
Representing varieties of English in film language and dubbing:

The case of Indian English

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Abstract & Keywords

English:

In the era of cultural awareness and of the adoption of new, non-Eurocentric perspectives, the construction of identity in audiovisual texts is particularly interesting. Representation is always an act of selection by storytellers, who choose traits and features that to their mind best portray the reality that they mean to describe. When an audiovisual text is dubbed in another language the process of representation of identity takes one further step, passing through several negotiating processes. It is only recently that special attention has been paid to the social and ideological aspects of the audiovisual medium in general and of audiovisual translation in particular, for their impact on the audience's feelings and their perception of reality. Among the post-colonial varieties of English, Indian English reflects its own cultural ideologies and a certain sense of belonging and identity in promoting different forms of innovation and restructuring with respect to Standard English. Furthermore, this variety is even more difficult to render as its sociolinguistic and cultural values are conveyed at all language levels, and it takes on features from some of the many different mother tongues spoken by the population. Therefore, in this contribution it is our aim to analyse how the cultural identity of the Indian-English speaking community is portrayed in three films and their Italian dubbed version. More specifically, first we focus on the linguistic choices adopted in the original version of these films in order to represent the "Indianness" of the characters. After evaluating how different features contribute to represent different types of Indian identity, we analyse the Italian dub, to identify the main translating strategies and verify if the same cultural and social values are represented, trying, when possible, to compare these features with those that are used in Italian cinema to evoke the stereotype of Indianness.

Keywords: dubbing, identity, representation, code-switching, Indian English

Don't write in English, they said,
English is not your mother tongue...
...The language I speak
Becomes mine, its distortions, its queerness
All mine, mine alone, it is half English, half
Indian, funny perhaps, but it is honest,
It is as human as I am human...
...Its voices my joys, my longings my
Hopes

(Kamala Das, *Summer in Calcutta: Fifty Poems*)

1. Introduction[1]

Since questions of ethnic diversity and representation are more and more central in our multilingual and multicultural society, with a still more or less evident tendency of American English language and culture to 'cannibalize' diversity, our purpose here is to investigate how the cultural identity of the Indian-English speaking community is portrayed through language in films set in India such as *Monsoon Wedding* (M. Nair 2001; from now on MW), *Bride & Prejudice* (G. Chadha 2004; from now on BP) and *Slumdog Millionaire* (D. Boyle and N. Tandan 2008; from now on SM) and their Italian dubbed versions.

We have decided to focus on the linguistic choices adopted in the original version to represent the "Indianness" (Bhatt 2008: 546) of the characters, also when Indian English encounters other varieties of English – i.e. British English in *Bride and Prejudice* or Desi in *Monsoon Wedding* – and then to discuss how cultural and social values travel across cultures in the light of the most recurrent strategies adopted in the Italian dub. By Indian English we mean Vernacular Indian English – i.e. a non standard variety that "shows

strong identification with local ideologies” (Bhatt 2008) and bears traces of the influence of local languages of India, thus differentiating itself from Standard Indian English, which in contrast is essentially similar in its core syntax to Standard British English – from which it differs only in its phonetics.

Finally, the last step of this study consists in verifying whether the same linguistic strategies employed in the Italian dub to evoke the stereotype of Indianness are actually exploited in Italian cinematography, by analysing a recent film of Italian production but set in India, *Lezioni di Volo* (F. Archibugi 2006; from now on LV), where Italian and Indian characters mingle and meet.

Although our investigation focuses on the linguistic texture of the analysed films and their dubbed dialogues, we believe that, in any work of fiction, be it a novel or a film, the characters’ idiolect is a strategic instrument used to represent their cultural identity in the diegetic world. We hope to be able to explore the multi-faceted nature of the representation of cultural identity in greater depth in our future research.

2. Language varieties and representation

Representation is always an act of selection by storytellers, who choose traits and features that to their mind best portray the reality that they mean to describe. When an audiovisual text is dubbed in another language the process of representation of identity takes one further step, passing through several negotiating processes (Bollettieri Bosinelli and Di Giovanni 2009).

Recently, special attention has been paid to the social and ideological aspects of the audiovisual medium in general and of audiovisual translation in particular for their impact on the audience’s feelings and their perception of reality. Images, and not only dialogues, are responsible for the transmission of values and consequently of their transfer in either dubbing or subtitling. Several studies have been devoted to the subject of representation: De Marco (2006, 2009), for instance, has focused on the portrayal of cinematic gender stereotypes, a multidimensional and volatile category influenced by cultural and social systems that undergoes further manipulation in translation. Another area that has been only lately studied is the perception of humour, especially in its verbally encoded form, as it is pivotal for humour to be recognised as such by the audience. The perception of humour may be – and often is – severely jeopardised when it is mediated linguistically, that is when it is interlinguistically transposed (cf. on humour, among others, Chiaro 2004, 2007; Bucaria 2005, 2007; Rossato and Chiaro 2010). The studies conducted by the Forlì group are all empirical and seek to ascertain the reaction of the audience when exposed to translated humour by identifying practices and responses common to members of the same cultural milieu and abstracting as much as possible from individual variation.

