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Voices from the Anglo-Saxon World: Accents and Dialects Across film Genres

We are agreed that all languages and dialects are complex and structured means of expression and perception, and that prejudices based on the way other people speak are akin to racism and sexism. We are agreed that most views about the superiority of one language or dialect over another have social and historical rather than genuinely linguistic origins. And we are agreed that languages and dialects are unique and miraculous products of the human brain and human society. They should be discussed respectfully and knowledgeably and, for all that we may marvel at them as objects of enormous complexity and as vehicles, sometimes, of sublime expression, they should also be discussed dispassionately and objectively if we are to achieve a better understanding of this uniquely human characteristic.

Bauer and Trudgill (1998), *Language Myths*.

Abstract

In this paper we mean to focus on the representation of sociolinguistic variation across social classes in two radically different film genres, i.e. *Gosford Park* (Altman 2001), an ensemble murder mystery which takes place during a hunting party of aristocratic people and their friends; and *Gnomeo & Juliet* (Asbury 2011), a computer-animated film, loosely based on Shakespeare's tragedy, whose protagonists are garden gnomes.

The linguistic landscape of both films is characterised by a wide use of accents and dialects which are functionally exploited both to shaping the characters' identities and to achieving different narrative purposes: in *Gosford Park* they are used to create a portrait of a certain epoch by distinguishing between the voices of aristocratic and non-titled

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people; in *Gnomeo and Juliet*, on the contrary, they are used to create humorous situations by reinforcing established stereotypes (e.g. refined Southerners vs. rustic Northerners).

If on the one hand, as Milroy and Milroy claim (1999: 24), the media and thus also films are criticised for an evident growth of a homogenising standard that reduces diversity, certain genres, comedy and light-hearted films, especially if destined for an audience of children, seem to be the privileged environment for the use of accents and dialects with a clear humorous function (Chiaro 2010). Sometimes features that are chosen to portray characters are quite stereotypical (Hilton, von Hippel 1996), as they are ascribable to a whole social class or group, which is thus economically represented through a few traits. Although the genre of comedy suggests viewers not to take these stereotypes seriously, there is evidence in the literature that comedies actually contribute to the enhancement of stereotypes (Park, Gabbadon, Chernin 2006). Our main research aim is to observe in two different film genres how dialects and accents contribute to reinforce stereotypes or to describe realistically the socio-geographical environment they mean to depict.

Given the widely-recognised difficulty of transposing marked varieties (Armstrong 2004; Armstrong and Federici 2006; Giorgio Marrano *et al.* 2009), we also take into account the Italian dubbed versions of both films with a view to evaluating if corresponding acceptable socio-cultural scenarios are represented in the target lingua-culture.

1. Introduction

In this paper we mean to focus on the representation of sociolinguistic variation across social classes in two radically different film genres, i.e. mystery and animated comedy, by analysing *Gosford Park* (Altman 2001), an ensemble murder mystery which takes place during a hunting party of aristocratic people and their friends; and *Gnomeo & Juliet* (Asbury 2011), a 3D computer-animated film, loosely based on Shakespeare's tragedy, whose protagonists are garden gnomes.

Since the linguistic scenario of both films is characterised by the usage of different accents and dialects, our aim is to ascertain how and to what extent these features are functionally exploited both in shaping the characters' identities and in achieving narrative purposes; whether they reinforce stereotypes or describe realistically the socio-geographical environment they mean to depict.

Despite the fact that, as Milroy and Milroy claim (1999: 24), the media and films in particular are criticised for an evident growth of a homogenising standard that reduces diversity, certain genres such as comedy and light-hearted films, especially if destined for an audience of children, seem to be the privileged environment for the use of accents and dialects with a clear humorous function (Chiaro 2008). Sometimes features that are chosen to portray characters may be quite stereotypical (Hilton, von Hippel 1996), as they are ascribable to a whole social class or group, which is thus economically represented through a few traits. Although fictional texts trigger suspension of disbelief (cf. Kozloff 2000: 47), and viewers, thus, do not necessarily take these stereotypes seriously, there is evidence in the literature that comedies actually contribute to the enhancement of stereotypes (Park, Gabbadon, Chernin 2006).

Given the widely-recognised difficulty of transposing marked varieties (Armstrong 2004; Armstrong, Federici 2006; Marrano *et al.* 2009), we compare the original with the Italian dubbed version of both films, with a view to evaluating if corresponding acceptable socio-cultural scenarios are represented in the target lingua-culture.

2. Accents and dialects in the United Kingdom

Languages change over time and vary from place to place. Change is the result of different factors such as social or political forces at play and of large-scale phenomena such as waves of invasions, colonisation and immigration. Other reasons that account for the introduction of new words into a language are linked to the need to find names for the latest inventions in the scientific, technological and cultural domain (Algeo 2005). However, more naturally and also more pervasively, languages change because people from different places, of different gender, age, ethnicity and with different social and educational backgrounds, come into contact and thus reciprocally influence each other's linguistic output. Therefore, although there are a number of features that might be universally ascribed to a certain community, it is true that no two persons

speak alike, as there are peculiar specificities that characterise each individual's way of speaking both phonetically and prosodically, and even more so on the level of vocabulary, speech organisation and style.

Everybody speaks with an accent and everybody speaks a dialect. The distinction concerns different language levels, as accent is responsible for changes in pronunciation, whereas dialectal differences involve word, grammar and discourse choices too.

Pronunciation usually tells us something about more localised regional provenance and not only about the country of origin of a speaker. The sounds of English can change radically even in neighbouring areas. In the United Kingdom a small percentage of the population uses a completely regionless accent, one that does not betray where the speaker comes from, the so-called received pronunciation (RP), either because these speakers have been educated in one of the famous British public schools or because they want to sound as if they have, thus claiming a high social status. So, while most regional dialects are spoken with a corresponding regional accent (for example Lancashire dialect is often associated with a Lancashire accent), the matter is much more complex when the relationship between Standard English and RP is at stake. Standard English is the dialect which is normally used in writing and which is spoken by the most educated and influential strata of the population, a percentage that according to Trudgill (1990: 3) oscillates between 12 and 15%. Those speakers who use a BBC accent (RP, or 'The Queen's English') also speak the Standard English dialect, but the reverse is not necessarily true, that is not everybody who speaks Standard English does so with a BBC accent. In fact, Trudgill (1990) observes that the slightly higher percentage of Standard English Speaker (ranging between 7 and 12 % of the population) has a noticeable regional accent.

