

Francesca Raffi
University of Macerata, Italy

Retranslation as Resubtitling.
The Case Study of Federico Fellini's *La Strada*

Abstract

While retranslation in the literary domain is “usually regarded as a positive phenomenon” (Tahir-Gürçağlar 2009: 233), retranslation within the context of audiovisual products tends to be either negatively received (Zanotti 2015: 110) or neglected (O’Sullivan 2018: 269). Retranslation in the form of resubtitling, in particular, (i.e. the production of a new subtitled version of the same audiovisual text) has not attracted considerable attention in audiovisual translation studies, since “resubtitling is seen as inevitable and is hardly ever noticed or remarked upon” (Zanotti 2015: 111). Indeed, very little research has been conducted from a diachronic perspective “to see how subtitling was done in the past, and how it is done nowadays” (Díaz Cintas 2004: 65). The present paper aims to address the issue of resubtitling in the audiovisual field from a diachronic perspective using the case study of an Italian film as an empirical basis: two sets of retranslated English subtitles produced for re-releases of Fellini’s *La Strada* (1954), 37 years apart, will be analysed according to a two-level analytical framework, technical and translational. The study will show that, while major improvements can be observed on a technical level, the more modern retranslation departs farther from the original, with respect to the older subtitles. Thus, the notion of ‘retranslation as improvement’ is questioned.

1. Introduction

Theoretical discussions about retranslation have generally centred on literary texts and are often based on the notion of improvement and progress; this implies that a retranslation responds to a ‘lack’ in the first translation in terms of style, language, or interpretation (Berman 1990; Vandershelden 2000; Kahn and Seth 2010, among others). In addition, retranslation is also linked to the notion of updating, determined by the linguistic, cultural and societal transformations that occur over time in the

receiving system (Gambier 1994: 413). Susam-Sarajeva (2003) and Paloposki and Koskinen (2004) highlight the strengths and weaknesses of Berman's history-as-progress model, criticising the tendency to reduce historical development into straightforward evolution or linear progress. Brownlie (2006), Dean-Cox (2014) and Massardier-Kenney (2015) also question the binary opposition between lack and progress that grounds the notion of retranslation, showing that no distinguishable pattern of improvement can be found over time and that retranslation does not necessarily stem from weakness, deficiency, or inadequacy in previous translations.

When referring specifically to audiovisual texts, the term retranslation identifies a subsequent translation of the same source text in the same target language (Chaume 2007: 50). This may imply a retranslation of the same audiovisual translation (AVT) modality (redubbing, resubtitling, etc.); or it may involve a change in the translation modality initially selected (when a subtitled film is retranslated using dubbing, for example). While extensive studies have been carried out on retranslation in the literary domain, the phenomenon has not been widely investigated in AVT studies (O'Sullivan 2018: 269). However, this does not mean that the issue has been entirely neglected. For instance, the redubbing of feature films or TV series has been debated by some scholars (Maraschio 1982; Wehn 1998; Khris 2006; Valoroso 2006; Chaume 2007; Votisky 2007; Zanotti 2015; Keating 2016; and Di Giovanni 2017). Others have discussed the differences between the dubbed and subtitled versions of certain films, but this has been mainly from a synchronic perspective (Törnqvist 1995; and Hurtado de Mendoza Azaola 2009), with some notable exceptions (Keating 2014). Similarly, resubtitling has not attracted much attention from a diachronic perspective. Diaz-Cintas (2001) compared two versions of subtitles created for VHS and TV, and showed that these two mediums differ with regard to their approach to sexual references. Di Giovanni (2016) examined two versions of subtitles (an initial version and a proofread version), created for the same medium and produced synchronically, and Dore (2017; and forthcoming) compared, once again from a synchronic perspective, the British-English and American-English

subtitled versions of some episodes from the first season of *Montalbano*, exploring the way in which translators on both sides of the Atlantic had dealt with Catarella's humorous idiosyncrasies (2017) and with references to food and Italian-Sicilian traditional cuisine (forthcoming).

Retranslation in the form of resubtitling has very seldom been viewed diachronically (i.e. comparing two or more sets of subtitles of the same source text, dating back to different periods). One exception that could be cited is Goulet's study (2013), which investigated the treatment of culture-specific utterances in two sets of subtitles produced twenty years apart for the TV series *Beverly Hills 90210* and broadcast by two Greek TV channels. With regard to feature films, however (and to this author's best knowledge), two different subtitled versions of the same title have rarely been compared, especially diachronically. However, the increasing paratextual visibility of retranslated subtitles in promotional materials, such as DVD extras and packaging released by 'prestigious' publishers (such as Criterion Collection in the US or the British Film Institute in the UK), has the potential to increase awareness of resubtitling issues from a diachronic perspective among researchers (O'Sullivan 2018). Thus, the present paper aims to address the issue using the first of Fellini's films to enter the UK, namely *La Strada* (1954), as an empirical basis. The 35mm copy dating back to 1972 and the DVD copy dating back to 2009 will be compared in order to shed light on the process of resubtitling and add to the debate on retranslation as 'improvement' (or not).

When analysing film retranslation from an historical perspective, it is fundamental to take into account the original contexts of production, distribution, and reception of the titles under scrutiny. Therefore, before moving to the analysis, a brief overview will be offered in the following section to see how Federico Fellini's originally subtitled films were translated and retranslated between the late 1940s and early 1960s to target different types of audience.

