the following linguistic and graphic solution:



This inspired example reflects the translator's effort to recreate the original pun with an English solution which can be read both as "These Our Mothers" and "These Sour Smothers" (Simon, 1996: 14), and also as "These Sour Mothers". As with any type of literary translation, not all solutions are as inspirational as the one referred to above. Mary Daly's *Gyn/Ecology*, for example, includes some challenging neologisms such as *the-rapist*, the therapist who takes advantage of his patient, or the *totalled woman*, i.e. the final product of fashion magazine designs likened to the wreck of a crashed car, which just would not work in German (von Flotow, 1997: 21).

Feminist translation is considered to work best when a concerted effort is made between the author and the translator, thanks to their shared ideology and commitment, even though this does not necessarily imply the stakeholders' total agreement on the principles that articulate the feminist cause, as de Loblitière-Harwood (1989) points out in the above-mentioned preface. The possibility of disagreement also begs the question of what course of action feminist translators should take when they find themselves confronted with "ideologically unfriendly texts" (Simon, 1996: 30) or instances of macho behaviour, for example. Simon (*ibid.*) and von Flotow (1997) indicate three main options here, i.e. (1) accepting

the author's approach, (2) subverting it or (3) refusing to translate the work altogether. With reference to the first and last options, de Lobtinière-Harwood (1989; in Simon, 1996: 31) explains that the Canadian rock singer Lucien Francoeur "was the first and last male poet she translated", as she felt she was forced to adopt a male voice and speak to an exclusively male audience. When confronted with the sexist language of the Cuban writer Guillermo Cabrera Infante, on the other hand, the translator Suzanne Jill Levine decided to make substantial changes to the English text, which she made clear to the audience (von Flotow, 1997: 26), although von Flotow (*ibid.*) points out that examples of such changes are scarce. The one cited by the scholar is the substitution of his 'jaded' statement "no one man can rape a woman" as "no wee man can rape a woman" (*ibid.*: 27). This is an instance of the feminist translation strategy which von Flotow (1991) calls hijacking, that is, a form of ideological subversion, although the wording refers more to the actual result seen in the translation product rather than a particular translation strategy, as ideological subversion can be achieved by activating various translation strategies, including borrowing, substitution and omission.

In addition to prefacing and hijacking, von Flotow (1991) suggests two more feminist translation approaches that she knows as footnoting and supplementing. The definition, scope and boundaries of supplementing are not, however, completely clear-cut. According to this scholar, supplementing "compensates for the differences between languages, or constitutes 'voluntarist action' on the text" (*ibid.*: 75), which, depending on the context, would include such translation strategies as compensation or addition, and it could also account for instances of overtranslation. Except for supplementing, the other three translation approaches suggested by von Flotow (*ibid.*) are markedly different from the ones which will be debated in Chapter 4 with reference to the translation of CSRs and GSs. As already discussed, hijacking tends to refer to the end result rather than being a specific translation strategy per se, whereas

prefacing and footnoting are some kind of reflective or commentative notes on the approach or challenges of the translation process rather than being specific strategies for the transfer of CSRs or GSs from the ST to the TT. As such, none of them can be placed on a continuum of SL and TL-oriented strategies, though their activation calls attention to the translation act and, as such, raises the reader's awareness of consuming a product that comes from a different language and culture. In this respect, they can be said to contribute to a feeling of foreignisation rather than domestication, to borrow Venuti's (1995/2008, 1998) terminology.

Having said that, feminist translation approaches such as hijacking and supplementing are useful research tools in order to investigate the role played by ideology in AVT (De Marco, 2012; Díaz Cintas, 2012; Díaz Cintas *et al.*, 2016). On the other hand, and despite their greater visibility on the internet, thanks to practices like fansubbing (Díaz Cintas and Muñoz Sánchez, 2006) and more recently cybersubtitling (Díaz Cintas, 2018), such translation approaches are not normally tolerated in professional subtitling.

Indeed, when feminist translation issues and approaches are considered in relation to the field of AVT in general, and subtitling in particular, a number of complex questions and implications arise, including the role of the professionals and their potential latitudes. In this sense, Venuti's (1995/2008) trope of the translator's invisibility is all the more relevant to audiovisual translators, such as the subtitlers of *Comedy Italian Style*, as subtitling has traditionally been regarded as a necessary evil (Laks, 1957; Marleau, 1982), just as the translator has traditionally been considered a humble figure working behind the scenes. So, where does this type of discourse leave the feminist translator? To what extent can gender issues in AVT be tackled from a feminist translation theory agenda? Prefacing and footnoting aside, can any instances of the other two feminist translation approaches mentioned above be identified in the present corpus? Can any other feminist translation approaches be found in the corpus? And how will

the specific constraints of the translation mode, such as lip synchronisation in dubbing or time and space constraints in subtitling, affect the translation process and product when it comes to dealing with gender stereotypes? These are some of the questions which will be discussed in Chapter 5. In the meantime, the next section on the interrelation between TS and gender stereotypes sheds light on some of these issues by considering, among other matters, the role played by ideological manipulation, as discussed in previous AVT studies on gender and translation.

### **3.6 Translation and gender stereotypes**

Being an even more recent sub-discipline within the relatively young academic discipline of TS, AVT has so far seen very limited research into the transfer of gender. The main monograph on the subject is De Marco's (2012) analysis of UK and US cinema dubbed into Italian and Spanish. The other four shorter studies available have been conducted by Joyce (1997) on the dubbing and subtitling of Almodóvar's (1990) Spanish film *¡Átame!* into English, by Feral (2011a) on the dubbing and subtitling of the series *Sex and the City* into French, by Feral (2011b) on the dubbing of US TV series into French, by Baumgarten (2005) on the dubbing of James Bond films into German, and by Yuan (2016) on the Chinese subtitling of sexual taboo in the series *Sex and the City*. This section considers the translation of gender stereotypes in relation to feminist translation research in general and the above-mentioned AVT studies in particular. It also considers the first attempts to sensitise students to the issues of translation and gender through practical training in the translation classroom.

Gender stereotypes are an essential component of gender construction and representation and are therefore both implicitly and explicitly discussed by Simon (1996) and von Flotow (1997). Both researchers comment on the implications for translation in a society markedly patriarchal and sexist and von

Flotow (*ibid.*: 14) specifically foregrounds “the links between social stereotypes and linguistic forms”. While analysing feminist writing and translation, the author illustrates that the latter partly originated as a reaction against “a subject that has hitherto been described in terms of the stereotypes of the lover (‘whore’), the devoted and unsexed mother, or the untouchable Holy Virgin” (*ibid.*: 17). Simon (1997: 107), for her part, discusses the efforts undertaken by feminist translators in order to interpret “the Bible against its patriarchal frame and challenge sociocultural stereotypes”.

It is therefore not surprising that gender stereotypes are given due attention in the first in-depth study on AVT and gender written by De Marco (2012), who devotes a whole chapter to this topic, including a discussion of sexist issues. The upshot of De Marco’s (*ibid.*) research is that the dubbing process of US and UK films dubbed into Italian and Spanish leads to considerable manipulation of gender stereotypes, which entails, more often than not, the sexist reinforcement of female stereotypes. From this point of view, the results of De Marco’s (*ibid.*) research are similar to the conclusions reached a year earlier by Feral (2011b) in her analysis of the translation of chick texts discourse, including the novel *Bridget Jones Diary* (Helen Fielding, 1996), the first season of the TV series *Sex and the City* (Star, King and Kohan, 1998-2004) and the first 12 episodes of the television series *Ally McBeal* (Kelley, 1997-2002), as well as the translation of feminist discourse in *Sex and the City* (Feral, 2011a).

In the former paper, the author shows how some of the translations of the French dubbed version of the TV series manage to portray women according to the French gender stereotypes of the courtesan and the sexually restrained woman. The author concludes that the dubbed version does not seem to leave much room for the above-mentioned “Anglo-American cultural trend” (Feral, 2011b: 183) which portrays women defying entrenched gender stereotypes about their sexuality, as epitomised in the analysed audiovisual products and in

Helen Fielding's novel. In the other contribution by the same scholar focussing exclusively on *Sex and the City*, Feral (2011a) addresses the issue of the translation of feminist discourse in this popular TV series and demonstrates that many references to such discourse are in fact omitted in the French dubbed version. Feral's (*ibid.*: 405) investigation thus illustrates instances of manipulation of "values which potentially threaten certain patriarchal notions of gender roles and relations", while the French subtitled version mostly reflects the nuances of the original discourse. The two articles by this scholar to some extent deal with the same TV series and similar issues, which could be summarised as the way in which the original gender discourse is made to conform to the criteria of the TL and TC social conventions. In this sense, Feral's (*ibid.*) conclusions are at the same time similar and different from Joyce's (1997) argument that gender discourse and gender stereotypes are made to conform to the society's male-dominated discourse *both* in the English subtitled and the English dubbed version of Almodóvar's *¡Átame!* (1990), although she concedes that the level of ideological manipulation is lower in subtitling.

To complicate matters further, Baumgarten (2005: 68-69) argues in her own study on the dubbing into German of various James Bond films that, when it comes to the transfer of gender-related issues, "the German translations feature gender-conscious language in the sense that potentially socially discriminating aspects of the discourse are cut away" and the ensuing translation can be said to be more politically correct. The author attributes these results to various factors including the influence of certain existing norms in the target culture, the intrinsic differences in the way in which the English and German languages display particular discourse features, such as cohesion and coherence, and the tendency of the target language to focus more on the narrative than on subjective attitudes.

Finally, Yuan's (2016) exploration in the series *Sex and the City* on the use that women make of sexually taboo language and their subtitling into Chinese

shows that most taboo expressions found in the English dialogue have been manipulated in their transition to Chinese in what seems a clear attempt to suit the sexual mores and gender boundaries prevalent in China. In this respect, the translators' approach displays an ideological bias whereby rude expressions uttered by male characters tend to be closer to the original and more direct, while the female exchanges containing such expressions end up being more sedate and metaphorical in the Chinese subtitles.

Clearly, the above-mentioned issues of ideological manipulation and potential sexism also have wide-reaching implications from a pedagogical point of view and researchers have started to take the first pioneering steps toward a TS training model based on a gender-sensitive approach to translation. In the introduction to an edited volume including various contributions by leading scholars on how translation students can be trained to develop gender awareness, for example, De Marco and Toto (2019) advocate an all-inclusive, holistic approach which recognises that gender is embedded in every facet of human activity, rather than being relegated to the private domain. The lack of such awareness among translation students has been pointed out by various scholars. In a previous study, De Marco (2011) tested her students' gender sentience by setting them translation homework which included ideological issues, such as instances of sexist language in the ST. The author only revealed the precise purpose of these tasks when she delivered her lecture about the presence and translation of gender aspects in AVT in the last week of the course and after she had also asked the students to fill in a questionnaire including matters such as the relevance of gender awareness for audiovisual translators. It turned out that, of the eight students enrolled in her elective course, only one had realised what the purpose of the exercise was and, while some students deemed gender awareness to be significant to the translator's job, others thought it was not relevant to their future career, or believed that the importance of such issues depended on the professional's own gender. Other collaborative studies (Corrius,

De Marco and Espasa, 2016a; Corrius, De Marco and Espasa, 2016b) on the translation of audiovisual adverts have confirmed that, even when students understand the risks of ideological manipulation associated with this professional practice, they still find inclusive language difficult to implement and they tend to adopt the generic masculine that is prevalent in professional contexts. Echoing De Marco's (2011) findings, Vigo's (2019) study shows that students have their own ideas about what constitutes a "good" translation and they generally have a very limited awareness of ideological issues in TS. In addition, Vigo (*ibid.*) demonstrates the value of certain specific translation activities to make trainees aware of the potential consequences of their translation decisions. Addressing the need to train students on the issues of translation and gender from a different perspective, Baldo (2019) also argues that lecturers in the UK may have to contend with the veiled resistance of many academic institutions, which are eager to present themselves as advocating fairness and equal opportunities for all, but do not seem equally willing to accept the expansion of the gender component beyond the one standard lecture devoted to the topic. This lack of understanding of the multifarious ideological and ethical issues related to gender representation is symptomatic of the general reluctance to deal with such matters in our society at large. In the field of AVT, this attitude can potentially lead to translation practices that end up contributing to the perpetuation of gender stereotypes and which are thoroughly investigated in Chapter 5.

Before concluding this discussion about previous research on gender representation in AVT, it is important to note that, while the present study shares a number of similarities with the above-mentioned research in the way it focuses on the representation of women and the manipulation of gender-related issues in AVT, one notable difference in the analysis of gender in Comedy Italian Style corpus is the equal attention devoted to the translation of gender stereotypes related to men. As has been discussed in the previous section on the representation of gender in this film genre, men are the undisputed protagonists

of these comedies. Of the seven films making up the corpus, only *I Knew Her Well* sees Adriana as the main character of the story, while all the other films are mostly dominated by male figures, including *Seduced and Abandoned*. The title of the second Sicilian comedy by Pietro Germi does refer to the young woman around whom revolves the diegesis of the film, but, in actual fact, Agnese only features as an important character in the seduction scene at the beginning of the film and when she goes to tell the local inspector about the *vendetta* schemes in her family. The other brief appearances of this character, on the other hand, seem to serve the sole purpose of being maltreated, shouted at and insulted by her furious father. The latter could be said to be the real protagonist, both anguishing about the potentially lost honour of her daughter and his family and machinating how he can resolve the situation by keeping Agnese's seduction secret and getting Peppino to marry her. Hence, even when the films are theoretically about women, it is the men manipulating them who take centre stage, with their obsession with sex, on the one hand, and their constant fear of being cuckolded and losing their honour, on the other. These male obsessions foregrounded in the film show that the gender stereotypes about men are equally important as the ones about women.

Summing up this section on the relationship between translation and gender stereotypes, we have seen that, although a variety of the above-mentioned contributions have highlighted the tendency to ideologically manipulate the representation of gender stereotypes in the process of AVT, especially in dubbing, on the whole, it is difficult to reach any hard and fast conclusions on the impact that the actual translation transfer can have on the representation of gender (including stereotypes). What research on gender in TS in general, and AVT in particular, does demonstrate, however, is that gender stereotypes feature prominently in any studies of this kind. After situating the present study in the wider research field of gender and gender stereotypes, the next chapter now turns to the methodological instruments of which this research avails itself for

the analysis and translation of gender representations. These include the research framework of the DTS (Toury, 1980; 1995/2012), the various categorisations of CSRs and the taxonomies of strategies for their translation put forward by various authors like Newmark (1988) and Leppihalme, (1997) for translation in general and Nedergaard-Larsen (1993), Antonini and Chiaro (2005), Díaz Cintas and Remael (2007), Pedersen (2007, 2011) and Ranzato (2013) for the specific case of AVT.

## Chapter 4

### Methodological Framework

#### 4.1 Introduction

As already indicated in the introduction, the present study follows in the footsteps of previous research in AVT based on the theoretical framework of DTS. In addition to the descriptive study of norms postulated by Toury (1980; 1995/2012), the analysis of gender stereotypes is also based on the work of other scholars who have proposed different taxonomies for the classification of CSRs as well as a battery of strategies that are normally activated for their translation. This chapter is therefore devoted to the theoretical foundations of the present research and is divided in two main sections. The first section presents an overview of the DTS methodological framework, focussing on the different types of norms which underlie its descriptive approach and including some references to their potential application to the analysis of the translation of GSs. The other sections look at several definitions and categorisations of CSRs, as well as the various translation strategies that can be used to transfer them across languages, which have been proposed by researchers such as Newmark (1988) and Leppihalme (1997), for translation in general, and Nedergaard-Larsen (1993), Antonini and Chiaro (2005), Díaz Cintas and Remael (2007), Pedersen (2007, 2011) and Ranzato (2013) for the specific case of AVT. It also considers how these concepts can be applied to the study of gender in order to offer heuristic tools that can be used for the categorisation of gender stereotype references (GSRs) as well as for the classification of the strategies that can be employed for their translation.

## 4.2 Descriptive Translation Studies

Partly originating from the premises of the Polysystem Theory (Even-Zohar, 1978; Díaz Cintas, 2004), the Descriptive Translation Studies framework derives its name from a fundamental focus on the study of translational norms and behaviour, and the way in which they can be observed in the analysis of real translation practices, at a given time in history, within a specific socio-cultural context and for a specific language pair. Following this at-the-time innovative conception of TS based on the descriptive paradigm, which, to a large extent, was a reaction against the long tradition of linguistic/structuralist prescriptivism, Toury (1980, 1995/2012) defines translation as a “norm-governed activity”. In this context, as foregrounded by Harvey (2000: 466), “translation is not just about texts: nor is it only about cultures and power. It is about the relation of the one to the other”. The task of the scholar is to explore and unravel the nature and frequency of the different types of norms which are at play during the translation process that has been conducted at a particular moment in time, within a given socio-cultural context.

In particular, Toury’s (*ibid.*) ‘preliminary’ and ‘operational norms’ are key for the descriptive approach in general and for the analysis of gender stereotypes in the specific context of Comedy Italian Style. Preliminary norms refer to the politics and decisions that, based on a number of socio-cultural and economic factors, are taken by the different stakeholders when it comes to selecting the works which are to be translated from a particular language into another. Hence, from the point of view of the Polysystem Theory (Even-Zohar, 1978; Díaz Cintas, 2004), preliminary norms reflect the power relationships which operate between different languages, cultures and their literary systems or cinematic traditions. Indeed, following Díaz Cintas’s (*ibid.*) application of the DTS methodological framework to the field of AVT, this new perspective implies that all film productions, whether domestically produced or imported from other countries via translation, can influence the success and domination of a particular linguistic

and cultural system by achieving centre position (*ibid.*). Such centrality in the system is gained at the expense of other languages, cultures and traditions that are therefore relegated to more or less peripheral positions.

From this point of view, the historical developments of Comedy Italian Style in the international cinematic arena represent an interesting case, as this cinema genre was relegated to a peripheral position both at the time of its first appearance in the 1960s and in subsequent decades. Historically, these developments need to be seen in the context of the whole Italian cinematic tradition. On the one hand, the position of Italian cinema in relation to other national filmic traditions of the time was not central, despite the fact that some Italian film directors such as Fellini, Antonioni, Pasolini, Visconti, De Sica and Rossellini, did enjoy international recognition and prestige. Indeed, a cursory look at Amazon's ([www.amazon.com](http://www.amazon.com)) catalogue shows that the films of these undisputed *auteurs* have largely been subtitled into English. On the other hand, only a handful of Comedy Italian Style films are available with English subtitles, since this was the cinema genre whose directors could count on very little, if any, international currency, and its productions were seen as a form of popular entertainment for domestic consumption. Other stakeholders and factors that may have influenced the decision not to translate or export most films belonging to this genre can be encapsulated in what Lefevere (1985) knows as patronage. In the words of the scholar, patronage is understood as the group of "powers (persons, institutions) which help or hinder the writing, reading and rewriting of literature" (*ibid.*: 227) and that "can be exerted by persons [...], groups of persons [...], a social class, a royal court, publishers [...] and, last but not least, the media" (*ibid.*: 228). This rather productive concept refers to the role played by public or private sponsors, producers and distributors, and their considerations related to the value or significance of a particular film genre, the taste of the public, potential profits, and the like. Although Lefevere's (*ibid.*) emphasis is on the literary system, the concept can be easily extrapolated to the cinema ecosystem.

Indeed, as highlighted by Díaz Cintas (2004: 28), “[c]ompared to the literary world, audiovisual products are a lot more exposed to commercial forces, a fact that opens up additional opportunities for manipulation and for avenues of research”.

In addition to preliminary norms, Toury distinguishes two types of ‘operational norms’, namely ‘matricial norms’ and ‘textual norms’. Matricial norms refer to the fullness of the translation and pay attention to how much of the ST is included in the linguistic transfer and the parts of the text that end up being omitted. Again, with reference to Comedy Italian Style, in a previous study focussing on the comparison and contrast of two different subtitled versions of *Divorce Italian Style*, one by the Italian studio Cristaldi, and the other one by the US studio Criterion, Alfano (2018) found that the latter version tended to translate considerably greater portions of the ST, whereas the subtitles by Cristaldi tended to be shorter as they omitted and condensed more of the original. These norms are of particular value when they are applied to the analysis of the subtitling of GSs into English in the Comedy Italian Style corpus, as the tendency to translate more fully or eliminate a larger part of the ST is one of the factors which can greatly affect the representation and manipulation of gender.

The other type of operational norms distinguished by Toury (1995/2012) are called textual norms and refer to the specific translation choices that materialise in particular linguistic solutions in the TT. From the point of view of gender stereotypes as socio-cultural constructs, which can be translated by making recourse to a gamut of different translation strategies, operational norms are connected to the use of such strategies. The result of activating certain translation strategies makes the TT lean to one of two opposite poles on a continuum depending on whether the strategies are SL-oriented or TL-oriented. This continuum, in turn, can be interpreted according to the DTS key concepts of ‘adequacy’ and ‘acceptability’. The former refers to those cases when the

translated product subscribes to the values and culture of the ST, whereas acceptability means that the translation embraces the linguistic and cultural values of the hosting community. Conceptually, the two approaches are closely related to Venuti's (1995/2008) notions of foreignisation and domestication. As no translation is completely adequate or acceptable, part of the researcher's task is to untangle the sort of relationship that gets established between the original text and its translation.

Finally, it is important to remember that, in the field of subtitling, the translator tends to be much more exposed to the influence of the above-mentioned stakeholders and patrons than in other translation domains. Hence, both the general trends which can be detected in the study of norms from the macroanalytical or quantitative perspective, as well as the specific translation choices operated by the translator on a microanalytical or qualitative level, are likely to be determined by external (patronage) as well as internal (linguistic, cultural) factors.

### **4.3 Culture-specific references**

Discussed by translation scholars and social scientists such as Simon (1996) and von Flotow (1997), Basow (1992) and Williams and Best (1990), who have conducted the most comprehensive study on the cross-cultural dimension of gender stereotypes discussed in the previous chapter, the culture-specific nature of gender construction and representation is one of the methodological foundations of this work. The following discussion provides an overview of TS research on CSRs, paying special attention to the way in which these concepts can be adapted to the categorisation and translation of gender stereotypes. However, before illustrating the way in which the concept of CSRs has been adapted for the analysis of GSs, it may be useful to clarify the meaning of the two main categories of GSs referred to in the following pages, i.e. gender stereotype

references (GSRs) and gender stereotype allusions (GSAs). Simply put, the former indicates a GS which is referred to explicitly, such as *cornuto* [cuckold] or *puttana* [whore], whereas the latter is used for implicit allusions, like the concept of *onore* [honour] in the Sicilian comedies of the Comedy Italian Style corpus, which often constitutes the basis for an indirect reference to other GSs, like the above-mentioned *cornuto* and *puttana*.

Following research by TS scholars, such as Simon (1996) and von Flotow (1997), as well as social scientists, such as Basow (1992) and Williams and Best (1990), in the context of the English subtitling of Comedy Italian Style, gender and gender stereotypes are conceptualised as socio-cultural constructs and, as such, are subject to social and cultural variation. From the translational point view, this means that the GSs observed in the SC/ST may not always exist in the TC, which, in turn, has a knock-on effect on the translation strategies utilised by the professionals to deal with the transfer of such stereotypes. In other words, GSs can be considered a form of CSR as they are strictly linked with a country's culture, history and its particular social system (Díaz Cintas and Remael, 2007). As already mentioned, a full analytical categorisation of GSs based on Ranzato's (2013) model of CSRs is presented in section 4.5 below and the impact of the culture-specific nature of some GSs on the translation strategies adopted by the subtitlers is analysed in depth in Chapter 5. In the meantime, the core understanding of GSs as a form of CSRs, illustrated here, will assist and guide the reader in the discussion of gender elaborated on in the following pages.

Considering the importance and pervasiveness of CSRs in translation, the number of definitions provided by researchers is relatively limited, as Ramière (2007) and Ranzato (2013) have pointed out. Even the translation scholars who do provide a definition seem to have reached no overarching consensus on the nature of CSRs. Mailhac (1996: 133-134), for example, offers a rather loose definition of CSRs as “any reference to a cultural entity which, due to its distance

from the target culture, is characterised by a sufficient degree of opacity for the target reader to constitute a problem”. This is indeed a broad definition which generalises CSRs in terms of problematic entities or concepts which are semantically opaque to the target culture (TC).

A clearer, standard definition is the one put forward by Díaz Cintas and Remael (2007: 200), who define CSRs as “extralinguistic references to items that are tied up with a country’s culture, history, or geography, and tend therefore to pose serious translation challenges”. This definition has the virtue of explaining, without going into too much detail, the essence of a CSR, that is, its belonging in a country’s particular “culture, history, or geography” (*ibid.*) and its frequent relationship with an extralinguistic referent. The fact that CSRs are frequently, but not necessarily, associated with extralinguistic referents is discussed below in reference to Ranzato’s (2013) taxonomy of CSRs.

A fairly detailed definition is the one provided by Pedersen (2011: 43), who has devoted an in-depth study to the norms governing the subtitling of CSRs and has therefore forged his own specific definition of what he calls extralinguistic cultural references (ECRs) as follows:

Extralinguistic Culture-bound Reference (ECR) is defined as reference that is attempted by means of any culture-bound linguistic expression, which refers to an extralinguistic entity or process, and which is assumed to have a discourse referent that is identifiable to a relevant audience as this referent is within the encyclopaedic knowledge of this audience.

Crucial to Pedersen’s (*ibid.*) definition is his explanation of the terms ‘extralinguistic’ and ‘cultural’. He comments that ‘extralinguistic’ does not equate ‘nonverbal’ but, rather, it refers to entities or processes which can be found outside the language itself and pertain to the knowledge of the world tied to a particular culture. In other words, Pedersen makes a distinction between language and culture, explaining that knowledge of the former does not

automatically grant access to ECRs of the relevant culture, as in the case of a non-native speaker of English who is proficient in the language but does not have sufficient “cultural” knowledge to understand its references to “places, people, institutions, customs, food”, etc. (*ibid.*: 48). On the other hand – he goes on to explain – the opposite can also be true, as in the case of the Hispanic community in the US, some of whose members may be familiar with many ECRs belonging to the US culture despite not being proficient in the language.

In a previous publication, however, Pedersen (2005: 11) also refers to “microcultural” ECRs, not known to some members of a SC community despite its familiarity both with the language and the culture associated with the language. An example of this would be *Beowulf*, the English epic poem with which many English people will not be familiar. To make matters even more complicated, and as Ranzato (2013: 71-72) points out, CSRs are very often extralinguistic, but not always, particularly when it comes to culture-bound allusions to other texts. Again, *Beowulf* is a case in point, as it refers to a literary classic rather than reality outside the language itself. Finally, another interesting instance in which people may not be familiar with a language but still understand some of its culture-specific references is the case in which references do not stem either from the SC or from the TC but from a third culture (*ibid.*, 2013: 83-84). In translating the day-to-day reality of British films into Italian, for example, subtitlers may find themselves confronted with CSRs from Indian cuisine such as *tandoori* or *curry*. These are, strictly speaking, neither references to the British nor to the Italian culture. They belong to a third culture, the Indian culinary tradition in this case, and the British perfectly understand their meaning without having to speak any of the numerous languages of the Indian subcontinent. Therefore, as Pedersen’s (2005: 11) own take on microcultural CSRs and Ranzato’s (2013: 71-71) further specifications demonstrate, his distinction between linguistic and cultural knowledge is useful even though it is not as clear-cut as it might appear at first sight.

In her own work, Ranzato (*ibid.*) articulates a model that is broadly based on Leppihalme's (1997) influential study on allusions as cultural references. Leppihalme (*ibid.*: 3) defines such allusions as "preformed linguistic material [from] other texts embedded in the text at hand, which interact and colour it, but may be meaningless or puzzling in translation" because they are deeply rooted in the SC. Leppihalme (*ibid.*) therefore sees the translator as a cultural mediator and her conceptualisation of allusions, not as mere proper names but also as key-phrase references including "small stretches of other text", will be a useful approach for the analysis of gender stereotype allusions (GSAs) and their translation.

It is perhaps significant that in one of the most recent and comprehensive studies of CSRs in AVT, after offering a detailed review of previous categorisations and definitions, Ranzato (2013) refrains from suggesting a completely new taxonomy herself and, instead, proposes one that is largely based on earlier works on the topic. Indeed, the above discussion highlights some of the main difficulties encountered when trying to define CSRs. Although none of these contributions constitutes an agreed comprehensive conceptualisation of culture-specific references, all of them can be judged, albeit to different degrees, correct, as they highlight different components of the nature of CSRs. In particular, Díaz Cintas and Remael's (2007) together with Pedersen's (2011) definitions give us a clear enough understanding of CSRs for the purposes of the discussion and analysis carried out in the present study.

#### **4.4 Categorisations of CSRs**

After having offered some working definitions of CSRs in the field of AVT (Díaz Cintas and Remael, 2007; Pedersen, 2011) as guidelines, it might be more productive for the ensuing discussion to adopt a practical approach by taking a

closer look at the different taxonomies of CSRs which have been suggested in AVT. This standpoint seems all the more sensible in the context of the present investigation of the subtitling of GSRs, as a more specific overview of lexical fields and practical examples will allow us to uncover the intersection between CSRs and gender identity. At first sight, such links might seem few and far between; however, a closer look at CSR taxonomies and GSRs will show that there is more to their culture-specific nature than meets the eye and that CSR classifications can effectively be adjusted and employed for their analysis. The following discussion will first present some of the most significant taxonomies of CSRs discussed in academia up to now, before examining the way in which the concept of CSR may be used as an analytical tool for the present study.

Traditionally, Newmark's (1988: 95) "cultural categories" have been the first point of reference for many translation scholars working within this area. Despite having the merit of being one of the first translation scholars to look into the nature of these references and offer a classification, broadly modelled on Nida's (1945) previous work, his taxonomy is partly vague and some of the categories can be a bit opaque and better understood in the context of his following discussion and examples. In the general field of TS, Bugarski (1985: 159) is the only other scholar who has discussed what he calls "cultural systems" without really suggesting a systematic taxonomy of CSRs. In the context of the present overview, the classifications of CSRs proposed in AVT and reviewed below constitute more systematic research tools and are also more relevant to subtitling.

From the point of view of AVT, one of the first scholars to deal with the transfer of CSRs in subtitling is Nedergaard-Larsen (1993), who also devises a taxonomy of strategies for their translation. She suggests four main lexical fields of CSRs, subdivided as displayed in Table 4.1:

Table 4.1 – Nedergaard-Larsen's (1993) taxonomy of CSRs

| Extralinguistic culture-bound problem types |                                     |  |
|---|-------------------------------------|--|
| Geography etc.                              | Geography<br>meteorology<br>biology | mountains, rivers<br>weather, climate<br>flora, fauna  |
|   | cultural geography                  | regions, towns<br>roads, streets etc.  |
| History                                     | Buildings                           | monuments, castles etc.  |
|   | Events                              | wars, revolutions, flag days   |
|   | People                              | well-known historical persons  |
| Society                                     | industrial level (economy)          | trade and industry, energy supply etc.   |
|   | social organisation                 | defence, judicial system<br>police, prisons<br>local and central authorities   |
|   | Politics                            | state management, ministries<br>electoral system, political parties<br>politicians, political organisations  |
|   | social conditions                   | groups, subcultures<br>living conditions, problems   |
|   | ways of life, customs               | housing, transport, food, meals<br>clothing, article for everyday use<br>family relations  |
| Culture                                     | Religion                            | churches, ritual, morals<br>ministers, bishops<br>religious holidays, saints   |
|   | Education                           | schools, colleges, universities,<br>lines of education, exams  |
|   | Media                               | TV, radio, newspaper, magazines  |
|   | culture, leisure activities         | museums, works of art<br>literature, authors<br>theatres, cinemas, actors,<br>musicians, idols,<br>restaurants, hotels,<br>nightclubs, cafés<br>sports, athletes |

Commenting on the difficulty of creating a definitive taxonomy, Pedersen (2011: 60) indicates that there is a considerable degree of overlap between the four main fields, and he argues that geography, history and society could all be easily subsumed under the heading of culture. In addition, Nedergaard-Larsen's (1993) examples do not always systematically fit into her subdivisions, as can be seen in the section relating to society, where the examples for 'social organisation' sound more like institutions and the 'industrial level' or 'economy' are again too vague to be fully operational. In relation to gender, however, some important categories are found here, for instance 'media', which is a constant source of gender construction and representation (Capecchi, 2006; Ruspini, 2009), as well as the previously mentioned 'religious' category, with a specific reference to (potentially gender-specific) morals.