Standard English is a dialect like any other language variety, but it is the one that is adopted as a reference model for grammatical correctness in educational settings and in language teaching. Given the enormous spread that English has had all over the world, it is also true that the standard variety undergoes some changes in the different countries where

English is spoken as a mother tongue: it is more than obvious that the grammar of American Standard English is slightly different from British Standard English, but, in Trudgill's words, «since it is a variety of the language that differs from others in its grammar, it is clearly just as much a dialect as any other variety» (1990: 3).

Another important feature that characterises the notion of Standard is that, like any other dialect, it admits stylistic variation, so the same information can be couched in more or less formal terms, including the use of slang or swearing. The term “dialect” signals in fact a variation of some sort, specifying the provenance of the speaker, i.e. where he/she comes from, or alternatively it may refer to his/her social standing (social dialect or diastratic variety, cf. Coseriu 1973), to the level of formality employed to fit the situation of utterance (diaphasic variation), or also the means of communication employed (diamesic variation).

Another distinction that can be drawn within the category of dialects is that between traditional and mainstream dialects (Trudgill 1990: 5-6). The former correspond to the notion the man in the street has about dialects and are spoken by an ever decreasing number of speakers. They are generally relegated to the most peripheral areas of the United Kingdom and differ considerably from the Standard and from each other, to the point that they might not be mutually understandable. Mainstream dialects include both the Standard English dialect and modern Nonstandard dialects, which may be associated with speakers of English as a mother tongue in countries other than the British Isles, where English was – or still is – in close contact with a plethora of local languages (e.g. in Australia, North America, etc.). In Britain these modern dialects are associated with the area where the Standard originated, i.e. the Southeast of England, which is predominantly urban; with areas where English has been adopted fairly recently, e.g. Wales, Scotland, Cornwall; with the speech of the younger strata of the population and, in general, with middle and upper-middle class. The discrepancies with the Standard are not so relevant and affect most of all pronunciation rather than grammar.

Changeability is a feature of languages that is observed in English, among other things, in the way accents, even the most conservative like RP, develop new features (Gimson 1984), and also in the blurred boundary between accents and dialects.

Despite the fact that RP is spoken by a very circumscribed number of speakers, over time it has adopted a number of new features, derived from different sources: the so-called “t-tapping” and “t-voicing” from American English and “t-glottaling” from Cockney, the famous dialect spoken by working class Londoners, and common nowadays to most London speech, Cockney and Estuary English (Crystal 1995: 327) (the latter being a term coined in 1984 by Rosewarne to designate the London regional speech that was spreading out along the Thames Estuary, especially to Essex and Kent). Initially, Estuary English was characterised by some typical pronunciation features (e.g. glottal stops and ‘dark’ l, in common with Cockney) but it gradually embraced lexical features (e.g. the persistent use of the adverb “basically” as a kind of filler, the use of the well wishing formula “cheers” with the meaning of “thank you”; cf. Rosewarne 1994), and grammatical structures (e.g. the use of the ‘confrontational’ question tag, adverbs never referring to single occasions, omission of the *-ly* adverbial ending, certain typical prepositional uses, generalisation of the third person singular form, “I gets out”, and generalisation of the past form *was* in the whole paradigm of the verb (cf. Crystal 1995: 327), thus resembling a dialect).

Conversely, in present-day Italy, diatopic variation concerns especially those secondary dialects that are regional variations of Italian (D’Achille 2011), which are the result of the encounter between language and dialect. The panorama of the different regional varieties of Italian has often been explained as the result of underlying dialects, whose influence is especially felt at certain levels (mainly intonation and phonetics, and the lexicon). However, it should be noted that speakers of a regional variety may not have an active competence in the dialect; moreover, diatopic variation is not always related to the dialectal substrate. An example that D’Achille and Viviani (2009) offer is that of several geo-synonyms that do not derive

from a corresponding dialectal term in the same area: the terms *cornetto*, *brioche*, *croissant* have, for example, a very different distribution.

2.1 *Accents and dialects in films*

As emerges from the previous account, the way in which someone speaks provides information about their provenance, the social group they belong to, the kind of education they received, and the like. In light of that, since film language is thoroughly styled to be a mimesis of spontaneous speech, accents and dialects are sometimes represented, becoming an effective resource that filmmakers have at their disposal and with which they not only produce natural sounding conversations, but also give background information about characters' lives and locations. However, as De Laurentiis (2014: 69-72) and Taylor (2006: 38) highlight, compared to spontaneous speech, film speech shows a neutralising tendency and thus also dialects and accents, when present, tend to be less strong and marked in order not to affect the audience's comprehension and the reception of the movie itself. Given the crafted and very carefully planned nature of film language, it is no surprise that language variation, when used in films, is not simply a coincidental phenomenon, but it is functional in building narratives.

One of the major functions attached to the way someone speaks in films is conveying information about settings and characters, as a response to the time constraints characterising films. Lippi-Green maintains (1997: 84) that in many fictional products intended for American audiences, directors call for actors to use accented forms of English with the aim of conveying to the audience that the film is set in a precise place (e.g. in *Schindler's List* (1993) Ralph Fiennes starring in the role of a Nazi commanding officer speaks English with a German accent to suggest that the scene takes place in Germany). Alongside establishing settings, accents and dialects serve as tools for fleshing out characters' portraits, through their association with distinguished social or regional groups of people that are conventionally linked to specific linguistic features (Lippi-Green 1997:

81; Englund Dimitrova 2004; Pavese 2005). Such accents, imbued as they are with social meanings, enrich and improve our understanding of characters' personalities. In line with that, we can cite the example of Disney films where British or, more generally, non-American varieties of English, are used by villains in order to reinforce, also from a linguistic point of view, the dichotomy between good and evil around which the plots revolve. It thus emerges that language variation has a pivotal role in films in order to further the plot and to specify crucial features in a quick and effective way that, in the case of animated movies, can also be intelligible to children.

Furthermore, it has been noted that film characters who speak with a very strong and recognisable accent are more likely to be portrayed with stereotypical traits than unaccented characters. In fact, there is ample evidence that non-standard varieties of English also contribute to perpetuate stereotypes that, as Lippi-Green (1997) notes, may influence the audience to socially stigmatise communities of non-standard English speakers in real life. Dialects and accents can in fact convey particular stereotypes and social meanings such as "rustic" or "refined" and also help to enrich film speech with additional meanings (e.g. distinguishing between social classes). It thus goes without saying that, in films, stereotyping is bound to the need to convey information about characters quickly and to raise in audiences expectations about their actions (Casey *et al.* 2002; Wilson *et al.* 2003), although in media products – especially in fictional genres – stereotypes tend to be, for dramatic reasons, inaccurate and exaggerated, generally resulting in linguistic clichés. One case in point is the character of Thomas O'Malley in *The Aristocats* (1971). His speech is interspersed with both phonetic and morphosyntactic substandard features, such as, for example, the simplification of the phoneme /ŋ/ and the use of pleonastic pronouns. The former is represented by the orthographic simplification of the grapheme <ing> into <n'>; the latter consists of the usage of unnecessary pronouns, as in "gotta strut *them* city streets". Both features aim at representing O'Malley as a speaker of a socially marked variety of Southern US English, which strongly clashes

with his frequent French loanwords, thus resulting in an over-the-top, fictional character.