If, generally speaking, there is increasing awareness of and interest in the accents and varieties of English spoken around the world – a fact that is mirrored not only in the number of publications devoted to this subject, but also in the plethora of different accents that are nowadays heard on the BBC, where only a few decades ago there were only RP speakers – most of the research on Englishes in the media is centred on news discourse or advertising, with special attention to Asian and European regions (Martin 2009: 583).

One of the most prolific approaches to the spread of the varieties of English in the media is the one focused on power and ideology. Just to name an example, there are several studies on the portrayal of ideology in Disney films directed at children. From the late ‘80s onwards a new trend emerged – i.e. the portrayal of cultures that are either temporally or spatially remote from Western ones (Di Giovanni 2003). In cartoons and audiovisual texts in general, the viewer has even more “limited time to identify and understand what is represented on the screen. Consequently, authors and directors select and encode information in such a way that viewers are presented with standardised stereotypes” (Bollettieri Bosinelli *et al.* 2006: 497). More specifically, attention has also been paid to the choice of language varieties as specific diegetic tools to portray characters: Pandey (1997), in fact, claims that the choice of English varieties is often skewed, as speakers of non-standard varieties are usually presented as “powerless proletarians of low cultural and socioeconomic status” (1997: iii). The association between language variation and established notions and values as a typical filmic shortcut to characterisation is confirmed by Lippi-Green (1997), who also analysed accents and stereotypes in animated cartoons.[2] So, for example, if we consider the representation of evil characters, it is true that 85% are speakers of English and only 15% have foreign accents, but a more in-depth analysis of characters with positive, negative and mixed motivations discloses the fact that the representation of people who have a foreign accent (40%) is much more negative than that of speakers of either British (30%) or American English (20%) (Lippi-Green 1997: 92). Thus language variation is deployed as an ideological instrument to represent “variations in power and moral worth” (Pandey 1997: iii).

3. ‘Indianness’ in the media

Apart from the studies we have mentioned above on representation of diversity in animated cartoons and in films that depict a specific ethnic group – e.g. Italian/American in Bosinelli *et al.* 2006 – Martin (2009) reviews several surveys of different world – or “non-native” – varieties. Among the studies on Indian English there is the one by Bhatia (2001) on the representation of Indians in American media, which stresses that they are depicted “in an overwhelmingly negative light” (2001: 279) with the result that the Indians living in America feel betrayed and abused. The exploitation of foreign values for commercial purposes is a crucial symptom of this attitude: among the examples Bhatia offers there are the use of sacred

symbols in films, e.g. the image of the temple in *Indiana Jones and the temple of doom*, or the *Vaishnava Tilak* worn by Madonna in her performance of *Ray of Light* (1998) for the MTV Awards. In the latter case, since the *tilak* is a symbol of purity, the American pop star was severely attacked by the World Vaishnava Association (WVA) for wearing this holy symbol for commercial profit. Conversely, Bhatia recognises Bollywood films as a relief to other misrepresentations of the Indian culture and notices that this identity is perhaps felt more seriously by Indians abroad than Indians in India (Bhatia 2001: 282). One of the merits of these film productions is that of spreading the idea of diversity and ethnicity through cinema and music (Martin 2009: 587): one example in point is the popularity of Bhangra, a form of celebratory folk music born in India and later exported to Britain, especially by Punjabi immigrants.

As director Mira Nair says in the commentary provided in *Monsoon Wedding* (DVD version), Bollywood films also offer a wide kaleidoscope of languages, in which English is one form of communication among others:

Like music and costumes, language is also something we play with very much in India. It's very common and totally natural to speak mixing two or three languages: Hindi, English and Punjabi in this case. [In *Monsoon Wedding*] we just went with the absolute honest flow of exactly how we would do it in life... to celebrate being from India rather than look upon the west as anything as closest to happiness in any way (also cited in Martin 2009: 588).

However, in this case study, none of the films analysed strictly belong to Bollywood, which is in fact limited to productions totally spoken in Hindi. Nevertheless, in the films included in our corpus there are some episodes which share some features with Bollywood productions, namely songs, dancing, bright costumes, etc., particularly in *Bride and Prejudice*, whose genre allows more space for song-and-dance numbers as an integral part of the script. Moreover, Mira Nair, director of *Monsoon Wedding*, refers to the film as an example of Bollywood, obviously using the term in a broad sense (cfr. par. 4).

Furthermore, the description of the representation of Indianness relies on the language spoken in the film dialogues (original and translated), without taking into account other aspects of daily life that are shown in the films and that also contribute to the creation of stereotypes (e.g. music, food, clothing, celebrations, etc.).

4. The corpus of our analysis

As mentioned in the introduction, the corpus on which the present study is based can be subdivided into two parts: the first component is constituted by three recent films of British/American/Indian production set in different regions of India, while the second component simply consists of one film of Italian production, yet set in India. The choice of the films was on the one hand constrained by the paucity of recent films where characters speak Indian English in an Indian context, on the other, we chose among the most recent some that included members from different social classes. As regards the Italian film, the choice was practically constrained, as only very recently have elements belonging to the Indian culture been introduced in Italian productions.