For his part, Pedersen (2007, 2011) puts forward his own classification of ECRs, warning the reader that it stems from and is designed for the analysis of his particular corpus, which is why it also allows for a certain degree of overlap across categories. Aware of the limitations of his classification, he does not, therefore, make any claims to the universality of his model but refers to it as a list of domains created for the purposes of analytical endeavour. The following are his 12 domains:

1. Weights and measures
2. Proper names (personal names, geographical names, institutional names and brand names)
3. Professional titles
4. Food and beverages
5. Literature
6. Government
7. Entertainment
8. Education

- 9. Sports
- 10. Currency
- 11. Technical material
- 12. Other

In addition to the categories that have already been encountered in Nedergaard-Larsen's (1993) classification, professional titles and affiliations in Italian represent an important culture- and gender-specific challenge when it comes to subtitling some of the GSRs that are present in *Comedy Italian Style*. Other potentially interesting sources of GSRs in Pedersen's taxonomy are the categories of 'literature' and 'sports'.

In her discussion about general issues pertaining to the field of AVT, Chiaro (2009: 155) mentions three main types of "translational hurdles":

1. highly culture-specific references (e.g. place names, references to sports and festivities, famous people, monetary systems, institutions, etc.);
2. language-specific features (terms of address, taboo language, etc.);
3. areas of overlap between language and culture (songs, rhymes, jokes, etc.).

Although the second category is defined as language specific, one of its examples, taboo language, often exceeds the linguistic dimension to embrace also culture- and gender-specific aspects. It should also be pointed out that the third type of 'hurdle' is different from the references so far encountered in the work of other scholars, as it includes culturally challenging items such as songs, which go beyond the lexical unit to include longer linguistic segments and also rely on paralinguistic features such as rhythm, rhyme and intonation. From this point of view, songs share some similarity with Leppihalme's (1997: 3) allusions, which are generally defined by the author as "small stretches of other text". In turn,

Leppihalme's (*ibid.*) definition applies very well to some gender stereotypes, which in Comedy Italian Style take the form of allusions to socio-cultural constructs and consist of longer linguistic segments.

A more systematic categorisation, especially when compared with Newmark's (1988) and Nedergaard-Larsen's (1993), is presented in the same contribution by Chiaro (2009: 156-157), although it first appeared in a previous study co-authored by Antonini and Chiaro (2005: 39). Said list is made up of 10 groups:

1. **Institutions** (including judiciary, police, military)
  - a. Legal formulae: e.g. 'This court is now in session', 'All rise', 'Objection, your Honour', 'Objection overruled/sustained', 'You may be seated';
  - b. Courtroom forms of address: e.g. 'Your Honour', 'My Lord', 'Members of the jury';
  - c. Legal topography: Supreme Court, Grand Jury, Court, etc.;
  - d. Agents: lawyers, solicitors, attorneys, barristers, etc.; hospital hierarchies such as consultants, interns, paramedics; military hierarchies, etc.
2. **Educational** references to 'high school' culture, tests, grading systems, sororities, cheer leaders, etc.
3. **Place names:** The District of Columbia, The Country Club, 42nd Street, etc.
4. **Units of measurement:** Two ounces of meat, 150 pounds, twenty yards, etc.
5. **Monetary systems:** Dollars, soles, pounds, etc.
6. **National sports and pastimes:** American football, baseball, basketball teams: *The Nicks, Boston, Brooklyn Dodgers*, etc.
7. **Food and drink:** Mississippi Mud Pie, pancakes, BLT, etc.

8. **Holidays and festivities:** Halloween, St Patrick's, July 4th, Thanksgiving, Bar Mitzvah, Chinese New Year, The Festival of Light, etc.
9. **Books, films and TV programmes:** 'Did you watch the Brady Bunch?'; 'Welcome to the road Dorothy'.
10. **Celebrities and personalities:** Ringo Starr; Toppy; The Cookie Monster, etc.

In a rather metaphorical manner, Antonini and Chiaro (*ibid.*) refer to these areas of CSRs as "lingua-cultural drops in translational high voltage". The trope foregrounds the challenges posed by CSRs for the translator and the potential risks of semiotic inconsistency between verbal and visual channels of communication, that can occur with the implementation of some translation strategies when dealing with the transfer of CSRs, such as translation by hypernym or hyponym. In Antonini and Chiaro's (*ibid.*) taxonomy, many of the examples relating to institutional agents, some drawn from the field of education (sororities and cheer leaders) and the category of celebrities and personalities are the most relevant ones to the analysis of gender.

A different but equally systematic classification of CSR categories is the one proposed by Díaz Cintas and Remael (2007: 201) for the analysis of subtitling:

#### 1. Geographical references

- Objects from physical geography: savannah, mistral, tornado.
- Geographical objects: downs, plaza mayor.
- Endemic animal and plant species: sequoia, zebra.

#### 2. Ethnographic references

- Objects from daily life: tapas, trattoria, igloo.
- References to work: farmer, gaucho, machete, ranch.
- References to art and culture: blues, Thanksgiving, Romeo and Juliet.
- References to descent: gringo, Cockney, Parisienne.

- Measures: inch, euro, pound.

### 3. Socio-political references

- References to administrative or territorial units: county, bidonville, state.
- References to institutions and functions: Reichstag, sheriff, congress.
- References to socio-cultural life: Ku Klux Klan, Prohibition, landed gentry.
- References to military institutions and objects: Feldwebel, marines, Smith & Wesson.

As usual, some categories are more relevant to discuss gender issues than others. In this case, the references to the military are, perhaps, the ones which can be considered most gender specific because of the male-dominated nature of these institutions.

As Pedersen points out (2011: 60), some degree of overlap can always be found in every classification and trying to devise a “foolproof taxonomy” is probably not a very useful academic exercise because of the sheer complexity of the concept of culture and the potentially endless number of language communities around the world, individual cultures and specific language pair scenarios. This is not, by any means, a way to devalue the efforts of the above-mentioned scholars in trying to systematically organise the different fields of CSRs, but only a word of caution as to the ambition of providing a definitive, universal categorisation. Still, as the list of contributions so far discussed shows, some taxonomies, such as Antonini and Chiaro’s (2005), Díaz Cintas and Remael’s (2007) and Pedersen’s (2011), are more systematic and therefore more useful than others.

To sum up this section, from the point of view of gender, a number of lexical fields and cultural environments have been found so far to be potential

sources of GSRs, such as professional titles, the military, work and leisure, media, sports, education, religion and taboo language. It is not my intention here to propose a taxonomy of GSRs on the basis of these categories, but to emphasise that an overview of CSR classifications, with its different categories, subcategories and specific examples, has the benefit of allowing the researcher to discover the potential intersection with gender and make the interrelation between CSRs and GSRs more explicit. In fact, similarly to CSRs, the pervasive and extremely fluid nature of gender makes any such taxonomy too limiting and straight-jacketing. Indeed, as has been shown by the research conducted on gender stereotypes and reviewed in Chapter 3, gender construction is a cultural product (Williams and Best, 1990; Simon, 1996; Von Flotow, 1997; Vonk and Ashmore, 2003) and, as such, it cannot be easily or comprehensively categorised. Last but not least, Ranzato's (2013) taxonomy, which takes a very different approach to the classification of CSRs, should be presented. Much, although not all, of her classification lends itself to the discussion of GSRs, which is why the next section will focus on the way in which her categorisation can be adjusted to suit the aims of the present study.

#### **4.5 Ranzato's model of CSRs applied to gender stereotypes**

Having considered the advantages and disadvantages of some of the taxonomies based on lexical fields, such as the ones previously discussed, Ranzato (2013) opts for a different type of classification. Some of her concepts are partly derived from the works by Leppihalme (1997) and Pedersen (2011), but she also goes beyond these models by making the relationship between SC and TC the central notion around which her taxonomy revolves. She points out that the choice of lexical fields and classifications of cultural entities such as CSRs, which are not based on the point of view of the SC/TC relationship, are bound to be highly subjective and, hence, potentially difficult to extrapolate and apply in other contexts. Therefore, she proposes a basic distinction between 'realistic' and

‘intertextual references’, relating them to the real world and to fiction (e.g. audiovisual programmes, novels, poems), respectively. These references, along with their subcategories, can also be verbal or nonverbal and temporally synchronous or asynchronous with the time at which the translation is taking place, as is shown in Table 4.2 below:

Table 4.2 – Ranzato’s (2013) classification of CSRs

|   |
|---|
| <b>Realistic References</b>                       |
| 1. Source culture references                      |
| 2. Intercultural references                       |
| 3. Third culture references                       |
| 4. Target culture references                      |
| <b>Intertextual references</b>                    |
| 5. Overt intertextual allusions                   |
| 6. Covert intertextual allusions                  |
| 7. Intertextual macroallusions                    |
| <b>All of the above can be either</b>             |
| - Verbal or nonverbal cultural references         |
| - Synchronous or asynchronous cultural references |

Although Ranzato (2013) does mention that Pedersen’s (2011) microcultural CSRs also fall into the category of SC references, she does not go into too much detail about these. In these pages, it is worth mentioning this distinction, even though the Comedy Italian Style corpus only includes two instances of the microcultural subgroup. One of these is the reference to baron Ferdinando Cefalù as a *cornuto contento* [cuckold happy] in *Divorce Italian Style*, after Rosalia has left him for another man. In her analysis of the film, Reich (2004: 70) clarifies that *cornuto contento* is a cuckold who “willingly gives away his wife or daughter”, just as Don Ferdinando “is happy to be rid of his wife in order to pursue his passion for Angela”. In this case the GSR is determined by the Sicilian gender rules of the

time and its understanding is likely to be limited to the Sicilian microcosm; hence, the definition of microcultural GSR.

Still with reference to Pedersen's (2011) categorisation of SC references, Ranzato (2013) makes one more fundamental distinction for, in her opinion, these references are not limited simply to the ones which are rooted in the SC but they also encompass many other references that are often subjectively considered as being intercultural. In this respect, Ranzato (*ibid.*: 82) clarifies that, no matter how familiar a CSR such as 'Starbucks' may be assumed to be for the Italian audience, there are no objective criteria to establish its status as an 'intercultural' coffee shop chain, as there were actually no such shops in Italy at the time of her writing. All the Italian audience can rely on in order to identify and make sense of this CSR are foreign films, television programmes and travels abroad, among others. Intercultural references, on the other hand, are the ones which have originated in the SC but have developed a proven relationship with the TC, based on objective criteria such as the presence of local shops as in the case of 'McDonald's' or the distribution of a famous singer's record in the TC. In other words, though originally deriving from a SC, these references have ended up becoming CSRs in their own right in the TC and, as such, have acquired an intercultural status.

In the context of Comedy Italian Style, and according to Ranzato (*ibid.*), a SC GSR would be the *assassina per motivi d'onore* [murderess for reasons of honour] found in the film *Divorce Italian Style*, where the *delitto d'onore* [crime of honour] is historically and judicially documented in Sicily; and, an intercultural reference, on the other hand, could be the GSR of the *prostituta*, which has an objective, documentable counterpart in the concept of 'prostitute' in the US society.

However, the boundaries between these categories become blurred and difficult to establish when they enter the field of gender identity and portrayal. An

example showing these difficulties is the GSR of the *svergognata* [shameless woman], where the only objective proof of this GSR existing in the SC is the specific Italian word, which does not quite translate into English because, presumably, there is no such stereotype in the English culture, although such rationale is again based on the familiarity with the Italian culture and assumptions about the TC. Indeed, while some GSRs, as *assassina per motivi d'onore*, can objectively and transparently be defined as such, in many other cases they are the consequence of social and cultural construction (Williams and Best, 1990; Basow, 1992; Simon, 1996; von Flotow, 1997), which results in particular ways of looking at gender and attitudes towards the sexes, but has no objective proof in real life other than their linguistic realisation. Hence, in addition to the general taxonomies of gender stereotypes and the specific gender representations in Comedy Italian Style analysed in Chapter 3, another important criterion guiding the categorisation process in this research project consists of the translation product itself. In line with the philosophy at the basis of the DTS approach (Toury, 1980, 1995/2012), one of the objectives is, for instance, to gauge the degree of conceptual transparency for the TC and linguistic fluency for the TL of the literal translation of *svergognata* as 'shameless woman'. Similarly, the intention is to explore the way in which these references have been treated by professional subtitlers, by investigating their translation strategies, and trying to ascertain whether the practitioner has felt the need to substitute a particular GSR with a TC one, such as 'bitch' for *svergognata*, thereby considering it an anchored SC reference.

Going back to the work by Ranzato (2013), there are two more categories which need to be examined as sub-groups of the realistic references, namely, target culture and third culture references. The latter "rely on the degree of familiarity of the SC with a given third culture (or at least with the particular element taken from it), which may be different from the TC's degree of familiarity" (*ibid.*: 82). An example of a third culture GSR from Comedy Italian

Style can be found in *The Easy Life*, where the young, introverted and self-conscious Roberto, who is in love with the next door girl, is referred to as *giovane Werther* [young Werther] by Bruno's daughter. The reference to the gender stereotype of a young man desperately in love, from Goethe's eponymous, epistolary novel, belongs, strictly speaking, neither to the Italian nor to the US culture, but to a third culture, in this case the German one, although it may be easily understood by an audience with an educated background (Newmark, 1988). Target culture references, on the other hand, present the opposite scenario to the 'standard' issues posed by CSRs. Indeed, these are CSRs that belong to the TC rather than the SC and, therefore, the translator is confronted with different translation challenges. An example from Comedy Italian Style is the reference to Grace Kelly in the film *The Easy Life*, whose cultural representativeness and connotations might be arguably lost for the Italian audience, as opposed to the US viewers, who are expected to be more familiar with this celebrity.

On the basis of this discussion, Ranzato's (2013) model can be adjusted to cater for gender stereotype references (GSRs), as shown in Table 4.3:

Table 4.3 – *Taxonomy of GSRs*

| <b>Gender stereotype references</b>            |
|--|
| 1. Source culture gender stereotype references |
| 2. Microcultural gender stereotype references  |
| 3. Intercultural gender stereotype references  |
| 4. Third culture gender stereotype references  |
| 5. Target culture gender stereotype references |

Ranzato's (*ibid.*) other main category in her classification of CSRs is that of intertextual references, which are different from realistic references in that the former do not refer to reality per se but to fictional works, be they serious

literature, comic books, films or similar. Based on Leppihalme's (1997) work on allusions, Ranzato's (2013) main distinction here is one between overt allusions, which make a direct link to a work of fiction clearly understandable by the SC audience, and covert allusions, which tend to be more enigmatic and cryptic. She also coins the concept of macroallusions to refer, for instance, to a whole episode of a TV series or a film being used as a general allusion in another fictional work, as opposed to allusions made to a precise character or a particular event or sequence. A detailed discussion of Ranzato's (*ibid.*) categorisation of allusions is not strictly necessary here, as there are only very few overt allusions in the films under scrutiny, which are significant from the point of view of the gender representation. Indeed, it is not so much Ranzato's (*ibid.*) categorisation as Leppihalme's (1997) general conceptualisation of allusions as CSRs which share a similar form and function to the numerous GSAs found in Comedy Italian Style.

Some examples from *Divorce Italian Style* and *I Knew Her Well* will help clarify this analogy. The first example comes from the scene in which Rosalia is complaining to her mother-in-law about her husband, Don Ferdinando (the protagonist of the film), who has decided to move to another bedroom after having an argument with her. Rosalia complains that *io debbo sempre subire* [I always have to put up with it/suffer], thereby implicitly alluding to the (master/servant) power relations that can be detected between man and woman in domestic environments. Another example, illustrated below, is from the beginning of the film, when Don Ferdinando's voice is heard off-camera commenting on the women of Agramonte, the Sicilian fictional town in which the action takes place. He describes these women as follows:

Example 4.1 – *Divorce Italian Style*

| Original dialogue  | English subtitles  |
|--|--|
| 00:04:24,230 --> 00:04:31,769<br><br><b>Don Ferdinando:</b> Le favolose, invisibili donne di Agramonte che celavano la loro bellezza e il loro ardore dietro le grate, pardon, dietro le stecche | 00:04:24,230 --> 00:04:25,891<br><br>The marvelous,<br>invisible women of Agramonte, |

|   |   |
|---|---|
| <p>di vereconde persiane.</p> <p>[The fabulous, invisible women of Agramonte, who hid their beauty and ardour behind the grating, pardon, behind the slates of bashful shutters.]</p> | <p>00:04:25,999 --&gt; 00:04:28,763</p> <p>who hid their beauty and ardor behind the grating –</p> <p>00:04:28,868 --&gt; 00:04:31,769</p> <p>pardon me –<br/>behind the slats of bashful shutters.</p> |
|---|---|

To the SC audience, this description of the women of Agramonte conjures up the images associated with the gender stereotype of the segregation of women in the Sicilian society of the sixties, constantly watched by their male relatives and confined to the only space they could legitimately inhabit, i.e. their homes. However, rather than being explicitly expressed by referring to the segregated Sicilian women, the stereotype, in this case, emerges from the complex gender representation expressed in the whole sentence.

While these examples show that Leppihalme’s (1997) concept of allusions, which function as culture-specific references, can be applied to the implicit GS allusions found in *Comedy Italian Style*, there is one central distinction between the two models that needs to be pointed out. In the films under analysis, GS allusions may indeed consist of Leppihalme’s (*ibid.*) “small stretches of text”, as in the above-mentioned examples of Rosalia and Don Ferdinando, but, in other cases, they can also materialise as relatively long comments uttered by a particular character or as several dialogue exchanges between different people, such as Don Ferdinando’s voiceover example about the women of Agramonte or the gender stereotypes which surface from some of the conversations between Adriana and some of the other characters in *I Knew Her Well*. An instance of these relatively long dialogue exchanges can be observed in her conversation with Paolo, her unscrupulous promoter, who is supposed to assist her in furthering her career in show business. This example is particularly useful because it features the two types of GSs distinguished in these pages, namely explicit GSRs and implicit GSAs:

Example 4.2 – *I Knew Her Well*

| <b>Context:</b> Paolo is trying to convince Adriana to be photographed without wearing much. He shows her a picture of another aspiring star photographed in this way, trying to show her how useful these pictures can be for her career. |   |
|--|---|
| <b>Original dialogue</b><br>(partly speaking the Roman dialect)  | <b>English subtitles</b>  |
| 00:17:06,058 --> 00:17:32,507  | 00:17:06,058 --> 00:17:08,424   |
| <b>Paolo:</b> Oh, vedi che vo di no ave' uno che te rappresenta? Gagliarda, questa.<br><br>[Oh, you see what it means to have someone who represents you? Great, this one.]  | See how important an agent is?<br><br>00:17:08,594 --> 00:17:12,462<br><br>Great shot!<br>- You can't pose like that! |
| <b>Adriana:</b> No però senti farsi fotografare così!<br><br>[No, but listen, let yourself be photographed like that!]   | 00:17:12,631 --> 00:17:16,032<br><br>That's the way to go.<br>All natural.  |
| <b>Paolo:</b> Ma se capisce, così se fa, senza trucco e senza inganno, eh.<br><br>[But it's understood, you do it like this, without trick and without cheating, right.]   | 00:17:16,201 --> 00:17:18,226<br><br>They can't publish that!   |
| <b>Adriana:</b> Ma questo non si può mica pubblicare.<br><br>[But this cannot be published.]   | 00:17:18,404 --> 00:17:21,498<br><br>But it gets around,<br>with her phone number on the back.                        |
| <b>Paolo:</b> Non fa niente, intanto circola, nome e telefono di dietro.<br><br>[It doesn't matter, in the meantime, it goes around, name and phone number behind.]  | 00:17:21,673 --> 00:17:24,039<br><br>They see her and call her.   |
| <b>Paolo:</b> La vedono la chiamano e compagnia bella.<br><br>[They see her, they call her and so on.]   | 00:17:24,209 --> 00:17:26,234<br><br>But no, not you!   |
| <b>Paolo:</b> Tu così 'nt'a voi fa.<br><br>[You don't want to do it like that.]  | 00:17:26,412 --> 00:17:30,314<br><br>What's this picture say,<br>with your skirt and bra?                             |
| <b>Paolo:</b> Tè, che me rappresenta sta fotografia? Col gonnellino, el reggiseno?<br><br>[Here, what does this picture represent to me? With the little skirt, the bra?]  | 00:17:30,482 --> 00:17:32,507<br><br>You look like a nun!   |
| <b>Paolo:</b> Guarda qua, me sembri 'na monaca. Me sembri.<br><br>[Look here, you look like a nun, you look.]  |   |

In this exchange between Paolo and Adriana, in which the latter is looking at a picture of another 'career woman', her body language, as well as her disapproving comment, visibly show how shocked she is to see the photograph of someone presumably posing almost naked. While she protests that such a picture cannot even be published, Paolo unabatedly continues to stress the advantages for women of exposing their bodies in order to advance their professional careers. In another scene of the film, Paolo even tries to convince Adriana to accept a lift with a *commendatore*, an honorific Italian title conferred on people for particular, often professional, merit. Once more shocked by Paolo's behaviour, Adriana suggests he should stop trying to prostitute her with his friends, as he has already done in the past. While in this specific example, Paolo does not, strictly speaking, try to convince Adriana to physically prostitute herself, he implicitly suggests a very similar stereotype, i.e. that in order to be able to succeed in the world of show business and cinema, women must conform to the gender representation of the loose woman, who sells her body in return for professional favours. The other gender stereotype explicitly contained in this dialogue, on the other hand, is the exact opposite of what Paolo has been alluding to in the previous exchanges and is expressed at the end of the conversation. After having volunteered his best advice on how to fast track the career of a new 'starlet' and having gathered that Adriana is still not prepared to pose as he suggests, he points out that her photographs make her look like a 'nun', therefore implying that, if she is not ready to compromise on her principles, she will never have a successful professional future.

To sum up, this example helps illustrate the difference between explicit, direct GSRs, such as 'nun', and longer, implicit GSAs, like the one about women selling their bodies, which ultimately emerges from the conversation between Adriana and Paolo. Bearing this in mind, I therefore propose in Table 4.4 the following classification of GSAs based on Leppihalme's (1997) general concept of allusion and Ranzato's (2013) SC/TC relationship:

Table 4.4 – *Taxonomy of GSAs*

| <b>Gender stereotype allusions</b>            |
|---|
| 1. Source culture gender stereotype allusions |
| 2. Microcultural gender stereotype allusions  |
| 3. Intercultural gender stereotype allusions  |
| 4. Third culture gender stereotype allusions  |
| 5. Target culture gender stereotype allusions |

Finally, and as mentioned above, all of these references can also work on two further different planes, as they can be verbal/nonverbal and synchronous/asynchronous. They are verbal references when they are transmitted through the linguistic channel of communication as part of the dialogue exchanges, lyrics of songs or written text appearing on screen (letters, newspapers, street signs, etc.); whereas they are nonverbal when they are transmitted through a non-linguistic channel of communication that can be instrumental music, clothes, gestures and the like (Delabastita, 1989). From a temporal perspective, they are synchronous when they share the time of the audience, and asynchronous when they do not, i.e. the reference has faded with the passage of time and the audience may not be able to relate to it as a result of the time distance. Once more, some examples will help to make these concepts easier to understand.

An instance of a GSR conveyed through the nonverbal channel of communication is the one already mentioned in Chapter 2 in relation to Germi's *Seduced and Abandoned*, when the baron is invited for a formal meal at the Ascalones. After the traditional first course consisting of pasta, the baron asks what the second course is going to be. When he is given a clue by the hostess, he promptly guesses that the second course is going to consist of snails by triumphantly imitating the horns of the mollusc with a gesture that typifies the

gender stereotype of the cuckold. While the number of such nonverbal cultural references can be considered to be fairly small in the present corpus, asynchronous cultural references are more frequent, as all of these films were released in the 1960s and, as a consequence, a considerable number of GSRs are not so obvious or relevant to today's society, culture and audiences. An example from Germi's *Divorce Italian Style* would be the reference to the *concubina*, i.e. a woman who lives with her companion without being tied to him by a conjugal relationship. In today's Italian society, with its increasing number of couples who choose to live together without being officially married, and where legislation regulating *unioni civili* [civil partnerships] was approved by Parliament back in 2016, hardly anyone would accuse such a woman of breaching any moral values or social conventions. Hence, the GSR can be said to be asynchronous as it refers to a different point in time, when sharing a home with a man without being married to him was frowned upon and even considered disgraceful, albeit only for the woman and not so for the man.

On the basis of the adjustments proposed to Ranzato's (2013) classification, the complete taxonomy of GSRs and GSAs now looks as displayed in Table 4.5:

Table 4.5 – *Taxonomy of GSRs and GSAs*

|  |
|--|
| <b>Gender stereotype references</b>            |
| 1. Source culture gender stereotype references |
| 2. Microcultural gender stereotype references  |
| 3. Intercultural gender stereotype references  |
| 4. Third culture gender stereotype references  |
| 5. Target culture gender stereotype references |
| <b>Gender stereotype allusions</b>             |
| 6. Source culture gender stereotype allusions  |
| 7. Microcultural gender stereotype allusions   |
| 8. Intercultural gender stereotype allusions   |

|  |
|--|
| 9. Third culture gender stereotype allusions                         |
| 10. Target culture gender stereotype allusions                       |
| <b>All of the above can be either</b>                                |
| - Verbal or nonverbal gender stereotype references/allusions         |
| - Synchronous or asynchronous gender stereotype references/allusions |

After having considered some general, working definitions of CSRs as well as the main taxonomies proposed by some academics, with a special focus on Ranzato's (2013) classification adjusted for the present study, the following section will concentrate on the various ways in which CSRs can be translated into other languages and how such translation strategies can be adjusted for the particular investigation of the subtitling of GSs, from Italian into English.

#### 4.6 Taxonomies of translation strategies for CSRs

After suggesting his classification of CSRs, Newmark (1988: 96-103) provides some examples of translation strategies that are used for the transfer of cultural references, by referring back to his general "translation procedures" from which he selects the following twelve strategies:

1. Transference: loan of the SL word;
2. cultural equivalent: replacement of the original with the TC closest concept in the case of similar systems, institutions, etc., e.g. A-level for the Italian *diploma* as a secondary education qualification;
3. neutralisation (i.e. functional or descriptive equivalent): definition based on function or description. Newmark (*ibid.*: 84) gives the example of the substantive *machete*, whose "description is a 'Latin American broad, heavy instrument'", while "the function is 'cutting and aggression'";
4. literal translation;

5. label: a provisional translation, usually of a new institutional term, which is normally given in inverted commas;
6. naturalisation: loan with pronunciation and/or morphological adaptation to the TL, e.g. French *rosbif* for 'roast beef';
7. componential analysis: reduction to and explanation of the different components of meaning;
8. deletion (of redundant stretches of language in non-authoritative texts, especially metaphors and intensifiers): in other words, omission;
9. couplet: combination of different translation strategies, e.g. functional and descriptive equivalent;
10. accepted standard translation: official translation, e.g. 'German Federal Parliament' for *Bundestag*;
11. paraphrase, gloss, notes, etc.: consisting of different forms of explanatory information;
12. classifier: use of a hypernym to clarify, e.g. 'shintigin trousers'.

This taxonomy has been criticised by Mailhac (1996: 138) for its fuzziness and overlap between different strategies, particularly between neutralisation, functional equivalent and componential analysis, which are all "used to refer to the same procedure, namely a definition".

After scrutinising Newmark's (1988) and Ivir's (1987) taxonomies, Mailhac (1996: 140-41) puts forward his own taxonomy on the basis of Ivir's classification by supplementing it with the strategy of 'compensation' and adjusting the strategies of 'addition' and 'footnote' to better suit his needs. Mailhac's (*ibid.*) examples are from the French translation of *The Secret Diary of Adrian Mole, Aged 13 ¾*, written by Sue Townsend in 1982 and translated into French by Béatrice Gartenberg in 1991, as *Journal secret d'Adrien, 13 ans ¾*:

1. Cultural borrowing: loan of the SC word which expresses the CSR, e.g. 'punk';
2. literal translation (calque): the author gives the example of 'Land of Hope and Glory' translated literally in French as *Pays d'espoir et de gloire*;
3. definition: can range from the simple use of a generic term to substantial definitions and include any possibility in between;
4. cultural substitution: consists in the substitution of a SC CSR with one belonging to the TC such as *compteur kilométrique* for 'milometer';
5. lexical creation: Mailhac (*ibid.*) exemplifies the nature of this translation strategy with *poisson-frites* [fish-chips] as a translation of 'fish and chips' based on the morphological model of *steak-frites* [steak-chips];
6. deliberate omission: for cases in which the omitted item is not "central to the point being made" (*ibid.*: 140);
7. compensation: a translation loss is compensated by adding something at some other point in the translation process, e.g. 'we walked to Sainsbury's' becomes *on a été faire des courses chez Sainsbury* [we went shopping at Sainsbury's];
8. combination of procedures: e.g. literal translation and minimal definition;
9. footnote.

This example of classification is more concise and at the same time systematic than Newmark's (1988). Although there is still room for refinement, it includes most of the strategies suggested in some of the most recent subtitling taxonomies such as the ones by Díaz Cintas and Remael (2007) and Pedersen (2011). In a largely prescriptive approach, differentiated from but also similar to Newmark's (1988), Mailhac (1996) lists four parameters that should be taken into consideration when approaching the text as whole, namely, purpose of the text, role of CSRs, pragmatic coherence and readership's knowledge of the SC. In addition to these, he also volunteers a rather long and complex list of 16 parameters to be considered in relation to any given cultural reference: (1)

purpose of the text, (2) selected text procedure, (3) the role of CSRs, (4) cultural transparency, (5) readership, (6) contextual information, (7) referent type, (8) CSR form, (9) CSR frequency, (10) pragmatic coherence, (11) cultural coherence, (12) semiotic value of referent, (13) situational coherence, (14) relationship between SL and TL, (15) stylistic equivalence and (16) elegance. By contrast, Nedergaard-Larsen (1993) lists only the following six criteria for subtitling: (1) function, (2) significance of connotations, (3) TL transparency, (4) interaction between visual and acoustic channels of communication, (5) speech to writing implications and (6) technical constraints of subtitling. Since then, AVT in general has moved towards the descriptive paradigm (Karamitroglou, 2000; Díaz Cintas 1997, 2004; Pedersen 2011; Sokoli, 2011; De Marco, 2012; Ranzato, 2013), where criteria are still considered but from an analytical rather than prescriptive viewpoint, such as Pedersen's (2011: 105-120) "influencing parameters" discussed below.

Before moving on to the specific field of AVT, however, it is worth examining Leppihalme's (1997: 78-79) set of strategies for the translation of allusions. This author makes a fundamental distinction based on whether the allusion consists of a proper name or a key phrase. In the first case she suggests:

1. *Retention* of the name as such or including some kind of concise or more detailed clarification;
2. *replacement of a name by another SL or TL name*;
3. *omission*, including total omission of the allusion or explanation, for example by a common noun.

For the transfer of key-phrase allusions, which consist of longer "stretches of text", such as literal quotations from other works or people, or of implicit, more covert references to other texts, Leppihalme (1997: 84) suggests:

1. Use of a standard translation;
2. minimum change, that is, a literal translation, without regard to connotative or contextual meaning;
3. extra-allusive guidance added in the text or assistance in the form of extra information for the TC readers;
4. footnotes, endnotes, translator's prefaces and other explicit explanations;
5. simulated familiarity or internal marking, that is, the addition of intra-allusive allusion signalling features (marked wording or syntax) that depart from the style of the context, thus signalling the presence of borrowed words;
6. replacement by a preformed TL item;
7. reduction of the allusion to sense by rephrasal;
8. recreation, using a fusion of techniques: creative construction of a passage which hints at the connotations of the allusion or other special effects created by it;
9. omission of the allusion.