2. *Retranslating Fellini's films*

Fellini's drama *La Strada* (1954) was the director's first film to be imported into the British market, and it was favourably reviewed by the British specialised press (Marcarini 2001: 66), thereby establishing his success in the UK. The film opened at the Curzon in Mayfair (London) with English subtitles, running from January 1955 to February 1956, and later appeared regularly in a number of different art house cinemas, always in its subtitled version (Ibid.).

The decision to distribute this film in its original version with English subtitles was in line with the general strategy adopted by British distributors who dealt with art films. At the end of the 1940s, British intellectual engagement with cinema blossomed within the context of cultural film society movements. The British Film Institute (first established in 1933) and its magazine *Sight & Sound* played their part in raising the cultural status of film and catering for the nation's varied cinematic tastes by providing access to foreign films within a strongly educational framework (Nowell-Smith and Dupin 2012). This led to the growth of a group of cinemagoers with different expectations from those of big market hall audiences. The former circle desired films which needed intellectual effort to be fully appreciated, rather than enjoyed on a superficial level, thus contributing to the institutionalisation of the concept of foreign art films and helping to promote the artistic concerns of film culture. Subtitles then became symbolically associated with educated, culturally curious, and well-read spectators, who wanted to appreciate the foreignness and actuality of art films (Nornes 2007). A manifesto in favour of subtitling appeared in *Sight & Sound* in 1948 with the article 'No! Mr. Blakeston', in response to a suggestion made by Oswell Blakeston in 1947 to consider the artistic merits of dubbing.¹

Against this background, it is hardly surprising that *La Strada* was only screened in the UK with English subtitles. However, in the US, after the great success of its subtitled version at the Trans-Lux on 52nd Street in 1956, the film was also released in a dubbed version in 1957 and distributed

¹ In some ways, this was also an openly overt rejection of cinema's universal appeal (Williams 2009: 91-92), which had been strongly promulgated in Hollywood to ensure fast and easy circulation, popularity, and consumption of its productions (Ibid.).

by Trans-Lux Pictures (Van Order 2009: 62). According to a film review that appeared in *Variety* magazine (1957), this retranslation choice was due to marketing reasons. In 1956, *La Strada* had received both an Academy Award and a New York Film Critics Award for Best Foreign Film, which clearly increased the film's popularity, and its appeal widened to a broader audience beyond the narrow art-house circuit. With reference to the reasons behind dual releases, Trans-Lux Management Consultant, Richard Brandt, and Sales Manager, George Roth, told *Variety* magazine (1957): "One of the apparent advantages is that, while a long art-house run unquestionably enhances a film's prestige, [it] doesn't necessarily denote a lack of popular acceptance in the commercial situations". The English audio track of *La Strada* was edited under the supervision of Carol and Peter Riethof at Titra Sound Studio in New York, and Fellini had no control over this (Van Order 2009: 62). In anticipation of the release of this dubbed version, Trans-Lux claimed that it was "really an 'undubbed' job, since the two American actors in it – Anthony Quinn and Richard Basehart – spoke their lines originally in English and then were dubbed into Italian" (Variety 1957). However, this was false. In fact, Fellini followed a singular procedure regarding dialogue during filming, a technique called the 'number system' or 'numerological diction': instead of saying lines, the actor had to count to a certain number, and shooting was done without sound, with the actual dialogues added later together with music and sound effects. Anthony Quinn and Richard Basehart were indeed English-speaking actors, but they were not actually saying their lines. Therefore, despite Trans-Lux's sensational advertising campaign to promote the dubbed version of *La Strada* as an 'original version', the English-language version was certainly 'not original'; in fact, the English audio track was shorter with respect to the foreign-language version screened in 1956, because some lines were eliminated to synchronise the dialogue with the movements of the actors' mouths (Van Order 2009: 62). Perhaps that is why the American distributor decided to release the dubbed version of *La Strada* only when the original version with English subtitles had already been withdrawn from release.

Going back to the UK, after his initial success, other works by Fellini were released in London with subtitles: *II bidone* (The Swindlers, 1955),

which was distributed by Gala and screened at the Astoria (Marcarini 2001: 67), and *Le Notti di Cabiria* (Cabiria, 1957), which was released by Mondial Film at the Cameo-Polytechnic in 1958 (Ibid., 68). Both were praised by the specialised British press as accomplished examples of Italian neorealism and British distributors marketed them as artistic products (Ibid.), thus releasing them with subtitles. However, a different marketing strategy was adopted to distribute another of Fellini's films of the period, *I Vitelloni* (The Spivs, 1953), which was first released by Gala in 1954 on the British art-house circuit (Ibid. 68): after two years, it was screened with English dubbing at the Cinephone (Quigly 1956: 19), which traditionally showed mainly popular and sensational films (Eyles and Skone 2014: 92-93). Interestingly, the original title was translated as *The Spivs*, which was highly criticised in the British specialised press: "These loafers are not intrinsically criminal or cruel and the English title is absurdly misleading" (Monthly Film Bulletin 1956: 59). More often than not, Italian titles were translated literally or even left untranslated, as in the case of *La Strada*. However, when distributors decided to sell them in a different way, as second releases with English dubbing, titles were changed in order to increase the allure of Italian films for the mass market.

Despite the film critics' aversion to dubbing, a new wider market opened up to those Italian films which departed from the neorealist and *auteur* tradition and had more popular and commercial features. It became clear that dubbing helped the commercial success of these titles. British distributors decided to exploit both the mass-market traits and the 'artistic' value of these titles by marketing them in different ways, to target different types of audience: first, subtitled and shown in art houses for a more select public; then, dubbed and screened in popular cinemas to appeal to a much wider audience, since dubbing "helped broaden the market for a foreign picture, but only after the film's reputation had been built via subtitled runs" (Segrave 2004: 175). Therefore, while distributors deemed *II Bidone* and *Notti di Cabiria* appropriate only for sophisticated art houses, they decided to exploit the mass-market traits of *I Vitelloni* with a second release, rather than remaining focused on the film's 'artistic' value.