The three films under consideration that are part of the first component, which includes both the original English version and the Italian dub, offer quite a varied socio-linguistic scenario. More specifically, *MW* is set in New Delhi, Delhi, India, and describes the life of the Vermas, an upper-middle class family, during the preparations for an arranged marriage with a stressed father, a bride-to-be with a dark secret, a fanatical event-planner and relatives from different places coming to celebrate and to have a say in everything and interfere in the Vermas' affairs. Lower classes are also represented in some minor characters – i.e. the housemaid and the wedding planner. Different Englishes are spoken, as the Vermas' relatives come from Australia and the groom is of Indian origin, but lives in Houston, Texas, and therefore is a Desi[3], speaking this different variety of English.

BP takes place in Amritsar, Punjab, India, and is a romantic, musical adaptation in Bollywood style of Jane Austen's *Pride and Prejudice*. The story follows the ups and downs of the Bakshis. The eldest daughter, Lalita, helps her father run the family business while her mother is resolved to marry off her daughters to well-off men. Here too there are speakers of different varieties of English, and more specifically, Will Darcy, a handsome and wealthy businessman from Los Angeles, and Balraj Bingley, a barrister from London, UK.

SM is set in the capital of India, Mumbai, and portrays characters from the lower classes. In fact, it tells the story of Jamal Malik, a young man from the slums of Mumbai who participates as a contestant in the Indian version of the show *Who Wants to Be a Millionaire?* Against the odds he wins the final prize, arousing suspicion in both the show host and police officers.

Finally, the Italian component consists of the recent film of Italian production *LV*, which tells the story of two Roman adolescents and inseparable friends, Apollonio and Marco, who are in search of their identity and who call themselves 'Pollo', that is 'chicken', and 'Curry', respectively – a word play that refers to their tight friendship and to the fact that the latter is Indian by birth, adopted by an Italian couple, thus recalling the traditional Indian dish of 'chicken curry'. The two convince their parents to let them take off for India, since Curry wants to see his native land and look for his real mother. In Jodhpur, they meet an Italian

gynaecologist, Chiara, interpreted by Giovanna Mezzogiorno, who takes them to her aid agency's clinic in the desert of Rajasthan. From a socio-linguistic and socio-cultural point of view, *LV* is quite interesting, since it vividly represents the differences between characters belonging to various Indian social classes, from the street vendor to the taxi driver to the receptionist and manager of a luxury hotel in Jodhpur; differences which are reflected in the language used, as shall be seen in the following paragraphs. The same holds for the way Indians relate to Curry: they are misled by his Indian looks, which often causes him problems in communication and a sort of "Lost in Translation" effect.

Table 1 below shows the technical details of the films discussed here, while Table 2 describes the linguistic varieties present in each film in its original and dubbed version, indicating also when subtitling is employed.

	Film title	Year	Director	Country	Italian title	Italian dialogues	Runtime
<i>MW</i>	<i>Monsoon Wedding</i>	2001	Mira Nair	India/USA/F/G/I	<i>Monsoon Wedding</i>	Mario Paolinelli	114'
<i>BP</i>	<i>Bride & Prejudice</i>	2004	Gurinder Chadha	UK/USA	<i>Matrimoni & Pregiudizi</i>	Federica De Paolis	111'
<i>SM</i>	<i>Slumdog Millionaire</i>	2008	Danny Boyle, Loveleen Tandan	UK	<i>The Millionaire</i>	Paolo Modugno	120'
<i>LV</i>	<i>Lezioni di Volo</i>	2006	Francesca Archibugi	I	-	-	106'

Table 1. The corpus: The English and Italian dub film component, the Italian film component.

Films	Original soundtrack
<i>Monsoon Wedding</i>	Indian English Hindi/Punjabi Desi (from the USA) Australian English English subs
<i>Bride & Prejudice</i>	Indian English Punjabi/Hindi American English Brit-Asian English subs
<i>Slumdog Millionaire</i>	Indian English Hindi English subs
<i>Lezioni di Volo</i>	Italian English Indian English Hindi Italian subs Italian subs

Table 2. Linguistic varieties in the film corpus, including AVT.

5. Analysing 'Indianness' in Film Language

We started off with the analysis – in the original soundtrack of the three films – of a series of phenomena which have been indicated as indices of the linguistic creativity of Indian English (see Balirano 2007; Bhatt 2008; Gargesh 2009; Sedlatschek 2009): compounding, reduplication and affixation on the morphological level; borrowing and appropriation in the choice of lexical items; tags, ellipsis of various elements, the deletion of determiners, a different use of some verbal tenses, word order and topicalisation in the domain of syntax, and finally code-mixing and code-switching. Then, we carried out a parallel analysis of the type of strategies employed in the Italian dubbed version to recreate the same effect of 'Indianness', which were then compared to the features used in the Italian film to convey the same effect.