Considering the emphasis traditionally placed on the analysis of CSRs from the point of view of their linguistic representation as lexical units, this taxonomy for the translation of key-phrase allusions is significantly different, as it enables the researcher to analyse linguistic segments rather than just isolated lexical items. As already mentioned, it is a model later borrowed and further elaborated on by Ranzato (2013) for the specific case of dubbing of CSRs, and I would like to argue that it is equally operative and functional for the analysis and translation of the numerous GSAs found in Comedy Italian Style films, which rely on similar linguistic realisations.

Having considered some of the main taxonomies of translation strategies put forward by translation scholars in order to deal with the transfer of CSRs in general, the next step in this research is to discuss some of the classifications that

target the field of AVT and subtitling in a more specific manner. Nedergaard-Larsen (1993) is among the first scholars to come up with a taxonomy of translation strategies for the transfer of CSRs in subtitling. In her work, she mentions the importance of Vinay and Darbelnet's (1958) classic work on translation strategies, refers to some of Newmark's (1988) views on the subject as well as Hervey and Higgins's (1992) contribution and points out that one of the main strategies missing from previous taxonomies is that of 'explicitation'. On the basis of this argumentation, she suggests the following six strategies for the translation of CSRs:

1. Transfer: subdivided into exoticism or loan and imitation or calque;
2. direct translation: literal translation;
3. explicitation: "explanation or clarification, possibly by using a wider term" (Nedergaard-Larsen, 1993: 239);
4. paraphrase: rephrasal of the original wording for the purposes of clarification;
5. adaptation to the TL culture: subdivided into situational and cultural, this strategy refers to the substitution of the SC reference with one belonging to the TC;
6. omission: deletion of the CSR.

Although the strategy of explicitation is not as clearly defined as in more recent taxonomies, such as Díaz Cintas and Remael's (2007) and Pedersen's (2011), Nedergaard-Larsen's (1993) classification constitutes a basic model for future contributions in AVT, including examples of some of the issues that the spatial and temporal constraints of subtitling may cause on the implementation of some of the strategies.

Many of Nedergaard-Larsen's (*ibid.*) strategies are similar to the ones later proposed by Pedersen (2011) in his influential study on CSRs. On the basis of his

review of previous classifications of translation strategies for CSRs, both for translation in general and subtitling in particular, Pedersen (*ibid.*) emphasises the fact that different classifications may be suitable for different types of studies, although he also makes some annotations on the intrinsic merit of the taxonomies analysed. In reference to Katan's (1999) classification, for example, Pedersen (2011) highlights the inherent difficulty in trying to work with too limited a number of strategies and, together with Gottlieb (2009), he points out that a working taxonomy should contain at least six main strategies, in addition to which there may well be some other subcategories. He identifies a number of strategies that most AVT researchers consider fundamental by now, although, again, the specific terminology may vary according to the different scholars. Pedersen (2011: 76), then, suggests his own classification of seven translation strategies for the transfer of Extralinguistic Cultural References (ECRs) as follows:

1. Retention: the ST linguistic item is kept unchanged in the TT. It is subdivided into complete retention and TL-adjusted retention, e.g. adjusting the spelling or dropping an article;
2. specification: information is added to the ST linguistic item in the form of completion, when the element of completion "is latent in the ST ECR" (*ibid.*) (e.g. an acronym), and addition, when supplementary information relevant to the ECR is given, e.g. adding the occupation to a person's proper name;
3. direct translation: subdivided into literal translation in the form of calque, including only obligatory shifts and therefore more SL-oriented, and shifted direct translation including optional shifts;
4. generalization: translation by a superordinate term or paraphrase;
5. substitution: the replacement of a SC ECR which is not expected to be known in the TC with a transcultural ECR, i.e. a reference still originating in the SC but whose knowledge is shared with the TC;
6. omission: deletion of the ECR;

7. official equivalent: official translation acknowledged by “people in authority” or an established translation which has become “entrenched” through use (*ibid.*: 198).

In the analysis of his corpus, Pedersen (*ibid.*: 105-120) also devotes a chapter to “influencing parameters”, which contribute to determining the translation norms operating at a certain period, such as the preference of a translation strategy over another. The first three parameters are closely related to the nature of the ECRs, namely: (1) transculturality, whether an ECR is known only to the SC, both to SC and TC, or to neither of them, (2) extratextuality, whether an ECR has a referent in the real world or not, and (3) centrality, i.e. how crucial the ECR is in the context of the audiovisual product. Parameters (4) and (5) concern AVT semiotic and technical considerations, respectively, such as polysemy and the spatial and temporal constraints of subtitling as a translation mode. Parameter number (6) refers to the co-text, that is, to the interplay that exists between different parts of the dialogue; and number (7), the ‘subtitling situation’, encompasses a series of considerations that have to do with the ST, the TT audience, the broadcasting or commercial distributors of the translated programme, as well as other pragmatic factors. In Pedersen’s (*ibid.*: 106) words, “[t]he parameters all apply to operational norms: the first six apply to textual linguistic norms, whereas the last one applies to matricial norms”.

Pedersen’s (*ibid.*) taxonomy includes, to a larger or lesser extent, all the usual categories comprised in recent classifications postulated by other authors, although the way in which such taxonomy is organised comes partly determined by the nature of his own corpus. For the purposes of the present study, a more general but equally systematic taxonomy that can be adjusted in order to analyse the translation of GSRs is the one put forward by Díaz Cintas and Remael (2007: 202-207), which is made up of the following nine items:

- 1) Loan, where the ST word is borrowed from the ST language and incorporated into the translation.
- 2) Calque is a literal translation that sounds unnatural in the TL. Díaz Cintas and Remael (2007: 202) give the example of “*Secretario de Estado* in Spanish for Secretary of State, when *Ministro de Asuntos Exteriores* [Minister of Foreign Affairs] would be a more common and transparent title”.
- 3) Explicitation is a strategy whereby the translation explains more than the original, usually by means of hypernyms (generalization) or hyponyms (specification).
- 4) Substitution is similar to explicitation and refers to the use of a hypernym or hyponym for space limitations rather than lack of a corresponding word in the TL.
- 5) Transposition consists in the replacement of a CSR belonging to the ST culture with one belonging to the TT culture.
- 6) Lexical recreation, as can be deduced from the wording, involves the creation of a neologism on the basis of the ST (invented) word.
- 7) Compensation aims to make up for translation loss in an exchange by “overtranslating or adding something in another” (Díaz Cintas and Remael 2007: 206).
- 8) Omission is not much of a strategy, as Díaz Cintas and Remael (2007: 206) point out, although it is often imposed by stringent space and time constraints.
- 9) Addition is encountered usually in the form of supplementary information which is added to the TT in order to make the CSR more comprehensible to the TT audience.

## 4.7 Taxonomy of translation strategies for GSRs and GSAs

The taxonomy proposed in this thesis for the analysis of the subtitling of GSRs consists of Díaz Cintas and Remael's (*ibid.*) original nine strategies with six adjustments: (1) literal translation has been added; (2) the concept of 'substitution' has been modified and merged with the translation strategy of 'transposition'; (3) the translation strategy of 'erasure' has been added and distinguished from that of omission; (4) the translation strategy of compensation has been eliminated; (5) the translation strategy called paraphrase has been added; and (6) the concept of 'addition' has been modified. The complete taxonomy of translation strategies for GSRs is listed below and is followed by a discussion of the way in which these strategies have been defined in Díaz Cintas and Remael's (*ibid.*) work and/or the other aforementioned classifications of translation strategies for CSRs. Some examples have been included with the aim of clarifying the practical use of each strategy:

1. Loan
2. Calque
3. Literal translation
4. Explicitation
5. Substitution
6. Paraphrase
7. Lexical recreation
8. Deletion: including omission and erasure
9. Addition

### 1. *Loan*

Newmark (1988) refers to it as transference and Mailhac (1996) as cultural borrowing, while Leppihalme (1997) and Pedersen (2011) prefer the term retention. Yet, essentially, the definitions of loan in the above-mentioned

taxonomies of translation strategies for CSRs tend to converge on the idea of borrowing and incorporating the ST word or expression into the TT as it is. Loan requires minimal effort by the translator as the SL word or expression is retained in the TT, usually with the same spelling and either italicised or between inverted commas. Examples given by the above-mentioned authors include the Russian *dacha* (Newmark, 1988: 81) and the English ‘punk’ (Mailhac, 1996: 140).

According to Newmark (1988: 81), this translation strategy should almost exclusively be reserved for the transfer of CSRs, while Ivir (1987: 37) considers borrowing a translation strategy “that assures a very precise transmission of cultural information, provided that the knowledge of the extralinguistic reality in question has been assured in some other way”. In other words, the caveat for the efficiency of borrowing is that the loaned term(s) must be comprehensible to the target audience, as in the case of intercultural CSRs whose meaning is clear from the context or feedback effect (Nedergaard-Larsen, 1993).

## 2. *Calque*

Calque consists of a literal translation that sounds somewhat unnatural in the TL (Díaz Cintas and Remael, 2007: 202). Similarly to the case of loan and the other most SL-oriented translation strategy included in the present taxonomy – i.e. literal translation – calque can be more or less comprehensible to the target audience depending on the level of transparency of the calqued TL solution. As a translation of the country’s legislature, for example, “[a]n English or American public with no prior knowledge of Dutch history will find the English calque ‘States-General’ for the Dutch *Staten-Generaal*, quite mysterious” (*ibid.*).

## 3. *Literal translation*

Literal translation is a word for word translation which in this work is understood in its broadest meaning as “one-to-one translation”, allowing for grammatical adjustments (Newmark, 1988: 69-70). The broad conception of “one-to-one translation” includes word to word, clause to clause and sentence to sentence (*ibid.*). Therefore, once applied to the analysis of translation strategies for GSRs, this definition also caters for the literal translation of many GSAs, which may be longer than single word GSRs. A useful example is provided by Pedersen (2011), whose concept of direct translation is rather similar to Newmark’s (1988) description of this translation strategy. Pedersen (2011: 84-85) cites an exchange from the film *Meet Joe Black* (Martin Brest, 1998), in which the original ‘tea dance twenties’ is translated into Swedish as *20-talets tedanser* [twenties tea dances]. As the author notes, the translation is still literal, although the change in the noun phrase from ‘twenties’ to ‘dances’ has the effect of grammatically adjusting the word order of the CSR to the TL.

On the other hand, literal translation, even within the broadened scope of the above-mentioned definition, does not seem like an accurate description of the strategy used for the transfer of longer GSAs, as the aforementioned exchange between Adriana and Paolo from *I Knew Her Well* (see example 4.2), which are sometimes translated literally, but may also include some level of subtitling reduction or reformulation. For these translation instances, involving a lower level of subtitling reduction and rephrasal, I use the sub-category of quasi-literal translation, whereas the translation examples in which a higher level of reformulation can be observed are classed as instances of paraphrase, illustrated in more detail below.

#### 4. *Explicitation*

The twofold strategy of explicitation defined by Díaz Cintas and Remael (2007: 203) as translation by “specification, using a hyponym, or by generalization, using

a hypernym”, is not included in any of the above-mentioned general taxonomies of translation strategies for CSRs. In the specific field of AVT, on the other hand, generalisation is a regular feature of the classifications devised for subtitling (Nedergaard-Larsen, 1993; Díaz Cintas and Remael, 2007; Pedersen, 2011), while specification is not included in Nedergaard-Larsen’s (1993) taxonomy and Pedersen (2011) uses this translation strategy for the supplementation of explanatory information (cf. “addition”, Díaz Cintas and Remael, 2007: 207).

The two forms of explicitation referred to in this work, i.e. specification and generalisation, consist in the transfer of the SC CSR by using respectively a more specific or a more general TL word or expression. To take one of Pedersen’s (2011) examples, ‘cheese’ can be translated by using a more specific word or concept such as ‘cheddar’, while, conversely, ‘cheddar’ can be generalised to ‘cheese’. In any case, specification by hyponym seems to be much less popular in AVT than its twin translation strategy, i.e. translation by hypernym. Indeed, in her study of the translation of CSRs in US and British audiovisual products dubbed into Italian, Ranzato (2013: 107) found only sporadic instances of what she calls “concretisation by hyponym” compared to the cases of generalisation. Going back to the previous example, the reason for the lower frequency of this translation strategy compared to generalisation is, according to Pedersen (2011: 88), that “[b]y chunking up, you retain the reference, which is not always the case when you chunk down, as cheddar (in its original sense) is always a cheese, so to speak, whereas all cheeses are not cheddars”.

##### *5. Substitution*

Díaz Cintas and Remael (*ibid.*: 204) define substitution as “a variant of explicitation” dictated by the constraints of subtitling rather than the lack of a corresponding word in the TL. While there are no such cases of substitution in the Comedy Italian Style corpus, the films analysed show frequent translation

instances of the type of substitution described by both Pedersen (2011) and Ranzato (2013). With reference to his Scandinavian corpus, Pedersen (2011: 89) defines substitution as the act of “removing the ST ECR and replacing it with something else, either a different ECR from the SC or the TC (Cultural Substitution), or something completely different that fits the situation (Situational Substitution)”. In the case of the above-mentioned *Staten-Generaal*, this type of substitution would entail the replacement of the SC CSR with the TC ‘Parliament’ when translating into British English, or ‘Congress’ when translating into American English.

Similarly to Pedersen (2011), Ranzato (2013: 107-108) also observes in her corpus “a high incidence of forms of substitution of an element with another one which may be longer or shorter than the original term and may even have only a remote link with it, or none at all”. Furthermore, Ranzato (*ibid.*) points out that, while some of these substitutions can be justified through the technical constraints of dubbing, other similar occurrences appear “hardly explainable”. One of Ranzato’s (*ibid.*: 109) examples is from the British TV series *Life on Mars* (Graham, Jordan and Pharoah, 2006-2007), where the reference to Britt Ekland, an attractive Swedish actress living in Britain in the 1960s and 1970s, is used to temporally situate the series in those times. The Swedish actress is substituted in the Italian translation with *la regina madre* [the Queen Mother], which has very little to do with the original, either in terms of time reference or sexualised characterisation, as the reference is uttered by a man who treats Britt Ekland as a sexual object. Hence, following Pedersen (2011) and Ranzato (2013), substitution covers here both the replacement of a SC CSR with a TC/IC CSR or a TL solution that has little or nothing at all to do with the original reference, other than fitting the situation.

## 6. Paraphrase

With regard to the Comedy Italian Style corpus, paraphrase is intended as a reformulation of the ST CSR, following the definition of the scholars who have included it in their taxonomies of strategies for the linguistic transfer of CSRs (Newmark, 1988; Nedergaard-Larsen, 1993; Leppihalme, 1997). One of the examples of paraphrase analysed by Nedergaard-Larsen (*ibid.*) constitutes a useful instance of reformulation to clarify more specifically how this translation strategy is intended by the above-mentioned authors. The instantiation she uses to illustrate the strategy of paraphrase is extracted from the French film *L'homme de pouvoir* [the man of power] (Frydland, 1985) and its subtitled Danish version. The expression used in the original dialogue is *l'oral de l'ENA* [the oral of Ena], a French educational institution which trains students who wish to pursue a career as civil service officials. In the Danish subtitles, the CSR has been paraphrased into *eksamen i statskundskab* or 'oral exam in political science', thus reformulating the original in order to clarify its meaning.

In the context of the Comedy Italian Style corpus, however, instances of long GSAs involving considerable reformulation are also categorised as examples of paraphrase. Indeed, although the reformulation may not always be based on the need for clarification, the translation strategy which, overall, most accurately describes the translator's procedure is still paraphrase, when a considerable portion of the ST has been rephrased by the subtitler.

### 7. *Lexical recreation*

Of the authors who have worked on taxonomies of translation strategies for CSRs reviewed in this chapter, only Ivir (1987), Mailhac (1996) and Díaz Cintas and Remael (2007) include a translation strategy called lexical creation (Ivir, 1987; Mailhac, 1996) or recreation (Díaz Cintas and Remael, 2007). More specifically, Ivir (1987) and Mailhac (1996) see lexical creation as the translator's creative effort to fill in the TL cultural gap, as in the above-mentioned *poisson-frites* for

'fish and chips' (*ibid.*). Díaz Cintas and Remael (2007), on the other hand, approach lexical recreation from the viewpoint of a SL neologism which is recreated in the TL through another invented term, as in the translation of the English 'weird shit-o-meter' with *rarezametro* [oddity-metre] in the Spanish subtitle. In this work, the label of lexical recreation is used to refer to the implementation of a creative translation strategy for the SC CSR, regardless of whether this is done in order to recreate the original neologism or just as a creative solution to deal with SC CSR.

### 8. Deletion

Most researchers who have addressed the issues of CSR, as well as the strategies which can be used for their translation, refer to this translation strategy as omission. Leppihalme (1997: 25), for example, stresses that a "translator may [...] choose omission responsibly, after rejecting all alternative strategies, or irresponsibly, to save him/herself the trouble of looking up something s/he does not know". In any case, omission in subtitling "is sometimes unavoidable either because of space-time limitations or because the target language does not have the corresponding term" (Díaz Cintas and Remael, 2007: 206). These two statements sum up much of the debate on omission as a translation strategy for CSRs in AVT: it is certainly undesirable and best avoided and it should only be adopted responsibly as a last resort. On the other hand, the technical constraints of the translation medium sometimes make it an inevitable choice and, on occasion, a better solution than other strategies such as the literal translation of a SC CSR like the Italian *buon appetito* [good appetite] which attracts unnecessary attention to itself (Ivir, 1987: 44).

In order to distinguish between the different scenarios mentioned by these authors, this translation strategy is referred to as deletion, in the context of the present thesis, and is divided into two sub-strategies, that is, omission and

erasure. Omission is intended as an instance of deletion of the ST CSR, which can be justified with the technical constraints of the translation mode or the lack of a TL corresponding term, following the above-mentioned definition by Díaz Cintas and Remael (2007). On the other hand, differently from omission, erasure represents an instance of deletion which is not warranted either by the technical constraints of subtitling or by the lack of a TL corresponding term or expression. Erasure is here understood as a translation strategy which deletes the original CSR for no obvious reasons, rather like Ranzato's (2013: 111) concept of elimination in dubbing. A useful example to illustrate the difference between these different types of deletion is the reference to a Sicilian dessert wine called *zibibbo*, occurring in the scene of the film *Seduced and Abandoned* in which Peppino is visiting his fiancée, Matilde. Once Peppino has been welcomed by the paterfamilias, Don Vincenzo, the latter first tells Matilde to offer his fiancé some liquor, then more specifically suggests to try the 'new wine', i.e. the *zibibbo*. The subtitler has translated the slightly dialectal *zibibbu novu* [new zibibbo] with 'new stuff', which can be seen as an instance of generalisation, based on the previous reference to the general *liquore* [liquor], or as an omission, justified by the lack of a TL corresponding term. On the other hand, if the liquor in question had been *Martini*, this translation strategy could be regarded as an instance of erasure, since the concept and the related Italian term also exist in American English, although they may well be less known than in Italy.

### 9. Addition

Similarly to borrowing, addition is one of the fundamental strategies included in all the above-mentioned taxonomies albeit with slightly different wordings and meanings. Generally speaking, addition refers to some kind of supplementary and explanatory information, but in the context of Comedy Italian Style this translation strategy has been modified to make it relevant to the linguistic transfer of GSRs. In the films under scrutiny, it is not so much addition in the form

of supplementary information which can be observed, as the addition or creation of a GSR in the TT which has no direct counterpart in the original. Hence, since this strategy refers to a specific translation procedure in the context of Comedy Italian Style, which has not been discussed by any of the above-mentioned scholars, detailed examples will be provided and examined in the analysis of the corpus.

In conclusion, it may be useful to summarise this chapter devoted to the methodological framework of DTS and to the topic of culture-specific references in TS in general and AVT in particular. After illustrating Toury's (1980, 1995/2012) theoretical framework based on the study of translation norms, the discussion has concentrated on different definitions of culture-specific references and the various taxonomies of CSRs that have been proposed in AVT by various authors. Particular focus is laid on Ranzato's (2013) classification which has been borrowed and adjusted for the purposes of this thesis. Following a similar approach to the one adopted when exploring the various CSR taxonomies, the discussion has subsequently proceeded to review the main classifications of translation strategies used for the transfer of CSRs in TS in general and AVT in particular. Finally, on the basis of Díaz Cintas and Remael's (2007) contributions on the subject, a working taxonomy of translation strategies for GSRs and GSAs has been proposed and the different strategies included in said taxonomy have been illustrated with relevant examples. Equipped with the instruments needed to analyse gender stereotypes and to classify the translation strategies used for their interlingual transfer, the discussion will proceed to the corpus analysis in Chapter 5.

# Chapter 5

## Corpus Analysis

### 5.1 Introduction

The previous chapters have laid the foundations of the present study by reviewing the technical features of subtitling as an AVT mode (Chapter 2), by situating GSs and gendered translation theories in the context of Comedy Italian Style (Chapter 3) and by proposing heuristic taxonomies both for the classification and translation of GSRs/GSAs (Chapter 4). These theoretical foundations and analytical tools will now be utilised to examine GSs both from a quantitative (macroanalysis) as well as a qualitative point of view (microanalysis). The following sections therefore provide information about the frequency with which the different translation strategies have been used in the whole corpus and in every particular film, as well as the impact that these translation strategies have on the resulting solutions – i.e. whether there is a general tendency toward reinforcement, similar impact or softening of GSs. Illustrations of the typical use of each translation strategy are also provided in the form of some relevant examples. Taking the whole corpus of the seven films as the main analytical construct, the investigation then focuses on a specific sample of GSs of particular interest from the point of view of the translation and manipulation of gender identities.

Following the above-mentioned order, the next section starts by looking at general trends and concrete examples for each of the various translation strategies activated in the subtitling of the Comedy Italian Style corpus. However, before proceeding to the quantitative analysis of GSs, it may be useful to provide the readers with some information on the different stages of the corpus analysis, which eventually led to the results detailed below. Following the corpus selection,

according to the criteria illustrated in the introduction, I acquired the seven Criterion DVDs making up such corpus and proceeded to rip the subtitles in SRT format, containing both the text of the subtitles as well as the timecodes, which I then converted into Word files. The next stage consisted in transcribing the original Italian speech for each one of the seven comedies. To this aim, I went back to the Word files containing the subtitle translations of the films and I transcribed the original utterances next to the corresponding subtitles, including any original words or sentences which had been omitted from the TT translation. Subsequently, I analysed the resulting bilingual versions in order to identify the segments which contained the ST GSs, as well as their English rendition, and copied and pasted these extracts to individual “analysis documents” including the ST, its literal translation into English, the TT and the subtitles timecodes. Finally, I carried out the analysis proper, by identifying the exact nature of the GSs, e.g. *cornuto* [cuckold], the category it belonged to according to the framework illustrated in Chapter 4, e.g. SC GSR in the case of *cornuto*, the translation strategy used in the corresponding subtitles and the perceived impact that such strategy may have on the TT audience, that is, softening, reinforcement or similar impact. I organised all this information in tables, which also included a brief summary of the film context in which the occurrence of a particular GS could be found. The format of the analysis tables can be observed below in the first instance of literal translation, which will be examined in detail in the following pages as part of the quantitative analysis:

Example 5.1 – *Divorce Italian Style*

| <p><b>Context:</b> Don Ferdinando's wife, Rosalia, has left the baron and fled with her lover. In this scene, we see a Communist politician from Northern Italy asking an assembly of local people to give an objective assessment of Rosalia's behaviour, now – he argues – that Southern Italy has also tackled the issues of female emancipation. The choral response he receives from the assembly is contained in the following, unequivocal, one-word subtitle, that reflects the markedly dialectal term:</p> |                               |
|--|-------------------------------|
| Original dialogue  | English subtitles             |
| 01:27:15,430 --> 01:27:17,455  | 01:27:15,430 --> 01:27:17,455 |
| <b>All:</b> Bottana!   | Whore!                        |

|                             |                        |
|-----------------------------|------------------------|
| [Whore!]                    |                        |
| <b>Gender stereotype</b>    | IC GSR Bottana [Whore] |
| <b>Translation strategy</b> | Literal translation    |
| <b>Resulting impact</b>     | Similar                |

Finally, I collated the different documents containing the analysis of each film in one single file, that is, Appendix 1, which includes all instances of GSs observed in the Comedy Italian Style corpus together with their English subtitle translations and the above-mentioned analysis details.

The different temporal parameters used when subtitling for television or for the DVD industry, also depending on different target audiences, have been discussed in Chapter 2, where the tendency to increase the reading speed in professional practice up to 180 wpm or 17 cps for DVD was observed (Díaz Cintas and Remael, 2007). Considering that the target audience for the Comedy Italian Style corpus DVDs analysed in the present thesis is the US (region 1), where subtitled foreign films have to compete with Hollywood's dominance of the English movie market and viewers may not be particularly accustomed to reading subtitles, the technical reasoning behind the analysis of all the examples presented below has been based on a reading speed of 15 cps, or some 160 wpm, which is still in keeping with current practice in the industry (*ibid.*; González-Iglesias González, 2011; Bywood, 2016). In addition to the examples presented in the analysis, reference will be made to further translation instances compiled in Appendix 1, which includes all the cases of GSs found in the present corpus, and Appendix 2, which contains the examples of ideological manipulation. Since Appendix 1 consists of the whole corpus, examples are numbered by film and referred to with an abbreviated form of the film title,<sup>10</sup> a column and the number(s), for example, BDoMS: 21, 22, refers to translation instances 21 and 22 from *Big Deal on Madonna Street*. Appendix 2, on the other hand, consists of a

<sup>10</sup> The abbreviations of the film titles are the following ones: BDoMS (*Big Deal on Madonna Street*), DIS (*Divorce Italian Style*), TEL (*The Easy Life*), M (*Mafioso*), TO (*The Organizer*), SaA (*Seduced and Abandoned*), and IKHW (*I Knew Her Well*).

limited number of translation instances which will be referred to simply with a capital "A" and the example number(s) in the discussion below. Hence, A21, 22, refer to translation instances 21 and 22 in Appendix 2.

## 5.2 Macroanalysis

By first looking at the pie chart below in Fig. 5.1, showing the percentage of use for each translation strategy, it is obvious that three translation strategies account for more than half of the instances encountered in the corpus: literal translation (37%, 236 cases), explicitation (15.9%, 101 cases) and deletion (15.3%, 98 cases), which includes omission (10.8%, 69 cases) and erasure (4.5%, 29 cases). The other strategies most frequently activated in the corpus under analysis are, in decreasing order, substitution (11.5%, 73 cases), followed by paraphrase (8.5%, 54 cases), addition (6.3%, 40 cases), calque (3.1%, 20 cases), loan (2.2%, 14 cases) and lexical recreation (0.2%, 1 case), which fill up the rest of the pie chart with less significant shares. The exact number of instances in which a translation strategy has been used in the corpus is also indicated in the chart, whereas the number of cases of reinforcement (R), similar impact (SI) and softening (S), together with the above-mentioned percentages, are shown next to each strategy in the list presented on the right-hand side:

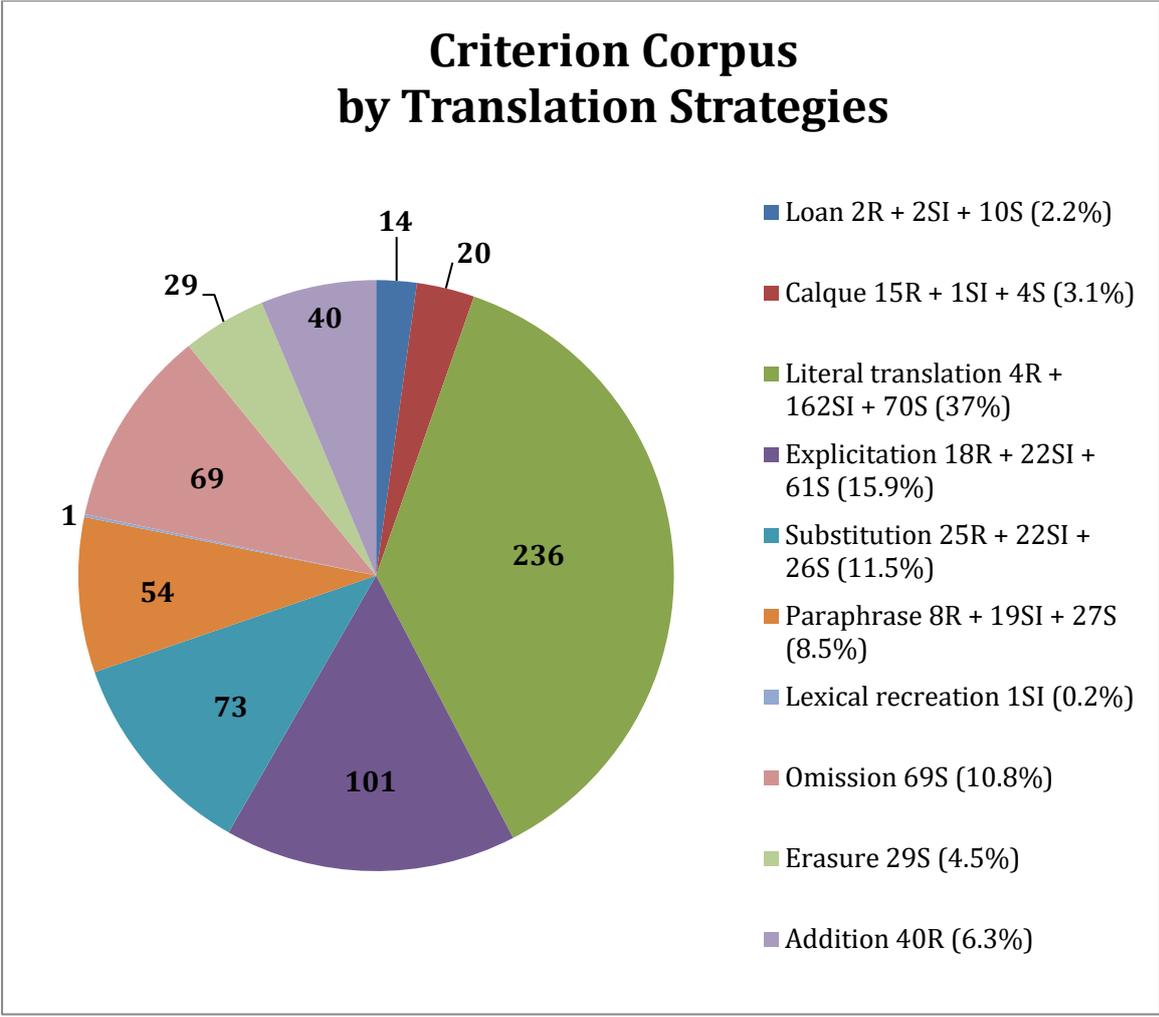


Figure 5.1 – Frequency of use for each translation strategy

In terms of the general impact to which the different translation strategies lead, loan, explication, substitution, paraphrase and deletion tend toward the softening of GSs, whereas literal translation, and lexical recreation more often than not generate a similar impact to the original and calque and addition are strategies that tend to facilitate reinforcement.