In the 1950s, subtitled and dubbed versions of the same Italian film were never released simultaneously. Indeed, it would normally take at least a year for the retranslated version to reach British cinemas; but in 1960, for the first time, London audiences witnessed a double release of the same film featuring two different translation modalities. That year, *La Dolce Vita* was screened simultaneously at the Columbia Theatre, a big up-market hall located in the heart of the West End (London), in its dubbed version (Lane 2009: 84) and at the Curzon, in its subtitled version, both distributed by Columbia (Marcarini 2001: 74). Unlike the dubbed version of *La Strada* released in the US, Fellini had total control over the English dubbing for *La Dolce Vita* and worked closely with both Michael Truman, the dubbing director, and the ‘translator’ himself, John Francis Lane² (Ibid.). However, the dubbed version received some negative criticism from the audience, as Lane (Ibid. 87) reported: “The dialogues didn’t seem to match the actor’s lips. [...] and I wanted to hear Marcello Mastroianni’s real voice”. Although *La Dolce Vita* had been marketed as a film that explored a new and extremely daring subject matter (with little emphasis on its artistic value), the decision to release a dubbed version turned out to be unsuccessful in other British cities where both versions were shown. In the words of Lane (Ibid. 81): “Audiences rushed to see the original version and very few went to see our dubbed version, which was pulled after a few days”. Lane did not provide any further details on the profile of the unsatisfied viewers, but it is not surprising that an audience accustomed to watching foreign-language films with subtitles, especially art films, did not show any enthusiasm for the dubbed version of Fellini’s *La Dolce Vita*.

The reasons behind the preference for the subtitled version may also have something to do with a potential mismatch between the empirical nature of the English language and the atmosphere of the film, as Lane explained:

² He was not a translator but a journalist and one of Federico Fellini’s friends: ‘I had gladly accepted Federico’s invitation to undertake this job, without knowing what I was in for’ (Lane 2009: 83-84).

Michael [Truman] and I became increasingly aware that we couldn't hope to render the magic of Fellini's world, set in a Rome somewhere between reality and fantasy, in such an empirical language as English. In England the times of Lewis Carroll's Wonderland had long gone. We were in the England of angry young men and Harold Pinter's first successes, who was playing with the English language in such a way, that we certainly couldn't hope to imitate in our inadequate translation. (Ibid. 86)

In fact, Lane was not a professional translator. As he himself reported: "It was not my job. I was a journalist and apart from covering cinema for specialist magazines, I followed the real dolce vita of nineteen fifties Rome" (Ibid. 83-84).

Not only were some British cinemagoers (presumably those accustomed to watching art films with subtitles) critical of the dubbed versions of films such as Fellini's, but also British film critics in the specialised press (Marcarini 2001). Despite the fact that film distributors preferred to release dubbed versions of certain Italian art titles (with the aim of achieving greater success than their original niche market), the specialised press still regarded the subtitled versions of Italian art cinema as an opportunity for the audience to more fully experience, understand, and appreciate something real, authentic, and foreign (Ibid.). Therefore, in their eyes, subtitling was the best option to enable the audience to appreciate the realism and foreign authenticity of Italian artworks.

The preference for subtitling in art cinema is still evident today in the new releases of the 'prestigious' British publisher, the British Film Institute (BFI).³ As for Fellini's films, they have all been re-released exclusively with English subtitles, with no dubbing options in English;⁴ this means that the original choice made by British distributors for their first release in the British market has been respected. Furthermore, these films offer a valuable opportunity to diachronically trace the resubtitling process, as shown in the following section.

³ 'BFI Sales & Distribution.' British Film Institute, <https://www.bfi.org.uk/international-distribution/bfi-sales-and-distribution> (last accessed 17/12 2018).

⁴ 'Federico Fellini.' British Film Institute, <https://shop.bfi.org.uk/directors/federico-fellini.html> (last accessed 17/12 2018).

3. *Resubtitling Fellini's La Strada*

The need for resubtitling is ascribed to a number of reasons. It is widely recognised that one of the problems with audiovisual material is copyright. Consequently, when re-releasing a given film after a number of years, such as great film classics, it is often easier and even cheaper to commission a new translation instead of purchasing an existing one (Chaume 2007: 60). Another important factor, which is strictly linked to commercial reasons, is technical. With the passage from analogue to digital technology, the expansion of the DVD market, and the need to produce high-quality marketable products, new editions often offer reprinted credits, the restoration of frames, and higher video (and audio) quality, among other improvements. Consequently, the new release of those films which had been subtitled in the analogue era also require technical updating, which entails taking into account the new tools available to subtitlers (new subtitling software programmes), technological advances (the requirement to produce electronic subtitle files for DVD release), and the commercial forces which have had a great impact on the subtitling profession (less time to do proper research and to revise the subtitling work). Similarly, the existing subtitled versions of films made originally in analogue formats may need linguistic updating (the substitution of outdated lexis).