5.1. Morphology and Lexicon

On the morphological level, there are examples of two types of compounding. Firstly, there are cases of hyphenated rhyming reduplicative compounds, as *love-shove* from *BP*, which are usually translated into Italian by explicitation, in this case using a diminutive, namely 'piccioncini'. Secondly, we often find hyphenated compounds made of a word in English and the other in Hindi, which on the one hand reflects the high creativity of Indian English, and on the other is part of the process of language adaptation typical of post-colonial texts. More specifically, as Ashcroft *et al.* (2002) observe about post-colonial literature, "[t]he crucial function of language as a medium of power demands that post-colonial writing defines itself by seizing the language of the centre and re-placing it in a discourse fully adapted to the colonized place" (2002: 37). Such a result is achieved through the use of two processes, namely abrogation and appropriation. The first entails the "refusal of the categories of the imperial culture, its aesthetic, its illusory standard of normative or 'correct' usage" (2002: 37), while the latter is "the process by which the language is taken and made to 'bear the burden' of one's own cultural experience" (2002: 38). In this sense, the creation of such compounds is an instance of the previously mentioned and extensively used mechanisms, with the use of Indian terms, namely loanwords, that are in some way manipulated and re-used in a new way. See examples (1) and (2) below from *SM*:

(1) [SM] Prem: A few hours ago... you were giving *chai* for the phone-*wallas*.
IT DUB > Poche ore fa portavi il tè ai ragazzi del call-centre. [BT[4]: A few hours ago, you were taking tea to the boys at the call centre.]

(2) [SM] Driver: Mother-*chod*!
IT DUB > Figlio di puttana! [BT: Son of a bitch!]

The two Hindi words *walla* and *chod*, which respectively mean ‘someone who is employed in a particular occupation or activity’ and a swearword, are borrowed from one language to be used in another, and generally in the Italian dub explicitation is the preferred strategy to render these new terms, which are not maintained in any way. Moreover, it is worth noticing that the processes of borrowing and appropriation are actually applied twice as regards the compound *phone-wallas*, since the Hindi word *walla* is modified by affixation with the addition of the English inflectional suffix *-s* for the plural.

Another relevant morphological phenomenon that can be found in these films is the use of deferential forms of address, mainly honorifics, in the Indian culture, as *-ji* or *-saab*, which are normally appended to proper names, thus functioning as actual suffixes, as in ‘Kholi-*saab*’, ‘Baba-*ji*’, ‘Mr Darcy-*saab*’ in *BP*. However, these are just two forms of the more varied terms of address used in this context and which are independent lexemes, such as *beti* and *didi*, whose use produces the effect of code-mixing. As a consequence, for further discussion and analysis in comparison to the Italian dub, see 5.3. The same holds for another recurring feature that refers more to lexicon, so to say, that is the extensive use of loanwords from Hindi which usually pertain to the semantic domains of food and cooking – e.g. *lado* for ‘biscotto’, *samosa*, *chai* for ‘tè’ – traditions – e.g. *dupatta* for ‘velo’, *sangeet*, *mehendi* for ‘henné’ – and terms of either spontaneous or formal speech such as greetings. Once again, the use of these Hindi words in a major English linguistic context produces the effect of code-mixing (see section 5.3. for an extensive analysis).

5.2. Syntax

As pointed out in the introductory section (cfr. 5.), the most frequent and relevant features characterising Indian English on the syntactic level are tags, ellipsis, the deletion of determiners, a different use of some verbal tenses and word order.

First of all, the three films that are part of the English component of the corpus are characterised by the use of specific invariant tags in the form of *huh*, *no* and *nah*, which is a very common alternative to *no* in Indian English (Balasubramanian 2009). Extracts (3)–(5) below provide a few examples of some of the ways these tags are rendered in the Italian dubbed version, when translated, whereas example (6) shows an alternative translation, where the tag is completely obliterated and other strategies are employed as a way of compensation, namely in this case a negative interrogative:

(3) [SM] Prem: You got lucky, *huh*?
IT. DUB > Ti è andata bene, *eh*?

(4) [SM] Jamal: No, but maybe it’s written, *no*?
IT. DUB > No, ma magari è scritto, *no*?

(5) [MW] Pimmi: Well, I’m doing it for your darling daughter, *nah*?
IT. DUB > Lo faccio per nostra figlia, *no*?

(6) [MW] Lalit: My God! Pimmi, it’s wonderful, *nah*?
IT. DUB > Pimmi, non lo trovi meraviglioso Ø?

Indeed, these tags contribute to building up the Indian identity of the characters, and when transposed in the target language, the translation does not fully succeed in rendering the same socio-cultural values. Such difficulty is mirrored also by the fact that of the total number of occurrences present in the original soundtrack of the three films, which is 29, in nearly half of the cases tags are not transposed at all in the target text (cfr. Table 3).

	[BP] Original	Dub	[MW] Original	Dub	[SM] Original	Dub
<i>huh</i>	-	-	2	2 Ø	13	7 <i>eh</i> 6 Ø
<i>no</i>	2	1 <i>giusto</i> 1 <i>vero</i>	1	1 <i>vero</i>	2	2 <i>no</i>
<i>nah</i>	2	1 <i>non trovi</i> 1 <i>no</i>	7	5 Ø 1 <i>no</i> 1 <i>non è</i> <i>così</i>	-	-
Tot. 29						

Table 3. Invariant Tags

The Italian film *LV* also showcases some examples of these tags, especially *huh* and *nah*, which are mainly

used by one character, namely by Sharmila/Archie Panjabi, the Indian doctor and colleague of Chiara/Giovanna Mezzogiorno at the World Aid clinic in the desert of Rajasthan. Of course, Sharmila uses these tags when she speaks Indian English, which is generally subtitled in Italian, with European people, as in (7) below, while she sticks to Hindi, which conversely is always left untranslated, when talking to other Indian characters.

(7) [LV] Sharmila: So, how does India seem to you as an adopted?
[IndEng[5]: Come ti sembra l'India da adottato?]