2.2 Translating accents and dialects in films: a thorny issue

Language variation notoriously represents a source of difficulty in audiovisual translation and raises a series of problems that require the personal judgement of the adapter. This intricate matter can be observed in many situations, but three major issues can be pinpointed. First of all, dialectal markers and expressions are often cultural specific and thus it is difficult to find an equivalent solution in the target language that has the same connotations (even in *The Simpsons*, where the Scottish janitor Willie is dubbed in Italian with a strong Sardinian dialect, the translating solution is justified by the genre, but the equivalence is not grounded in similar connotations attached to the diatopic variety). The choice of how to render dialects is therefore inevitably connected with the genre of the movie and with the effect the dialogue adapter decides to convey to the audience. In this vein, the dub of comedies and animated films is likely to be more creative, containing also regional varieties (Chiaro 2008; Bianchi 2014), whereas in other films there is a drive to reduce language variation by choosing a supra-regional and unmarked variety, which can in part be attributed to the attempt to reduce morphological and syntactic variation in line with prescriptive grammatical rules. Both Chiaro (2008) and Heiss (2004) observe that comedy «allows operators more room for successful manoeuvre» (Chiaro 2008: 18) and «unorthodox solutions in film translation» (Heiss 2004: 211), because their nature itself deviates from reality, so that various rule-breaking solutions are admitted in translation. Another important factor is that, nowadays, thanks to the spread of new media, and in particular of social media, dialects evolve very quickly and their boundary line with slang becomes weaker and weaker, a feature that is also more prominent in movies, where dialects are less accurately represented. In other words, it is sometimes hard to verify the actual use and the frequency of some dialectal expressions, since corpora of general

language use (e.g. the BNC and the COCA for English) do not provide ample evidence of their spread, as they represent unmarked language features more than marked ones. Last but not least, from a pragmatic point of view, dialects, and also accents, have different conversational implications (e.g. creating humour, giving background information about characters, etc.); as a result, translating them accurately also implies the preservation of these functions. Bearing all this in mind, the dialogue adapter who has to deal with such issues has no agreed upon solution to rely on, but needs to find one that best fits the text, either choosing to opt for a more ‘creative’ solution and trying to render regional voices in the target language with a corresponding non-standard variety, or ‘domesticating’ the difference, i.e. neutralising the dialectal specificity by resorting to the Standard Norm, as if dialect had never been used in the first place. Ideally, retaining dialect or accent by resorting to a comparable variety in the target language that shares the same connotations could help to bestow authenticity on the audiovisual product and would contribute to preserve key information about the speakers. However, the idea of finding a perfectly matching variety is almost utopian and the risk of giving rise to farcical characters is very likely. In Italian, for example, accents and dialects are strongly marked and some of them (especially Southern varieties) are stigmatised. The choice of how to render dialects is therefore inevitably connected with the genre of the movie and with the effect the dialogue adapter decides to convey to the audience.

3. Analysis

3.1 Gnomeo & Juliet/Gnomeo & Giuletta

Gnomeo & Juliet (Asbury 2011) is a computer-animated film released by Touchstone Pictures, a label of Walt Disney Studios Motion Pictures. The plot is loosely based on Shakespeare’s *Romeo and Juliet* but the setting is provided by two neighbouring gardens in a fictional Stratford-upon-Avon. The blue garden is inhabited by the Bluebury family, counterpart of the

Montagues, whereas the red garden belongs to the Redbricks, counterpart of the Capulets. The protagonists are garden gnomes and other outdoor items that are typically found in gardens, who begin to talk and act in a human-like manner when their owners, Mrs Montague and Mr Capulet, are not in the scene. The style of the animation is reminiscent of the *Toy Story* full-length animated movie (1995), where toys pretend to be lifeless in the presence of humans.

The notorious hatred between the two families in Shakespeare's play is turned into trivial rivalry between neighbours symbolised by the colours red (for the Capulets) and blue (for the Montagues).

In the original version, following a trend that has emerged in most recent Disney productions (such as *The Lion King* (1994) and *Pocahontas* (1995)), the characters are voiced by well-known actors such as Emily Blunt, Maggie Smith, James MacAvoy and Michael Caine. Conversely, in the Italian dubbed version, the voices do not generally belong to very famous artists.

3.1.1 Varieties in the original version

Most of the characters in the film speak with an accent belonging to the South of England. The main male character, Gnomeo, is voiced by Scottish-born actor James McAvoy but a supra-regional Southern variety of English, with no regional traces, is adopted. Juliet's voice, on the other hand, belongs to British actress Emily Blunt. Gnomeo's mother (Lady Bluebury) and Juliet's father (Lord Redbrick), respectively dubbed by Maggie Smith and Michael Caine, also employ a regionless RP pronunciation. The villain of the story, Tybalt, who is Juliet's cousin and Gnomeo's archenemy, borrows his voice from Jason Statham, who speaks Cockney. British actor Matt Lucas acts the part of the protagonist's sidekick, a tall-hatted gnome counterpart to Shakespeare's Benvolio. Other secondary characters include a mushroom, Shroom, who is Gnomeo's friend, and Fawn, a garden deer and Tybalt's best friend, who speaks with a Birmingham accent, recognisable by many thanks to the fact

that he is voiced by Ozzy Osbourne, who is a Brummy by birth. A minor role is also given to William Shakespeare's statue, who briefly discusses the ending of the tragedy with Gnomeo in a conservative RP accent.

There are few characters who do not speak with a British accent, namely Nanette, a frog and Juliet's intimate friend, who speaks Scottish English and is dubbed by Scottish actress Ashley Jensen; Featherstone, a lonely plastic flamingo with a thick Latino accent, whose voice belongs to Jim Cummings, a famous Disney actor who also starred in *Aladdin*, *The Lion King*, *The Princess and the Frog*; Dolly Gnome, the lawnmower race announcer, who speaks with a clear Tennessee accent; and Terrafirminator, the announcer who advertises garden lawnmowers, who speaks American English. The Prologue is read by a red gnome, friend to Tybalt, with an American accent. Overall the actors are not cast on the basis of their native accents or dialects, as McAvoy was specifically asked to adapt his pronunciation to the script's needs, differently from Ashley Jensen and Ozzy Osbourne who could speak with their own voices. For a more detailed account of features of regional accents see Minutella 2016, paragraphs 3.1 and 3.2.