As far as distribution issues are concerned, computers, tablets, and new-generation mobile phones have enabled users to receive TV or watch film material on the internet, through a wide range of new video-on-demand platforms, such as Netflix, Amazon Prime, or Hulu. Consequently, information architecture and visual design has had to be optimised for different kinds of screens and resubtitling has been required to support usability issues. In the words of Gideon Bierer, Executive Vice President of Digital Media for MTV Networks International, “regular subtitling on mobiles doesn’t work. So, we’re re-subtitling with slightly different wording, shorter, sharper, bigger fonts, designed to work for this particular medium” (Bierer, in Spencer 2006).

Other contexts of distribution call for new translations of old subtitled material. Within the film festival context, for example, projections seldom

use the subtitles adopted for cinema distribution. Similarly, for DVD distribution the subtitles made for cinema release need to be reformatted for television viewing (O'Sullivan 2018: 270). It is frequently made explicit in the films' paratexts,⁵ such as the DVD cover and the website (Ibid.), that the subtitles are 'new and improved' or 'newly translated', thus implying that previous subtitles were of poorer quality (Ibid.). Viewers often comment on the 'higher quality' of these new subtitles; with reference to the new edition of Fellini's *La Strada* released by the BFI in 2009, for example, one customer review says: "The only reason for buying this release is the improved subtitles".⁶

La Strada tells the story of the simple-minded Gelsomina (played by the actress Giulietta Masina) who is sold by her mother to Zampanò (Anthony Quinn), a travelling artist. Despite Zampanò's brutality and continuous abuse, Gelsomina faithfully follows him from village to village. They eventually encounter the Fool (Richard Basehart), a high wire artist and clown, whom Zampanò ends up accidentally killing after he is riled by the circus man. The Fool's death profoundly touches Gelsomina, who falls into a state of depression; Zampanò selfishly abandons her, and only five years later learns that she has died. At the end, the brutal man recognises his remorse, and feels the measure of his enormous solitude.

Working at the BFI's National Archive in London, I collected a 35mm copy of *La Strada*, which had been originally released in the UK in 1955 and which formally entered into the BFI's inventory with retranslated English subtitles in 1972 (Target Text 1). To my knowledge and according to BFI staff, this version is the oldest currently available for study and research in any major British film archives. I also accessed the latest available version of the film (at the time the materials were collected) released by the BFI with retranslated English subtitles, dating back to 2009 (Target Text 2); the time span between the two versions is therefore 37 years, and the resulting total number of subtitles is 1,599.

⁵ For further information on the notion of films' paratexts, see O'Sullivan (2018).

⁶ 'La Strada.' British Film Institute, <https://shop.bfi.org.uk/directors/federico-fellini/la-strada.html> (last accessed 17/12 2018).

The two sets of subtitles will be compared and analysed diachronically according to a two-level analytical framework: technical and translational. As explained at the beginning of this section, the shift from analogue to digital technology had a profound impact on the profession, and new guidelines have been developed over the years to tackle the emerging issues of a technical nature. The subtitles will first be contrastively analysed in terms of layout, spatial issues (including punctuation), and subtitling conventions in order to trace the type of technical changes made within the 37-year time span, limiting the conclusions to the data here analysed.

As for the translational analysis, a comparative study of the Italian original and the two sets of subtitles will then be carried out. For reasons of space, I will only concentrate on clear cases where the two subtitled versions have taken different approaches to the translation of the epithets *signor*, *signora*, and *signorina* and the rendering of wordplays.

3.1 Technical dimension

To begin with layout issues, in both versions the subtitles are white and centred, but different fonts have been used: serif for the film print, and non-serif fonts for the DVD version. As for the 35mm copy, the subtitles sometimes disappear into very light backgrounds (*La Strada* is a black and white film), while in the DVD letters are shadowed to render them more visible and to increase the degree of legibility. These differences seem to follow the evolution of font types, from the early days of cinema to modern times (Cornu 2014: 230-239, 266-272; and O’Sullivan and Cornu 2018: 20), as well as the development of new technical processes used to transfer the subtitles to the actual film (Ibid.).

From a technical point of view, the number of subtitles is almost the same in the two versions, with 802 subtitles for the 35mm copy and 797 for the DVD. Interestingly, the maximum number of characters per line is also the same: 37 in both versions. Despite these similarities, the 35mm copy has a very low percentage of subtitles distributed over two lines: 15% against 33.6% in the DVD. In addition, in the 35mm copy, two-speaker

subtitles are totally absent, while in the DVD they account for 44.4% of all two-line subtitles. It has not been possible to go back to the actual subtitling guidelines followed by the 1972-copy subtitler, but it is still possible to make some hypotheses for the absence of two-speaker subtitles. If we refer to Simon Laks' *Le Sous-titrage de Films*, which can be considered the very first volume on subtitling (it provides the reader with an exhaustive presentation of the technique), dashes had already been introduced to indicate dialogue subtitles. As Laks ([1957]2013: 22) reported: "Pour signaler que le personnage change, on dispose le texte sur deux lignes, en faisant précéder chacune d'un tiret". However, Laks (Ibid. 21) recommended adopting this strategy only when it was deemed absolutely necessary, thus suggesting that this practice was not seen as the best option for rendering a spoken exchange. The low number of two-line subtitles in the older subtitled version (and the absence of dialogue subtitles) means that 75% of subtitles are composed of a maximum of 37 characters, and this may also be associated with what John Minchinton (1987: 279), who subtitled the 1972 copy of *La Strada*, called a 'question of literacy'. In the article 'Fitting Titles' which appeared in *Sight & Sound* in 1987, Minchinton reports that in the UK, at that time, more than six million British adults had serious difficulty in reading; therefore, "these British citizens cannot be part of an audience for subtitled products with much written material" (Ibid.).