'Curry': Very stinky. [Eng: Molto puzzolente.]

Sharmila: Yeah, you only come to see the temples and diseases, cripple and god, *nah?* Get the tea, please. You know, Italy is not only Raffaello and mafia, *huh?*
[IndEng: Certo, venite qui per vedere solo templi, malattie, storpi e divinità Ø. Mi passi il tè? L'Italia non sarà solo Raffaello e mafia Ø.]

As will be noticed, the Italian subtitles tend to avoid transposing tags in any way – as well as other discursive items such as *please* and *you know* – so that the utterances appear to be more assertive, thus losing the challenging overtones conveyed by the tag itself, with an inevitable modification of the illocutionary force. Nevertheless, some of these values may be recovered from the original spoken dialogues, for example through intonation patterns, whereas in the dubbed versions of the English films it all disappears.

The next characterising feature of Indian English that emerged is the ellipsis of certain syntactic constituents, namely the subject, the auxiliary and the subject together with the verbal element. Extracts (8) and (9) are examples of the first two types respectively and give a general idea of what happens in the Italian dubbing:

(8) [MW] Rahul: [Ø] *Went* to the airport to get your sister and her husband.
IT. DUB > All'aeroporto, a prendere tua sorella e il marito. [BT: To the airport, to pick up your sister and her husband.]

(9) [SM] Jamal: [Ø] *You know* who that was?
IT. DUB > Tu sai chi è stato? [BT: You know who did it?]

Generally speaking, the occurrences of elliptical sentences in the original text are higher than in the target text, because of the clear difficulty in rendering certain types of ellipsis, namely of the subject, in Italian, as it is a pro-drop language. Therefore, standardisation is preferred, as happens in (8), or, when possible, some compensation strategies are employed, such as the use of the overt-subject, as in (9), which is a marked choice in Italian, or the use of non-standard ungrammatical constructions, also with the deletion of determiners, as often happens in the Italian subtitles of *LV* – see example (10) below.

(10) [LV] Auto-rikshaw driver: Ø Cricket team [Ø] inside the palace.
IT. SUBS > [IndEng: C'è squadra Ø di cricket dentro Ø albergo.]
[BT: There is cricket team in hotel.]

The translating choices adopted in subtitling Indian English in the Italian film analysed always seem to underline and strengthen the cultural differences between Indian speakers belonging to different social classes and with a different cultural background and stature. As a consequence, the language used by street vendors and taxi drivers, for example, is always stereotypically incorrect in the Italian subs, as in example (10) above, while that of Indian doctors, like Sharmila and the receptionist and manager of the luxury hotel in Jodhpur is standard.

Example (11) shows another frequent feature of Indian English that this Italian film shares with the other three films under consideration, that is the deletion of determiners, and more specifically of the definite article:

(11) [BP] Mrs Bakshi: *She's our only hope*. If we do not get the eldest married first, we'll never be able to marry Ø *rest of you* for the shame!
IT. DUB > Lei è Ø *nostra speranza!* Se la figlia maggiore non si sposa per prima, per la vergogna non riusciremo mai a sistemare *le altre!*
[BT: She is our hope! If the eldest daughter doesn't get married first, for the shame we won't be able to marry off the rest!]

As can be seen in (11), the elision of the determiner is usually maintained in the Italian dub, even though in different parts of the utterance.

A different use of verbal tenses is among the most characterising features of Indian English identified in contrast to Standard British English (Bhatt 2008). In fact, there is an extensive use of the Present Continuous instead of the Present Simple, as in (12), and of the Present Simple instead of the Present Perfect, as in (13) below:

(12)[BP] Mrs Lamba: Oh, his sister *is looking* so lovely! So fair, nah?
IT. DUB > Guarda com'è bella la sorella! È deliziosa, non trovi?
[BT: Look at how beautiful his sister is! She's adorable, don't you think?]

(13)[MW] Ria: So what do you do? Marry some guy selected by mom and daddy? You barely *know* him for a couple of weeks! You are so mature, Aditi!
IT. DUB > E allora che fai? Ti sposi con qualcuno scelto da mamma e papà e che *conosci* solo da due settimane? Io lo so, tu non sei una sciocca.
[BT: So what do you do? Are you going to marry someone chosen by mum and dad and that you've known for two weeks? I know it, you're not a fool.]

In both cases, the translation choices in the Italian dub basically tend to normalisation and standardisation, as the correct tense in Italian is used. Moreover, the language is totally levelled out, because no compensation strategies are employed in other parts of the same utterance. For example, it can be noticed how in (12) the ellipsis of the subject and verb *she's* is explicitated, preferring to use the verb 'è' overtly, not to mention the translation of the Indian tag *nah* with the formal 'non trovi?'.

Finally, one last syntactic feature of Indian English worth mentioning is the word order, that is the lack of inversion of subject and auxiliary verb in the interrogative form. See example (14) below:

(14) [MW] Lalit: I sent Rahul to the airport. *The flight was* late?
IT. DUB > Come siete venuti? Ho mandato Rahul a prendervi all'aeroporto ma non vi ha trovato perché il volo era in ritardo.
[BT: How did you get here? I sent Raul to pick you up at the airport, but he couldn't find you because the plane was late.]