The overall trends detected in the subtitling of the Comedy Italian Style corpus from the point of view of the resulting impact are displayed in Figure 5.2 and show that the subtitling of GSs, through the various strategies implemented by the subtitlers, leads to softening in 46.5% (296) of the translation instances, to a similar impact in 35.9% (229) of the cases and to reinforcement in the

remaining 17.6% (112) translation examples, while more details about the specific trends relevant to individual translation strategies are provided in the macroanalysis below:

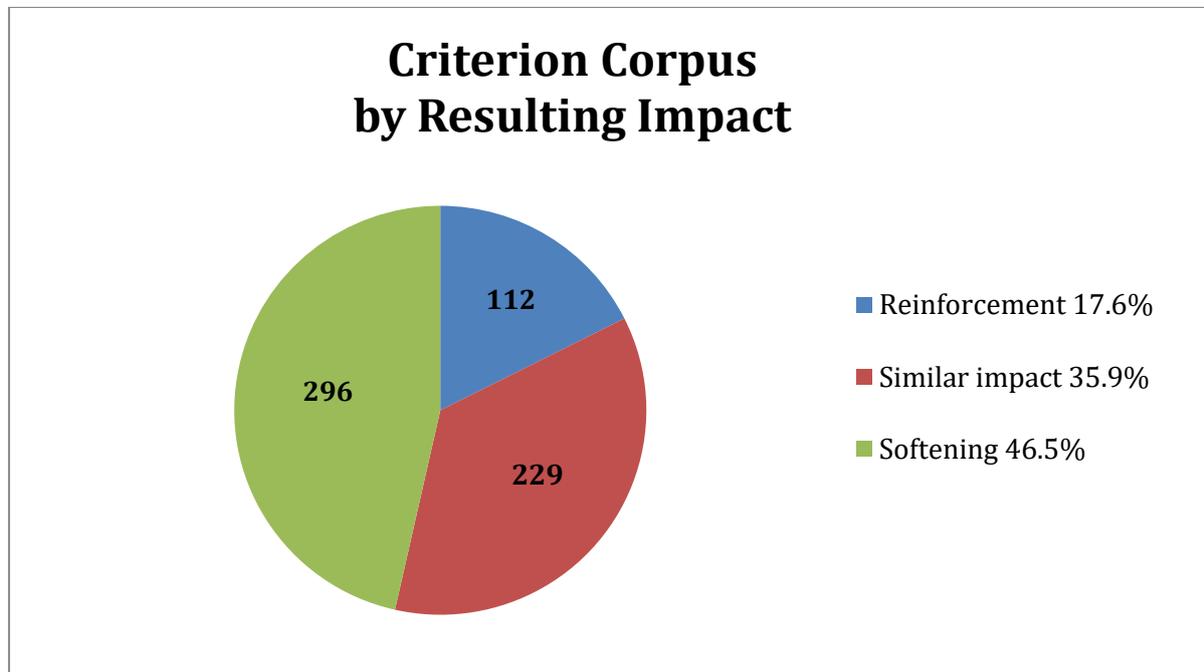


Figure 5.2 – Frequency of translated Gs by resulting impact

The first overview obtained from the general data shows two fundamental facts about the trends regarding the use of SL- or TL-oriented translation strategies when subtitling Gs in the Comedy Italian Style corpus. The first trend is associated with the significant use of literal translation (37%) and explicitation (15.9%), two SL-oriented translation strategies, which account for more than half of the instances encountered in the corpus (52.9%). If calque (3.1%) and loan (2.2%) are added to the total of the above-mentioned translation strategies, the percentage of translation instances accounted for by SL-oriented strategies rises to 58.2%. The remaining translation strategies, which are traditionally perceived as being closer to the TL and consist of deletion (15.3%), substitution (11.5%), paraphrase (8.5%), addition (6.3%) and lexical recreation (0.2%), add up to a sizeable 41.8%. What these two trends tell us at this point is that subtitling is confirmed as a translation mode that remains closer to the SL, as various

researchers have previously indicated (Ulrych, 2000; Sánchez, 2004; Ramière, 2007; De Marco, 2012), but, in the context of the Comedy Italian Style corpus, subtitling seems to function as a translation mode in which TL-oriented translation strategies also play an important role in the transfer of GSs.

Another pertinent caveat at this early stage is that, considering the variety of findings obtained by different scholars who have so far explored the field of translation and gender, including the thorny issues of ideological manipulation in AVT (Joyce, 1995; Baumgarten, 2005; Feral, 2011a, 2011b; De Marco, 2012), it may be useful to point out that these general trends represented in Figure 5.2 above are influenced by a number of factors and reasons, which will be interpreted in the following pages in order to achieve a balanced and meaningful conclusion. The discussion is structured according to the nine individual translation strategies.

### *5.2.1 Loan*

Loan, or the borrowing in the TT of a SL word or expression, is one of the least used translation strategies, with only 14 instances of a total of 637. Loan represents a low percentage of the corpus under analysis (2.2%), especially when compared to other AVT studies conducted on the translation of CSRs, such as the one carried out by Ranzato (2013), in which loan represents percentages close to and above 50%, depending on the different TV series analysed in her corpus. In Pedersen's (2011) empirical analysis the percentage is slightly lower, hovering around the 40% mark. Since both Ranzato (2013) and Pedersen (2011) work from the dominant language/culture (English) into the weak one (Italian and Swedish/Danish, respectively), it is significant that the translations they analyse draw so much from the original, whereas the incidence of loan in the English subtitling of Comedy Italian Style is comparatively almost insignificant.

In a similar way to Pedersen's (2011) and Ranzato's (2013) results on the use of loans, the data on this translation strategy from the Comedy Italian Style corpus seem to exemplify the dynamics described by Even-Zohar (1978) and Venuti (1995/2008) with reference to dominant and weak languages and literatures. In his theoretical framework about the literary polysystem, Even-Zohar (1978) postulates that weak or peripheral literatures, such as the Italian one, are generally prone to accept innovations from a dominant literature, whereas for dominant or central literatures, such as the US one, the permeation is not so straightforward and it is the lack of suitable models or the presence of an artistic vacuum which favour the acceptance of innovation from other cultures. Taking Even-Zohar's (*ibid.*) approach one step further by applying the Polysystem Theory as a theoretical framework to the field of AVT, Díaz Cintas (2004) has successfully argued how the above-mentioned principles, which govern the relationships between different literary systems, can be made relevant to the artistic and linguistic interchange of audiovisual productions between different cultures.

From the perspective of the Polysystem Theory, this discrepancy between the openness of the Italian culture to embrace loans from English, as illustrated in Ranzato's (2013) and Pedersen's (2011) studies and, conversely, the seeming resistance of English to the influence of loans from Italian detected in the corpus under analysis seem a case in point which confirms Even-Zohar's (1978) research hypotheses about the position and relative weight of weak and dominant languages and their cultural products. In addition, this perspective fits in well with Venuti's (1995/2008) theory about the Anglocentric approach to translation based on the concept of the translator's invisibility, i.e. the prevalent discourse in academic circles and in professional practice that a 'good' translation is one in which the foreignness of the original work, including potential linguistic innovations, has been erased in favour of a TT that sounds as if it had been originally composed in the target language.

In the Comedy Italian Style corpus, the incidence of loan is mainly limited to three significant translation instances from the macronanalytical and the microanalytical points of view. One of the examples of Italian GSs borrowed in the English subtitles, which is analysed in further detail in section 5.3.1, can be found in the film *Mafioso*, where the Italian term *cornuto* [cuckold] (M: 23, 37, 39, 40, 68) has been directly used in the translation. Another telling example from the same film consists in the use of the Italian *picciotto* (M: 46, 47, 63), which designates a young mafioso at the service of powerful mafia bosses. The third and last example is the loan of the well-known Italian substantive *mamma* [mum] in *Big Deal on Madonna Street* (BDoMS: 41, 42). Interestingly, most of these loans do not lead to the reinforcement of GSs, as the Italian words *cornuto* and *picciotto* refer to culture-specific GSs which, when borrowed in the subtitle translation, may not be fully understood by at least some members of the audience. Hence, although in quantitative terms, loan can be said to have limited significance when translating from Italian into English, it is an interesting translation strategy from the qualitative point of view, as further investigated in the microanalysis presented in section 5.3.1.

### 5.2.2 Calque

Like loan, calque is a marginal translation strategy from the quantitative point view, accounting for a mere 3.1% of the corpus and 20 translation examples, of which 15 lead to reinforcement, 1 to similar impact and 4 to softening. In the Comedy Italian Style corpus, calque is generally used for the translation of academic and professional titles, which is one of the categories identified by Pedersen (2007) in his taxonomy of CSRs. Concrete examples of these are the Italian *dottore*, translated by means of the abbreviation 'Dr', and, most frequently, *professore*, transferred as 'Professor', although there are also a few instances of calque of other GSs such as the Italian *porco*, which refers to a lascivious man

often accused of indulging in promiscuous behaviour or being unfaithful to his partner and is translated as ‘pig’. What is interesting about these calques is that they all result in mistranslations and a considerable degree of manipulation of the original GS, a dimension that will be further assessed in the microanalysis.

### 5.2.3 Literal translation

Accounting for the translation of 236 GS instances, equal to 37% of the examples in the films under analysis, and leading generally, though not always, to a similar impact in terms of gender representation in the TT and TC, literal translation is the most frequently used translation strategy in the whole corpus. The pervasiveness of such translation strategy could be partly explained by the fact that a considerable number of the GSs are intercultural, which results in a more recurrent use of literal translation when compared to the above-mentioned studies by Pedersen (2011) into subtitling, in which this strategy is activated approximately in 7% to 8% of cases, and Ranzato (2013) into dubbing, where percentages vary between 2%, 4% and 8%, depending again on the different TV series analysed by the latter researcher. Examples of such IC GSs that have been translated literally are *puttana* subtitled as ‘whore’ in *Divorce Italian Style* (DIS: 80) and *Seduced and Abandoned* (SaA: 26, 58, 82, 83, 84, 98, 100, 102, 110), *zitella* as ‘spinster’ in *Seduced and Abandoned* and *Big Deal on Madonna Street* (SaA: 33; BDoMS: 46) and *squadrina* as ‘tramp’ in *Divorce Italian Style* (DIS: 37, 38, 54), from which the following example 5.1 is drawn:

Example 5.1 – *Divorce Italian Style*

| <p><b>Context:</b> Don Ferdinando’s wife, Rosalia, has left the baron and fled with her lover. In this scene, we see a Communist politician from Northern Italy asking an assembly of local people to give an objective assessment of Rosalia’s behaviour, now – he argues – that Southern Italy has also tackled the issues of female emancipation. The choral response he receives from the assembly is contained in the following, unequivocal, one-word subtitle, that reflects the markedly dialectal term:</p> |                               |
|--|-------------------------------|
| Original dialogue  | English subtitles             |
| 01:27:15,430 --> 01:27:17,455  | 01:27:15,430 --> 01:27:17,455 |

|                                  |                        |
|----------------------------------|------------------------|
| <b>All:</b> Bottana!<br>[Whore!] | Whore!                 |
| <b>Gender stereotype</b>         | IC GSR Bottana [Whore] |
| <b>Translation strategy</b>      | Literal translation    |
| <b>Resulting impact</b>          | Similar                |

This is a revealing example of the regnant double standards, according to which male and female adulterers were judged differently in the Sicilian society of the 1960s. As discussed in Chapter 4, men’s greatest aspiration in this type of society is to gain the reputation of a *gallo* (Reich, 2004), that is, a sexually hyperactive Don Juan, while zealously watching the women in their family in order to preserve their honour. Apart from the absurdity of such competing and contradictory aspirations, it is worth noting that, in this peculiar and unsustainable social system, women are, in any case, at a disadvantage and when they transgress the gender rules, they are automatically branded as ‘whores’, as can be seen in the eloquent response of the above-mentioned assembly on Rosalia’s conduct.

Literal translation is also an interesting translation strategy for the different kind of repercussions it can have in the TT and TC. Indeed, although this strategy tends to generate a similar impact in 68.6% (162) of cases, the numerical values presented in Fig. 5.1 above show that there are also many cases of literal translations leading to softening (29.7%, 70 cases) and a limited number of translation instances in which the solutions lead to reinforcement (1.7%, 4 cases). In order to be able to meaningfully interpret these results, it should be remembered that SC GSs such as *cornuto* [cuckold], *onore* [honour] or *schifosa* [disgusting woman] are sociocultural constructs, which are clearly identifiable for members of the SC, but not necessarily as easy to grasp for the members of the TC audience. It is true that viewers will be able to partly understand these concepts thanks to the information which can be evinced from the immediate filmic context or gathered from the different channels of communication, but, as

postulated in Chapter 3, a SC GS is a form of SC CSR, i.e. “a cultural entity which, due to its distance from the target culture, is characterized by a sufficient degree of opacity for the target reader to constitute a [translation] problem” (Mailhac, 1996: 134). Hence, just as SC CSRs that have been translated literally may sound opaque for the TC readership, the literal translation of culture-specific GSs in Comedy Italian Style may be difficult to appreciate for the TC audience. This is why GSs such as *cornuto*, *onore* or *schifosa* translated by means of this strategy as ‘cuckold’, ‘honour’ and ‘disgusting woman’ respectively, have been classed as instances of softening. The potential lack of transparency of this translation, strategy and the unidiomatic solutions it may lead to, also seem to be the reason why the professionals sometimes opt for alternative strategies such as deletion (DIS: 62, 63, 82), explicitation (DIS: 7, 96; SaA: 66) or substitution (A25, 29, 30, 32, 33) in the case of similar GSs, rather than a literal rendition.

Considering that literal translation is a SL-oriented strategy, and given the potential difficulties that this entails for the audience of the TT, the high incidence of this translation strategy in the Comedy Italian Style corpus seems to confirm the assumptions made in the introduction to this thesis, in which reference is made to the traditional perception of subtitling as an AVT mode which remains closer to the ST rather than the TT and audience, as discussed by authors like Ulrych (2000), Sánchez (2004), Ramière (2007) and De Marco (2012), among others. These early findings will be compared and contrasted with the results yielded by the microanalysis conducted in section 5.3, so that a comprehensive understanding of this phenomenon can be achieved before drawing any firmer conclusions.

#### *5.2.4 Explicitation*

Explicitation consists in exchanging a ST GS with a more general or more specific one in the TT and constitutes the second most popular translation strategy traced

in the subtitling of the Comedy Italian Style corpus, accounting for 15.9% (101) of all GS translation instances. In terms of the way in which this procedure contributes to the manipulation of GSs, the instantiations of softening (60.4%, 61) are more frequent than the ones which lead to a similar impact (21.8%, 22). The latter are in turn more frequent than the translation instances that result in reinforcement (17.8%, 18) in the TT.

Looking back at the taxonomies of strategies used for the translation of CSRs, reviewed in Chapter 3, specification is a subtitling strategy mentioned only by Díaz Cintas and Remael (2007) as a variant of explicitation, which usually resorts to the use of hyponyms. The term is later adapted by Ranzato (2013), who points out its very low frequency when presenting the data from her corpus of US and British TV series dubbed into Italian. Generalisation, on the other hand, is a useful strategy for the transposition of SC GSs which do not exist in the TC but can be explicitated into a more general, often intercultural GS.

In the great majority of cases that form this corpus, i.e. 85 translation examples out of 101 total translation instances (84.2%), explicitation has materialised in instances of generalisation. Typical examples of the usage of such translation strategy can be found in *Divorce Italian Style* and *Seduced and Abandoned*, where the quintessentially Sicilian concept of *onore* [honour] is translated in different ways, including the literal translation 'honor', but also by means of generalised references to 'respect' (DIS: 7, 96) or the 'good name' of a family (SaA: 59, 61). Another interesting example in *Seduced and Abandoned* is the generalisation of the adjective *illibata* [undefiled], often used with reference to Agnese (SaA: 42, 60, 62, 63, 64, 65, 85). In this film, the whole affair of the Ascalone family's *onore* is dependent on the virginity of Agnese, the young woman 'seduced and abandoned' by Peppino. In order to safeguard his *onore*, the family's patriarch, Don Vincenzo, desperately tries to arrange Agnese's wedding with Peppino. But, in a turn of events both hilarious and tragic as is typical of

Comedy Italian Style, Peppino refuses to marry Agnese because, in his own words, he does not want *una buttana*<sup>11</sup> *in moglie* [a whore as a wife]. Such development signifies the fact that Agnese has lost the prize that all Sicilian women are expected to bring to the groom at the wedding (Günsberg, 2005), as she is not *illibata* [undefiled]. This particular GS represents a core Sicilian concept which means much more than just virginity and is closer to the idea of a madonna, that makes the translation of the term with the adjective ‘pure’ or the substantive ‘virgin’ sound like a generalisation. As can be seen from the examples of *onore*, subtitled as ‘good name’, and *illibata* as ‘virgin’, generalisation often softens these entrenched GSs because it eliminates their culture-specific, complex connotations.

### 5.2.5 Substitution

In these pages, substitution is intended as any replacement of a SC/IC GS with a TC/IC GS, including those cases in which the choice of the TL solution, which is clearly different to the SL, cannot be explained on the basis of the technical constraints of subtitling or the lack of a TL corresponding term. In general, substitution is not a very frequent translation strategy in the Comedy Italian Style corpus, accounting for only 11.5% (73) of translation instances, with a slight prevalence of softening (35.6%, 26) over reinforcement (34.2%, 25) and similar impact (30.2%, 22). Of the total of 73 instances of this translation strategy, 25 (34.2%) consist of substitutions which cannot be justified on the basis of technical constraints or the lack of a TL corresponding term, as the final solutions seem to have very little to do with the ST GS to explain their use. Before examining the reasons for the importance of this type of substitution in the microanalysis, some examples of the prevalent type of this translation strategy

---

<sup>11</sup> Dialectal variations like *bottana* and *buttana*, which are essentially the same word for ‘whore’ in the Sicilian dialect, frequently occur in Comedy Italian Style and partly reflect local differences.

are presented in this section, in order to shed light on what has been referred to as the phenomenon of “replacing culture with culture” (Pedersen, 2011: 89).

Two interesting instances of this translation strategy can be found in *The Easy Life*. In this film, Bruno plays the seasoned womaniser, albeit not a very successful one according to Comand (2010) and Günsberg (2005), who point out that none of the numerous passes Bruno makes in the film seem to achieve the desired effect. Bruno nonetheless takes the role of the self-appointed expert responsible for coaching Roberto, the introvert young man who is intent on pursuing his studies and who has never found the courage to approach the woman he secretly likes. After somewhat getting to know each other, Bruno starts offering advice to Roberto on life and women:

Example 5.2 – *The Easy Life*

| <p><b>Context:</b> Bruno and Roberto are driving back from a visit to Roberto’s relatives. Roberto tells Bruno that he feels he is already a closer friend to him than other acquaintances, despite having just met in the morning. Bruno takes the opportunity to give Roberto some advice about what to do when back in Rome, with reference to the young woman he likes.</p>   |  |
|---|--|
| Original dialogue   | English subtitles  |
| <p>00:56:08,998 --&gt; 00:56:20,932</p> <p><b>Bruno:</b> Beh, quando tornano dalla villeggiatura, fermala sta Valeria, parlace co sta Valeria, hai capito, non fare il <b>fesso</b>, sennò poi te ritrovi all’età mia solo come un cane.</p> <p>[Well, when they come back from the holidays, stop her, this Valeria, talk to her, this Valeria, have you understood, don’t be a <i>fesso</i>. Otherwise, then you’ll end up at my age alone as a dog.]</p> | <p>00:56:08,998 --&gt; 00:56:10,966</p> <p>When she gets back from vacation,</p> <p>00:56:11,134 --&gt; 00:56:14,661</p> <p>go up and talk to her, you hear?</p> <p>00:56:14,838 --&gt; 00:56:16,806</p> <p>Don't be a <b>jerk</b>,</p> <p>00:56:16,973 --&gt; 00:56:20,932</p> <p>or you'll find yourself at my age alone as a stray dog.</p> |
| <b>Gender stereotype</b>  | SC GSR <i>Fesso</i> [Stupid man]   |
| <b>Translation strategy</b>   | Substitution   |

|                  |        |
|------------------|--------|
| Resulting impact | Softer |
|------------------|--------|

As discussed in Chapter 4 in relation to Geremi's Sicilian comedies, *furbi* [cunning men] and *fessi* [stupid men] are the two opposite male stereotypes of the Sicilian microcosm (Reich, 2004). The *furbi* are able to exploit the Sicilian social system by simultaneously flaunting their masculinity and alleged success with women, while at the same time policing their own female relatives to preserve the family's honour. The *fessi*, on the other hand, are those who succumb to the system by losing their *onore*, either because they have been cheated on or for any other infringement to the rules of honour involving themselves or their families. In the Italian capital, men may not subject women to the same regime of strict surveillance and segregation, but the idea of being either *furbi* or *fessi*, cool womanisers or cuckold idiots, is still valid, as Bruno's advice to Roberto seems to suggest. Of the different translation strategies available to the subtitler, the professional has, in this case, opted for the substitution of *fesso* [stupid man] with 'jerk', which replaces the SC GS with a TC one in order to make up for the lack of a TC corresponding word.

Later on in the film, when Roberto and Bruno go to a club, the subtitler resorts again to this translation strategy for similar reasons:

#### Example 5.3 – *The Easy Life*

| <b>Context:</b> Bruno and Roberto find themselves picking up the pieces in a night club after narrowly avoiding a fight with two people Bruno had aggressively overtaken earlier on. Bruno cannot find his cigarettes on the table. |  |
|---|--|
| Original dialogue   | English subtitles  |
| 01:10:05,534 --> 01:10:09,095<br><b>Bruno:</b> Ecco qua, se so portati pure via le sigarette, sti <b>cornuti</b> .<br><br>[Here we go, they even took the cigarettes with them, these cuckolds.]                                    | 01:10:05,534 --> 01:10:09,095<br><br>The <b>bastards</b> even took their cigarettes. |
| <b>Gender stereotype</b>  | SC GSR <i>Cornuto</i> [Cuckold]  |
| <b>Translation strategy</b>   | Substitution   |

|                  |        |
|------------------|--------|
| Resulting impact | Softer |
|------------------|--------|

It should be remembered here that the subtitles under analysis have been created for the US audience and, although in this particular case the TL does have a corresponding term for *cornuto*, the English ‘cuckold’ in the US does not expose men to public ridicule in the way it does in Italy. In fact, *cornuto* is arguably still a relevant GS in contemporary Italian society with its emphasis on man’s virility and masculine pride, while in the US society ‘cuckold’ may be mostly reduced, from the point of view of the gender representation, to a linguistic fossilisation of what used to be but is no longer a very relevant GS. This point is symptomatically shown by the fact that the subtitlers sometimes avoid the literal translation of *cornuto* and opt instead for substitution (TEL: 8, 60), paraphrase (SaA: 41) and/or omission (TEL: 3) procedures.

### 5.2.6 Paraphrase

Although seldom used for the translation of GSRs, paraphrase is a translation strategy which accounts for 54 translation instances of the total 632, making up 8.5% of the corpus. This strategy is often activated by the professionals to reformulate GSAs through subtitling and can yield different results in terms of impact, including 8 (14.8%) translations instances leading to reinforcement, 19 (35.2%) to similar impact and 27 (50%) to softening. Paraphrase is frequently employed for stylistic reasons, especially in the case of GSs which can and are also translated literally on other occasions, but whose literal rendition seems to be utilised sparingly as it risks resulting in stilted or unidiomatic solutions. Examples of these are the verb *disonorare* [to dishonour] and *compromettere* [to compromise], often used in the dialogue exchanges of *Divorce Italian Style* and *Seduced and Abandoned*.

In *Divorce*, for example, when the 'heroine of the South', Mariannina Terranova, is questioned about the events that led to the trial for the murder of her life companion, she says about her cheating partner: *mi disonorò* [he dishonoured me], which is paraphrased into a more elegant 'he destroyed my honour', to refer to the betrayal. In this example focussed on the court case against Mariannina, the key concept for the gender representation is the defendant's *onore*. Once her partner has cheated on her, Mariannina loses her honour, thus being exposed to public criticism, ridicule even, expressed in the anonymous letters shown by Mariannina's lawyer as proof of the kind of treatment her client was being subjected to by being called *cornuta* [female cuckold]. In this context, it should be remembered that, although the partner's betrayal may not be a pleasant prospect for anyone, in the Sicilian society of *Divorce Italian Style* the idea of being cheated on by one's partner was possibly the most tragic fate people could be confronted with.

A similar scenario can also be observed in *Seduced and Abandoned* with reference to Matilde, when a boisterous Don Vincenzo storms into the house of his daughter Agnese's seducer, Peppino, demanding that he immediately write a letter to Matilde, Agnese's sister and his current fiancée, in order to take back his wedding promise. When Peppino tries to object: *povera Matilde, così resta compromessa davanti a tutti* [poor Matilde, that way she remains compromised before everyone], the subtitler reformulates the message with the words 'Poor Matilde! Her reputation will be ruined!'. Again, the concept of *onore* and the looming judgment of the public are key in defining the GS of a 'compromised woman', whom the tight-knit patriarchal community will be quick to blame for the new turn of events, as women, rather than men, are normally assumed to be guilty whenever there is an infringement of the official gender rules.

The use of paraphrase in the Comedy Italian Style corpus also includes other types of reformulation which are more complex and lead to interesting

cases of manipulation not usually associated with a translation strategy mostly used for clarification purposes, which is the function of paraphrase taxonomies for the translation of CSRs like Newmark's (1988) and Nedergaard-Larsen's (1993). These cases are analysed from a qualitative point of view in the microanalysis on paraphrase found in section 5.3.6.

### 5.2.7 Lexical recreation

This creative translation strategy, which is sometimes used by subtitlers to imitate the SC invented word (Díaz Cintas and Remael, 2007), can only be observed on one occasion in the present corpus and is used to subtitle the defence of Mariannina Terranova by her legal representative, after she has murdered her partner for cheating on her:

#### Example 5.4 – *Divorce Italian Style*

| <b>Context:</b> Mariannina Terranova's lawyer is passionately pleading her case while showing the court some anonymous letters she had received after the betrayal, one of which contains a drawing of the Italian hand gesture showing the sign of the horns, which indicates cuckoldry. |  |
|---|--|
| <b>Original dialogue</b>  | <b>English subtitles</b>   |
| 00:34:37,075 --> 00:34:51,980   | 00:34:37,075 --> 00:34:40,841                                      |
| <b>Lawyer:</b> Lettere, lettere vergate da anonime ma simboliche mani. Lettere illeggibili che offenderebbero la dignità di quest'aula. Tacitane tra l'altro, come questa che con una sola parola compendia la sorte dell'infelice Mariannina: <b>cornuta</b> .                           | Letters! Letters written by anonymous but symbolic hands.          |
| [Letters, letters written by anonymous but symbolic hands. Illegible letters which would offend the dignity of this courtroom. Concise, also, like this one, which with only one word summarises the destiny of unhappy Mariannina: [Female cuckold.]]                                    | 00:34:40,945 --> 00:34:44,506                                      |
|   | Illegible letters that would offend the dignity of this courtroom. |
|   | 00:34:44,615 --> 00:34:47,413                                      |
|   | Blunt and concise, like this one,                                  |
|   | 00:34:47,518 --> 00:34:50,282                                      |
|   | which in one word renders poor Mariannina's fate:                  |
|   | 00:34:50,388 --> 00:34:51,980                                      |

|                             | "Cuckoldess"!                          |
|-----------------------------|--|
| <b>Gender stereotype</b>    | SC GSR <i>Cornuta</i> [Female cuckold] |
| <b>Translation strategy</b> | Lexical recreation                     |
| <b>Resulting impact</b>     | Similar                                |

In this example, Mariannina's lawyer explains to the court how the defendant would have been branded after the betrayal, had she not vindicated her honour, by using the Italian epithet *cornuta* [female cuckold], feminine for *cornuto* [cuckold]. The feminine version of the Italian word, which is in itself unusual as the fate of the *cornuto* seems to apply almost invariably to men in the type of society depicted in *Divorce*, has no real equivalent in English and the subtitler therefore resorts to a creative solution with the term 'cuckoldess'. Although this is the only occurrence of lexical recreation accounting for a mere 0.2% of the corpus, such solution has significant implications from the qualitative point of view, which will be discussed in the microanalysis of this translation strategy conducted in section 5.3.7.

### 5.2.8 Deletion

Deletion is used in these pages to refer to the translation strategy which consists in eliminating a ST GS from the TT. A total of 98 (15.3%) of the translation instances analysed in the Comedy Italian Style corpus resort to one of the two main forms of deletion considered here, namely, omission, accounting for 69 (10.8%) translation instances, and erasure, accounting for 29 (4.5%). Though both approaches lead to a softer gender representation, the former, following Díaz Cintas and Remael (2007), is intended as an instance of deletion justified by the technical constraints of subtitling or the lack of a TL corresponding term, whereas erasure refers to the type of deletion that cannot be justified with any of these reasons. Some typical examples of the lack of a TL corresponding term can be found in *The Easy Life*, where Bruno addresses a business partner as

*commendatore* on various occasions. This honorary title, conferred upon “citizens who have stood out in particular activities” (Garzanti, 2020: online, my translation), is borrowed directly from the source dialogue in the first instance, but is often omitted in the following ones as there is no real TL corresponding term and, with 12 letters, it is a rather long word whose inclusion considerably increases the display rate of the subtitles.

An example of omission that derives from the technical constraints which characterise subtitling, on the other hand, can be observed in the following extract from *The Organizer*, featuring Renato and Maria:

Example 5.5 – *The Organizer*

| <b>Context:</b> Maria is going to Renato’s place for a romantic encounter. While they go in, she is worried that someone might see them together and her reputation might be tarnished as a result. When they arrive at Renato’s place, they find the <i>professore</i> [school teacher], who has been leading the workers’ strike, already installed in the house after the workers’ council has assigned him that place. |  |
|--|--|
| Original dialogue<br>(partly dialect)  | English subtitles  |
| 00:43:18,195 --> 00:43:21,392<br><b>Maria:</b> Ma per cosa m’hai preso per una <b>sfacciata</b> ? Porco ti e quel barbut.<br><br>[But for what have you taken me, for a shameless woman? Pig you and that bearded man.]  | 00:43:18,195 --> 00:43:21,392<br><br>Who do you think I am?<br>You and the bearded man are pigs! |
| <b>Gender stereotype</b>   | SC GSR <i>Sfacciata</i> [Shameless woman]  |
| <b>Translation strategy</b>  | Omission   |
| <b>Impact</b>  | Softer   |

Here, the subtitle lasts 3 seconds and 197 milliseconds (or 5 frames) which would allow for a total of some 48 characters if the standard display rate of 160 wpm is used as the yardstick. By using 55 characters for this translation, the subtitler has already exceeded the maximum reading speed without even translating the term *sfacciata* [shameless woman], which makes the omission technically

understandable. Additionally, this SC GS does not have a straightforward, corresponding word in English.

Although context and “intersemiotic redundancy” (Gottlieb, 2005: 19) will often fill the gap left by deletions, there are also cases in which the use of this translation strategy is arguably not the most careful solution available to the professional. As has been suggested by Ivir (1987), the translator may decide to omit a CSR like the above-mentioned, relatively obscure *commendatore*, which attracts unnecessary attention to itself in the TT and, on balance, is less significant than other GSs for the overall gender representation in *The Easy Life*. Yet, on the other hand, the following example shows an instance of erasure which does not seem to be based on a clear rationale, ultimately attributable to the technical constraints of this translation mode:

Example 5.6 – *Big Deal on Madonna Street*

| <p><b>Context:</b> In an iconic scene of a film itself synonymous with Comedy Italian Style, our gang of would-be criminals have just botched up their attempted burglary by making a hole into the wrong wall. When they find comfort in the pasta and chickpeas cooked by the maid currently dated by Peppe, Ferribotte takes the opportunity to make the following comment on her culinary skills:</p> |   |
|---|---|
| Original dialogue<br>(Sicilian dialect)   | English subtitles   |
| <p>01:41:53,239 --&gt; 01:41:59,675</p> <p><b>Ferribotte:</b> Dalle nostre parti diciamo, <b>fimmina piccanti</b>, pigghila per amanti, <b>fimmina cuciniera</b>, pigghila pi mughiera.</p> <p>[Where I'm from we say: spicy woman, take her as mistress, good female cook, take her as wife.]</p>  | <p>01:41:53,239 --&gt; 01:41:56,834</p> <p style="text-align: center;">At home we say:<br/><b>saucy woman</b> makes a good mistress,</p> <p>01:41:57,343 --&gt; 01:41:59,675</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>bland woman</b> a good wife.</p> |
| <b>Gender stereotype 1</b>  | SC GSR <i>Fimmina piccanti</i> [Spicy woman]  |
| <b>Translation strategy</b>   | Quasi-literal translation   |
| <b>Resulting impact</b>   | Similar   |
| <b>Gender stereotype 2</b>  | SC GSR <i>Fimmina cuciniera</i> [Good female cook]  |
| <b>Translation strategy</b>   | Erasure   |
| <b>Resulting impact</b>   | Softer  |

Ferribotte's stereotypical gender representation of the Sicilian wife as a good cook – literally serving her man *and* leaving him free to enjoy his sexual life with a lover – is erased from the TT for no apparent reason, since the subtitles do include a translation of the ST phrase ('bland woman'), but one that leaves no trace of the SC GS. From a technical viewpoint, the first subtitle lasts 3 seconds and 595 milliseconds (or 15 frames), which would allow for a maximum display rate of some 54 characters, while the actual subtitle contains only a total of 49 characters. Similarly, the second subtitle lasts 2 seconds and 332 milliseconds (or 8 frames), allowing for a maximum display of 35 characters, though at present it only makes use of 24. Theoretically, the subtitler could have played with other longer solutions that could be more in consonance with the language and stereotypes used in the source dialogue.