Moving on to other punctuation conventions, print triple dots are used extensively in the 1972 release (69 detected instances) and serve as a bridge when a sentence is not finished in one subtitle and needs to be carried over to the next; but in the DVD only seven instances have been detected. In the past, only the most relevant parts of dialogue were subtitled, whereas today subtitles are denser (O'Sullivan 2018: 270) (discussed further in the following section) and space is therefore at a premium. Thus, the decrease in the number of continuation dots is hardly surprising. As for the film print, the extensive use of triple dots can be explained by the fact that, in the past, viewers were less used to reading subtitles, and perhaps it was not

obvious enough that consecutive subtitle projections could be two halves of the same whole (without the triple dots to link them together).⁷

3.2 Translational dimension

In the 35mm copy the epithets *signora*, *signorina*, and *signore* were consistently maintained in their original form in the subtitles, unlike the retranslated version of 2009. Table 1 below lists all occurrences of this (in brackets):




Table 1. *Signora, Signor, Signorina*: 1972- and 2009-subtitled versions of *La Strada*

SOURCE TEXT	TARGET TEXT 1	TARGET TEXT 2
Signora (3)	Signora (3)	Miss (3)
Signor (1)	Signor (1)	Mister (1)
Signorina (1)	Signorina (1)	Miss (1)

First of all, in each instance the same character is speaking, namely the rough and bad-mannered Zampanò, whose characteristics contrast with the polite forms of address he employs, as discussed later. In his act, which he takes from town to town, Zampanò breaks an iron chain by expanding his chest; and his assistant, Gelsomina, performs the drum rolls and then collects tips from the audience. The repetitiveness of Zampanò's chain-breaking exercise is emphasised by the repetition of the formula (see examples 2 and 3 below) with which the man starts the show. All of the following examples show the original dialogue (Source Text), the 1972 subtitles (Target Text 1), the 2009 subtitles (Target Text 2), and the frame in which the original lines of dialogue are uttered.


⁷ In Lak's guidelines dating back to 1950s, both triple dots and a hyphen are indicated as possible options, with Lak's preference towards the latter ([1957] 2013: 42-43).


Examples 1-3 *Signora*: 1972- and 2009-subtitled version of *La Strada*

	FRAME	SOURCE TEXT	TARGET TEXT 1	TARGET TEXT 2
1		ZAMPANÒ: Controllate coi vostri occhi. Signora Gelsomina, prego.	Check it for yourself. Signora Gelsomina, please.	Check it for yourself. Miss Gelsomina, please.
2		ZAMPANÒ: Il tamburo suonerà 3 volte. Signora Gelsomina, prego.	The drum will roll three times. Signora Gelsomina, please.	The drum will roll three times. Miss Gelsomina, please.
3		ZAMPANÒ: Il tamburo suonerà 3 volte. Signora Gelsomina, prego.	The drum will roll three times. Signora Gelsomina, please.	The drum will roll three times. Miss Gelsomina, please.

In all three instances above, Zampanò addresses Gelsomina with the epithet *signora*, first to ask her to show the chain to the audience and then to roll the drum three times before he starts the show. The use of this polite form of address contrasts sharply with the rudeness with which Zampanò treats Gelsomina when they are alone or not in front of the audience, as shown in the following examples:


Examples 4-5 *Signor*: 1972- and 2009-subtitled version of *La Strada*

	FRAME	SOURCE TEXT	TARGET TEXT 1	TARGET TEXT 2
4		ZAMPANÒ: Andiamo, muoviti!	Come here. Hurry up!	Please, come in.

5		ZAMPANÒ: Saluta il signor Giraffa.	Greet Signor Giraffa.	This is Mister Giraffa.
---	---	--	--------------------------	----------------------------

Here, Zampanò and Gelsomina have turned up at a travelling circus. In the second citation, Zampanò tells Gelsomina to greet the owner, Mister Giraffa. Again, Zampanò's rough behaviour contradicts the politeness behind the term of address, 'il signor', which is used here to acknowledge the circus owner's higher official position with respect to his interlocutors. In addition to translating the word *signor*, the retranslated version of the film, at least in this passage, seems to represent Zampanò as a far less brutish man. While in the old version the man's rough order is almost literally translated ('Come here. Hurry up!' and 'Greet Signor Giraffa'), in the new subtitles, two of the three imperatives of the original dialogue are omitted ('muoviti' and 'saluta'), as well as the exclamation mark at the end of the second command ('Hurry up!'). Furthermore, there is the addition of 'please', which is absent in the Italian. In the original, Zampanò is far from being polite; he does not make a request or invite Gelsomina to greet the circus owner, but rather issues an order and in fact whistles to grab Gelsomina's attention, who is in the distance (see examples 4 above). However, as already seen in example 1, 2, and 3, Zampanò pretends to be more than he is, especially when he is not alone with Gelsomina and mainly when he is performing in front of his audience, as indicated in example 6 below:

Example 6 *Signorina*: 1972- and 2009-subtitled version of *La Strada*

	FRAME	SOURCE TEXT	TARGET TEXT 1	TARGET TEXT 2
6		ZAMPANÒ: Buongiorno Signorina Gelsomina. GELSOMINA: Zampanò.	Signorina Gelsomina. Zampanò.	Miss Gelsomina. Zampanò.

Here, Zampanò and Gelsomina are acting out a short comic farce, which represents a degraded form of the *commedia dell'arte*, where the two actors clearly belong to two different cultural standings: Zampanò (see the frame in example 6) imitates a clown and the entire comic routine will be based upon the mispronunciation of various words, as discussed later. In this context, the epithet is used to politely address a young and literate woman and to emphasise the cultural and age differences between the two characters. In the oldest target text, the Italian word is simply transferred to the subtitles, but the new version translates *signorina* as 'miss'.