Once again, in the Italian dub, the utterance is completely manipulated and the language standardised, with the addition of linguistic material which also modifies the illocutionary force from an interrogative to a statement (made possible in this case by the lack of lip-synch constraints, due to the fact that many characters appear in the scene and the camera goes from one to the other).

This feature is also frequent in *LV*, as (15) below shows, and since it is more frequently used by characters belonging to lower social classes, the translation in the Italian subtitles is characterised by non-standard and ungrammatical constructions:

(15) [LV] Taxi driver: *You are not* Indian?
IT. SUBS > [IndEng: No indiano?]

5.3. Code-mixing and Code-switching

The last two characterising features of Indian English that we would like to consider for our investigation are code-mixing and code-switching.

Code-mixing (cf. Auer 2007) entails, in this case, the insertion of Indian/Hindi/Punjabi words in a sentence in English. As previously mentioned in section 5.1., generally, these words pertain to the semantic fields of food, traditions, terms of address and conversational routines. In the first case, we can observe a general tendency in preserving the name of typical Indian food and dishes, as it appears to be the case for *lassi* and *samosa* in [MW] and *panipuri* in [SM], even though this is not a rule, as other terms pertaining to the same domain are translated into Italian, as *ladoo* with 'biscotto' in [BP], *chai* with 'tè' in [MW] and [SM]. Words relating to traditions, conversely, tend to be translated in the dubbed version or even omitted: *dupatta* with 'velo' in [BP], but obliterated in [MW]; *mehendi* with 'henné' in [MW]; *sangeet* is either maintained, translated with 'festa' and 'matrimonio', or even omitted in the same film [MW], as can be seen in the following extract in (16):

(16) [MW] Lalit: Save the jokes for the *sangeet*.
IT. DUB > Risparmiala per la *festa*, ne avrai bisogno.
[BT: Save it for the party, you're gonna need it.]

Aditi: What?
IT. DUB > Cosa?
[BT: What?]

Lalit: He'll be the M.C. at the *sangeet*.
IT. DUB > Sì, sì, per il *sangeet*, sarà il cerimoniere ufficiale, d'accordo?
[BT: Yes, yes, for the *sangeet*, he'll be the official master of ceremonies, alright?]

Terms of address deserve special attention, as they are a recurring element in code-mixing, both in the form of honorific suffixes appended to proper names (cfr. 5.1.), such as *-ji* and *-saab*, and as proper words, like *didi*, *beta*, *bahi* and the like. As far as dubbing is concerned, Table 4 shows the various ways in which the transposition of such terms of address is dealt with in the target text.

[BP]	Dub	[MW]	Dub	[SM]	Dub
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	Original		Original		Original	
<i>beta</i>	1	1 Ø	9	5 Ø	-	-
<i>beti</i>	1	1 <i>beti</i>		3 name	-	-
				1 <i>amore</i>		
<i>papa</i>	2	2 <i>papa</i> (+2)	5	3 <i>papà</i> [BT: dad]	-	-
				2 Ø		
				<i>papa</i> (+2)		
<i>didi</i>	-	-	5	2 name	-	-
				2 Ø	-	-
				1 <i>cuginetta</i> [BT: cousin]		
<i>saab</i>	17	15 <i>saab</i>	3	3 name	-	-
		2 Ø				
<i>-ji</i>	3	2 Ø	1	1 Ø	10	10 Ø
		1 <i>-ji</i>				
<i>bhai</i>	-	-	-	-	4	2 <i>fratello</i> [BT: brother]
						2 Ø
<i>baba</i>	-	-	-	-	2	2 Ø
Tot. 63						

Table 4. Code-mixing: Terms of address

As may be noticed, these forms can be either maintained or transposed in various ways, using proper names, or other expressions like hypocoristics, but they can also be totally omitted. In fact, out of the total 63 occurrences, 29 are deleted in the Italian dubbed version, even though in some cases translation may present some additions, as can be seen in the extract in (17) from *MW*:

(17) [*MW*] Lalit: Don't compare yourself with me, you're just a kid, understand?
 IT. DUB > Non metterti a giudicare quello che fanno i grandi, ragazzino.
 [BT: Don't judge what grownups do, kid.]

Varun: But right now you said I'm big now!
 IT. DUB > Sono uomo solo quando ti pare, vero *papà*?
 [BT: I am a man only when you like, right, dad?]

Lalit: That's it. You're going to boarding school. Decided!
 IT. DUB > Che faccia tosta, ma il collegio ti raddrizzerà.
 [BT: What a cheek! But the boarding school will put you on the right track.]

Varun: Since when?
 IT. DUB > Bisogna vedere.
 [BT: We'll see.]

Pimmi to Varun: *Beta*, **beta**, **papa** and I are only talking about it.
 IT. DUB > *Ora basta. Papà* e io ne stiamo semplicemente parlando.
 [BT: Stop now. Dad and I are simply talking about it.]

Code-switching occurs from Hindi to English and *vice versa*, with English supplying mainly the grammatical frame and Hindi the content morphemes. The switch between the two languages expresses the socio-historical experience of the English bilingual population: the words serve as vehicles of cultural memory, "recalling the local-cultural practices of the past within the global medium of [...] English" (Bhatt 2010: 107) and reflect the hybrid, multicultural nature of Indian identity.