Finally, it is useful to note here that, whether in the form of omission or erasure, deletion is a strategy that automatically leads to a softer TT impact, since it involves the elimination of any original gender representation, in the same way as addition leads by default to a stronger TT impact, as discussed in the next section.

### 5.2.9 Addition

Addition, as a translation strategy that consists in introducing a GS in the TT, where there is none in the ST, is not mentioned in any of the taxonomies of translation strategies for CSRs from which the present classification adapted for the translation of GSs has been derived. Examples of addition can, however, be observed consistently throughout the corpus, with 40 examples of this translation strategy making up 6.3% of the total number of translation instances and including the addition of such GSs such as 'pansy' in *Seduced and Abandoned* and 'moll' in *Big Deal in Madonna Street*. The case of 'moll' will suffice to clarify

the way in which addition works and is intended in the context of Comedy Italian Style:

Example 5.7 – *Big Deal in Madonna Street*

| <b>Context:</b> In their fruitless search for someone willing 'to take the rap' and let the would-be mastermind of the sting, Cosimo, out of prison, our gang of petty criminals is now trying to convince Peppe, a boxer, to accept their deal. While they discuss this, Peppe turns to Norma with a question: |   |
|---|---|
| Original dialogue   | English subtitles   |
| 00:13:16,061 --> 00:13:18,529<br><b>Peppe:</b> Tu stai co' Cosimo?<br>[Are you with Cosimo?]  | 00:13:16,061 --> 00:13:18,529<br>Are you Cosimo's <b>moll</b> ? |
| <b>Gender stereotype</b>  | None in original, TC GSR 'Moll' in TT                           |
| <b>Translation strategy</b>   | Addition  |
| <b>Resulting impact</b>   | Stronger  |

Peppe's question as to whether Norma is Cosimo's partner contains no GS per se, but by translating it with 'Are you Cosimo's moll?', a TC GS is introduced in the TT which cannot be accounted for by any gender representation in the original dialogue, i.e. the GS of a gangster's female partner. As can be observed in this example, while omission and erasure automatically soften the level of gender stereotyping, particularly in the case of sexist GSs, addition creates, again by default, a stronger gender representation, including some sexist examples which will be illustrated in the microanalysis in section 5.3.

In conclusion, the macroanalysis has shown some general trends including the centrality of literal translation, which accounts for 236 translation instances and 37% of all translated GSs. It has also pointed to the relative incidence of other translation strategies such as explicitation (15.9%), deletion (15.3%) and substitution (11.5%), as well as the minor role of less frequent strategies such as paraphrase (8.5%), addition (6.3%), calque (3.1%), loan (2.2%) and lexical recreation (0.2%). From the point of view of the Polysystem Theory, the macroanalysis has highlighted that the prevalence of literal translation and the

low frequency of loan starkly contrast with Pedersen's (2011) and Ranzato's (2013) studies on the subtitling into Swedish and Danish and the dubbing into Italian of US TV series, respectively, thus confirming the dynamics illustrated by Even-Zohar (1978) and Venuti (1995/2008) as regards the position of dominant and weak languages like American English and Italian and their literary and audiovisual products.

It has also been indicated that the general trends of the Comedy Italian Style corpus with its tendency to the softening of GSs (46.5%), followed by similar impact (35.9%) and reinforcement (17.6%), need to be put into perspective by considering factors such as the noticeable contribution of literal translation to the softening of culture-specific GSs. With 23.6% of the cases encountered in the whole corpus, the contribution of literal translation to the softening trend is second only to deletion, while other SL-oriented strategies also add to this type of softening. The loans of *cornuto* in *Mafioso* and *commendatore* in *The Easy Life*, for example, or the above-mentioned generalisations of *onore* [honour] with 'good name', are also instances of translation strategies used to deal with gender stereotypes as sociocultural products, whose meaning and significance pose cross-cultural translation problems, which may lead to a softer gender representation in the translated production.

Finally, the macroanalytical picture has helped to delineate some general trends as regards the impact that different translation strategies have in the subtitled version of the films. In addition to its important role in the softening of GSs, literal translation is mainly associated with producing a similar impact, as this translation strategy can be used as an effective and uncomplicated solution for the transfer of IC GSs such as *puttana* [whore], *squadrina* [tramp] or *uomo* in the particular meaning of a male displaying the stereotypical attributes associated with his gender. Another SL-oriented translation strategy which contributes substantially to the softening trend is explicitation and, on the other

end of the SL-TL continuum, deletion. In addition to deletion, the TL-oriented strategies usually associated with a stronger departure from the SL and a higher degree of manipulation are those of substitution, paraphrase and addition. Of these, the only translation strategy which clearly tends to the reinforcement of GSs is addition, which always strengthens the TT gender representation. Apart from the only instance of lexical recreation leading to a similar impact, the only other strategy not mentioned so far is calque, which for many authors is not differentiated from literal translation and, therefore, is considered a SL-oriented translation strategy (Mailhac, 1996; Pedersen, 2011; Ranzato, 2013). However, in the context of Comedy Italian Style, this strategy generally leads to a considerable degree of manipulation and the reinforcement of GSs, as will be further discussed in section 5.3.2 below.

Having considered the macroanalytical picture, the next section now turns to the microanalysis in order to shed more granular information on these and other issues that are characteristic of the subtitling of the Italian Comedy Italian Style corpus into English.

### **5.3 Microanalysis**

As the examples illustrated in the first part of this chapter show, the macroanalysis of GSs in Comedy Italian Style cannot be completely separated from the microanalysis if solid conclusions are to be reached. This is the reason why some of these examples and further translation instances from the corpus under scrutiny are now analysed with a special focus on the specific nature of the manipulation process and the translation product it leads to, before finally tackling potential ideological issues behind the subtitling of the Comedy Italian Style corpus.

As the analysis homes in on the single films, table 5.1 below can be useful in an attempt to visualise more detailed information about the similarities and differences that can be detected in the frequency of use of the different translation strategies activated in every one of the films. The table shows, for example, that literal translation (Lit trans) is the most frequently used translation strategy overall, although there is considerable variation between *Divorce Italian Style* (highest percentage of use with 53.9%) and *Mafioso* (lowest with 20%):

Table 5.1 – Translation strategies by film<sup>12</sup>

|              | Loan | Cal   | Lit trans | Expli | Sub   | Para  | Lex recre | Del   | Add   |
|--------------|------|-------|-----------|-------|-------|-------|-----------|-------|-------|
| <i>DIS</i>   | 0%   | 1.9%  | 53.9%     | 13.5% | 12.5% | 4.8%  | 1%        | 10.5% | 1.9%  |
| <i>SaA</i>   | 0%   | 1.8%  | 36.1%     | 15.3% | 13.5% | 9.9%  | 0%        | 15.3% | 8.1%  |
| <i>BDoMS</i> | 3.1% | 0%    | 39.6%     | 20.8% | 13.5% | 6.3%  | 0%        | 11.5% | 5.2%  |
| <i>TO</i>    | 0%   | 14.9% | 25.5%     | 10.3% | 5.7%  | 6.9%  | 0%        | 26.4% | 10.3% |
| <i>TEL</i>   | 1.9% | 0%    | 37.3%     | 18.7% | 15%   | 8.4%  | 0%        | 9.4%  | 9.3%  |
| <i>M</i>     | 12%  | 2.7%  | 20%       | 17.2% | 2.7%  | 8%    | 0%        | 30.7% | 6.7%  |
| <i>IKHW</i>  | 0%   | 1.8%  | 43.8%     | 14%   | 15.8% | 19.3% | 0%        | 5.3%  | 0%    |

### 5.3.1 Loan

In the case of the present corpus, loan is the strategy that best illustrates how the quantitative and qualitative approaches to the analysis of GSs complement each other. From the quantitative point of view, loan carries very little significance in the Comedy Italian Style corpus, accounting for a mere 2.2% of the translation instances analysed. Yet, it is fair to argue that the interest of loan lies more in the quality of the translation solutions obtained by using this translation strategy, and its potential impact on the TT viewers, than in the number of occurrences. In

<sup>12</sup> The names of the films have been shortened to the first, capital or small letter of each word, e.g. *BDoMS* for *Big Deal on Madonna Street*. The various translation strategies have been kept the same or shortened as follows: Loan, Cal (Calque), Lit trans (Literal translation), Expli (Explicitation), Subs (Substitution), Para (Paraphrase), Lex recre (Lexical recreation), Del (Delition) and Add (Addition).

this section, it is worth scrutinising from the microanalytical point of view all three cases of loan examined in the macroanalysis, as they are all likely to have a different impact.

The first example is the loan of the substantive *picciotto* in the English subtitles of *Mafioso*. This loan needs to be viewed in the context of the personal story of the protagonist, Tano Badalamenti, whose journey with his wife and children back to Sicily and his Sicilian family after years of hard work and sacrifices in Milan is a metaphor of his success and, as such, is celebrated on various occasions in the film. On the other hand, the atmosphere created by the soundtrack, the people and the significant asides, such as the funeral of a man killed by the mafia, which the Badalamentis witness soon after their arrival, all seem to shroud Tano's story in an ominous veil, until he is finally asked to repay the favours received in the past from the local mafia boss by executing a mafia killing. Arguably, the filmic context usually makes the meaning of this term sufficiently clear for the audience.

The first two instances of this loan occur when Don Liborio and Tano are reminiscing about the past, about the time when the Allied Forces had just come to Sicily and the young Tano used to work as a messenger boy for the *amici* [friends]. Before they go into these details, Don Liborio asks Tano whether he remembers that he once was a *picciotto d'onore* [young mafioso of honour] as if to test where Tano's loyalties lie. Tano promptly replies that he very well remembers his past and Don Liborio condescendingly confirms that the 'friends' are aware he has always been a good *picciotto*. The meaning of this phrase, which is borrowed in the English subtitles, can be deduced not just from the context, but also from the Italian word *onore* [onore], in the first instance of this loan, a term that mafiosi like to use to refer to themselves and their alleged 'code of honour'. Similarly, the other instance of the loan of *picciotto* can be found in a context which helps clarify the meaning of the borrowed term, i.e. when the mafia boss,

Don Vincenzo, is discussing with Don Liborio whether the designated *picciotto* may be a suitable candidate for the job. At the end of the film, *picciotto* is used once more by Don Vincenzo, when he asks Tano to kill another mafioso for him, but the original *mamma comanda e picciotto va* is subtitled as ‘Mama orders, child obeys’, which erases the ST GS. This may not appear to be a very consistent approach to the translation of *picciotto*, since, even assuming that the subtitler is relying on the fact that viewers can hear the original uttered in the dialogue and previously borrowed, *picciotto* still ends up clashing with the subtitle, in which it has been translated as ‘child’.

The second example of loan to be considered here is the Italian *cornuto* [cuckold]. This is a GS often used in Comedy Italian Style as an insult to men that are supposed to be and/or have been betrayed by their female partners and foregrounds the obsession with cuckoldry of the androcentric Italian society in general and the Sicilian one in particular. While Comedy Italian Style tends to be replete with stereotypical *cornuti* [cuckolds] and *puttane* [whores], be they real or suspected, *Mafioso* is the only film in the present corpus featuring the use of loan for the transfer of the Italian *cornuto* [cuckold]. Most of these insults are exchanged in a row between Tano, his father and another character called Calogero in the following scene:

Example 5.8 – *Mafioso*

| <b>Context:</b> Tano and his father are in the middle of a fiery argument over the price of some land they would like to buy from Calogero. Accompanied by an improbable monk armed with a stick which is supposed to show the potential customers that there is now water in his land, Calogero starts using increasingly aggressive language until the argument becomes a real fight. |   |
|---|---|
| Original dialogue<br>(partly speaking Sicilian)   | English subtitles   |
| 00:47:43,293 --> 00:48:35,043<br><b>Friar Simone:</b> Calogero, non dite sconcezze.<br>[Calogero, don't say obscenities.]   | 00:47:43,293 --> 00:47:45,124<br>Calogero, watch your language! |
| <b>Tano:</b> Oh, Fra' Simone, io a Calogero ci do un cazzotto in testa.   | 00:47:45,329 --> 00:47:47,422<br>Watch me smash his face in!    |

|   |  |
|---|--|
| <p>[Hey, friar Simone, I give Calogero a punch in the head.]</p> <p><b>Calogero:</b> A cu, a mia? A mia?</p> <p>[To whom, to me? To me?]</p> <p><b>Calogero:</b> Incrasciatu, <b>cornuto!</b></p> <p>[Filthy, cuckold.]</p> <p><b>Speaker unclear:</b> <i>Inaudible speech</i> chi fai, u cuteddu no, u cuteddu no.</p> <p>[What do you do? The knife no, the knife no.]</p> <p><i>Inaudible speech</i></p> <p><b>Tano's father:</b> Ma chi cridi che mi fai paura?</p> <p>[But what do you think that you scare me?]</p> <p><b>Tano's :</b> No, per l'amo' di Dio.</p> <p>[No, for the love of God.]</p> <p><b>Tano:</b> Ma picchi fate i bambini.</p> <p>[But why do you do the children.]</p> <p><b>Tano's father:</b> Lassimi, <b>cornutu</b> m'ha detto stu gran pezzu di ruffianu.</p> <p>[Leave me, cuckold he told me this great piece of ruffian.]</p> <p><b>Calogero:</b> Morti ri fami, famigghia ignobile.</p> <p>[Starving people, despicable family.]</p> <p><b>Tano's father:</b> Lassimi, niente ci fazzu.</p> <p>[Leave me, I don't do anything to him.]</p> <p><b>Tano's father:</b> Insultano tua matre e tu...<br/><b>Tano:</b> Mia matri?</p> <p>[They insult your mother and you...]<br/>[My mother?]</p> <p><b>Tano's father:</b> Sì sì, se io sono <b>cornuto</b>, tua matre è buttana.</p> <p>[Yes, yes, if I am cuckold, your mother is a whore.]</p> | <p>00:47:47,631 --&gt; 00:47:50,532</p> <p>Who's gonna smash whose face?</p> <p>00:47:50,734 --&gt; 00:47:53,100</p> <p>Let go of me, you <b>cornuto!</b></p> <p>00:47:53,570 --&gt; 00:47:58,337</p> <p>What are you doing? Not the knife!</p> <p>00:47:59,476 --&gt; 00:48:00,807</p> <p>Who's a <b>cornuto?</b></p> <p>00:48:01,011 --&gt; 00:48:03,605</p> <p>Stop it!</p> <p>00:48:08,252 --&gt; 00:48:10,516</p> <p>You're acting like kids!</p> <p>00:48:17,995 --&gt; 00:48:22,398</p> <p>Let go! He called me <b>cornuto!</b><br/>That bastard!</p> <p>00:48:23,000 --&gt; 00:48:25,366</p> <p>Damn you and your whole family!</p> <p>00:48:26,169 --&gt; 00:48:29,536</p> <p>Let me go! I won't touch him.</p> <p>00:48:30,274 --&gt; 00:48:32,401</p> <p>- Insulting your mama and...<br/>- My mama?</p> <p>00:48:32,609 --&gt; 00:48:35,043</p> <p>If I'm a <b>cornuto</b>,<br/>your mama's a whore.</p> |
| <p><b>Gender stereotype</b></p>   | <p>SC GSR <i>Cornuto</i> [cuckold]</p>   |

|                             |        |
|-----------------------------|--------|
| <b>Translation strategy</b> | Loan   |
| <b>Impact</b>               | Softer |

In this chain of dialogue exchanges, the word *cornuto* is used three times and all three instances of the insult levelled at Tano's father are borrowed in the English subtitles, which highlight the foreignness of the term through the use of italics. On the other hand, the second instance of the use of *cornuto* in the TT is, strictly speaking, a case of addition, since no reference to this GS is audible from the original soundtrack. The choice of the most SL-oriented translation strategy by the professional on this occasion, i.e. loan, may have been dictated by the awareness of the crucial role played by this GS in the representation of the old-fashioned Sicilian society, controlled by the mafia and steeped into its tribal gender rules, which make a man betrayed by his wife a *cornuto* and the woman in question a 'whore'. However, the Italian *cornuto* alluding to this gender representation is not a familiar Italian word known outside of Italy and the only clue that might help the TT viewers to understand its meaning is not provided until the end of the scene, when Tano's father states that calling him *cornuto* is equal to calling his wife *buttana* [whore], as it automatically makes her guilty of infidelity to her husband. Hence, despite being italicised in the English subtitles, the borrowing of the insult without any supplementary information and surrounded by limited contextual information, risks not being understood by some members of the TT audience.

The third and last case of loan occurring in the corpus can be found in the film *Big Deal on Madonna Street* and refers to the Italian word *mamma* [mum], uttered by Mario. As has been discussed in the previous chapter, the characters in this comedy Italian Style are initially portrayed stereotypically, but subsequently acquire full character complexity as the narration unfolds. Mario is probably the best example of this metamorphosis from the would-be big shot, who is supposed to pull off a "sensational" stint with his associates, to a sensible young man, who decides to find a job and starts thinking about settling down.

Mario's background also contributes to the overall portrayal of his character and may be useful to understand the loan of the substantive *mamma*, which has greater international currency than *cornuto*. As the plot of *Big Deal on Madonna Street* unravels, we learn that Mario was abandoned as a child and raised as their own son by three women he often refers to. In the first part of the film, the stereotypical depiction of Mario as a *mammone* [big mum man], or an eternal boy incapable of cutting off his umbilical cord (Fagioli, 2001; Günsberg, 2005) from his *mamma*, is part of the director's hackneyed and comical representation of this and other characters and is exemplified by the following dialogue exchange with Capannelle:

Example 5.9 – *Big Deal on Madonna Street*

| <p><b>Context:</b> This is another scene from the first part of the film where Capannelle is trying to find someone to claim responsibility for Cosimo's attempted car theft, so that Cosimo himself can be released and proceed to execute his "sensational" robbery. The first person to be offered the deal is Mario. Capannelle finds him intent on bartering with another petty criminal about the price of a baby pram and three umbrellas he says he needs for his mother. When Capannelle finally presents the deal to him, Mario replies as follows:</p> |  |
|---|--|
| Original dialogue   | English subtitles  |
| <p>00:07:26,540 --&gt; 00:07:36,378</p> <p><b>Mario:</b> Nooo. Mica pe niente, ma che glie racconto a mia madre te saluto, vado in prigione?</p> <p>[Nooo, not for nothing, but what do I tell my mother, bye, I go to prison?]</p> <p><b>Capannelle:</b> Ma sempre la mamma!</p> <p>[But always the mum!]</p> <p><b>Mario:</b> Aò, ma fatti gli affari tuoi.</p> <p>[Hey, but mind your own business.]</p> <p><b>Capannelle:</b> Ma tu hai bisogno di emanciparti, sai?</p> <p>[But you need to become emancipated, you know?]</p>                               | <p>00:07:26,540 --&gt; 00:07:29,668</p> <p>It's not like I don't want to,</p> <p>00:07:30,277 --&gt; 00:07:32,268</p> <p>but what do I tell my mother, "See you, I'm off to prison"?</p> <p>00:07:32,446 --&gt; 00:07:34,437</p> <p>-Always your mother!<br/>-Mind your business!</p> <p>00:07:34,615 --&gt; 00:07:36,378</p> <p>You're already on your way there!</p> |
| <b>Gender stereotype</b>  | SC GSA Mammone [Big mum man]   |

|                             |         |
|-----------------------------|---------|
| <b>Translation strategy</b> | Erasure |
| <b>Impact</b>               | Softer  |

As can be seen in the example above, the idea that Mario may fit the Italian gender stereotype of the *mammone* is first alluded to in this conversation in the form of a SC GSA, i.e. *Ma tu hai bisogno d'emanciparti, sai?* [but you need to become emancipated, you know?], uttered by the character Capannelle. Since all he seems to do is think about his *mamma* incessantly, Capannelle sarcastically advises Mario that it is high time for him to “become emancipated”, but the stereotype is erased from the subtitle translation, which makes no reference to the original joke.<sup>13</sup> However, this portrayal of Mario as *mammone* is helpful to understand the reasons and significance behind the third and last type of loan analysed here, which is used to subtitle Mario’s speech when he goes to visit his adoptive mothers. On this occasion, Mario addresses them as *mamma bella* subtitled literally as ‘beautiful big mamma’. Since Mario seems to have a particularly close relationship with his *mamma*, or, rather, *mamme* [mums], in the plural form, the use of the loan of the ST word, included by the professional in the English subtitles, may be part of an endeavour to express the importance of such special relationship, by using an Italian term generally well-known beyond the national boundaries.

Overall, these three types of loan are likely to lead to a different impact, which will largely depend on the degree of familiarity of the target audience with the Italian terms borrowed, as well as on the extent to which the viewers can exploit the information gathered from the immediate context to understand the meaning of the loan. The translation strategies opted for by the professional subtitlers are usually the result of an evaluation of different factors and concerns at stake. These may include the need to avoid placing undue emphasis on a loan which may not contribute in any special way to the overall TL representation, or

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<sup>13</sup> This translation example will also be analysed on the basis of the space and time constraints of subtitling in the micronanalysis of deletion carried out in section 5.3.8.

to highlight the importance of a term that has particular significance in a specific context.

When it comes to the way in which these loans may affect the target viewers' perception of the various gender representations at stake, *picciotto* is an interesting example, as it illustrates the manner in which professionals can exploit the situational context in order to let the viewers appreciate a particular aspect of the Italian gender representation in a relatively unobtrusive way. On the other hand, the two instances of *mamma*, used by Mario to address his adoptive mothers, and all instances of the insult *cornuto* used in *Mafioso* are transferred to the English subtitles in the same way: by means of borrowing. Arguably, whereas the Italian term *mamma* is reasonably well-known around the world, sounds fairly similar to the US 'mama' and its meaning is further deducible from the context of the particular scene in which Mario goes to visit his *mamme*, the term *cornuto* bears little phonological resemblance to the English 'cuckold' and the contextual clues which accompany the use of this loan are considerably less useful for the TT audience to be able to infer its meaning. Thus, as mentioned above, while the former loan is more likely to be easily understood and appreciated by the TT audience, the significance of the latter may be elusive for viewers who are not familiar with the Italian language and culture.

### 5.3.2 Calque

Calque is a translation strategy frequently used for the translation of SC GSS related to honorific, professional and academic titles. In *The Organizer*, for example, a comedy about factory workers fighting the management team in an attempt to obtain better working conditions, the *professore* [school teacher] leading the strike is often referred to as 'Professor' [TO: 18, 19, 23, 32, 33, 35, 72, 73, 75, 76, 83], a calque which results in a mistranslation, as, in American English, this term does not refer to the professional role of a school teacher, but to the

rather more prestigious professional status of a university lecturer. The same applies to the academic title *dottore* [doctor], which can be used in Italian to address any person who has earned a university degree. In *Mafioso*, this is translated by means of the abbreviation ‘Dr’, which is associated in English with the prestige of a researcher who has completed a doctoral programme, including the writing of a PhD thesis, and earned the corresponding title. Thus, the interest of the activation of calque in the subtitling of Comedy Italian Style films lies in the fact that, while this translation strategy is traditionally perceived as being very close both to the SL and ST according to the taxonomies of strategies for the translation of CSRs discussed in Chapter 3, this particular use of calque leads to a substantial manipulation of the social status and gender stereotypes associated with a *professore* or *dottore*. With specific reference to the latter, it should be remembered that the films under analysis are set in a historical period, the 1960s, when both university degrees in Italy and PhDs in the US would have been almost exclusively awarded to men. In fact, in the Comedy Italian Style corpus all these titles are invariably used to refer to men, in a film genre that, as has been stressed before, was dominated by men and intended for male consumption (Günsberg, 2005). Thus, translating *dottore* with ‘Dr’ or *professore* with ‘Professor’ has the effect of reinforcing entrenched gender stereotypes about the social and professional prerogatives and privileges of men, as opposed to women, by upgrading the social status of a *dottore* to a ‘Dr’ or a ‘teacher’ to a ‘Professor’.

The activation of calques can also lead to very different GSs in the TT when the SL term has a literal equivalent in the TL from the denotative point of view, for example *porco* which literally translates as ‘pig’, but such equivalent does not refer to the same Italian GS. In the case of the noun *porco*, for example, the GS represented in Italian is related to a man who “behaves or speaks in a vulgar, obscene manner” (De Mauro, 2020: online) and is often accused of cheating on women or indulging in promiscuous behaviour. From the point of view of the gender representation, the English literal translation with ‘pig’, on the other hand,

refers to a different GS, i.e. “a greedy, dirty or unpleasant person” (Lexico.com, 2020: online), particularly a man. Such permutation has the effect of replacing the SC GS with a different TC one, as can be seen in the above-mentioned example 5.5 from *The Organizer*, recuperated below for ease of reference:

Example 5.10 – *The Organizer*

| <b>Context:</b> Maria is going to Renato’s place for a romantic encounter. While they go in, she is worried that someone might see them together and her reputation might be tarnished as a result. When they arrive at Renato’s place, they find the <i>professore</i> [school teacher], who has been leading the workers’ strike, already installed in the house, after the workers’ council has assigned him that place. |   |
|---|---|
| Original dialogue<br>(partly dialect)   | English subtitles   |
| 00:43:18,195 --> 00:43:21,392<br><b>Maria:</b> Ma per cosa m’hai preso per una sfacciata? <b>Porco</b> ti e quel barbut.<br><br>[But for what have you taken me, for a shameless woman? Pig you and that bearded man.]  | 00:43:18,195 --> 00:43:21,392<br><br>Who do you think I am?<br>You and the bearded man are <b>pigs!</b> |
| <b>Gender stereotype</b>  | SC GSR <i>Porco</i> [Pig]   |
| <b>Translation strategy</b>   | Calque  |
| <b>Impact</b>   | Similar   |

In this translation of *porco* with ‘pig’, the TT gender representation of Renato is considerably softened and, to some extent, it is not in tune with the diegesis of the film. In the present scene, Maria is worried from the very beginning about what people may think if they see her going into Renato’s flat with him; indeed, she tells Renato she does not want to pass for a prostitute. Hence, it is relatively clear from the context that Maria and Renato may at least have the intention to go to Renato’s place and engage in premarital sex, something which was morally unacceptable in the 1960s, even for people who were officially engaged, and all the more so for acquaintances or friends, as in this case. This explains Maria’s outrage when she finds another man in Renato’s flat and starts accusing Renato of being morally perverted by calling him *porco*, which, when subtitled with the English ‘pig’, ceases to express any of the sexual connotations embedded in the

Italian word. Not only is Maria outraged because someone has seen her go into Renato's place with him, but, ignoring that finding the *professore* in his flat is an equally unwelcome surprise for Renato, she may think that the latter may have been planning an adventurous group sex experience. Indeed, this would explain why she also accuses the *professore*, not just Renato, of being a *porco*. The audience may still guess Maria's thoughts from the information obtained from the visual and auditory channels of communication, as she storms out of the house looking very upset and railing against Renato after seeing the *professore*. This is why a closer pragmatic rendering of the original insult would have been more in keeping both with the ST gender representation, as well as with the visual and auditory channels of communication of this particular scene.

What these examples show overall is that, although calque is used in different ways in Comedy Italian Style, the end result of this translation strategy usually involves a considerable degree of GS manipulation and, in the specific case of the Comedy Italian Style corpus, calque cannot generally be considered a translation strategy that remains close to the ST. In this respect, this is an important point to bear in mind when considering the relative incidence and contribution of different translation strategies to the manipulation of GSs.

### *5.3.3 Literal translation*

Research conducted on the use of literal translation as one of the strategies for the transfer of CSRs (Ivir, 1987; Newmark, 1988; Ranzato, 2013) indicates that this translation strategy tends to be faithful to the ST, though it also alerts to the fact that it can have different degrees of transparency, or comprehensibility, for the target audience, depending on the actual reference being translated. Indeed, although in the Comedy Italian Style corpus literal translation tends to generate a similar impact in the TT, as can be seen in Figure 5.1 at the beginning of this chapter, the statistics also show that a considerable number of instances of literal

translations (70 cases worth 29.7% of the total) actually lead to softening, as this translation strategy often does not convey the culture-specific connotations of the original. These dynamics can be observed in the translation of some of the GSs that can be found at the beginning of *Divorce Italian Style*, as in the following example:

Example 5.11 – *Divorce Italian Style*

| <b>Context:</b> The voice off is Baron Don Ferdinando Cefalù's. While the camera focuses on different characters during a Sunday's service, the baron's voice introduces his family, including his sister Agnese.   |  |
|---|--|
| Voice off   | English subtitles  |
| 00:05:44,744 --> 00:05:51,280<br><br><b>Don Ferdinando:</b> Mia sorella Agnese, nubile e a carico, <b>ufficialmente compromessa</b> , cioè fidanzata, con Rosario Mulè.<br><br>[My sister Agnese, single and dependent, officially compromised, that is, engaged, to Rosario Mulè.] | 00:05:44,744 --> 00:05:47,372<br><br>My sister Agnese,<br>unmarried and still dependent<br><br>00:05:47,480 --> 00:05:51,280<br><br><b>officially compromised</b> – i.e., engaged –<br>to Rosario Mulè |
| <b>Gender stereotype</b>  | SC GSR Donna <i>ufficialmente compromessa</i> [officially compromised woman]   |
| <b>Translation strategy</b>   | Literal translation  |
| <b>Impact</b>   | Softer   |

In this example, the baron sarcastically describes his sister Agnese as *ufficialmente compromessa, cioè fidanzata, con Rosario Mulè*, which is then subtitled as 'officially compromised – i.e. engaged – to Rosario Mulè'. In order to understand this GS, it may be useful to clarify the meaning of the verb *compromettere* [to compromise], from which the Italian past participle *compromessa* is derived, in the context of the Comedy Italian Style corpus. In *Seduced and Abandoned*, for example, it is Matilde who is at risk of being *compromessa* in the eyes of the local community, after receiving Peppino's letter withdrawing his wedding promise. In reality, it is Matilde's father, Don Vincenzo, who has been orchestrating this move by forcing Peppino to write said letter, so he can marry the girl he has 'dishonoured', who happens to be Don Vincenzo's

other 'unfortunate' daughter, Agnese. After Don Vincenzo has suddenly barged into the house of the Califanos, in an aggressive move leading to a brief skirmish with Peppino and his parents, he starts dictating the above-mentioned letter to Peppino, who timidly attempts to point out the consequences of this action: *Povera Matilde, così resta compromessa davanti a tutti* [poor Matilde, so she is compromised before everyone]. Paraphrasing Peppino's point of view, the subtitler has translated this as 'Poor Matilde! Her reputation will be ruined!', which is an effective clarification of the core meaning of the Italian *compromettere*, that is, "to damage one's reputation" (De Mauro, 2020: online, my translation). The same idea is expressed by Matilde herself, when she receives Peppino's letter and, breaking out into tears, she protests that she has done nothing wrong and, just like Peppino, laments that she will be *compromessa davanti a tutto il paese* [compromised before the whole village], subtitled again as 'My reputation's ruined!'. In other words, both Peppino and Matilde imply that Matilde's honour will be tarnished, as, presumably, the local community will be asking critical questions about the reasons which have led to Peppino's striking decision. The crucial element in these circumstances revolves around the fundamental issue of the woman's virginity, in this case whether Matilde has done 'anything wrong', whether she may have 'dishonoured' herself with another man and, thus, may not be worthy of Peppino anymore. As always, in the close-knit, claustrophobic and patriarchal community of *Seduced and Abandoned*, which reserves a special treatment to women, every bride is expected to walk to the altar *illibata* [undefiled], an assumption that, needless to say, is never made of the men in the same society.