Obviously, it is not easy to find an official explanation for the decision to maintain the Italian words *signora*, *signor*, and *signorina* in the 35mm subtitles, but it is possible to formulate some hypotheses. Considering the way in which the character of Zampanò is visually and linguistically represented in the film as a rude, brutal, and bad-mannered man, which is reflected in his harsh treatment of Gelsomina, the Italian words uttered by Zamapanò (only when the couple is 'acting' in front of an audience or people that Zamapanò wants to impress) in the 35mm subtitles may have the function of signalling a more refined, unusual, and somehow 'artificial' way of speaking on the part of Zampanò. A further motivation for retaining the Italian epithets may be an attempt to preserve and even emphasise the 'Italianness' of the film.⁸




On the other hand, the modern subtitles do not retain any elements of the Italian language and simply translate both forms of address used by Zampanò into English as 'miss' in each case. Consequently, the distinction between *signora* and *signorina* which is inherent to the Italian language is neglected, and this represents a loss because the Italian terms have a slightly different meaning and communicative function: while *signorina* is used to

⁸ Interestingly, Dore (forthcoming) reaches the same conclusions when comparing the British-English and American-English subtitled versions of the Italian TV series *Il commissario Montalbano*. In her case study, the American version frequently retains Italian and Sicilian culinary terms as an attempt to retain the exotic flavour of Italian food, which may still be recognised by part of the Sicilian-American audience.

address a young and generally unmarried girl, *signora* is a polite form of address reserved for an older and generally married woman⁹.

As the comic farce develops (see example 6 above), further differences emerge between the 1972 and 2009 subtitles of the film:

Examples 7-9 Comic farce: 1972- and 2009-subtitled version of *La Strada*

FRAME	SOURCE TEXT	TARGET TEXT 1	TARGET TEXT 2
7 	ZAMPANÒ: Mi scusi la domanda: che lei c'ha paura del mio ciuffile?	Are you afraid of my gunshot?	Excuse me, are you scared of my 'rifle'?
8 	ZAMPANÒ: Eh va bene... se non ci fa paura andiamo a giacca col ciuffile.	If not, we'll go shooting with the gunshot.	All right, then, let's go hunting.
9 	GELSOMINA: Non si dice 'ciuffile', si dice 'fucile'.	It isn't 'gunshot' but shotgun.	It's a rifle, not a 'rifle'.

This comic routine relies entirely on Zampanò's mispronunciation of the words *fucile* (he says *ciuffile*) and *caccia* (he says *giacca*). *Signorina* Gelsomina corrects the ignorant hunter's pronunciation of the word *fucile*, and this is translated differently in the English subtitles as 'shotgun' and 'rifle'.¹⁰ This naturally implies that two different solutions are used to render the Italian

⁹ This does not necessarily mean that the 1970s English-speaking audience understood the difference, from a semantic point of view, between the two Italian words (*signora* and *signorina*) as they appeared in the subtitles. However, the fact of reading two distinct words might have given the audience a 'taste of difference' which is absent in the 2009 subtitles.

¹⁰ The two lexical terms do not have the same semantic value. A shotgun fires a shell packed with shot and is typically used for shooting at moving targets, particularly birds and other animals (which is more in keeping with Zampanò's reference to hunting), as distinguished from a rifle, which fires bullets and is typically used for firing at stationary targets.

wordplay. In the older subtitles, the wordplay is recreated by inverting the component stems of the compound noun 'shotgun' ('shot + gun' becomes 'gun + shot'), but in the new version only two consonants of the word 'rifle' are inverted, with the letter 'l' wrongly preceding the letter 'f' ('rilfe'). Despite adopting a similar strategy of inversion, the result is slightly different: the new version creates a word which does not exist in the English language, thus it can be seen as an attempt to replicate what happens in the original dialogue. On the other hand, 'gunshot' is not nonsensical, it is a real word, which might even have been appropriate in this context if it were not for both the visual and acoustic elements (in this scene no gun can be seen firing and, naturally, no gunshot is heard). It is also worth noting that the word 'gunshot' is not signalled as a mistake by the use of inverted commas, unlike 'rilfe' in the 2009 subtitles.

In both versions, the second instance of wordplay becomes lost. In the original dialogue, Zampanò mispronounces the word *caccia* (which means hunting) as *giacca* (which means jacket). In the subtitles, both 'shooting' and 'hunting' are acceptable alternatives for the sport of killing animals or birds and Zamapanò simulates this activity in the scene (see example 8 and 9 above). The only difference is that the older version repeats the incorrect word *ciuffile* (i.e. 'gunshot'), as in the original dialogue, and creates a correspondence between 'shooting' and 'gunshot'/'shotgun' since all three stem from the same verb, 'to shoot', and all three share the letters 's', 'h', 'o', and 't'. Since *giacca* and *caccia* also share several letters ('i', 'a', and 'c'), perhaps the solution found in the old subtitles was an attempt to create a similar effect, even if it applies to a different instance of wordplay. Finally, when Gelsomina corrects Zamapanò, the old subtitles almost literally translate the dialogue by preserving the original order of the elements in the Italian sentence: first, the mispronounced word ('gunshot'), and then the correct one ('shotgun'); the order is inversed in the modern subtitles.