3.1.2 Varieties in the Italian dub

In the Italian dubbing new humour is added thanks to a massive use of accents and dialects drawing from the rich and diversified repertoire of regional varieties. The historical hostility between the Capulets and Montagues is transformed into the stereotypical conflict between Northern *polentoni* and Southern *terroni*, i.e. the red gnomes, who speak Southern varieties, and the blue ones, who come from the north. The red side uses varieties from Puglia, Calabria, Campania and Sicily, whereas the blues resort to varieties from Lombardy, Veneto, Romagna and Piedmont. The regional identity of the characters is conveyed not only by their phonetic traits but also by some lexical choices, among which are some notably routinised expressions that are typical of certain areas, like "bacio/baciamo le mani" as a polite, welcoming formula in the south, the

exclamations “mizzica”, again quite widespread in the south, and “ostrega”, which is instead confined to Veneto. In addition to accents, behaviours also recall the usual clichés attached to Southern and Northern Italy, as the red gnomes are crooks, often reluctant to follow the rules, but, at the same time, have big hearts, whereas the blue ones are honest and hard working, but very vindictive.

3.1.3 *A comparison*

There are several levels worth discussing when comparing the original and the dubbed text of *Gnomeo & Juliet*, in part related to the very strong exploitation of regional voices, in part to other narrative and linguistic dimensions.

We have already pinpointed that although extremely rich in voices, the original dialogues feature a prevalence of British accents, and also the marked voices (those that depart from the British ‘norm’) are neither strongly nor precisely characterised. The actor who lends his voice to Tybalt, for example, speaks popular Cockney, but this is mainly recognisable from his accent, as other typical traits of this London speech are almost absent. Quite oddly from a narrative point of view, the expression “flipping flaming Nora”², a very informal exclamation of surprise in London Cockney, is uttered by the character of Nanette, who speaks Scottish English.

In the Italian dub, accents are rather strong and neatly divide the two opposing families and their friends, but lexical and grammatical choices (for a wide sampling of lexical and grammatical choices in the Italian dub cf. Minutella 2016, paragraph 4) also resorted to in order to reinforce this

² The origin of the expression seems to be linked to a typical sloppy Cockney pronunciation of the phrase “flaming horror”: since both the final <g> and the initial <h> are not pronounced, over the years the expression has turned into “flamin’ Nora”, although the variants “Bloody/Flipping Nora” are also possible.

characterisation. This is not very typical in dubbed talk, as substandard morphosyntactic deviation is often perceived as a serious stigmatising feature that connotes speech as illiterate and boorish. As Pavesi underlines (2005: 41), in translated audiovisual texts, substandard forms are usually neutralised and at best compensated by some generic markers of orality, or just one morphosyntactic trait is chosen to represent a whole range of phenomena, thus creating a stereotyping effect, which is the case in *Gnomeo e Giulietta*.

Some typical regional stock phrases, mainly exclamations of surprise and fixed formulae, are used in moments of heightened emotion, whereas morphosyntactic features only appear in the Southern characters' speech. Giulietta, in line with her father and friends, speaks with a Southern accent, not so heavy as her father's or Tybalt's, but still quite perceivable in the pronunciation of vowels, like [fiɔre], or some consonant sounds at the beginning of words as in [ttrovato] or [rrɔssa]. Yet, although her speech is normally not very marked, she once uses *passato remoto* instead of *passato prossimo*, as is typical in Southern Italian for actions that did not take place long ago in the past but more recently, together with a marked word order, e.g. "Nessuno vidi, sicurissima sono". None of the blues ever uses marked features that can be ascribed to morphosyntax or word order, but only phrases that are stereotypically associated with Northern Italian, like *ostrega*, a Venetian interjection, corresponding to Italian *ostrica* ("oyster"), euphemistic for *ostia* ("host"), expressing bewilderment or disappointment, or *signur/signura* ("Mr/Mrs"), *gioiellin* ("jewel"), *picinin* ("little one"), *fiöl* ("son"); verbs such as *andemo* ("we go"), *scappemo* ("we run away", or *zè* (= *è*); or various words where a double consonant is pronounced as a single one, such as *picinin* ("little one").

The speech of the reds is more strongly connoted, thanks to the choice of several Southern accents, namely from Calabria, Sicily, Puglia, and some dialectal terms. The most striking are in the lines uttered by Lord Mattonerosso and Tebaldo. Lord Mattonerosso speaks with a remarkable Sicilian accent and is perhaps one of the most hilarious characters for his frequent malapropisms. The most colourful

stereotypical expressions that he employs is the exclamation *mizzica*, euphemistic for *minchia* (regional for ‘dick’), indicating surprise and amazement. *Mizzica* and *minchia* are almost alike, but the former is employed when the latter is perceived as too vulgar or when the level of formality required is higher. Other typically Sicilian terms are for example *sciminunitaggini* (‘bullshit’), or verbs such as *pigghio* (= *piglio*, ‘I take’), *vogghio bene* (= *voglio bene*, ‘I love’), adjectives such as *beddu* (= *bello*, ‘nice’). When Paride, the suitor whom Lord Mattonerosso favours, offers her a hybrid plant he has created for her, Giulietta answers ironically with a Sicilian expression of salutation conveying great deference, referring to the symbolic value of the gesture, *baciamo le mani* (‘I/we will kiss you the hands’). Since Giulietta’s desire to get rid of Paride as soon as possible is evident in the scene, the formula is clearly uttered mockingly. Finally Tebaldo, the most aggressive and also verbally violent character in the film, employs several Southern expressions, like *picciriddo* (= *piccolo*, ‘small’), *racchiu* (= *racchio*, ‘ugly’), *vieni ‘cca* (= *vieni qua*, ‘come here’), *in da casa* (= *nella casa*, ‘into the house’), *cussì grande* (= *così grande*, ‘so big’). Quite interestingly, when he first confronts Gnomeo, in the original he addresses him with a rather vulgar epithet, “sucker”, which is instead turned into the Italian neutral, bland *babbeo* (‘you fool’). It is quite evident that the effect of adding a strong Southern accent to several regional expressions is the counterpart chosen in the Italian dub for an accent, Cockney, that is normally stigmatised for being uneducated and rough, although some of its features have been absorbed in Estuary English, a trendy and classless pronunciation in the London area (Rosewarne 1984, 1994). In Italian, in fact, the stereotypical associations of Southern speech are rusticity and lack of education, even ruthlessness, because of the association with racketeering, i.e. camorra and mafia connections.