Going back to Agnese and Rosario in *Divorce Italian Style*, we can safely assume that the meaning of *ufficialmente compromessa* refers to Agnese's honour and the potential damage to her reputation. The possibility that Agnese may be transgressing the peculiar, retrograde gender rules of the archaic Sicilian society in which she lives is confirmed by the frequent awkward and hilarious

encounters in the film between Agnese and Rosario, who are engaged in intimacy, on the one hand, and the baron, who suddenly stumbles upon them, on the other. Under normal circumstances, this behaviour would be considered a cardinal sin in the kind of society represented in *Divorce Italian Style*. However, as aptly pointed out by Reich (2004), this is only possible because the baron is not fulfilling his role of 'virginity patrol' (Günsberg, 2005) by policing the female members of his family in order to make sure the honour of the Cefalùs is preserved.

Indeed, the character of the baron in this film represents, only to a certain extent, the gender stereotype of Sicilian men in such society. Don Ferdinando Cefalù comes across as an unscrupulous middle-aged man, who has tired of his smothering and unbearably clinging wife and has therefore devised a complex plan to suppress her and enjoy the rest of his life with his young and beautiful cousin, Angela. From this point of view, the baron is partly worthy of the gender stereotype of the Sicilian *gallo*, who publicly boasts to other men about his alleged sexual prowess, while at the same time keeping the women confined at home *dietro le stecche di vereconde persiane* [behind the slats of bashful shutters], as Don Ferdinando sardonically states when introducing 'the women of Agramonte'. However, the baron does not seem in the least interested to perform the role of the guardian of the family's honour, which involves keeping a watchful and continuous eye on his wife and sister. In fact, he is eager to find a lover for his wife, with the hope that it may give him a reason to kill her and then marry Angela. Within this context, every time he surprises his sister, Agnese, and her fiancé, Rosario, hiding away in moments of intimacy, he almost dismisses Rosario's embarrassment and his pledge to marry Agnese 'as soon as possible', by remarking that the wedding is not a matter of urgency. Hence, not only is Agnese *compromessa* because she clearly transgresses the gender rules which forbid any kind of intimacy between fiancés, although viewers of the film cannot exactly establish the extent to which the transgression goes, that is, whether it includes

premarital sex. Agnese is also *officially* compromessa because the man who should be protecting her honour, the baron, is only interested in the formal conventions of the Sicilian gender rules when these serve his purpose of ridding himself of his wife Rosalia so that he can start a new life with his attractive young cousin.

As this example very well demonstrates, much of the irony in *Divorce Italian Style* is exquisitely subtle and the director excels in his ability to evoke a given stereotypical gender representation with very few words, like in this particular case, in which *ufficialmente compromessa* refers to all that happens behind the scenes between his sister and Rosario. In addition, the case of Agnese being 'officially compromised to Rosario' may also refer to the fact that, in the asphyxiating Sicilian microcosm of the time, women had to find ways to survive by paying lip service to the ancestral gender rules in front of the local community, but then acting as they wished behind doors. Hence, this singular state of affairs is a reflection of the Sicilian, culture-specific gender rules prevalent at the time and the characterisation of the baron, who likes to think of himself as *furbo* [cunning man], but is really an "inept" individual, to borrow Reich's epithet (2004), both indifferent to his sister's infringement of the Sicilian gender rules and unable to assert his authority by marking the boundaries of what his sister is or is not permitted to do. From the translation viewpoint, it is this complexity and cultural specificity of the gender representation encapsulated in the expression *ufficialmente compromessa* which makes this GSR difficult to convey to a foreign audience through literal translation. To make matters worse, this reference to Agnese's official engagement to Rosario is made at the beginning of the film, when the viewers still have very limited contextual clues, and even the visual channel of communication, such as the close-ups of Agnese and Rosario in the church, does not add much to the voiceover. 'Officially compromised' can be considered a literal translation, as the English 'to compromise' can have a similar meaning to *compromettere* in the sense of "allow[ing] your principles to be less strong or

your standards or morals to be lower” (Cambridge Dictionary, 2020: online). Nonetheless, the translation of *ufficialmente compromessa* as ‘officially compromised’ may lead to softening in the TT, since, beyond the purely linguistic level, this translation strategy does not convey any of the cultural components of the SC GSR. In addition, this particular meaning of the verb ‘to compromise’ in English does not seem to share the same currency that the words *compromettere* or *compromessa* have in Italian, in general, and in the context of Comedy Italian Style, in particular.

In other cases, the meaning of GSs translated literally, such as *compromessa*, *onore* and *cornuta* can be more easily deduced from the context, as in the trial of Mariannina Terranova, who had killed her partner for cheating on her. The baron’s voiceover in this case provides an informative introduction about the case and, at the trial, Mariannina’s lawyer repeatedly evokes the issues of honour and betrayal and the role these would have played in pushing Mariannina to commit her crime. Hence, although the literal translation of such GSs as *compromessa*, *onore* and *cornuta*, so deeply rooted and ingrained in the SC, normally leads to softening and may be difficult to fully grasp, the context can on occasion be sufficiently clear for the audience to be able to appreciate their general meaning.

Similarly, longer SC GSAs deployed over several subtitles in the TT, such as the complex characterisation of the women of Agramonte which is part of the baron’s voiceover at the beginning of *Divorce Italian Style*, are often translated literally as they lend themselves, at least superficially, to literal translation. The excerpt about the women of Agramonte, which is presented and analysed in the example below, follows the baron’s comments on the *circolo*, a homosocial men’s club, and the endless conversations about the ‘fabulous’ women of their village:

Example 5.12 – *Divorce Italian Style*

| <b>Context:</b> Against the backdrop of restless zooming shots creating the effect of a deformed reality (Sesti, 1997), Baron Don Ferdinando Cefalù's voiceover introduces the village and the people at the centre of the action, including the 'women of Agramonte'.   |  |
|--|--|
| Voice off  | English subtitles  |
| 00:04:24,230 --> 00:04:31,769<br><br><b>Don Ferdinando:</b> Le favolose, invisibili donne di Agramonte che celavano la loro bellezza e il loro ardore dietro le grate, pardon, dietro le stecche di vereconde persiane.<br><br>[The fabulous, invisible women of Agramonte, who hid their beauty and ardour behind the grating, pardon, behind the slats of bashful shutters.] | 00:04:24,230 --> 00:04:25,891<br><br>The marvelous,<br>invisible women of Agramonte,<br><br>00:04:25,999 --> 00:04:28,763<br><br>who hid their beauty and ardor behind the<br>grating –<br><br>00:04:28,868 --> 00:04:31,769<br><br>pardon me –<br>behind the slats of bashful shutters. |
| <b>Gender stereotype</b>   | SC GSA Donne segregate [segregated women]  |
| <b>Translation strategy</b>  | Literal translation  |
| <b>Impact</b>  | Softer   |

In this concrete example, in which the whole description acts as the gender stereotype of the women in the social theatre of Agramonte, the literal translation of the GSA is, on the surface, understandable, although the underlying gender representation may be, again, more difficult to interpret. Indeed, the GSA alludes to the segregation and marginalisation of women in the Sicilian society and their oppression by men, obsessed with controlling every female member of their family. At the same time, the baron also acknowledges the 'ardor' of the 'women of Agramonte', as if to say that these 'invisible' women also have sexual urges, after all, and that is the reason why they need to be kept under strict surveillance by men in order to safeguard their honour. Not only is the women's 'ardor' acknowledged, but the adjective *verecondo*, translated with 'bashful', is used to describe the shutters, not the women, thus displacing their timidity to an external object. In this way, the baron's description seems to imply that it is not the women who are really modest and, on their own volition, 'hide their beauty and ardor' from the external world, but it is the shutters which put a 'bashful' barrier

to what such women could potentially do if nothing prevented them from venturing into the outside world.

On the whole, and similarly to the previous example about Agnese, these references to the role and gender stereotypes of women policed, imprisoned *dietro le grate, pardon, dietro le stecche di vereconde persiane* [behind the grating, pardon, behind the slats of bashful shutters] reveal the sad, inhuman condition in which Sicilian women in the 1960s, and by extension throughout most of the island's history, had to live and try to survive. The climactic, scathing pun about the women of Agramonte locked up 'behind the grating' of a prison, almost like animals kept in a cage, betrays the baron's real thoughts, as he hurries to correct his inner thoughts and conceal the way in which Sicilian women were regarded and treated by their male masters, practically like wild animals to be kept behind bars and punished when misbehaving, occasionally killed if they went as far as undermining the men's honour.

From a technical point of view, the first subtitle stays on screen 1 second and 661 milliseconds (16 frames) and could accommodate a maximum of 24 characters, although the actual solution reached by the professional contains 43 characters, thus forcing viewers to a rather fast reading speed. The second subtitle, displayed on screen for 2 seconds and 764 milliseconds (19 frames) and allowing for a maximum of some 41 characters, contains in fact a total of 51 characters displayed in one line. The subtitle does not only force the viewers' reading speed to a potentially uncomfortable level but it also flouts one of the parameters adhered by many commercial subtitling companies, i.e. the maximum number of characters allowed in one line, which usually hovers around 40 to 42. Additionally, the punctuation in the subtitle is unorthodox both in the use of the m-dash, which is not very common in professional practice with this communicative value, as well as in the way in which the line is left hanging. Finally, the third and last subtitle, made up of 49 characters and remaining on

screen for 2 seconds and 901 milliseconds (22 frames), also exceeds the standard maximum display rate, as it contains 5 more characters than it should. On the whole, the accelerated display rate of these three subtitles and the unconventional layout and line breaking of the second subtitle make the baron's discourse more challenging to follow. Of course, the subtitler could have reformulated the utterance to make a briefer, and perhaps more explicit reference to the segregation suffered by the women of Agramonte. Yet, as foregrounded by Zabalbeascoa (1999), translation is a matter of priorities and, in this particular case, the subtitler has decided that adhering quantitatively to the original and translating the pun was more important than simplifying the message, even if this translation choice is likely to soften the impact of the voiceover in the TL and TC.

Summing up, these examples seem to confirm the hypothesis highlighted at the beginning of this sub-section, i.e. that the literal translation of GSs can make such stereotypes difficult to apprehend for the target audience, thus leading to a certain degree of softening of their final impact. Indeed, culture-specific GSs are intimately intertwined with the SC and the activation of the literal translation strategy, while remaining close to the ST, often poses challenges of transparency for the target reader.

#### *5.3.4 Explication*

Explication, particularly when materialised as generalisation, is a useful strategy in the sense that it conveys some of the connotations of the original gender representation but without going too much into detail, as the constraints of this translation mode often preclude any lengthy reformulations or clarifications. The subtitles of the present corpus seem to oscillate between the activation of literal translation and generalisation when it comes to some basic GSs such as *onore* [honour] and *illibata* [undefiled], the latter repeatedly used with reference to

Agnese in *Seduced and Abandoned* in the sense of a “chaste, marriageable madonna”, as Günsberg (2005: 85) aptly puts it.

In the case of other GSs, the use of generalisation can be put down to the subtitler’s particular translation choice rather than to the lack of a TL equivalent. A clear example of this procedure can be found in the transfer of *fusto* [hunk] into the more general ‘fine looking guy’ in *Big Deal on Madonna Street*, when referring to Tiberio, a character played in the film by the Italian masculinity icon, Marcello Mastroianni. Generalisation is also used to translate Italian diminutives which can add multiple connotations to the GSs. Diminutives like *-ino/-ina* and *-etto/-etta* (respectively used for masculine and feminine) can express a complex semantic range including irony, complicity, condescendence and interest in the other sex, particularly women. According to Biemmi (2017), the main function of these diminutives in Italian is to express irony, although in Comedy Italian Style all these types of meanings tend to be intertwined rather than exclusive. The original dialogue from *Big Deal on Madonna Street*, for example, contains several references to the *servetta* [little maid], Nicoletta, working in the house that the criminal gang wants to burgle. The fact that the *servetta* is the object of sexual fantasies, both for the male characters and the male cinema audience (Günsberg, 2005), is made quite clear during a conversation about the sting, when Mario comments that said *servetta* is, by the way, *bona* [hot]. But even when this is not clearly stated, the use of the diminutive *servetta*, regularly used by male characters to refer to Nicoletta, is a constant, implicit reference to a stereotypical gender representation of women as sexual objects, which is emblematic of Comedy Italian Style. In other words, the diminutive suffix in Italian is used to depict subtle gender representations whose impact is considerably softened when they are transferred in the form of generalisations such as ‘maid’, which is a suitable English equivalent, but lacks the complex connotations of the ST term. On the other hand, the fact that the maid is described as ‘hot’ by Mario helps, in this case, to partly compensate for the absence of the diminutive in the translation, as

the English epithet clarifies that the maid is regarded as a sexual object by the men in this scene.

The opposite is, however, true of the last translation example presented here to conclude the qualitative analysis of this translation strategy. This is an instance of the rarer type of explicitation – i.e. specification – which can be observed in the following scene from *The Easy Life*:

Example 5.13 – *The Easy Life*

| <b>Context:</b> Roberto goes to visit his relatives with Bruno, his journey companion. Upon meeting the family, Bruno notices the corvine hair of the hostess and, as the latter explains that there is Spanish blood in the family, he remarks: |   |
|--|---|
| Original dialogue  | English subtitles   |
| 00:45:11,575 --> 00:45:15,341<br><b>Bruno:</b> Ah, a Barcellona, c'ho azzecato. La nonnina ha <b>scherzato</b> col torero.<br><br>[Ah, in Barcelona, I have guessed. The little grandmother has played with the bullfighter]                     | 00:45:11,575 --> 00:45:15,341<br><br>I was right! Granny must have <b>fooled around</b> with a bullfighter. |
| <b>Gender stereotype</b>   | IC GSA Donna che trasgredisce le norme di genere [Woman transgressing the gender rules]                     |
| <b>Translation strategy</b>  | Explicitation (specification: fool around)  |
| <b>Impact</b>  | Stronger  |

The Italian utterance represents a comment illustrative of Bruno's temperament: spontaneous but tactless, bordering on the rude side. This GSA is a good example of the complexity ingrained in the translation of gender stereotype representation and the difficulty in framing the resulting product and process analytically. In this case, there are various semantic components at play in the original, including the gender-specific Italian diminutive *-ina* in *nonnina*, with its nuances of irony, condescendence and complicity. As a result, Bruno's remark in Italian does sound more like a comment on the grandmother's conduct than a dispassionate remark. Nonetheless, there is a substantial difference between the original *la nonnina ha scherzato col torero* [the little grandmother has played with the bullfighter] and the actual subtitle 'granny must have fooled around with a

bullfighter'. In terms of translation strategy, the transfer of the verb *scherzare* with the verbal phrase 'fooled around' is an instance of specification, but, while the Italian verb is no more than a generic allusion to flirting, the English 'fool around' refers to engaging in "casual or extramarital sexual activity" (Lexico.com, 2020: online). Although it is true that the Italian diminutive *nonnina* makes the original utterance by Bruno sound partly judgmental, this nuance is lost in the TT, where the neutral term 'granny' is employed. On the other hand, however, the translation of *scherzare* with 'fool around' makes the overall impact of the TT gender representation considerably stronger and arguably sexist, as, ultimately, 'fool around with a bullfighter' does more than simply make up for the generalisation of *nonnina* to 'granny'. Not only does 'fool around' refer to a type of sexual conduct morally sanctioned by society, but the generic, indefinite article used in the nominal expression 'a bullfighter', which substitutes the Italian definite article in *il torero* [the bullfighter], conveys the idea that the *nonnina* must have really been a "loose woman", who was happy to indulge with *any* bullfighter.

As already mentioned in the macroanalysis, the majority of cases of explicitation take the form of generalisation, which does not result in any significant type of manipulation. However, this use of specification, leading to a gender representation which is more sexist in the TT than in the original, can also be observed in some other cases, showing a manipulation potential which cannot be found in the frequent instances of generalisation. Other similar cases can be perused in Appendix 2 (examples A9, 10, 14, 21, 22, 27).

### 5.3.5 Substitution

Some examples of substitution, which can be due to the lack of a TL corresponding term or to the technical constraints of subtitling, have already been presented in the macroanalysis, in section 5.2.5. The other main type of

substitution to be considered in this micronanalysis consists in the replacement of as SC/IC GS with a TC/IC GS, which often cannot be justified by either technical constraints or linguistic asymmetries between the two languages, so that the decision to use a different GS in the TT may appear to be arbitrary. This translation scenario is clearly exemplified by the following translation instance from *Mafioso*:

Example 5.14 – *Mafioso*

| <b>Context:</b> Back in Sicily with his Milanese wife and daughters, Nino has taken his family to the beach. In this excerpt, he is talking to his circle of male friends about his love adventures in Milan, with particular reference to one of his conquests. |   |
|--|---|
| Voice off  | English subtitles   |
| 00:57:50,900 --> 00:58:08,983  | 00:57:50,900 --> 00:57:55,735   |
| <b>Nino:</b> Tale Clara, una <b>signora divisa dal marito</b> . Bionda, malinconica, tondeggiante... Vederla vestita, frigida sembrava. Ma nell'intimità, tigre di fuoco era.  | Her name was Clara. A <b>divorcée</b> .                                 |
| [By the name of Clara, a <b>woman separated from her husband</b> . Blonde, melancholic, rounded... Seeing her dressed, she seemed frigid. But in the intimacy, a tigress on fire she was.]   | 00:57:55,939 --> 00:58:00,535   |
|  | Blonde, melancholy, round...  |
|  | 00:58:00,743 --> 00:58:03,473   |
|  | With her clothes on, she looked like an icebox...                       |
|  | 00:58:04,948 --> 00:58:06,882   |
|  | but in bed...   |
|  | 00:58:07,083 --> 00:58:08,983   |
|  | she was a tigress on fire.  |
| <b>Gender stereotype</b>   | SC GS <i>Donna divisa dal marito</i> [woman separated from her husband] |
| <b>Translation strategy</b>  | Substitution  |
| <b>Impact</b>  | Stronger  |

The representation of women forced to hide their sexual drive behind their external appearance, which harks back to the above-mentioned example 5.12 – the ‘invisible women of Agramonte’ hiding ‘their ardor behind the grating’ or

'slats of bashful shutters' – is in itself a distinctive illustration of gender stereotyping in Comedy Italian Style. From the point of view of the substitution strategy used in the first subtitle, the issue is why the subtitler has decided to opt for 'divorcée' rather than a literal translation of the IC GSR, i.e. *una donna divisa dal marito* [a woman separated from the husband] or 'an estranged woman'. Not only does the subtitler have ample time to do this as the utterance lasts 4 seconds and 835 milliseconds (20 frames), thus allowing for some 73 characters, while the subtitle only contains 31, but resorting to such a short translation means that the text remains on screen for too long, with the risk of breaking the audience's reading rhythm.

In the analysis of this GS and the translation strategy adopted by the subtitler, it should be remembered that both the narrative and social context in which the story is set refer to a time when divorce was not legal in Italy and, hence, the woman about whom Tano is talking in this sentence could only be separated from her husband. The translation with 'divorcée' thus introduces an historical anachronism into the TT, as, in the 1960s, Italy was a very Catholic society where divorce was not allowed, and the Christian Democratic Party, which enjoyed the express support of the Catholic Church, still held a firm grip on society and power. The party had no intention to change the legislation regulating marriage, which was actually not modified until 1970, thanks to a cross-party coalition bill to which the Christian Democratic Party and the Catholic Church were, of course, staunchly opposed (Fournier Lanzoni, 2008).

It is interesting to note that *Mafioso* (1962) was originally released just one year after *Divorce Italian Style* (1961) and one of the points stressed in the literature written on Germi's masterpiece (Giacovelli, 1997; Sesti, 1997) is the director's criticism of the old-fashioned Italian legal system and the tragicomic consequences that the situation depicted in *Divorce* leads to. Since the DVD version of *Mafioso* analysed here, with its "new and improved subtitle

translation”, was issued by the Criterion Collection (www.criterion.com) in 2008, almost 50 years after the original film release, the subtitler may not have been aware that the above-mentioned translation choice clashes with the historical reality. In addition, given that Tano’s reference to this love adventure in Milan is made in the social context of the backward Sicilian island, which is as far away as it could be from the idea of self-determination of married couples, some viewers might be induced to assume that the right to get divorced was a reality of the North of the country, that is, an example of the many differences which characterised, and arguably still characterise, the North South divide in Italy.

Another example of a substitution, which cannot be justified on account of the technical constraints of this translation mode or the lack of a corresponding term in the TL, can be observed in the following excerpt from *Divorce Italian Style*:

Example 5.15 – *Divorce Italian Style*

| <b>Context:</b> While travelling to Catania to see the trial of Mariannina Terranova, Baron Don Ferdinando Cefalù’s voiceover evokes the story of this murder for “reasons of honour”, involving a woman who had killed her partner for cheating on her.       |  |
|--|--|
| Voice off  | English subtitles  |
| 00:32:03,087 --> 00:32:08,157<br><br><b>Don Ferdinando:</b> La patetica figura della povera assassina, Mariannina Terranova, di anni 26, <b>casalinga</b> .<br><br>[The pathetic figure of the poor murderess, Mariannina Terranova, 26 years old, housewife.] | 00:32:03,087 --> 00:32:06,147<br><br>The pathetic figure of the killer, Mariannina Terranova,<br><br>00:32:06,257 --> 00:32:08,157<br><br>his 26-year-old <b>common-law wife</b> . |
| <b>Gender stereotype</b>   | IC GSR <i>Casalinga</i> [housewife]  |
| <b>Translation strategy</b>  | Substitution   |
| <b>Impact</b>  | Similar  |

Before looking at the technical parameters, it should be pointed out that the ST term, *casalinga*, and the TT solution, ‘common-law wife’, are very different not just from the semantic point of view, but also in terms of register and lexical field.

*Casalinga* is common in Italian everyday usage with the same meaning as the one expressed by the English 'housewife', i.e. "a woman who does not work outside the home and whose main job is looking after the children, cooking, cleaning, etc." (Macmillan Dictionary, 2020: online). 'Common-law wife', on the other hand, implies a formal, technical definition of the legal status of a woman who is attached but not married to her partner. In this instance, 'common-law wife' (15 characters) is also a longer solution than 'housewife' (9 characters), as it contains 6 more characters. The display rate of this subtitle is also slightly above average as the text stays on screen for 1 second and 900 milliseconds (22 frames), which means that the subtitler can make use of approximately 29 characters, but the actual subtitle consists of 32 characters. Therefore, given the possibility of using the straightforward 'housewife', which is both shorter and closer to the ST, the decision to use the expression 'common-law wife' appears to be an arbitrary instance of substitution. Later in the film, the subtitler resorts to the same solution, i.e. 'common-law wife', to transfer the Italian substantive *concupina*, a term that designates a woman who lives with her lover without being married to him and is again used to refer to Mariannina Terranova. As the two contexts are relatively different, it is difficult to fathom the reasons behind this translational decision. While the translation of *concupina* as 'common-law wife' can be seen as a reasonable solution, based on the legal principles that regulate a union between a man and a woman, in the case of the above-mentioned *casalinga* the decision to translate it as 'common-law wife' rather than 'housewife' does not appear to be based on a clear rationale.

Finally, in terms of the impact of the substitution of *casalinga* with 'common-law wife', the latter seems more a definition of the legal status of a woman who is in a stable partnership with a 'common-law' husband. For this reason, 'common-law wife' leads to a softer impact than *casalinga*, which stands for the age-old, ingrained gender stereotype and role of the woman responsible for looking after the house and the children. However, it should also be observed

that the translation adds the pronoun 'his' to 'common-law wife' in the TT, which portrays the woman as belonging to the husband and master within the patriarchal society, thus offsetting the 'softer' gender representation of 'common-law wife' and leading, overall, to what can be considered a similar impact.

To sum up the microanalysis of this translation strategy, substitution can entail a considerable degree of manipulation of the original representation, especially when this procedure is not justified by the technical constraints which characterise subtitling, but appears to be a case of sexist reinforcement of GSs associated to ideological rather than technical reasons. Two instances of substitution, which are particularly important from the point of view of translation and ideology, will be discussed in detail in the last section of the analysis devoted to these issues. Other examples of this kind can be found in Appendix 2 and include the substitution of the substantive *sciacquetta* [frivolous, insignificant woman] with 'tramp' in *Big Deal on Madonna Street* (Examples A4, 5), as well as the replacement of *pederasta* with 'queer' in *I Knew Her Well* (Example A34).

### 5.3.6 Paraphrase

From a qualitative point of view, paraphrase can lead to a considerable degree of manipulation of the original, which is not usually associated with a translation strategy intended as a form of clarification by the translation scholars who have included it in their taxonomies of strategies for the transfer of CSRs (Newmark, 1988; Nedergaard-Larsen, 1993; Leppihalme, 1997). Several translation examples in the corpus, in which this strategy has been deployed, include reference to and manipulation of sexual references. Two of these can be found in *Mafioso* and have been selected because they illustrate how the manipulation effected by paraphrase can lead to softening, on the one hand (Example 5.16), and reinforcement, on the other (Example 5.17).

The first example is a translation instance that leads to softening and has been drawn from the scene at the beach, where Tano has taken his family. There, while his wife and children are using one of the changing rooms, Tano takes the opportunity to join a conversation with his old friends:

Example 5.16 – *Mafioso*

| <b>Context:</b> Tano's Sicilian friends are engaged in a half-serious conversation about alienation and, of course, women, with the backdrop of a sand woman they have been playing with. At some point in the conversation, when one of the young men observes that the sand woman's breasts are of Polynesian type, his remark is met with the following retort from another character: |   |
|---|---|
| Voice off   | English subtitles   |
| 00:56:31,321 --> 00:56:33,983<br><b>Male friend:</b> E che ci vogliamo <b>sputare sopra alle Polinesiane?</b><br><br>[And what do we want to spit on the Polynesians?]  | 00:56:31,321 --> 00:56:33,983<br><b>Got anything against Polynesians?</b> |
| <b>Gender stereotype</b>  | IC GSA Donna come oggetto sessuale [woman as sex object]                  |
| <b>Translation strategy</b>   | Paraphrase  |
| <b>Impact</b>   | Softer  |

The verb in the original dialogue, *non sputare sopra* [not to spit upon], is used idiomatically in Italian to indicate *some* degree of appreciation about the object of a conversation. In this precise context, where the conversation's focus converges on the sand woman's 'pointy tits', supposedly of Polynesian type, the speaker is articulating the idea that Polynesian women are sufficiently attractive and do not make such bad sexual partners, after all. However, there is more to this instance of gender stereotyping than just an allusion to sex and potential sex partners. The comment sounds particularly chauvinistic as well as condescending and rude because it does not just treat Polynesian women as sex objects, but it also uses an Italian idiomatic expression, *non sputare sopra*, which makes the sexual allusion more specific and conveys the idea that the Polynesians are only about good enough for sex. For these reasons, while still retaining the core reference to the basic appreciation of women as sexual objects, the paraphrased translation with

'Got anything against the Polynesians?' leads to a considerably softer impact in the TT, as it is devoid of the condescending, negative nuances expressed in the ST by the verbal expression *non sputare sopra*.

The second example from *Mafioso*, leading in this case to a reinforcement of the TT gender representation, is given below:

Example 5.17 – *Mafioso*

| <p><b>Context:</b> This is the same context as the one described above, in example 5.8, for the loan of <i>cornuto</i>, before the argument degenerates into a physical fight. The characters in this scene are Father Simone, Tano, the protagonist of <i>Mafioso</i>, his father and Calogero, the owner of the land which Tano and his father want to purchase. At this stage, the characters are following Father Simone with his wooden stick, which is supposed to reveal the presence of water. When they reach a point where Father Simone argues that there is plenty of water, Tano objects that they cannot take the word of a monk as a serious justification for the hike in the price of the land. He suggests that Calogero should dig first, give proof of his claims and then ask for more money. Calogero, far from being impressed with Tano's idea, seems to feel quite outraged, judging by the reaction below:</p> |  |
|--|--|
| Original dialogue<br>(speaking Sicilian)   | English subtitles  |
| <p>00:47:38,555 --&gt; 00:47:43,082</p> <p><b>Calogero:</b> E io ti scavo u puzzu a tia? Pecché, sei na <b>bella fimmina</b>? Pecché, <b>mi dai la cosa</b>?</p> <p>[And I dig a well for you? Why, are you a beautiful woman? Why, do you give me the thing?]</p>   | <p>00:47:38,555 --&gt; 00:47:40,352</p> <p>So I should dig for you?</p> <p>00:47:40,557 --&gt; 00:47:43,082</p> <p>Are you a <b>beautiful woman</b>?<br/><b>Will I get laid?</b></p> |
| <b>Gender stereotype 1</b>   | IC GSR <i>Bella fimmina</i> [beautiful woman]  |
| <b>Translation strategy</b>  | Literal translation  |
| <b>Impact</b>  | Similar  |
| <b>Gender stereotype 2</b>   | IC GSA <i>Prostituta</i> [prostitute]  |
| <b>Translation strategy</b>  | Paraphrase   |
| <b>Impact</b>  | Stronger   |

By asking Tano why he should dig a well for him and letting him know that he is no beautiful woman who could 'give him the thing', i.e. return his courtesy with sexual gratification, Calogero implies that he does not intend to do his customers any favours, as he does not stand to gain anything from the digging. In order to express his thoughts, Calogero uses the sexual metaphor of 'a beautiful woman',

with whom – he seems to suggest – he could barter sexual favours. Both this metaphor and the reference to sexual gratification exhibit the prejudice of a man who reduces women to the mere objectification of their body, with the ultimate purpose of satisfying his own sexual urges. Differently from the previous example, however, such reification is compounded, rather than softened, by the reformulation of *Pecché, mi dai la cosa?* with the vulgar phrase ‘Will I get laid?’ in the subtitles, which, to some extent, reinforces the image of women as sexual objects and shifts the emphasis from the other person giving something to the speaker gaining something.

In this example, it must be acknowledged that the subtitler faces some technical restrictions related to time constraints. The two-line subtitle stays on screen 2 seconds and 525 milliseconds (13 frames), allowing for some 38 characters to be used for the translation. The first part of the original utterance *Pecché, sei na bella fimmina?*, subtitled literally as ‘Are you a beautiful woman?’, except for the omission of *pecché* [why], takes up 26 characters and leaves 12 more characters available for the translation of *Pecché, mi dai la cosa?*. The number of characters available is therefore limited but, playing with some alternatives, the subtitler could have rephrased the original utterance in order to save space with a solution that would amalgamate the two questions into one, which is a very common practice in subtitling. A potential output along the lines of ‘Are you a pretty woman giving me pleasure?’, which consists of the same number of characters as the current translation, would bring the advantage of maintaining the original reference to sex while avoiding the introduction of a vulgar expression that is not in the ST.