4. *Final remarks*

When the BFI issued retranslated DVD releases of Fellini's films, the British publisher opted for subtitling with no dubbing option; this means that the original choices made by British distributors when these films were first introduced into the British market were respected. Such retranslations are frequently advertised by distributors as 'improved' versions (O'Sullivan 2018: 270); similarly, theoretical discussions about literary retranslation are often based on the notion of improvement, as discussed in Section 1. The analytical study conducted in the present paper has raised some questions with regard to resubtitling: does it represent an actual improvement on the previous versions? The passage from analogue to digital technology, as well as the new tools available to the cinema industry, have undoubtedly led to significant improvements in terms of the legibility of subtitles, mainly thanks to the use of new fonts and shadowed letters for black and white films, such as *La Strada*. The adoption of shared subtitling conventions and the evolution of audiences, who can keep up with faster and denser subtitles (Szarkowska and Gerber-Morón 2018), have opened up new options and possibilities to subtitlers. The higher percentage of one-liners in the 35mm copy of the film under study, when compared to the DVD, shows that the original information contained within the Italian dialogue had to be condensed dramatically in the 1972 subtitles. This is not surprising, since in the past subtitling only the most relevant dialogue was the usual practice (O'Sullivan 2018: 270), while it is now widely accepted that films should be as fully subtitled as possible (Ibid.). Therefore, the 'improvement' advertised in DVD extras and packaging may be associated with the fact that these denser subtitle versions provide the audience with more translated dialogue and are assumed to enhance comprehension and enjoyment. Moreover, the two-speaker subtitles that appeared in the 2009 copy (absent from the 1972-subtitled version) make explicit the characteristics of dialogic interactions. Thus, the improvement may here be perceived as the more faithful reproduction of the interactional features of the dialogue, which contribute as much to the narrative as the words uttered by the actors on screen.

As the analysis demonstrates, the Italian terms of address (*signor, signora, signorina*) are maintained in their original form in the old subtitles, unlike the retranslated version of 2009. Additionally, at least in one of the analysed passages (see example 4), the 2009-subtitled version of the film represents Zampanò as a far less brutish man than he is depicted in both the original dialogue and the 35mm subtitles. Finally, the old subtitles somehow attempt to reproduce at least one of the wordplays found in the original dialogue and preserve the original order of the elements in the Italian sentence. Therefore, this study (limiting the conclusions to the data here analysed) questions the idea of ‘retranslation as improvement’: is the resubtitled version of *La Strada* an ‘improved’ version, as advertised by the paratextual elements of the DVD released by the BFI? The notion of improvement in retranslation research should always be paired with media reception research thus considering the new context of production, distribution and, above all, “the forms and modes of consumption and reception” (Di Giovanni and Gambier 2018: X) of the retranslated film. After all, every film is “conceived, produced, distributed and consumed within specific economic and social contexts” (Kochberg 1999: 14). Perhaps retranslation in AVT should not be regarded merely in terms of improvement or loss from a descriptive perspective, but rather as an opportunity to gain a deeper insight into viewers’ opinions and experience of the new translations. This may offer an interesting starting point from which to develop the present study and reconsider the tendency to equate retranslation with improvement.

Additionally, broadcasters, audiovisual translation companies, distributors, and the academic field have been looking into the ways in which the quality of audiovisual translations can be improved, especially from a technical point of view (number of characters, use of different colours, reading speed, etc.). As a consequence, studies focusing on retranslations may offer the opportunity to further deepen our understanding of viewers’ experiences and focus on audiovisual translation quality from a broader perspective.

Bibliography

- “I Vitelloni”. 1956. *Monthly Film Bulletin* 23, no. 264: 59.
- “La Strada: Going Dubbed”. 1957. *Variety*, April 17, 1957, https://archive.org/stream/variety206-1957-04/variety206-1957-04_djvu.txt (last accessed 15/10 2018).
- Berman, Antoine. 1990. “La Retraduction Comme Espace de la Traduction.” *Palimpsestes* 4: 1-7.
- Brownlie, Siobhan. 2006. “Narrative Theory and Retranslation Theory.” *Across Languages and Cultures* 7, no 2: 145-170.
- Chaume, Frederic. 2007. “La Retraducción de Textos Audiovisuales. Razones y Repercusiones Traductológicas.” In *Retraducir: Una Nueva Mirada. La Retraducción de Textos Literarios y Audiovisuales*, edited by Francisco Ruiz Noguera & Juan Jesús Zaro Vera, 49-63. Málaga: Miguel Gómez Ediciones.
- Cornu, Jean-François. 2014. *Le Doublage et le Sous-titrage: Histoire et Esthétique*, Rennes: Presses Universitaires de Rennes.
- Deane-Cox, Sharon. 2014. *Retranslation. Translation, Literature and Reinterpretation*. London: Bloomsbury.
- Di Giovanni, Elena. 2016. “The Layers of Subtitling.” *Cogent* 3, 1: 1-15.
- Di Giovanni, Elena. 2017. “New Imperialism in (Re)translation: Disney in the Arab World.” *Perspectives* 25, 1: 4-17.
- Di Giovanni, Elena and Yves Gambier 2018. *Reception Studies and Audiovisual Translation*. Amsterdam: John Benjamins.
- Díaz-Cintas, Jorge. 2001. “Sex, (Sub)Titles and Videotapes.” In *Traducción Subordinada II: El Subtitulado*, edited by Lourdes Lorenzo García & Ana María Pereira Rodríguez, 47-67. Vigo: Servicio de Publicacións da Universidade de Vigo.
- Díaz Cintas, Jorge. 2004. “Subtitling: The Long Journey to Academic Acknowledgement”. *Jostrans* 1: 50-70.
- Dore, Margherita. 2017. “Camilleri’s Humour Travels to the UK and the USA.” In *Translation Studies and Translation Practice: Proceedings of the 2nd International TRANSLATA Conference, 2014*, edited By Lew N. Zybatow,