The only character who is characterised in similar ways in the original and dubbed dialogues is Featherstone/Piumarosa, a pink plastic flamingo. His speech is in both versions piled up with a whole range of ‘exaggerated’ diatopically and diastratically marked features. This character is a neutral and does not participate in the feud and intervenes in the plot towards the

end to favour a reconciliation between the two parties. His voice belongs to Jim Cummings, who lends him a Cuban English accent with several features drawn from non standard dialects (“I be right back”, “gotta do”, “I getting into this” “I couldn’t do nothing”) and colloquial expressions (“you guys, “dude”), and is dubbed into Italian by Francesco Pannofino, who employs a complete repertoire of traits of the Roman accent (in particular apocope as in *borbotta*, rhotacism as in *er naso*, and palatalisation as in *daje* instead of *dagli*).

A nice cameo character is represented by William Shakespeare’s statue, which briefly converses with Gnomeo. The character in the original speaks a regionless RP, with a selection of high register words, such as “exeunt omnes” to refer to theatrical stage directions, “bravo”, as a typical cry of appraisal used in the theatre, emphatic structures with “do” (“it does put me in mind of another”). Conversely, in Italian Shakespeare speaks with a strong British accent, that betrays his origin and makes the character humorous but less serious and distinguished.

The choice of using regional voices in the dub sometimes alters the semantic isotopies that weave the text together. Semantic isotopies create thematic patterns that give the text homogeneity and ensure its semantic coherence. In *Gnomeo & Juliet* some major thematic lines echo Shakespeare, whose works constitute a pivotal isotopy in the movie.

Original	Dub
1) Red gnome reading the prologue: Two households, both alike in dignity, in fair Verona, where we lay our scene, from ancient grudge break to new mutiny, where civil blood makes civil hands unclean--. From forth the fatal loins of these two foes...	Gnomo rosso che legge il prologo: Nella bella Verona, dove collochiamo la scena, per antica ruggine, tra due famiglie, de pari nobbiltà, scoppia una nuova lotta, durante la quale sangue civile, macchia mani civili. Dai lombi dei due ccivili-...
2) Mr Capulet: Ah, Miss Montague, out you come to ruin my day.	Signor Capuleti: Donna Montecchi, ora che l'ho incontrata una ggiornata schifosa sarà.
3) Gnomeo: Hey there, Juliet. What a name, it's a great name. Goes with your eyes	Gnomeo: Ehilà, Giulietta, hai un nome pazzesco. S'intona ai tuoi occhi.
4) Featherstone: A weed by any other name is still a weed.	Piumarosa: Un'erbaccia anche chiamata con un artro nome è sempre n'erbaccia.

Examples 1-4 Shakespearian echoes

Starting from the prologue (ex. 1), which is taken word by word from *Romeo and Juliet*, the text is interspersed with many quotations, misquotations and references to Shakespeare's works. Overall, the choice of using various expressions from regional varieties of Italian undermines the humorous solemnity yielded by the net of echoes. The presence of dialectal expressions (cf. the examples 1, 2, 3, 4 in the dub) makes the references more farcical, ridiculous and thus less transparent, and shifts the focus onto the feud between Northerners and Southerners.

Another recurring isotopy is that of beauty. In the film, the standard canons of physical beauty are adapted according to the gnomes' eyes and thus being overweight becomes a distinctive sign of appeal.

Original	Dub
5) Nanette: Ooh, a new outfit! I'm on it! Here, that is cute. Give us a turn. Uh-uh. Nice junk in the trunk. Now, go get your flower.	Nanette: Uh, vuoi cambiare look? Mo' ci pens' io! Tiè, questa è 'na schiccheria. Girate nu poco. Ah-ah si chiù bona du babbà! Vatte' a pighia' stu fiore!
6) Juliet: Uh, maybe a tad less fluorescent pink?	Giulietta: Ehm, avresti qualche cosa di meno rosella?
Nanette: How much less?	Nanette: E come lo vuoi?
7) Juliet: Try black.	Giulietta: Diciamo nero.
8) Uh? Aah. Trust me, nobody us going to pay you attention in that.	Mm. Aah. Picciri? co' questo addosso manco tu ti riconosci. Garantito assoluto.

Examples 5-8 Ideas of beauty

In these examples the usage of dialects, in the Italian version, slightly weakens the isotopy of the original. In ex. 5 «junk in the trunk», which is a slang expression to indicate a woman with a fat derriere is rendered with the Neapolitan expression «si chiù bona du babbà». In this creative translation the connotation of “fat is beautiful”, a theme which recurs many times in the film, is substituted by a compliment couched in Neapolitan meaning that she tastes better than a typical local cake. A similar case is shown in ex. 8, where Nanette warns Juliet that nobody is going to look at her because she is wearing black, which makes her look slender. In the Italian counterpart, on the other hand, Nanette, still using a strong Neapolitan accent, praises her convincing disguise. Consequently, the implication concerning Juliet's physical aspect is lost.

The same trend applies to the references to the setting that frames the story, i.e. the garden. Everything in the movie is strictly connected with it, which constitutes a sort of parallel world where the plot develops unbeknown to humans.

Original	Dub
9) Mr Capulet: Outrage! Infamy! The gardening gloves are off then, are they?	Oltraggio! Infamia! Lacrime amare ti faccio piangere.
10) Mrs Montague: In your dreams, you daft old cabbage!	Ma va là! Si faccia curare da uno bravo!
11) Tybalt: Hey, come on out and fight like a gnome!	Ehi, esci da lì, combatti da uomo!

Examples 9-11 The garden frame

As will be noticed, the dialogue adapter has chosen to prioritise the usage of Italian non-standard varieties, consequently backgrounding the isotopy of the garden environment. Hence, he opts for more creative translational solutions, which provide a regional anchorage to the speech of the characters (e.g. in exx. 9 and 10 where respectively Pugliese and Veneto accents are used). Another remarkable feature of the dialogues is the presence of idioms, which often represent hurdles in translation.

Original	Dub
12) Juliet: Because you're blue, my father sees reds, and because I'm red, I'm feeling blue. Oh, at any rate, that shouldn't be the thing to keep us apart, should it?	Tu sei blu, mio padre è rosso fuoco, io sono rossa e mi sento blu. Eh, comunque sia non è un buon motivo per tenerci separati.
13) Gnomeo: Shroom, let's go kick some grass	Funghetto, andiamo dai rossi e facciamoli blu.
14) Lady Bluebury: May he rest in pieces	Che riposi in pezzettini!