### 5.3.7 Lexical recreation

The only example of lexical recreation found in the corpus is part of the peroration of the previously mentioned case of Mariannina Terranova by her

lawyer in *Divorce Italian Style* (Example 5.4). The legal representative fervently evokes the feelings of the accused in the face of society’s judgement after her partner’s betrayal, and summarises them to great effect in just one word: *cornuta* [female cuckold]. The creative solution adopted by the subtitler, ‘cuckoldess’, may well be regarded as an endeavour to emulate the unusual *cornuta*, a word that is not normally used in its feminine form in Italian – as if only men could be afflicted by their partner’s cheating – and is again emblematic of the “official” stance on gender prevalent in the Italian society:

Example 5.18 – *Divorce Italian Style*

| <p><b>Context:</b> Mariannina Terranova’s lawyer is passionately pleading her case while showing the court some anonymous letters that she received after her partner’s betrayal, one of which contains a drawing of the Italian hand gesture showing the sign of the horns and indicating cuckoldry.</p>   |  |
|---|--|
| Original dialogue   | English subtitles  |
| <p>00:34:37,075 --&gt; 00:34:51,980</p> <p><b>Lawyer:</b> Lettere, lettere vergate da anonime ma simboliche mani. Lettere illeggibili che offenderebbero la dignità di quest’aula. Tacitane tra l’altro, come questa che con una sola parola compendia la sorte dell’infelice Mariannina: <b>cornuta</b>.</p> <p>[Letters, letters written by anonymous but symbolic hands. Illegible letters which would offend the dignity of this courtroom. Concise, also, like this one, which with only one word summarises the destiny of unhappy Mariannina: [Female cuckold.]]</p> | <p>00:34:37,075 --&gt; 00:34:40,841</p> <p>Letters! Letters written by anonymous but symbolic hands.</p> <p>00:34:40,945 --&gt; 00:34:44,506</p> <p>Illegible letters that would offend the dignity of this courtroom.</p> <p>00:34:44,615 --&gt; 00:34:47,413</p> <p>Blunt and concise, like this one,</p> <p>00:34:47,518 --&gt; 00:34:50,282</p> <p>which in one word renders poor Mariannina's fate:</p> <p>00:34:50,388 --&gt; 00:34:51,980</p> <p><b>"Cuckoldess"!</b></p> |
| <b>Gender stereotype</b>  | SC GSR <i>Cornuta</i> [Female cuckold]   |
| <b>Translation strategy</b>   | Lexical recreation   |
| <b>Impact</b>   | Similar  |

In the Sicilian cultural microcosm, not only is the Italian *cornuto* not the same as the English 'cuckold' but it also differs quite substantially from the feminine *cornuta* [female cuckold]. Indeed, in the Italian society in which *Divorce Italian Style* is set, the woman's betrayal of her husband was morally more condemnable than the husband's betrayal of his consort, according to the law on *delitto d'onore* [crime of honour]. This piece of legislation set down the special considerations for the 'murderer for honour', which were applicable to men or women who had killed their spouse. On the other hand, the law on the *delitto d'onore* only applied to fathers or brothers that would kill their daughters or sisters, but not to mothers or sisters who could theoretically murder their sons or brothers. This last scenario was somewhat socially unimaginable, as the double standard applied to women meant that the potential violators of the rules of honour forbidding premarital sex could only be women, as opposed to men. The latter, on the other hand, were free to 'fool around', to borrow Bruno's judgemental comment on Roberto's aunt from *The Easy Life* (Example 5.13). In fact, they almost felt a duty to do so in order to show off their manliness. Even when it came to killing the spouse, the double standard enshrined in the Italian legislation of the time determined that the wife's adultery was morally more condemnable than the infidelity of the husband, as confirmed in a ruling by no less than the Italian *Corte Costituzionale* [Constitutional Court] as late as 1961 (Bellassai, 2004). The absurdity of such blatant sexism is even reflected in *Divorce Italian Style* with the differential treatment reserved by the court to the lowly Mariannina Terranova, sentenced to eight years, as opposed to the aristocratic baron, who is sentenced to just three years. This use of lexical recreation can therefore be regarded as an example of a successful, creative solution which is in keeping with the ironic look of the film's director on the Sicilian society of the 1960s and renders well the singular fate of Mariannina Terranova, the *cornuta* or 'cuckoldess'.

### 5.3.8 Deletion

As foregrounded by Díaz Cintas and Remael (2007: 206), deletion may not be ‘much of a strategy’, but the fact remains that it is clearly used in subtitling and accounts for 15.3% of all GS translation instances found in the corpus under scrutiny. Of the two possible types in which this translation strategy has been subdivided, omission and erasure, the former appears to be mostly associated with GSs that may be difficult to transfer into the TL and TC without lengthy explanations or without attracting unnecessary attention to themselves in the TT. Examples of GSs often omitted by the subtitler are the above-mentioned Italian honorific title, *commendatore*, and other Italian professional, academic and honorific titles such as *ragioniere* [accountant], *ingegnere* [engineer], *onorevole* [honourable (MP)], as well as SC GSs such as *cornuto* [cuckold], *svergognata* [shameless woman] or *picciotto* [young mafioso].

In general, omission may not be considered by some as an ideal translation strategy, although in the field of subtitling it can be easily justified on the basis of the limitations imposed by the spatial and temporal constraints that are characteristic of this professional practice. From the qualitative point of view, it is not so much omission as erasure which needs to be analysed in more detail in order to understand the potential reasons that have led to the activation of this translation strategy. Instances of erasure of GSs can be found in every film of the corpus, except for *I Knew Her Well*, but two specific examples already commented upon in the previous discussion, i.e. the portrayal of Mario’s as an adult man still dependent on his mum (Example 5.9) and Ferribotte’s depiction of the ideal wife as a good cook (Example 5.6), are very good illustrations of some of the manipulation forces behind this procedure. As Fagioli (2001) points out in her analysis of *Big Deal on Madonna Street*, the representation of Mario as a *mammone* [big mum man] is prevalent throughout the film and can be easily appreciated, for instance, in the following sarcastic utterance, already mentioned in Example 5.9:

Example 5.19 – *Big Deal on Madonna Street*

| <b>Context:</b> At the beginning of his search for someone 'to take the rap' for the gang's mastermind, Capannelle suggests to Mario that he could be the one to do this, but Mario replies he would not know how to explain this to his mother. Capannelle sarcastically quips: |  |
|--|--|
| Original dialogue  | English subtitles  |
| 00:07:47,800 --> 00:07:49,597<br><b>Capannelle:</b> Ma tu hai bisogno di emanciparti, sai?<br>[You need to get emancipated, you know?]   | 00:07:47,800 --> 00:07:49,597<br>You're already on your way there! |
| <b>Gender stereotype</b>   | SC GSA <i>Mammone</i> [Big mum man]                                |
| <b>Translation strategy</b>  | Erasure  |
| <b>Impact</b>  | Softer   |

With 1 second and 797 milliseconds (20 frames) available for this subtitle, the subtitler can use a maximum of about 27 characters for this translation. While the DVD output is slightly longer and consists of 33 characters, an idiomatic translation along the lines of 'you need to fly the nest!', with 25 characters, would actually save the space of 8 characters, which in turn means that this instance of deletion of the stereotype cannot be put down to any spatial or temporal constraints. Arguably, the solution reached by the professional may reflect a concern about the lack of transparency of Capannelle's joke for the target audience. The GS according to which Mario is presented in this sequence is culture-specific and stems from the idea that Italian adult men are eternal children, as foregrounded by Fagioli (2001) and Günsberg (2005), which may be difficult to appreciate for foreign viewers unfamiliar with the idiosyncrasies of the Italian language and culture. However, in addition to being slightly longer than the maximum display rate, the solution reached by the professional in this case is also rather opaque and could have been effectively replaced with various alternatives such as the above-mentioned 'you need to fly the nest' (25 characters) or other options like 'it's about time you grew up' (27 characters) or 'you need to get a life' (22 characters). Such idiomatic solutions would have also had the advantage to help the audience appreciate Mario's characterisation not

only in this specific instance, but also in other contexts of the film in which this particular gender representation resurfaces with additional references to Mario's relationship with his mother.

A further key instantiation of erasure can be found in the same film, but, in this case, it relates to Ferribotte's stereotypical classification of women in two broad categories: on the one hand, good cooks who look after the household and serve men at home and, on the other hand, seductive lovers whose main duty is to satisfy men's sexual needs. As previously discussed in Example 5.6, the translation used for Ferribotte's pearl of wisdom – *fimmina piccanti, pigghila per amanti, fimmina cuciniera, pigghila pi muggiera* [hot woman, take her as mistress, good female cook, take her as wife], subtitled as 'saucy woman makes a good mistress, bland woman a good wife' – erases the SC GS about the cooking abilities of every good Italian wife for no clear reason. It was pointed out in the macronanalysis that, from a technical viewpoint, the second subtitle lasts 2 seconds and 332 milliseconds (8 frames), thus using only 24 of the 35 characters available, which means that the solution 'bland woman a good wife' could still allow for some potential expansion. This instance of erasure is particularly striking for two other reasons. First, because Ferribotte's saying does not make much sense in the film's diegesis without the reference to the cooking abilities of Italian wives, as the saying is uttered in the kitchen of the house, where, after the failed robbery, our heroes are enjoying the pasta and chickpeas cooked by the maid. It is this context that prompts Ferribotte's association to his proverb about female lovers and female cooks, as if to suggest to Peppe that the maid could make a good wife for him. Yet, by erasing the reference to the fact that a good wife needs to be a good cook, Ferribotte's words sound fairly vague, despite the pun based on the culinary terms 'saucy' and 'bland'.

The second reason why the erasure can be perceived as a peculiar choice is that the GS of the Italian wife as a good cook fits both the general image of Italy as

a country in which good food is highly valued and the segregated gender roles of men and women in the domestic spaces of the society represented in the film. Ferribotte himself is the stereotypical, old-fashioned Sicilian who keeps his sister locked up in the house. When her fiancé comes to visit them, Ferribotte sends her off to make some coffee while he confers with the prospective groom, thereby establishing a clear separation of roles whereby the woman belongs in the kitchen, while the men sit down and decide upon, among other things, the future of the woman that has been tasked with making the coffee. In this respect, this scene constitutes a perfect example of Comedy Italian Style as a film genre completely dominated by men, whose point of view prevails even in the domestic spaces which are traditionally associated with women (Fullwood, 2015). As for Nicoletta, she represents the stereotypical maid that a character like Peppe would date, and whose passive role in the film is to function as the object of male sexual fantasies. The clear separation of roles between men and women can also be seen in the conversation between another member of the gang named Tiberio, a skinned photographer who spends most of his time hustling or tending to his baby, and his wife, who is in prison for cigarette smuggling. When Tiberio, played by Marcello Mastroianni, goes to visit his wife in prison to entrust the baby to her on the day of the robbery, the conversation between the two includes more than one sarcastic reference to Tiberio's doubtful skills as a houseman. In other words, there is nothing in the film's plot which could induce either the viewers or the subtitler to believe Ferribotte's saying and his reference to women's role may not fit with the film's context and gender representation, which makes the erasure of *fimmina cuciniera* from the English subtitles even more questionable.

The last case of erasure to be discussed in these pages is the obliteration of the original *cagna* [bitch/slut] from the English subtitles in *Seduced and Abandoned*, as illustrated in Example 5.20 below:

Example 5.20 – *Seduced and Abandoned*

| <b>Context:</b> In an outburst of anger and frustration after discovering his daughter’s pregnancy, and failing to “fix” the potential scandal with a ‘reparatory wedding’, Don Vincenzo is once more maltreating Agnese. At this precise moment, the baron, who is engaged to Agnese’s sister, Matilde, comes in to visit her. |   |
|---|---|
| Original dialogue   | English subtitles   |
| 00:45:11,727 --> 00:45:14,560<br><b>Don Vincenzo:</b> Zitta, cagna, zitta.<br>[Quiet, bitch/slut, quiet.]<br><b>Francesca</b> (his wife): C’è Matilde, il barone.<br>[There is Matilde, the baron.]   | 00:45:11,727 --> 00:45:14,560<br>- Shut up!<br>- Quiet! The baron's here! |
| <b>Gender stereotype</b>  | SC GSR <i>Cagna</i> [bitch/slut]  |
| <b>Translation strategy</b>   | Erasure   |
| <b>Impact</b>   | Softer  |

The polysemous Italian *cagna* is used here with the meaning of ‘bitch/slut’. As can be inferred from the context, it is a heavy insult based on a typical, disparaging GS that animalises women and debases them to the level of prostitutes (De Marco, 2012). From this perspective, the erasure of *cagna* greatly softens the gender representation in the TT, but, again, time constraints do not seem to justify this procedure. With a duration of 2 seconds and 833 milliseconds (21 frames), the translator has a maximum of some 42 characters available for this translation, but has only used 36. As a result, the deletion of *cagna* from the TT makes Don Vincenzo’s utterance against his daughter much less sexist and offensive than the original. From the point of view of feminist translation, this instance of erasure could be interpreted as an example of hijacking, i.e. a conscious attempt by the translator to subvert a representation of women that is understood to be following the standards of a male-dominated ideology and society (von Flotow, 1991, 1997). However, given the fact that *cagna* is a pejorative term in Italian and from the point of view of the impact of bad language in subtitling, discussed in Chapter 2 (Shochat and Stam, 1985; Lung, 1998; Mattson, 2006), it can also be argued that the subtitler has decided to resort to this translation strategy in an attempt to avoid this type of language, which may hurt the sensitivities of some

viewers. Indeed, there is a long tradition in the available literature postulating the idea that taboo expressions, such as swearwords, blasphemies and sexual references, are more aggressive when written on screen than when they are ‘just’ heard by the audience (Millwood Hargrave, 1991; Díaz Cintas, 2001), though more reception studies should be conducted on the topic to ascertain its validity.

Following this exploration of deletion from a quantitative as well as a qualitative point of view, it is important to stress that the significant distinction between omission and erasure also plays a crucial role when it comes to gauging the degree of manipulation that is often associated with TL-oriented translation strategies. In the initial overview of the present analysis (section 5.2), it was pointed out that TL-oriented translation strategies account for 41.8% of the corpus, including 15.3% of translation procedures based on the practice of deletion. However, 10.8% of these translation instances consist of omissions and, as such, cannot be considered examples of deliberate manipulation of GSs. Again, this is a crucial distinction that needs to be considered when drawing some final conclusions on the levels of manipulation found in the Comedy Italian Style corpus.

### *5.3.9 Addition*

From a qualitative point of view, the interest of this translation strategy lies in its ‘intrusive’ nature, i.e. in the fact that it ‘creates’ a GS where there is none in the original, thus always resulting in a stronger impact. The above-mentioned case of ‘moll’ discussed in Example 5.7 adds a GS to the English subtitles that fits in with a recurrent translation pattern observed on other occasions in *Big Deal on Madonna Street*. Since the comedy is articulated around the humorous effect created by the improbable aspirations of a bunch of petty criminals (Fagioli, 2001), the subtitler has taken the opportunity to exploit some of the American English gangster idiolect in an attempt to recreate the lexicon and enhance the

comic effect. The term ‘moll’, used in American English to designate the female partner of a gangster, is one of the solutions resulting from this approach, as is ‘wise guy’, designating a member of the Italian American mafia and sarcastically used by Mario to refer to his associates, when he decides to pull out of the robbery. Another famous expression used to this effect by the subtitler is the idiom ‘sleep with the fishes’, with the meaning of dying or being murdered, whose association with the Italian American mafia has also been popularised by directors like Francis Ford Coppola in his popular film *The Godfather* (1972). In *Big Deal on Madonna Street*, this phrase, with its mafia connotations, is borrowed by the subtitler to translate one of Cosimo’s exchanges with Peppe:

Example 5.21 – *Big Deal on Madonna Street*

| <p><b>Context:</b> After Peppe has failed to convince the judge that he is the real culprit for the attempted car theft, so that Cosimo could be released following their ingenious scam, not only is Cosimo not free to go, but Peppe is also sentenced to join him in prison. Out in the courtyard, Cosimo menacingly demands from Peppe the money he received for accepting to serve his sentence, as he has not been released and does not feel that Peppe played his role properly before the judge.</p> |   |
|---|---|
| Original dialogue   | English subtitles   |
| <p>00:16:06,393 --&gt; 00:16:12,289</p> <p><b>Cosimo:</b> Amoretto, guarda che se non mi cacci tutti i soldi miei, <b>hai finito di campare</b>, è chiaro?</p> <p>[Little love, see that if you don't give me all my money, you are finished living, is that clear?]</p>  | <p>00:16:06,393 --&gt; 00:16:10,056</p> <p>Cutie pie, if you don't give back the dough,</p> <p>00:16:10,230 --&gt; 00:16:12,289</p> <p><b>you'll sleep with the fishes.</b><br/>Got it?</p> |
| <b>Gender stereotype</b>  | None in original, TC GSA ‘US Mafioso’ in TT   |
| <b>Translation strategy</b>   | Addition  |
| <b>Impact</b>   | Stronger  |

This example also shows how, in this film genre, men sometimes resort to sarcastic, endearing vocatives in aggressive confrontations, as Cosimo does in this particular instance by addressing Peppe with the ‘romantic’ *amoretto* [little love]. Such expressions of endearment, which are normally reserved for children or lovers, can be seen as a strategy to question and undermine the masculinity of a man, by using terms which implicitly associate the addressee with a child or a

woman lacking the virility that makes a man worthy of this name. Such trend can also be observed in the previous Example 5.17 from *Mafioso*, in which Calogero first tells Tano that he has no intention of digging a well for him and then goes on to provocatively ask whether he is a ‘beautiful woman’ who could offer him some kind of sexual gratification to reward him for his hypothetical favour; or, earlier in the same film, when Calogero addresses Tano as *beddu i to matri* [beautiful of your mum]. This expression of endearment normally used in Italian to address children is translated by the subtitler with ‘mama’s boy’, which again introduces in the TT a GS which has no concrete equivalent in the ST and, therefore, results in a gender representation which is substantially manipulated.

Hence, addition can be said to be one of the most powerful translation strategies in terms of GS manipulation and impact, together with deletion. Of the 40 instances of addition present in the Comedy Italian Style corpus, another case, apart from ‘moll’, stands out from this point of view. This instance of addition can be observed in an exchange which takes place at the beginning of the film *Seduced and Abandoned*:

Example 5.22 – *Seduced and Abandoned*

| <b>Context:</b> Don Vincenzo is sitting at the dinner table with his family, leading the conversation, giving orders, reprimanding. His son, Antonio, is unsuccessfully trying to crack open a walnut with his hand. Don Vincenzo seems to lose his patience and he slams his hand down on Antonio’s, cracking the walnut open and telling his wailing son: |  |
|---|--|
| Original dialogue   | English subtitles                              |
| 00:08:09,789 --> 00:08:11,723<br><b>Don Vincenzo: Manu di ricotta.</b><br>[Hands of ricotta.]   | 00:08:09,789 --> 00:08:11,723<br><b>Pansy!</b> |
| <b>Gender stereotype</b>  | None in original/TC GSR ‘Pansy’ in TT          |
| <b>Translation strategy</b>   | Addition                                       |
| <b>Impact</b>   | Stronger                                       |

In this scene, the director gives the audience a taster of Antonio's character. A bit awkward and maladroit, ridiculed by his father at the dinner table, he does not exactly correspond to the GS of the stern Sicilian brother obsessed with his sister's honour and this translation quite fits the way in which he is regarded by Don Vincenzo. This also links in a parodic way to a subsequent scene in the film, in which Antonio turns out to be the relative designated by Don Vincenzo to kill Peppino for seducing his daughter Agnese and then refusing to marry her and "make things up". Nonetheless, a number of reasons may explain why, in this excerpt, the translation of *manu di ricotta* with the pejorative 'pansy', an old-fashioned term for "an effeminate or homosexual man" (Lexico.com, 2020: online), is not ideal. The fact that 'pansy' is an old-fashioned term in English, like 'moll' or 'to sleep with the fishes', may, in fact, be the only aspect of this translation which might have been in consonance with the context of the old-fashioned society represented in this scene. However, this potential advantage is quickly offset by a number of shortcomings, especially given that the phrase *manu di ricotta* does not have any connotations associated with an old-fashioned use of Italian.

From the technical point view, 'pansy' may be a succinct solution, but there is no need to be so concise in this particular instance since the subtitle lasts 1 second and 934 milliseconds (23 frames), which means that the subtitler could have employed around 30 characters for this translation. This leaves abundant space to play with various potential options and, yet, the actual translation solution is very short and only makes use of 6 characters, which risks breaking the viewers' reading rhythm, as they may start to reread the subtitle. Additionally, the rendition of *manu di ricotta* as 'pansy' is not without controversy. Indeed, the original expression has nothing to do either with the meaning or the negative connotations brought about by the English term, as the Italian dictionary De Mauro (2020: online, my translation) defines the phrase *di ricotta* as meaning "slack, weak, physically, intellectually or morally". This is

perfectly in keeping with the way the father regards the son, but is very distinct from the derogative definitions of 'pansy' offered by Brown (1993: 2086), i.e. "an effeminate man; a male homosexual".

In addition, not only can 'pansy' be considered a mistranslation, but it also does not fit with the sociocultural context in which this scene, as part of the film, is set. *Seduced and Abandoned* opens with depressing shots of an old-fangled village with the Italian cars of that time, the Fiat Cinquecentos, riding on the main road and situating the action in the 1960s, and, on the other hand, the images of people riding on donkeys up and down the little village streets. This is followed by the scene in which Agnese is seduced by Peppino, leading then to her confession to the priest, who seems to suggest that she may have enjoyed the intercourse, while she is crying and pouring her heart out, wrapped up in the traditional black shawl. The next sequence is set at the dinner table, where Don Vincenzo reads the letter of one of her daughter's fiancés in front of the whole family, before handing it over to the legitimate addressee. All these images offered in the first 10 minutes of the film are sufficient for the viewers to understand the world they are entering and, more specifically, the gender roles that men and women have to play in order to survive in this type of society. Hence, not only does the original scene depicted in Example 5.22 make no mention of effeminate or homosexual men, but, in the sociocultural setting of the time, even just the topic of homosexuality would have been taboo. Thus, although the insult may indeed faithfully represent Don Vincenzo's biased and conservative understanding of gender roles, it is very unlikely that he would have uttered it in front of other people.

Finally, from the point of view of translation and ideology, the question remains why the subtitler has decided to resort to the inclusion of a sexist term that is disparaging and sexually discriminating against the interlocutor and that is not fully justified on the grounds of the original phrase uttered by Don Vincenzo.

This example facilitates a smooth transition to the final section of the analysis (section 5.4), in which such issues are discussed and the most telling examples from the point of view of translation, ideology and sexism are scrutinised in order to identify any potential, recurrent trends. Before moving to this section, however, the main tendencies so far detected in the macro- and microanalysis of the subtitling of GSs into English are briefly summarised below.

Generally speaking, the main trends highlighted at the beginning of this chapter, on the basis of the macroanalysis, have been corroborated by the subsequent, detailed microanalysis, thus confirming the nature of subtitling as a translation mode that tends to remain close to the ST. Looking at SL-oriented strategies we have seen that, although some authors like Pedersen (2011) and Ranzato (2013) make no distinction between literal translation and calque, the latter strategy, accounting for 3.1% of the corpus, normally leads to substantial manipulation of GSs, a result more associated with the TL-oriented end of the translation strategies continuum. However, even discounting the contribution of calque from the total percentage of the corpus represented by SL-oriented translation strategies, loan, literal translation and explicitation still account for 55.1% of all the translation instances encountered in the films under scrutiny. Of course, the use of SL-oriented translation strategies does not preclude the possibility of alternating them with the activation of TL-oriented strategies. In this respect, a sizeable 41.8% of instances dealing with the translation of gender stereotypes have been resolved with the deployment of TL-oriented strategies. However, this percentage also includes 10.8% of omissions due to the spatial and temporal constraints characteristic of subtitling or the lack of a TL correspondent term. Typical terms and expressions found in *Comedy Italian Style*, such as *cornuto* [cuckold], *illibata* [undefiled] and the basic concept of *onore* [honour], which are at the basis of numerous gender stereotypes and representations, are illustrative of these trends. Oftentimes, they are subtitled by means of procedures like literal translation or explicitation, but the subtitlers also have recourse to

other translation strategies that involve a higher (erasure, addition) or lesser (substitution, paraphrase) degree of manipulation.

Complementing the initial quantitative findings regarding the role played by the various translation strategies on the ensuing impact on the GS representation – reinforcement, similar or softening –, the microanalysis of the Comedy Italian Style corpus has also thrown up interesting examples as to the nature of the manipulation process. Indeed, the macroanalysis has shown that certain translation strategies like omission, which inevitably contributes to the softening of the translated GSs, can be explained by the technical reasons of subtitling. On the other hand, the qualitative approach carried out in the second part of the analysis has indicated that translation instances such as the erasure of *fimmina cuciniera* [good female cook] from Ferribotte’s saying in the English subtitles of *Big Deal on Madonna Street* (Example 5.6), the substitution of *donna separata dal marito* [woman separated from the husband] with ‘divorcée’ in *Mafioso* (Example 5.14) or the addition of the offensive and sexually discriminating ‘pansy’ to the English subtitles of *Seduced and Abandoned* (Example 5.22), cannot be justified on the basis of technical constraints.

These very different concepts in the field of AVT, i.e. technical versus ideological manipulation, have been clearly illustrated by Díaz Cintas (2012). In this respect, the scholar has pointed out that the definitions of manipulation given by the OED (Brown, 1993) do not always carry negative connotations. In a similar way – Díaz Cintas (2012) goes on to argue – technical manipulation, which can be accounted for by the need for lip-sync in dubbing or text reduction in subtitling, may be determined by the translation mode and is very different from ‘unfair’ and ‘unscrupulous’ instances of ideological manipulation which do “unbalance the relationship between source and target product” (*ibid.*: 285). Hence, solutions like the erasure of *fimmina cuciniera* and the addition of ‘pansy’ mentioned above are ultimately the result of the translator’s choice and may, in some cases, be

directly linked with issues of ideology and manipulation, which are explored in the next section.

#### **5.4 Translation, ideology and sexism**

The role of ideology in translation, which started to receive scholarly attention in TS with the *cultural turn* in the 1980s and 1990s (Bassnett and Lefevere, 1990), has continued to generate great interest and led to new contributions over the last decades, not just from researchers adopting a clear feminist stand, such as Simon (1996) and von Flotow (1997), but also from other prominent scholars working from a more general perspective, such as Munday (2007) and Venuti (1995/2008). With the rise of AVT in TS, these issues have also been explored in the context of audiovisual productions by authors like De Marco (2012), Díaz Cintas (2012) and Díaz Cintas *et al.* (2016). Although the approaches taken by these researchers may be different, what they have in common is an interest in the role that ideology plays in translation, be it from the point of view of gender and feminist translation practice (Simon, 1996; von Fotow, 1997; Josephy-Hernández, 2017; von Flotow and Josephy-Hernández, 2019), sexist manipulation (Joyce, 1997; Baumgarten, 2005; De Marco, 2012), Anglocentrism (Venuti, 1995/2008), intersectionalist gender identities (Pérez López de Heredia, 2016a, 2016b), transsexualism (Asimakoulas, 2012, Pérez López de Heredia, 2017) or queer studies (Lewis, 2010; Ranzato, 2012; Villanueva Jordán, 2019).

The overarching focus of this thesis does not only cover the subtitling of gender stereotypes and their assumed potential impact on the TT viewers, but it also expands to consider the issues arising from the sexist manipulation of some gender representations, as foregrounded by a number of examples presented in the previous analysis. To achieve a comprehensive assessment of the nature and scope of the manipulation processes at work, a further level of investigation is conducted in the following pages, specifically concentrating on the overall impact

that such sexist manipulation of certain stereotypes, be they about women or men, is understood to have on the subtitling of the present corpus.

Overall, taking the complete Comedy Italian Style corpus into account, the data available show a total of 36 examples, of which 33 end up in sexist reinforcement against women (26, 72.2%) or men (7, 19.5%), while only 3 instances (8.3%) lead to the softening of sexist bias in favour of women. The specific data are provided in the pie chart contained in figure 5.3 below, representing the total number of instances and the relative percentages of the various trends of ideological nature. It is important to remind the reader that the data only take into account examples of sexist manipulation that are not affected by the technical constraints that define subtitling (except for one discussed below), such as the erasure of *cagna* [whore] or the addition of 'pansy', both of which have been fully discussed in the microanalysis of the translation strategies, in Example 5.20 and Example 5.22, respectively:

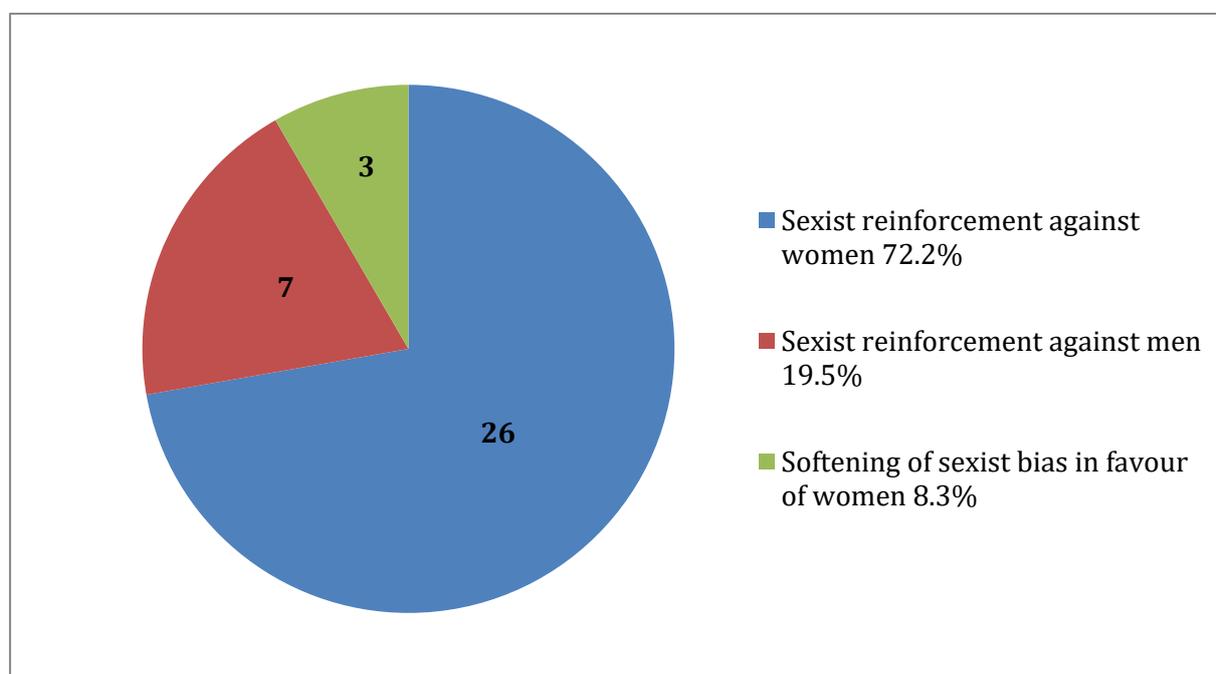


Figure 5.3 – Frequency of translation examples leading to sexist reinforcement or softening of sexist bias

What immediately stands out from these data is that the number of sexist translation occurrences against women is more than three times higher than the number of translation examples of the same type against men, although the situation is slightly reversed when it comes to the softening of sexist bias, which is higher in favour of women, as opposed to men.

A more granular analysis per film, as represented in Fig. 5.4 and Fig. 5.5 below, shows that the results are quite varied:

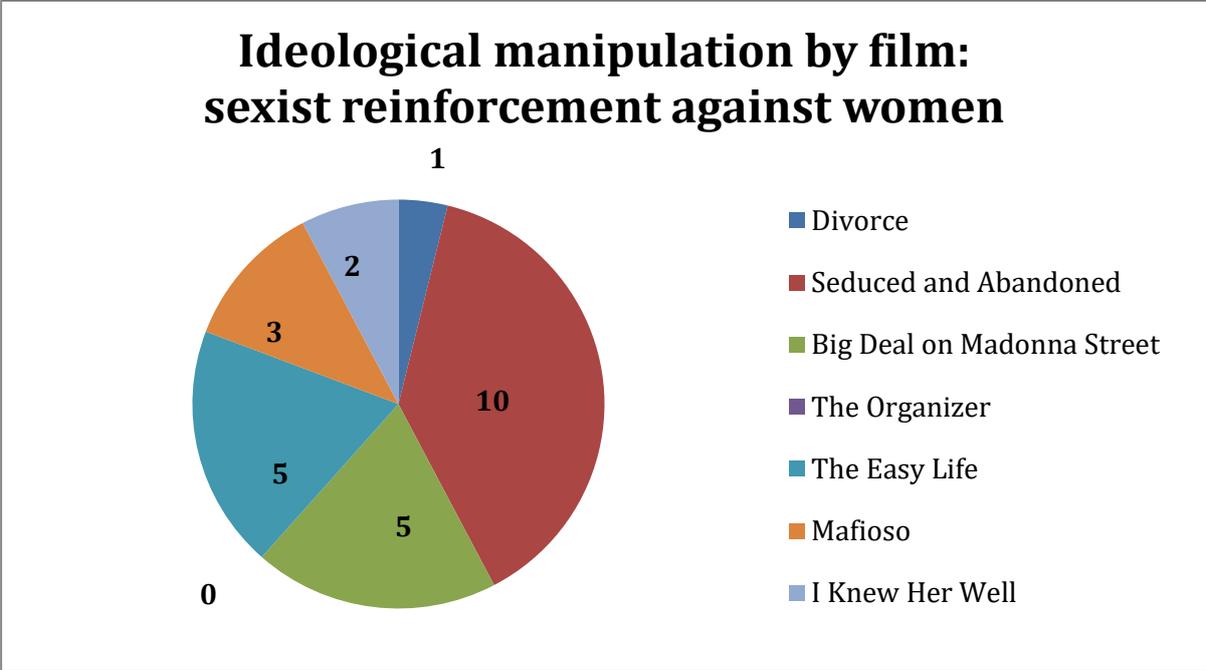


Figure 5.4 – Frequency of translation examples leading to sexist reinforcement against women

## Ideological manipulation by film: sexist reinforcement against men

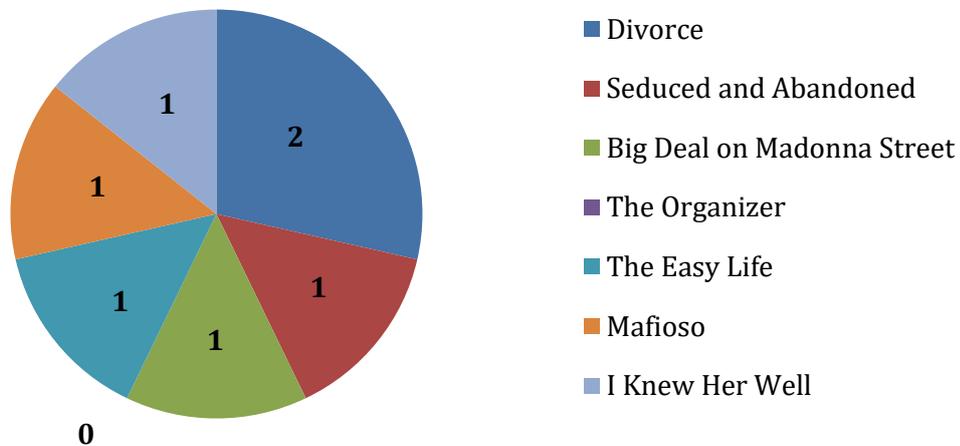


Figure 5.5 – Frequency of translation examples leading to sexist reinforcement against men

In addition to the findings displayed in these figures, the above-mentioned 3 instances of softening in favour of women are distributed equally between *Divorce Italian Style*, *Seduced and Abandoned* and *The Easy Life*, featuring one example each. *The Organizer* is the only film in the corpus where no instances of ideological manipulation have been detected, be they against or in favour of women or men.