This strategy is used in all three films although it is remarkably pervasive in *SM*. Originally, *SM* was written

entirely in English but at a later stage the director Boyle decided to have the children speak, at least partly, their native language – i.e. Hindi.

In *SM* code-switching allows the audience to understand the plotline without altering the cultural setting of the story through the use of Hindi. In the original version Hindi dialogues are subtitled in English, whereas in the Italian version both English and Hindi are dubbed into Italian (cf. below). In this film in particular, code-switching performs two main functions. On the one hand it underlines different phases of the plot, for example, it is extensively used in flashbacks on the children's life in the slums, but as the story goes on, English, the language of social advance, is used more and more. So switches in the code actually mirror momentous changes in the lives of the characters – e.g. the scene in which the two brothers, Jamal and Salim, improvise as tourist guides illustrating in English the beauties of the Taj Mahal. On the other hand, code-switching is used in some specific scenes to signal profound conflicts and social distance between the characters. At the beginning of the film, for instance, the policemen who interrogate and torture Jamal use some Hindi switches in dominant English to underline their distance from the victim, but then they switch back to Hindi to give vent to their anger when cursing.

(18) [SM] Inspector: He's is unconscious, *chutiya*. What good is that? How many times have I told you, you should once...

IT. DUB > È svenuto, lo vedi? Che cazzo hai combinato? Quante volte devo dirtelo. Merda!

[BT: He passed out, you see? What the fuck did you do? How many times do I have to tell you! Shit!]

Srinivas: I'm sorry sir.

IT. DUB > Scusi, signore.

[BT: Sorry, sir.]

Inspector: *Aré va* Srinivas... Now we'll have Amnesty International here next peeing in their pants about human rights.

IT. DUB > Fantastico, bravo Srinivas. Ora avremo addosso Amnesty International che ci farà due palle sui diritti umani.

[BT: Awesome, well done, Srinivas. Now we're gonna have Amnesty International on our back breaking our balls on human rights.]

SM is characterised by an extensive use of dialogues in Hindi that in the original version are mostly subtitled in English according to a practice that is known as “part subtitling” (cf. O'Sullivan 2007, 2011)[6], but are dubbed into Italian in the Italian version. The first scene of the film in which subtitles are used shows a group of children playing cricket on a tarmac cricket ground. Jamal seems careless and does not notice that his friends are screaming at him to get out of the way as a light aircraft is about to land there. The children are then pursued by security guards and dash across a rubbish dump and then disappear down a maze of tiny lanes in the slum. In the utterance pronounced by the police officers there is the Hindi preposition *ka* between two English words.

(19) [SM] Salim: [*Hindi*: Jamal, catch it, catch it. Jamal! Jamal, it's yours!]

IT. DUB > Jamal, prendila, prendila. Jamal! Jamal, prendila è tua!

[BT: Jamal, catch it, catch it. Jamal! Jamal, catch it, it's yours!]

Salim: [*Hindi*: How did you manage to drop a sitter like that, damn it?]

IT. DUB > No, ma che testa di cavolo, come hai fatto a perdere una palla come quella?

[BT: No, what a pinhead! How could you miss a ball like that?]

Officers: [*Hindi*: Private *ka*-land! Private *ka*-land!]

IT. DUB > Via di qui, proprietà privata! Via, via subito da qui!

[BT: Go away, private property! Away, away from here right now!]

Officer: : [*Hindi*: Catch him!]

IT. DUB > Ø

Children: [*Hindi*: The dogs are coming! Run!]

IT. DUB > La polizia! Via via! Scappiamo!

[BT: The police! Away, away! Let's run!]

Code-switching is also extensively employed in *MW*, where it has a strong social function, as Indian people belonging to lower classes, such as the wedding planner Dubey, the workers and the maid, always speak Hindi between themselves, while members of the upper-middle class Varma family mostly speak Indian English sometimes switching to Hindi. Finally, it is worth noticing that when Lalit Varma, the landlord, speaks to Dubey, the wedding-planner, he always uses Hindi as a way of marking the social differences between them, while Dubey sometimes speaks English as a sign of respect and obedience, as can be seen in the extract below in (20). In the original soundtrack, the sequences in Hindi are always subtitled in English, while in the Italian version of the film they are always dubbed:

(20) [MW] Lalit: [*Hindi*: This is the limit! A white tent?]
IT. DUB > Cos'è, sei daltonico? Che tenda hai messo?
[BT: What? Are you colour-blind? What kind of tent have you put?]

Dubey: Yes, sir!
IT. DUB > Perché, che ha?
[BT: Why? What's wrong with it?]

Lalit: Dubey! [*Hindi*: A white tent?!]
IT. DUB > Dubey! Che senso ha una tenda bianca?
[BT: Dubey! What's the point of a white tent?]

Dubey: Yes, sir!
IT. DUB > In che senso?
[BT: What do you mean?]

Lalit: Oh, "yes, sir"? [*Hindi*: What's with the white tent?]
IT. DUB > Ma che ti dice il cervello? Come può venirti in mente di montare una tenda bianca?
[BT: What's going on in that head of yours? How could you think of using a white tent?]