Examples 12-14 Idioms

In the three selected examples the idioms can be decoded either literally or figuratively: in ex. 12 Juliet, in a monologue inspired by the words uttered by her famous homonym in act II, 2, uses the expression «I'm feeling blue», which, if interpreted figuratively, describes her emotional state of sadness, but literally makes reference to the colour of the opposing part (i.e. Blueburies/Montagues) with which she identifies. In the dub the idiomatic expression is rendered with «mi sento blu», which only partially

preserves the reference to the feeling and attaches more importance to the colour of Gnomeo's side. In ex. 13, Gnomeo tries to involve Shroom in the action of taking revenge against the reds and uses the idiomatic expression «go kick some grass», meaning to be quite aggressive (as indicated by *Urban Dictionary*) but also recalling the frame isotopy of the garden setting. The dub selects the meaning of physical violence and discards the garden isotopy, and employs another expressions referring to the two opposite families, alluding to the attested Italian idiom *fare qualcuno nero* that means to beat someone until they turn black. Example 14 is characterised by a pun on the near homophones 'peace' and 'pieces', which refer respectively to the last words of farewell to a dead person and to what happens to garden gnomes, either accidentally or willingly, when 'they go to pieces'. The translation cannot preserve the pun and thus focuses on the second meaning choosing the verb *riposi* that has *pace* as one of its most frequent collocates. In fact, a simple query carried out by means of *Sketch Engine* software in the *TenTen corpus* of Italian shows that *riposare in pace* is a prototypical collocation, as the prepositional phrase *in pace* is the most frequent collocate of the verb *riposare*.

3.2 *Gosford Park*

Gosford Park (Altman 2001) is an Oscar-winning whodunit set in a grand mansion during the 1930s. The film can be considered a murder mystery only superficially, as in reality it provides an overview of the English class system, in which social interactions between the English aristocracy and their servants are meticulously explored. Referring to commonly used labels to describe fictional TV products (Bednarek 2010, Ranzato 2014), it could also be classified as a 'period dramedy'. The plot in certain respects is rather uneventful, consisting of a complex meshing of multiple characters involved in money hunting, social climbing and offensive gossiping, both upstairs and downstairs. British aristocracy is portrayed not only in contact with the servants but also with the emerging bourgeois class which is rising thanks to ingenuity and money.

The story takes place in the country villa of Sir William McCordle, where a group of friends get together to spend a weekend. The second night the landowner is murdered. The audience gradually discovers that most of the attendees have a reason to hate McCordle, but the investigative theme is only secondary to the reflection on the conflict between social classes and the dynamics of power, which emerge so obviously both from the visual codes and the dialogues. However, if aristocrats all talk more or less alike, using an undifferentiated RP, their servants employ a vast array of «regional varieties of working class British English of the Thirties» (Chiaro 2008: 19), which represents a serious challenge for translation.

3.2.1 Gosford Park: A comparison between the original and the Italian dub

While the opening credits run, the film portrays the departure of Constance, Countess of Trentham for the McCordles' mansion. Lady Trentham is accompanied by a driver and her personal maid, Mary, a simple and naïve young girl. During the trip, the noblewoman tries in vain to open a thermos of coffee and Mary is compelled to get out of the car in the pouring rain to help her ladyship. Another car arrives, carrying Ivor Novello, the famous movie star and singer, and his Californian friend, producer Morris Weissman. The two exchange a few words with Lady Trentham and then resume the drive to reach the McCordles'. From the narrative point of view, this scene is not eventful, like much of the film (Sir William's murder takes place after about an hour from the beginning of the film), but it is highly descriptive and suggests the interpretative key of the entire narrative. The most important issue is the divide between aristocrats and servants on the one hand, and the bourgeoisie on the other. Lady Trentham is icy and distant, unable to attend to a trivial operation like opening a thermos and completely without scruples towards her maid. At the same time, however, Lady Trentham is aristocratic by birth but impoverished and virtually dependent on her husband's nephew, William McCordle. As can be seen shortly afterwards, she enters into conflict with Ivor Novello and Weissman, representatives of the modern

Hollywood film industry, in other words they have money and success but no breeding.

Original	Dub
15) Mary: I think she's knocking.	Mi sa che sta bussando.
Merriman: Well, see what she wants.	E tu vedi cosa vuole.
Lady Trentham: I can't open this wretched thing.	Non riesco ad aprirlo questo maledetto coso.
Mary: I suppose we better stop.	Forse è meglio fermarsi.
Lady Trentham: I can't get this top off. (Mary does it for her. A car passes by)	Non riesco a togliere il tappo.
Weissman: Hello. Is everything all right? Are... are you ok?	Salve, tutto bene? Sie... siete <i>in panne</i> ?
Lady Trentham: Am I what?	Sono in che cosa?
Mary: We're all right, thank you.	Tutto a posto, grazie.
Novello: Is that Lady Trentham? Lady Trentham? It's, uh... I'm William McCordle's cousin, Ivor. Ivor Novello.	Ma chi è, Lady Trentham? Lady Trentham, sono... sono il cugino di WilliamMcCordle. Ivor, Ivor Novello.
Lady Trentham: Yes, of course.	Sì, certamente.
Novello: May I introduce a friend of mine from California? Mr Morris Weissman.	Posso presentarle un mio amico della California, il signor MorrisWeissman.
Weissman: Hello. Hi.	Salve. Ciao.
Novello: Uh, we were just wondering if we were headed in the same direction.	Ci chiedevamo se stiamo viaggiando nella stessa direzione.
Lady Trentham: I dare say we might be.	Oserei dire che è possibile.

Example 15 First meetings

The scene is characterised by Mary's Scottish accent, a feature that separates her speech from the environment both geographically and socially. Besides the accent, Mary's speech is also formally incorrect: «We better stop» (instead of «We'd better stop»), which is likely to be perceived as rustic and uneducated. Conversely, Lady Trentham has the typical accent of the aristocrats, one which does not betray her geographical origin. The main features of her voice are nasality and a typical prosody, representative of aristocratic women of a certain age. In addition to the content of what she says, paralinguistic traits also disclose her character: cold, haughty, formal and emotionally detached.