The primary trend clearly shown in Fig. 5.4 is the existence of a more substantial incidence of ideological manipulation against women, which is most noticeable in *Seduced and Abandoned*, accounting for 10 instances of sexist reinforcement (Examples A22, 24, 25, 27, 28, 29, 30, 31, 32, 33), and, to a lesser extent, in *Big Deal on Madonna Street* (Examples A1, 3, 4, 5, 6) and *The Easy Life* (Examples A11, 12, 13, 14, 15), both containing 5 instances of the same type of manipulation. Put together, these three films add up to 20 instances of sexist reinforcement against women, while the 6 remaining cases of ideological manipulation targeting women are divided between *Mafioso* (3) *I Knew Her Well* (2) and *Divorce* (1), with *The Organizer* showing no examples of such trend. In

this respect, it should be noted that the present corpus consists of all Comedy Italian Style films released by Criterion between 2001 and 2016, a relatively limited period of time spanning 15 years. As discussed in section 4.2, one of the objectives of scholarly enquiries framed within the DTS paradigm is to monitor any potential variations that may have taken place over time in the application of certain translation norms. In this particular case study, no patterns have been detected that could be due to diachronic variation, arguably because the release of the subtitles took place over a rather short period of time. This in turn means that the above-mentioned variation regarding the trends of sexist manipulation against women found in the various films that make up the corpus is atemporal and stems from the translation approach adopted by the individual subtitlers, from the particular GSs and characterisations, as well as from the plot of each film. Be that as it may, it seems legitimate to focus the attention on the three most significant films in this respect.

*Seduced and Abandoned* is the film that evidences the strongest tendency to manipulate GSs related to women, by compounding their sexist connotations or even adding to the TT sexist nuances which are not present in the ST. The subtitles of this film include no fewer than 9 sexist insults, which translate various original epithets like *infame* [despicable/wicked girl], *schifosa* [disgusting girl] or *disgraziata* [wretched woman] against Agnese, the girl who has been seduced and abandoned by Peppino. Although the core meaning of the epithets is not sexist in the original, these terms are turned by the subtitler into insults of a more marked sexist nature by using the substantive ‘tramp’ in the TT subtitles, which in American English is slang for “a sexually promiscuous woman” (Oxford English Dictionary, 2020: online). It could be argued that a literal translation of the original epithets, *infame* [despicable/wicked girl] and *schifosa* [disgusting girl], would lead to longer, perhaps unidiomatic solutions, but by checking the number of characters available to the subtitler, it becomes clear that only in one

of above-mentioned cases does a literal rendition slightly exceed the maximum display rate and the obstacle could be easily overcome with some rephrasing.

As for the challenge that a more literal translation may sound unidiomatic, subtitlers should strive to find alternative solutions which may be more appropriate in the TL. Yet, without a gender-sensitive approach to the translation of these terms, the TT risks adding up sexist nuances and insults that were not present in the original dialogue exchanges, thus contributing to the perpetuation of a sexist bias against women and, to a lesser extent, against (homosexual) men. As already discussed in the previous microanalysis, the subtitles of *Seduced and Abandoned* also feature two translation instances in which two very different trends can be observed: one example illustrates the softening of sexist bias observed in the erasure from the subtitles of the above-mentioned *cagna* [bitch/slut] (Example 5.20); the second example is an instantiation of sexist reinforcement against men, which is materialised in the pejorative use of the above-mentioned ‘pansy’ (Example 5.22).

The other film that displays a range of ideologically manipulated solutions similar to *Seduced and Abandoned* is *Big Deal on Madonna Street*. In this comedy, the Italian *sciacquetta* [frivolous, insignificant woman] has been subtitled with ‘tramp’, i.e. “a sexually promiscuous woman” (Oxford English Dictionary, 2020: online), on two occasions (A4, 5). In the case of the Italian *disgraziata* [wretched woman], on the other hand, the same sexist gender stereotype and insult, ‘tramp’, has actually been added to the TT, since the original *disgraziata* does not refer to any particular gender representation and cannot really be qualified as an insult (Example A3). As a result, the reiteration of ‘tramp’, always directed at Nicoletta, the maid, ends up stereotyping her as a sexually promiscuous woman, thus creating a characterisation which is both narrower and more sexist than in the original.

The last film which contributes more substantially than the rest to the above-mentioned trend of sexist manipulation against women is *The Easy Life*, where the subtitler has radically manipulated the gender representation of a particular scene, worthy of further analysis:

Example 5.23 – *The Easy Life*

| <b>Context:</b> Peppe and Roberto are on the road, with Peppe behind the wheel dangerously overtaking anyone in front of him. At this particular moment, Peppe spots two young women from Germany in a car just behind them. |   |
|--|---|
| Voice off  | English subtitles   |
| 00:13:26,705 --> 00:13:45,516  | 00:13:26,705 --> 00:13:28,639                               |
| <b>Peppe:</b> Queste due, qua dietro a noi. Adesso me faccio supera' cosi' attacchiamo. Eh, addio, pupe. Deutschland, gaiardo, le tedesche <b>ce stanno subito!</b>  | Those two <b>chicks</b> .                                   |
| [These two here behind us. Now I'll let myself be overtaken so we chat them up. Hey, hi, dolls. Deutschland, cool, German women go with it at once.]   | 00:13:29,809 --> 00:13:32,437                               |
|  | I'll get 'em to pass<br>so we can follow 'em.               |
|  | 00:13:39,919 --> 00:13:42,217                               |
|  | Hi, cuties!   |
|  | 00:13:42,888 --> 00:13:45,516                               |
|  | Deutschland!<br>Those German <b>chicks</b> are <b>easy!</b> |
| <b>Gender stereotype 1</b>   | None in original/TC GSR in TT 'chicks'                      |
| <b>Translation strategy</b>  | Addition  |
| <b>Impact</b>  | Stronger  |
| <b>Gender stereotype 2</b>   | IC GSR Pupa [Doll]  |
| <b>Translation strategy</b>  | Literal translation   |
| <b>Impact</b>  | Similar   |
| <b>Gender stereotype 3</b>   | None in original/TC GSR in TT 'chicks'                      |
| <b>Translation strategy</b>  | Addition  |
| <b>Impact</b>  | Stronger  |
| <b>Gender stereotype 4</b>   | SC GSA Le tedesche ci stanno [German women are up for it]   |
| <b>Translation strategy</b>  | Explication (specification)                                 |
| <b>Impact</b>  | Stronger  |

In this particular case, the source dialogue is articulated around the use of general expressions, i.e. *Queste due* [these two] and *le tedesche* [the Germans (female)], hence avoiding any reference to GSs, let alone sexist ones. Yet, the colloquial English term ‘chick’, which is used on these two occasions to refer to the German young women, and according to the Cambridge Dictionary (2020: online) “is considered offensive by many women”, represents another interesting case of sexist manipulation and reinforcement. In addition, Peppe’s English rendition, in which these two instances of addition are already sexist per se, is further compounded by the inclusion of the adjective ‘easy’ in the last subtitle, used here to translate the SC gender stereotype of the Germans women as sexually liberated women. Again, the qualification of ‘easy’ conjures up the negative connotations associated with ‘loose women’ sleeping around with anyone, which are considerably stronger than the information contained in the original utterance, even when considering that the Italian *ci stanno subito* [they are up for it at once] also expresses some kind of judgement on the supposed lack of sexual inhibitions or modesty of German women.

Overall, these examples show the aforementioned prevalence of translation instances which lead to the sexist reinforcement of female gender representations, whereby women are projected as promiscuous or treated as prostitutes (Examples 5.1, 5.8, 5.12 and 5.17).

On the other hand, by looking again at the three films which are particularly significant in relation to the issues of ideological manipulation, we also find one instance of softening of the sexist bias both in *Seduced and Abandoned* (Example 5.20) and *The Easy Life* (Example A17) and one instance of sexist reinforcement against men in all three films (Examples A2, 16, 23). By looking more closely at the few examples of sexist reinforcement against men, it is interesting to note that 3 of the 7 instances of such type of ideological manipulation are based on the sexual discrimination of homosexual men. In

addition to the above-mentioned case of 'pansy' (Example 5.20), the other two instances consist in the addition of 'pretty boy' to the subtitles of the film *Big Deal on Madonna Street* (A2) and the substitution of *pederasta* [pederast/homosexual man] with 'queer' in the film *I Knew Her Well* (A34). Indeed, as Kimmel (2001) points out in his discussion of masculinity as homophobia, men construe and perform masculinity as much in terms of what it is, for example, virile attributes such as men's strength or courage, as in terms of what it is not or what men feel threatened by, such as 'pansies', 'pretty boys' or 'queers'. This perspective makes the above-mentioned cases of sexist manipulation against homosexual men more comprehensible and meaningful, as it shows that the denigration of women as 'whores' and homosexual men as 'pretty boys' or 'pansies' become two fundamental gender stereotypes on which men predicate their masculinity.

Overall, the analysis conducted on the issues of translation and ideology shows that the corpus includes instances of substantial, sexist reinforcement of GSs that are comparable to those observed by De Marco (2012) in the Italian and Spanish dubbed versions of UK and US cinema. On the other hand, from the quantitative point of view, the 26 instances of sexist reinforcement against women and the 7 instances of sexist manipulation against men constitute, respectively, 4.1% and 1.1% of the whole corpus, which makes the quantitative incidence of the sexist manipulation of GSs rather limited. What appears unquestionable, on the other hand, even allowing for the small numbers of sexist manipulation, is that the instances which lead to sexist reinforcement *against* women (26 cases), by reducing them to the gender stereotype of the 'whore' or debasing them to the level of animals, are considerably more numerous than the instances of softening *in favour* of women (3 cases). Particularly problematic from this point of view is the way in which Agnese, in *Seduced and Abandoned*, and Nicoletta, in *Big Deal on Madonna Street*, are repeatedly treated as 'tramps' in the subtitled versions, where the ST displays a more varied and much less sexist range of gender stereotypes, such as *infame* [despicable/wicked girl], *schifosa*

[disgusting girl], *disgraziata* [wretched woman] or *sciacquetta* [insignificant, frivolous woman]. Going back to Basow's (1992: 3) definition of GSs as "strongly held overgeneralizations", it can be argued that, in these cases, the original GSs are solidified and funnelled into an even more indiscriminate view of women as prostitutes, which, in turn, reverts to the archetypal distinction between madonnas and whores. In a similar way, when we consider the instances of sexist reinforcement against women (26 cases), we find that they are again considerably higher in number than those of sexist manipulation targeting men (7 cases), which, in turn, show a prevalence of sexist manipulation that preys on homosexual men and stereotypes. Hence, although the level of ideological manipulation may be limited, especially when considered against the size of the whole corpus, and although the trends of such manipulation are not always clear-cut, the present study on the subtitling of gender representations in Comedy Italian Style confirms a moderate tendency to the sexist reinforcement of GSs, already observed in previous research in AVT by scholars like Joyce (1997), Feral (2011a, 2011b) and De Marco (2012). The main butts of such sexist reinforcement in the Comedy Italian Style corpus remain, unsurprisingly, two social groups frequently and historically discriminated in society, i.e. women and homosexual men.

## Chapter 6

### Conclusions

In the introduction to the present study, I briefly discussed the starting point of my research project, i.e. De Marco's (2012) study on the manipulation of gender representation in UK and US cinema dubbed into Italian and Spanish, which eventually galvanised me to investigate the English subtitling of GSs in Comedy Italian Style. Despite these common synergies, my research project differs quite substantially from the one conducted by De Marco (*ibid.*) in various ways. Firstly, I was interested in exploring how GSs articulated in the specific cinema genre known as Comedy Italian Style had been subtitled into English, rather than researching translation in the opposite language direction, that is, English into Italian, which tends to have more currency in academic exchanges. This, in turn, implies a very different scenario from the point of view of the Polysystem Theory (Even-Zohar, 1978; Díaz Cintas, 2004), since the power relationships are inverted and my emphasis is placed on how the marginal Italian SL and SC has made its way into the dominant American English TL and TC, in what some authors have come to call metaphorically 'upstream translation' (Gottlieb, 2009, 2018). Another significant difference that sets my research apart from that carried out by De Marco (2012) lies in the fact that my investigation has focussed on the manipulation of gender representations in Comedy Italian Style by looking at the other main AVT mode, i.e. subtitling, rather than dubbing. These and other defining aspects at the basis of my inquiry are all part of my six original research questions. In these final pages, I draw my conclusions addressing these initial questions in the order in which they were presented in the introduction.

My first research question was related to the way in which GSs can be categorised. Following their conceptualisation as culture-specific references and

building on the categorisations of CSRs proposed by experienced researchers such as Pedersen (2011) and Ranzato (2013), five different types of GSs have been identified, namely, (1) microcultural, (2) belonging to the SC, (3) belonging to both SC and TC, (4) belonging to the TC and (5) belonging to a third culture. An operative distinction has also been made between explicit, direct GSRs, such as *cornuto* [cuckold], and implicit GSAs, which are the ones underlying “stretches of text” (Leppihalme, 1997: 3) of variable length, like the representation of ‘the fabulous, invisible women of Agramonte’, locked up like wild beasts in their own houses by their ‘virginity patrols’ in the androcentric society of *Divorce Italian Style* (Example 5.12). On the whole, this dual categorisation has proved to be a valuable research instrument, as shown in the quantitative (Section 5.2) and qualitative (Section 5.3) analyses, particularly when it comes to the distinction between SC/IC GSs, which are the categories of stereotypes most frequently observed in the ST, and TC/IC GSs, that are the main categories used for their linguistic transfer.

The above-mentioned differentiation of GSs on the basis of the relationship that can be established between SC and TC (Ranzato, 2013) becomes crucial when it comes to answering the second research question, related to the nature of the GSs which have been found both in the original films and in their subtitled versions. With a total of 637 GSs distributed across the seven films under scrutiny, the Comedy Italian Style corpus includes a whole gallery of varied, interesting and sometimes colourful instances of gender representation. While a wide range of these GSs has been fully examined in the preceding analysis of the corpus, it would be impossible to explore all types of gender representation in these conclusions. For this reason, the full list of all the GSs encountered in the Comedy Italian Style corpus can be found in Appendix 1, for the perusal of those interested in the topic.

With reference to the second research question, I will attempt here to summarise the prevalent gender portrayals of men and women that have been observed in the various STs and TTs. If we look at the Comedy Italian Style corpus from this perspective, we find that the most widespread representation of men tends to be based on the gender stereotypes of more or less successful, would-be Casanovas obsessed with sexual prowess, on the one hand, and with the potential threats of cuckoldry, on the other hand, particularly in the three Sicilian comedies *Divorce Italian Style*, *Seduced and Abandoned* and *Mafioso*. Typical stereotypes of this kind include *disonorati* [dishonoured men], *cornuti* [cuckolds] and *vigliacchi* [cowards], as well as references to the Italian *uomo* [man] in the sense of a ‘real man’, capable of living up to the stereotypes associated with his gender, such as masculinity, courage and sexual stamina. In the case of women, a more varied array of GSs can be identified, including *donne illibate* [undefiled women] and *madonne* [madonnas], on the one hand, and *disonorate* [dishonoured women], *svergognate* [shameless women], *sgualdrine* [hussies] and *puttane* [whores], on the other hand. Hence, it is rather clear that the gender representation of men tends to be based on their virility and sexual prowess, or lack thereof, whereas the representation of women usually revolves around the opposition suggested by Günsberg (2005: 89) and based on the distinction between “marriageable madonnas and sexual, unmarriageable Eves”. Indeed, what these male and female gender stereotypes have in common is the fact that they are all, to different degrees and in different ways, related to male and female sexuality, with the notable difference that, while men are free to determine their own sexual life, women’s sexuality is mainly a function of men’s urges and anxieties. In this context, the representation of the two sexes coincides with Mulvey’s (1999: 839) appreciation of the projection of “Woman as Image, Man as Bearer of the Look”.

When we unpick the way in which these GSs have been translated and the ensuing gender representation propelled in the Criterion’s subtitled versions, we find that they are dealt with in different ways by the several professionals

involved in the process. They do so by alternating various translation strategies, which show a concern closely related to the relative foreignness or familiarity of particular GSs for the TC and the extent to which a literal translation may sound (un)idiomatic in the TT (Venuti, 1995/2008; Nornes, 1999). In general, key IC GSs such as *sgualdrina* [hussy], *puttana* [whore] or *uomo* [man], in the stereotypical meaning of the term, tend to be literally translated as they have a TL corresponding counterpart and express gender representations that are familiar to the target audience. On the other hand, key SC GSs tend to be transferred by resorting to a wider range of strategies, including literal renditions, substitution, paraphrase and deletion. This is the case of the main SC gender stereotype and strongest insult uttered against men in Comedy Italian Style, that is, *cornuto* [cuckold], but also of SC gender stereotypes referring to women, such as *illibata* [undefiled woman] or *svergognata* [shameless woman].

The same trend can be observed in the translation of SC GSAs representing men's obsession with sex and their fear of being betrayed by their female partners, on the one hand, and women being portrayed as disposable sex objects or marriageable partners whose sexuality needs to be rigidly controlled. One frequent GSA which is often referred to in these comedies is the broad concept of *onore* [honour], which, depending on the particular context in which it is used, may imply different stereotypes and be associated with a family which has nothing to be 'ashamed' of in the eyes of the local community, a man who has been betrayed by his wife or a woman who has infringed the draconian Sicilian rules regulating female sexuality. Again, the above-mentioned trend of alternating different translation strategies, in addition to literal translation, such as explicitation, paraphrase and omission, can all be observed in the case of this and similar SC GSAs, leading to different representations which are more or less similar to the ST GSs, end up being manipulated or are altogether deleted from the subtitled versions. However, it is important to stress that, in addition to these

general trends, different and sometimes opposite approaches have also been detected in the English subtitling of GSs in the Comedy Italian Style corpus.

A considerable number of SC GSAs, for example, like the representation of the women of Agramonte in *Divorce Italian Style* (Example 5.12), are literally translated, as the linguistic and cultural significance of these gender portrayals are, at least superficially, understandable for the TC. Conversely, although IC GSs generally tend to be translated literally, some of these gender representations are also manipulated in many cases in which a literal translation would seem the most straightforward and effective translation strategy (BDoMS: 77; DIS: 73; TEL: 4, 40, 42, 49, 55, 104; M: 34, 36, 54, 58; TO: 65; SaA: 71, 93, 109; IKHW: 6, 12, 16, 37, 43, 46) such as the translation of *donna divisa dal marito* [woman separated from the husband] with 'divorcée' in *Mafioso* (Example 5.14) or the subtitling of *casalinga* [housewife] with 'common-law wife' in *Divorce Italian Style* (Example 5.15). On the whole, the GSs conveyed through the subtitled versions are often similar to the original ones in the case of IC GSs, which involve gender representations shared by the SC and TC, and therefore tend to be translated literally. On the other hand, the English subtitles can often transmit different gender representations to the TC, not just in the case of SC GSs, which the professionals have felt the need to mediate by using multiple strategies, but also in the case of IC GSs, whose manipulation seems to stem from personal translation choices. This is also true for the cases of addition, a translation strategy that ends up introducing new gender representations which cannot be accounted for in the ST.

As can be seen from this summary of the numerous GSs observed in the original films and in their subtitled versions, the gender representations found in the TTs largely depend on the translation strategies activated by the professionals. This crucial research aspect therefore brings us to research question number 3, that is, what strategies are used by the subtitlers to translate

GSS from Italian into English. From this viewpoint, the findings presented in Chapter 5 show that SL-oriented translation strategies like loan (2.2%), literal translation (37%) and explicitation (15.9%), account for the translation of 351 (55.1%) instances of GSS. In the case of loan, the percentage of this translation strategy in Comedy Italian Style is markedly lower than that found in Pedersen's (2011) and Ranzato's (2013) studies, in which it hovers around 40% and 50%, respectively. According to Gottlieb (2018), these opposite tendencies are associated with what he calls "upstream translation", from a marginal language and culture into the dominant one, and "downstream translation", in the opposite direction. With these metaphorical definitions, the researcher stresses that "carrying verbal goods up the river and into an English target text is more difficult than exporting Anglo-American cultural items and anglophone features down the river" (*ibid.*: 336). In this respect, the data on loan from the present corpus can be interpreted as a significant indication of such power relationships between the marginal SL and SC (Italian) and the dominant TL and TC (US), or, from Venuti's point view (1995/2008), as the prevalence of the Anglocentric approach to translation at the expenses of peripheral languages and cultures. On the other hand, the role of subtitling as a translation mode which remains close to the SL is broadly confirmed. In this respect, and to refer to the postulates put forward by Toury (1995/2012), the subtitles used in the Comedy Italian Style corpus lean to the pole of adequacy, in the sense that, overall, they tend to subscribe to the cultural and linguistic values of the ST, rather than adhering to those associated with the TT. On the other hand, both Toury (*ibid.*) and Díaz Cintas (2004) also stress that translations may not exclusively follow the ST or TT norms and any TT output represents a compromise between these two poles, which is the most accurate description of the English subtitling of GSS in Comedy Italian Style. Indeed, some of the solutions reached in the subtitles outline the acceptability of the translation, i.e. follow the linguistic and cultural values of the TT, and involve the manipulation of GSS through the use of translation strategies

like substitution (11.5%), lexical recreation (0.2%), paraphrase (8.5%), deletion (15.3%) and addition (6.3%), which amount to a total of 41.8% (266 cases).

From the point of view of research question number 4, i.e. whether the activation of these translation strategies can be explained with technical constraints of the translation mode or whether they seem ideologically driven, in the Comedy Italian Style corpus, the use of particular strategies does not seem to correlate on many occasions with the spatial and temporal constraints that are characteristic of subtitling. Indeed, the translation strategies whose implementation is most frequently associated with such constraints, that is, omission and substitution, usually seem to result from the lack of a TL corresponding term, rather than any stringent temporal or spatial constraints. In the case of omission, the decision to use this translation strategy may have been affected by time constraints for a minority of instances (27.5%, 19 cases). However, more often than not, the above-mentioned linguistic asymmetries between SL and TL seem to be the main reason behind its use (72.5%, 50 cases). In the case of substitution, technical constraints seem to impinge even less on this translation strategy, as only 9 cases (12.3%) of a total of 73 appear to have been determined by time limitations. In addition, some examples of substitution (34.2%, 25 cases) also involve instances of manipulation of the ST, which cannot be put down either to technical constraints or the lack of a TL corresponding term, as the above-mentioned cases of manipulation of *donna separata dal marito* [woman separated from her husband] in *Mafioso* (Example 5.14) or *casalinga* [housewife] in *Divorce Italian Style* (Example 5.15). The most interesting examples from the point of view of technical versus ideological manipulation of GSs have been discussed in detail in section 5.4 as part of the analysis on translation and ideology, including the substitutions of *schifosa* [disgusting girl] in *Seduced and Abandoned* (Example A25, 29, 30, 32, 33) and *sciaquetta* [insignificant, frivolous woman] in *Big Deal on Madonna Street* with 'tramp' (A4, 5), which contribute to the perpetuation of sexist gender representations.

The specific nature of the manipulation process was the object of the investigation formulated in research question number 5, that is, to what extent GSs are retained, modified or deleted. What the above-mentioned cases of omission, substitution and general manipulation show is that, in addition to the frequent retention of GSs such as *cornuto* [cuckold] or *puttana* (whore), other gender representations in the English subtitling of Comedy Italian Style are manipulated or eliminated and sometimes even added to the TT. Indeed, although different strategies can hardly result in exactly the same gender representation, the tendency to retain ST GSs can often be observed in the use of SL-oriented strategies like loan, literal translation and explicitation, which together account for the translation of 351 instances (55.1%) of GSs. In this respect, the use of the term retention needs to be qualified. By its own definition, translation involves the mediation of the Other (Venuti, 1995/2008, 1998; Berman, 2000) and any linguistic transfer, regardless of the particular translation strategy used, will inevitably result in *some* degree of negotiation of meaning (Katan, 1999). Hence, when we say that SL-oriented strategies tend to retain the ST GSs, we mean that the core gender representation is preserved, not that the meaning or impact of the GS will be exactly the same. In a similar way, the addition of a totally new gender representation to the TT is a more manipulative translation strategy than the omission of a GS due to the time constraints, although they both have an impact on the final translation product. The latter tendency to manipulate or eliminate GSs has been detected in the use of strategies like substitution, paraphrase, deletion and addition, which amount to a total of 41.8% (266 cases) and trigger different types of repercussion in the TT.

Finally, gauging the general impact that GSs generate in the TT by comparison with the ST was the object of enquiry highlighted in the last one of my initial six research questions. In this respect, the corpus under analysis shows that the linguistic transfer of most GSs leads to a softer impact (46.5%, 296

cases), followed, in decreasing order, by a similar (35.9%, 229 cases) and a stronger (17.6%, 112 cases) impact. In this context, literal translation plays a very important role, as this strategy alone accounts for 70.7% (162 cases) of instances which lead to similar impact in the TT. On the other hand, while literal translation makes up 23.6% (70) of all instances of softening in the corpus under scrutiny, two other translation strategies also contribute substantially to this type of effect, namely, explicitation (20.6%, 61 cases) and deletion (33.1%, 98 cases). In this respect, the prevalence of softened GSs in the Comedy Italian Style corpus, which results not just from the use of deletion but also from the activation of translation strategies like literal translation and explicitation, is symptomatic of the difficulty in transferring the cultural elements that are embedded in the original gender representation and confirms the culture-specific nature of gender stereotypes. As for reinforcement, the strategies which more markedly tend to result in this type of impact are addition (6.3%) and calque (3.1%). The former leads by default to a stronger gender representation in the TT, whereas the gender stereotype most frequently translated by resorting to calque consists of *professore* [teacher], which accounts for 14 of a total of 20 instances of calque. The Italian *professore* is a professional title which is only used to refer to men in the Comedy Italian Style corpus to acknowledge the intellectual gulf which separates the speaker from the addressee. In these cases, the regard enjoyed by the people who hold such title is considerably enhanced by the translation with the TC title 'Professor', again implying the same kind of intellectual prestige, but at the higher level of academic institutions.

Ultimately, the strongest bearing on gender representation, as materialised in the TT, derives from the above-mentioned manipulative practices that have an ideological slant and lead to the sexist reinforcement and perpetuation of gender stereotypes portraying women as sexually promiscuous and men as homosexual weaklings. Given the presence of these ideological issues in the practice of translation, TS have started to discuss them not just from a theoretical and

analytical point of view, but also by addressing ways in which sensitivity and awareness towards these translational aspects can be honed in translators' training programmes. These new avenues bring me to the last section of my conclusions, focussing on new directions of training and research.

In Chapter 3, a discussion is established highlighting some of the first steps taken by researchers to consistently integrate gender awareness training into the translation curricula (De Marco, 2011; Baldo, 2019; Vigo, 2019). In this respect, De Marco and Toto (2019) have pointed out that gender identity still seems to be relegated to the private sphere rather than being recognised as an all-encompassing reality, which calls for a holistic, all-inclusive approach in the way translators and interpreters deal with it. As a novel pedagogical approach, this is a stand not always accepted by some, including students who may not be used to considering and focussing on the the role that gender issues play in the translation classroom (De Marco, 2011). This situation is compounded by the fact that, as foregrounded by Baldo (2019), some academic institutions are not always willing to acknowledge the importance of systematically integrating gender alertness into the educational curriculum.

Clearly, the path leading to gender awareness in TS training is not an easy one to follow and trainers need to overcome different hurdles before such issues can be more fully integrated into the TS curriculum. However, if we really want to enable future audiovisual translators to adopt a gender-sensitive approach when making translation decisions which involve ideological issues, we, as trainers, also need to achieve a more comprehensive understanding of how these issues are, or have been dealt with, in the past, in the field of AVT. This, in turn, implies the need to expand research beyond the available studies mainly limited to very few language pairs and two modes of AVT, i.e. dubbing and subtitling. Being a relatively unexplored research field, with the notable exception of De Marco's (2012) in-depth study, gender in AVT offers a variety of opportunities for further

investigation. Here, I will limit my suggestions to the avenues of research more closely related to the present study.

The present study has put forward a taxonomy of gender stereotypes based on Ranzato's (2013) classification, mainly designed for cultural references, and has made a distinction between gender stereotype references and allusions. As gender stereotypes are often fluid concepts and their linguistic representations are not always easy to systematise, further research into the way we categorise and understand them can help us to achieve further insights into gender stereotypes, in general, and assist us in the analysis of their translation in AVT, in particular. Such an approach would certainly benefit from a multimodal methodology in which the communicative power of sound and images is also investigated and integrated.

In addition, given that Comedy Italian Style is a film genre strongly characterised by a ubiquitous gender representation, the present corpus, or a similar one, could be further exploited to investigate the way in which the findings from the English subtitling of GSs in Comedy Italian Style compare with other language combinations and AVT modes, such as the nature and frequency of manipulation in the French, Spanish or German subtitling, or dubbing, of this particular film genre.

Further research can also be conducted into the translation of the wider field of Italian cinema and audiovisual productions into English, but also into other languages, in order to explore whether the above-mentioned findings from the Comedy Italian Style corpus can be corroborated or contradicted when compared to other Italian audiovisual genres, both classic and contemporary. Potential research questions could look into the way in which the translation of gender stereotypes in Comedy Italian Style, with its lower status in the Italian cultural polysystem, compares to the transfer of gender representation in classic,

highbrow Italian cinema of the same era. The remit could also be expanded to include also lowbrow and highbrow contemporary Italian cinema.

Indeed, building a more comprehensive picture of the translation practices related to gender, as well as training the next generation of professionals to develop a gender-sensitive approach to AVT, are *sine qua non* prerequisites if we want to redress some of the imbalance against frequently discriminated social groups, such as women and homosexual men, often disseminated across cultures by means of translation. From an ethical point of view, this arduous task also represents a moral imperative, since the way in which gender stereotypes and representations are dealt with in AVT can have an enormous impact on the perception of different social groups in our communities, given the omnipresence and pervasive power exerted by the audiovisual media.

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## Filmography

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