Dubey: [*Hindi*: This is the fashion these days, Millenium style: Y2K dot com]
IT. DUB > Non è-- adesso si usa, è del tutto normale! Anzi in questo periodo la vogliono tutti, i maggiori--
[BT: It's not-- nowadays it's fashionable, it's totally normal! In fact, it is requested by all major--]

Lalit: [*Hindi*: Smart-arse! A white tent! Is this a wedding or a funeral? Dubey, I only have one daughter and I want a colourful tent for her! Red, yellow, green, blue!]
IT. DUB > Sì, forse a Londra! Hai mangiato pane e volpe? Il bianco a un matrimonio, ma quando mai? Non è mica un funerale questo! Io ci tengo alla vita di mia figlia! Non voglio che si sposi sotto il bianco! Con tutti i cazzi di colore che ci sono! Falla sparire e mettone una colorata!
[BT: Yes, maybe in London! Are you off the rocker? White for a wedding! Since when? This is not a funeral! I care about my daughter's life! I don't want her to get married under the white! With all the fucking colours there are! Make it disappear and put another one coloured!]

A few considerations on the code-switching in the Italian film *LV* are in order. Even in this case, the use of this discursive strategy is mainly influenced by social constraints, as generally Indian characters in the film speak Hindi when addressing people of the same class or ethnicity, whereas they switch to Indian English when speaking to foreigners. A clear example is given by the following extract from the scene in which 'Curry' has just arrived in India and people in the streets talk to him directly in Hindi because they think he is Indian, but then switch to Indian English when he tells them he is not:

(21) [LV] Taxi driver: [*Hindi*]
'Curry': I don't understand. I'm not Indian. [*Eng*: Non capisco, non sono indiano.]
Taxi driver: You are not Indian? [*IndEng*: No indiano?]

As can be noticed, in *LV*, Hindi is never translated in any way into Italian, while subtitling is used to translate English and Indian English.

6. Conclusions

On the whole, despite the remarkable possibilities of deploying morphology in a creative way, the films analysed are not particularly rich in compounds, reduplicatives or even in the use of suffixes. Only a few suffixes from the native languages are employed often, Hindi in particular, e.g. *-ji* and *-walla*, both of which are sometimes also preserved in dubbing, due to the ease with which their meaning is inferable from context and images.

Indian English shows its distinctive quality in syntax with very many constructions and forms, but in this corpus only a few traits have been used as markers of identity. Ellipsis of various constituents, either the subject, the verb or both, appears with a certain frequency but is not used to the same extent in the dubbing, as Italian is a pro-drop language in which the subject is normally not expressed, since the person is codified in verb morphology. Similarly, variations in word order — for example the sequence: subject verb in questions — cannot be used in dubbing, as statements and questions differ only in their intonation in Italian.

Tag questions are used quite creatively as markers of linguistic diversity. In fact, Indian English shows a preference for invariant tags of different types. Given that the phenomenon is not typical in Italian, the number of tags translated in dubbing is definitely lower and little variation in tokens is displayed.

The category of honorifics is quite interesting, as it is partly represented by morphological affixes and partly by deferential expressions used as independent lexemes. These elements are also drastically reduced in the Italian dub, with the noticeable exception of the honorifics in *BP*. Some domesticating strategies are applied, for instance when they are turned into names or familiar diminutives.

Code-mixing and code-switching have by and large proven to be the most typical strategies used to encode various aspects of identity, as “speakers often index polyphonous identities’ through their use of language, so that utterances reflect the nuances of identity in multilayered ways” (Barrett 1999: 318). Code-mixing is often maintained in the dubbed Italian, as the relative scarcity of culturally imbued words referring to exotic artefacts or habits does not impair comprehension and might be welcomed by the audience. On the contrary, code-switching, which especially in *SM* is a meaningful narrative and communicative strategy, is completely eliminated, the result being a sort of “linguistic whitewashing of originally bright colors into various shades of grey” (Whitman-Linsen 1996: 118).

Finally, it is worth pointing out that this paper is a pilot study, therefore further research with a larger and more structured corpus is needed so that results can be generalised.

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Notes

- [1] The research was carried out jointly by the two authors. Veronica Bonsignori wrote paragraphs 3., 4., 5., 5.1. and 5.2.; Silvia Bruti wrote paragraphs 1., 2., 5.3. and 6.
- [2] Lippi-Green analysed a total of twenty-four animated Disney cartoons and 371 characters as for the variety of language and characterisation.
- [3] The word 'Desi' refers both to South-Asian immigrants living in the USA and to the language they speak, which is a variety of English resulting from the encounter/clash between English and South-Asian languages – e.g. Hindi, Urdu, Punjabi, etc. For an extensive analysis, see Balirano (2007) and, for the transposition of Desi in Italian dubbing, see Bonsignori (2011, 2012).
- [4] 'BT' stands for 'back-translation'.
- [5] The language used in the original soundtrack is indicated in italics before subtitles in Italian.
- [6] When several languages are employed in films, there are two main linguistic representation strategies: "homogenization" – i.e. representing heterogeneous speech "through English only, sometimes spoken with an accent to identify characters as belonging to a specific speech community" (O'Sullivan 2007: 82) – as in *Schindler's List* (Spielberg 1993), where the two speech communities of Poles and Germans both speak English; or "vehicular matching", a mode in which "the variations in the representational medium [correspond] to the variations in the represented object" (Sternberg 1981: 223).