Actress Maggie Smith has some familiarity with the role of a lady of the upper classes (*The Prime of Miss Jean Brodie*, *A Room with a View*, *Downton Abbey*). Her accent sharply contrasts with Weissman's American English. The difficulty of communication between the British noblewoman and the 'new' Californian man is also evident in the choice of words. The term

“wretched”, although it does not belong to a high register, signals a euphemistic choice which is here preferred to more vulgar alternatives such as “damned” or “cursed” or the more recent “fucking”, given that the statement expresses Lady Trentham’s disappointment, impatience and anger. The dichotomy is also evident in Weissman’s turns of phrase, especially in the term “ok”, which identifies him geographically and puzzles Lady Trentham. We cannot be certain whether she does not understand the expression, or if she understands it (more likely), she probably judges it untimely and inappropriate. Furthermore, her contribution to the conversation is minimal, calibrated, and devoid of indecision and uncertainty, whereas, in contrast, Novello and Weissman are more talkative and their idiolects are richer in hesitations and dysfluencies. Lady Trentham’s reticence and her willingness to close the meeting early are confirmed also by her formulaic answers, first with «Yes, of course», and then her reply «I dare say we might be». Novello, too, partly respects the ritual formalities in force between the aristocrats with the expression «We were just wondering», as a mitigation strategy to hedge his question. Upon discharge, Weissman takes leave with «Bye», a simple, symmetrical formula showing absolutely no deference, while Lady Trentham remains silent. In front of Mary’s wonder at having met two personalities from the world of celluloid, Lady Trentham shows concern only for herself and for her health, and does not hide a hint of impatience in her last utterance, indicated by the use of holophrastic «yes», without repeating subject and verb (“Yes, it is”). This case of ellipsis is rarely used in formal talk and thus betrays her desire to end the conversation.

In the Italian dubbing, diatopic variation connected with the varieties and accents of English is completely lost, with some compensation on the lexical and syntactic levels. The syntactic error made by Mary in «We better stop» is partly offset by the unstressed pronoun “mi”, which has both an intensifying and affective value, «Mi sa che sta bussando», and is typical of spoken language. Lady Trentham’s turn, «Non riesco ad aprirlo questo maledetto coso», doesn’t seem entirely convincing, as the term “maledetto” is inadequate to translate “wretched” because it is rather

vulgar and adopted by speakers of the lower classes. Furthermore, the use of the vague term “coso” is also typical of uncontrolled and unelaborated talk, again more typical of poorly educated people. Finally, the syntactic structure of the right dislocation makes this statement extremely conversational, not in line with the character and only partly compensated by the paralinguistic features of the actress who lends her voice to Lady Trentham. The dubbing voice speaks in fact with a nasal voice similar to the original, almost as emphatic and exaggerated. The inadequacy of Weissman’s turns at talk is largely maintained, although the expression “ok”, which gives rise to Lady Trentham’s puzzlement in the original, is translated by the expression “in panne”. In this way, the only possible interpretation is Lady Trentham’s lack of understanding, thus excluding her disappointment at the use of an inadequate expression. This choice is not very convincing, because the French expression “en panne” belongs to an elitist register usually known to aristocrats. The greeting “Salve. Ciao”, with the transition from a rather informal formula to a decidedly informal one, mirrors a similar switch in the original. Equally appropriate are the last two turns in the extract, where both Novello and Lady Trentham abide by the rules of politeness: «Ci chiedevamo se stiamo viaggiando nella stessa direzione», and «Oserei dire che è possibile». Lady Trentham is addressed with an honorific, a title that is acquired through marriage and that remains unchanged in Italian to emphasise membership of the noble class and to preserve the reference to the British setting.

In what follows is another interesting example showing how even a single element, in this case an adjective, contributes to characterisation.

Original	Dub
16) Lady Trentham: You see, I’m ... I’m starving. Where have you been?	Oh sto morendo di fame. Dove sei stata?
Mary: Sorry.	Scusi.
Lady Trentham: Oh, they always send up a good breakfast here. I’ll say that for Sylvia. She’s not at all mean in that way. Dear me, I call that very feeble. Well, I suppose one can’t have everything. Mary, I don’t think I’ll wear that shirt after all. The other one’s warmer. That’s all I care about. Ooh, yummy. Yummy, yummy, yummy.	Uh, la colazione è sempre ottima qui. Va dato merito a Silvia. Non è affatto avara in questo senso. Ah ah, marmellata industriale. Stiamo perdendo colpi in cucina, eh? Pazienza, non si può avere tutto. Mary? Non credo che indossero quella camicetta dopo tutto. L’altra è più calda ed è la cosa più importante. Uh che bontà, gnam

Example 16 Aristocratic talk

Lady Trentham uses the adjective “feeble” to refer to jam that is bought and not homemade. This apparently trivial expression contributes significantly to characterise her in a certain way, that is, as an aristocratic, haughty and capricious lady. In the dub the expression has been totally rephrased and is no longer entrusted to a single element. “Perdere i colpi” is not equally connoted as haughty or snobbish, as it refers to engines and in its metaphorical extension means to be less efficient. When dubbing aristocratic speech into Italian, expressions drawn from high registers could be resorted to, but this is rarely convenient in that the Italian social structure does not match the English one. As a consequence, the message is often better expressed using an unmarked diachronic and diatopic variety, entrusting the expression of socio-pragmatic meanings, conveyed by register in the original, to gestural and behavioural codes.

Among the characters speaking a recognisable regional variety in the original version are Mary, Lady Trentham’s maid, Henry Denton, Weissman’s valet, and cinema director Morris Weissman. All the rest speak British English with a wide range of Southern accents, although none is particularly marked. The following extract illustrates a conversation between Mary and Elsie, a housemaid at the McCordles’.

Original	Dub
17) Elsie: Oh, look. It’s Mr. Novello.	Oh guarda, il Signor Novello.
Mary: Just think of him sleeping downstairs.	Ti rendi conto che dorme qua sotto.
Elsie: I’m gonna have to watch you, my girl. I can see that.	Mmm, ti dovrò tener d’occhio ragazza mia, ho capito.
Mary: Her Ladyship says Mr Weissman’s a Hollywood producer. He does the Charlie Chan films.	Sua signoria dice che il signor Weissman è un produttore di Hollywood, fa i film di Charlie Chan, pare.
Elsie: Yeah, I like those. I like a bit of a fright in the cinema.	A me piacciono, mi piace provare un brivido al cinema.
Mary: You could go with his valet. He’d give you a fright. You’d better keep your eye on him. I think he’s a queer one. He’s not from Scotland, for a start. At least not any part of it that I know. What’s Mrs Nesbitt like?	Allora vai col suo valletto, lui li fa venire i brividi. Secondo me devi tenerlo d’occhio, è uno strano quello, vuole sapere tutto di tutti, ma di se stesso non racconta mai niente. E la signora Nesbit, com’è?
Elsie: She’s all right. I feel a bit sorry for her,	Mah, è carina, mi fa un po’ pena veramente, sai

really. Of course, it never works.	non funziona.
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Example 17. A conversation between maids

The two girls have an informal chat, so the register is quite colloquial and the topics chosen trivial. Traces of informality are to be found in both the original and the Italian dub, although they apply to different levels. In the original they include the use of address term “my girl”, the future with “gonna”, the adjective “queer”, whereas in the dub informality is conveyed by marked syntactic structures (the dislocation «lui li fa venire i brividi» = it’s him who gives you the creeps, and the topicalised structures «E la signora Nesbit com’è?» = And Mrs Nesbit, what is she like? And «è uno strano quello» = he’s strange, that guy). Marked word orders are typical of spontaneous discourse but may be emphasised in dubbed language, where they are selected as a key to orality. The right dislocations in particular appear to be more frequently employed in dubbing than in spontaneous Italian, «impress[ing] strong interactivity to film dialogue and perform[ing] a phatic, listener-oriented function» (Pavesi 2008: 89-90).

In addition, accent plays a double role in the English original, both because Mary speaks with a strong Scottish accent in pronunciations of isolated words, e.g. “queer”, where rhoticity is evident, and in the overall prosody of her speech, and because she makes reference to Mr Weissman’s valet, who fakes a Scottish accent that she recognises to be false. In the dub both are obliterated, but in different ways: Mary’s accent is standardised and the allusion to Henry Denton’s contrived way of speaking is turned into a reference to his ambiguous nature. Yet, the peculiarity of Mary’s speech is rendered with paralinguistic information, i.e. the meek timbre of her voice, which characterises her as a naïve, silly girl.

4. Discussion and conclusions

This study has attempted to shed light on the portrayal of accents and dialects in two radically different movies, i.e. *Gnomeo & Juliet*, and *Gosford Park*. Our aim was to demonstrate the way in which language variation (i.e. dia-

lects and accents) bestows meaning upon the narration and how, at the same time, it triggers social stereotypes associated with these marked varieties. Both English and dubbed Italian dialogues were taken into account, in order to evaluate how different accents and dialects were transposed in the target language.

An attentive analysis of the original dialogues of *Gnomeo & Juliet* revealed that, generally, good characters (both blue and red gnomes) speak unmarked Southern British varieties, quite close to RP, which is spoken in its most conservative manner by the statue of Will Shakespeare. Conversely, the villain of the movie, the red gnome Tybalt, uses Cockney English. Some other marked varieties are used by sidekicks, such as the frog Nanette and the flamingo Featherstone, who respectively speak with a Scottish dialect and a strong Latino accent. American English also enriches the linguistic landscape of the movie, being represented in the speech of some secondary characters, such as the sexy gnome Dolly, the red storyteller gnome and the lawnmower. On the whole, the most interesting pattern that can be singled out is that the dichotomy between good and evil, which is present in most animated movies, is also represented and reinforced linguistically by resorting to marked language varieties. Such functional usage of accents and dialects may ease children's understanding of the story. However, it goes without saying that this association contributes to the perception of dialects as negative and socially stigmatised.

The differences between the English and Italian version of *Gnomeo & Juliet* are quite striking in that the strong characterisation linked to the use of accents and dialects is reinforced in the dub, although with different implications. In the original the feud between the two rival families is not mirrored by the accents the characters employ: both Juliet's father and Gnomeo's mother employ in fact a regional, polished RP, whereas the characters who speak more marked varieties are either equally distributed between the two families or altogether neutral. In the Italian dub, on the contrary, the division is mirrored by the linguistic varieties adopted: the characters belonging to the red garden employ Southern accents and dialects, ranging from Neapolitan to Calabrian and Sicilian, whereas members of Gnomeo's blue garden use Northern varieties, ranging from Milanese to

Venetian. Similarly to the original Cuban English used by Featherstone, Piumarosa uses a very exaggerated accent that triggers laughter in the audience. A pilot study that we have carried out with students to ascertain the reception of marked varieties in films has in fact evidenced that both Featherstone and Piumarosa are perceived as hilarious (Bruti, Vignozzi 2016). In line with Italian original films and products that are dubbed into Italian, Roman accent is used to sketch amusing characters and easy-going types. In Italian cinema the so-called *commedia all'italiana*, which flourished in the 1960s, chose a linguistic style that was linked to the use of a careful selection of recognisable traits drawn from regional varieties (and of Roman speech in particular, see Rossi 2007, 48-52). As long as the selection remained contained, fictional Roman speech was perceived as amusing and hilarious, also thanks to talented and expressive actors such as Alberto Sordi, Nino Manfredi, Monica Vitti, to name just a few. While the choices in the original dialogues affect pronunciation, in the dub sometimes regional morphosyntactic traits are used, thus putting dialectal forms in the characters' mouths. This effect contributes to a more precise characterisation, but also to a sharper stereotyping than in the original, where there is no clear divide between north and south. In the Italian dialogues the red characters speak with accents and dialects that are typically regarded as less prestigious, at least in collective consciousness, whereas people talking with a Northern accent or using a Northern dialect seem more polite and civilised. Although comic movies are the genre where it is possible to experiment in translating, the choice, in this case, is probably motivated by the plot revolving around the hostility between the two groups, which is thus strengthened.

In *Gosford Park* the plot is rather uneventful, but the script is the real protagonist, as what characters say or suggest to each other through their body language or accent needs to be paid close attention. Accents and paralinguistic features, in particular, have a relevant role in creating the scene, as each character's distinctive voice is a piece of the puzzle that will fall into place so that the overall design, i.e. the description of an epoch and its social environment, will be clear.

This portrayal is severely compromised in the Italian dub, as all the characters speak alike, with no distinction for either regional provenance or social class. An attempt at differentiation is made by using two strategies: lexical and morphosyntactic choices create an impression of spontaneity and orality in low-class characters, whereas tone and timbre confer the speech of some others (the aristocratic ones in particular, e.g. Lady Trentham) a distinctive quality.

On the whole, although translating and dubbing marked varieties accounts for a challenging task, from this case study it appears that translation is more constrained by the genre than by the lack of available translating counterparts, as can be seen in *Gnomeo & Juliet* where original and unexpected solutions have been adopted. In fact, contemporary animated films are often family movies, which are clearly catered for a vast and diversified audience. This clearly favours a type of humour that can be appreciated both by children and grown-ups. Register variation, for example, in the dub of *Gnomeo & Juliet*, creates a sort of estrangement and farcical effect that can amuse adults too, but does not make children's comprehension more demanding. Moreover, in animated products, the "implicit pact" which is always established between authors and audience in fictional products (cf. paragraph 1) is stronger. Thus, a fake linguistic landscape can be acceptable and the stereotypes that it creates appear less stigmatising.

Regarding the dubbing into Italian of period dramedies (cf. paragraph 3.2) such as *Gosford Park*, the use of diatopically and diastratically marked varieties is not very common, as the trend is that of using a standard supraregional accent, with just a few substandard uses in the form of markers of orality. This is related to the fact that Italian accents are very marked and strongly contribute to profiling and stereotyping. However, since the film aims to distinguish between social classes, some more cues of language variation, e.g. words belonging to different registers, could have been added.

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