- Andy Stauder & Michael Ustaszewski, 43-52. Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang.
- Dore, Margherita. Forthcoming. "Food and Translation in *Montalbano*." In *Food Across Cultures - Linguistic Insights in Transcultural Tastes*, edited By Giuseppe Balirano & Siria Guzzo, 31-47. London: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Eyles, Allen and Keith Skone. 2014. *London's West End Cinemas*. Swindon: Historic England Publishing.
- Gambier, Yves. 1994. "La Retraduction, Retour et Détour." *Meta* 39, no 3: 413-417.
- Gouleti, Katerina. 2013. *Translating Culture-specific References on Greek Television: A Diachronic Case Study of Subtitling Trends*. PhD diss, Aristotle University of Thessaloniki.
- Hurtado de Mendoza Azaola, Isabel. 2009. "Translating Proper Names into Spanish: The Case of *Forrest Gump*." In *New Trends in Audiovisual Translation*, edited by Jorge Díaz-Cintas, 70-82. Bristol: Multilingual Matters.
- Kahn, Robert and Catriona Seth, eds. 2010. *La Retraduction*. Rouen: Publications des Universités de Rouen et du Havre.
- Keating, Carla Mereu. 2014. "The Translation of Ethnonyms and Racial Slurs in Films." *European Journal of English Studies* 18, no 3: 295-315.
- Keating, Carla Mereu. 2016. "'The Italian Color': Race, Crime Iconography and Dubbing Conventions in the Italian-language Versions of *Scarface* (1932)". *Altre Modernità*, 107-123.
- Kochberg, Searle. 1999. "Cinema As an Institution." In *An Introduction to Film Studies*, edited by Jill Neldes, 13-58. London: Routledge.
- Khris, Smail. 2006. "The Whys of Redubbing. Toward a Theoretical Approach to Redubbing". Paper presented at *MuTra - Multidimensional Translation Conference*, Copenhagen, May 2006.
- Laks, Simon. (1957) 2013. "Le Sous-titrage de Films. Sa Technique - Son Esthétique." *L'Écran Traduit* 1: 4-46, <http://ataa.fr/revue/archives/1343> (last accessed 01/05 2017).
- Lane, John Francis. 2009. "Fellini and Dubbing. The Bitter Struggle To Dub *La Dolce Vita* in English." In *Mezzo Secolo di Dolce Vita*, edited by Vittorio Boarini & Tullio Kezich, 77-83. Bologna: Cineteca Bologna.

- Maraschio, Nicoletta. 1982. "L'Italiano del Doppiaggio". In *La Lingua Italiana in Movimento*, edited by Accademia della Crusca, 137-58. Firenze: Accademia della Crusca.
- Marcarini, Elena. 2001. *The Distribution of Italian Films in the British and American Markets 1945-1995*. PhD diss, University of Reading.
- Massardier-Kenney, Françoise. 2015. "Toward a Rethinking of Retranslation." *Translation Review* 92, 1: 73-85.
- Minchinton, John. 1987. "Fitting Titles." *Sight and Sound* 56, 4: 279-282.
- Nornes, Markus. 2007. *Cinema Babel. Translating Global Cinema*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.
- Nowell-Smith, Geoffrey and Christophe Dupin. 2012. *The British Film Institute, the Government and Film Culture, 1933-2000*. Manchester: Manchester University Press.
- O'Sullivan, Carol. 2018. "New and Improved Subtitle Translation": Representing Translation in Film Paratexts." In *Linguistic and Cultural Representation in Audiovisual Translation*, edited by Irene Ranzato & Serenella Zanotti, 265-279. New York: Routledge.
- O'Sullivan, Carol and Jean-François Cornu. 2018. "History Of Audiovisual Translation." In *The Routledge Handbook of Audiovisual Translation*, edited by Luis Pérez González, 15-30. London: Routledge.
- Paloposki, Outi and Kaisa Koskinen. 2004. "Thousand and One Translations. Retranslation Revisited." In *Claims, Changes and Challenges*, edited by Gyde Hansen, Kirsten Malmkjaer & Daniel Gile, 27-38. Amsterdam: John Benjamins.
- Quigly, Isabelle. 1956. "Desolate Sympathy". 1956. *The Spectator*, April 06, 1956.
- Segrave, Kerry. 2004. *Foreign Films in America: A History*. Jefferson N.C.: McFarland & Co.
- Spencer, Kelly. 2006. "Content Challenge for Mobile TV." *BBC News*, February 17, 2006, http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/programmes/click_online/4724068.stm (last accessed 5/05 2017).

- Summers, Walter. 1948. "No! Mr. Blakeston." *Sight and Sound* 17, no 65: 14-15.
- Susam-Sarajeva, Sebnem. 2003. "Multiple-entry Visa to Travelling Theory: Retranslations of Literary and Cultural Theories." *Target* 15, 1: 1-36.
- Szarkowska, Agnieszka, and Olivia Gerber-Morón. 2018. "Viewers Can Keep Up With Fast Subtitles: Evidence From Eye Movements." *PLOS ONE* 13, no 6, <https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0199331> (last accessed 11/11 2018).
- Tahir-Gurcağlar, Şehnaz. 2009. "Retranslation." In *Routledge Encyclopedia of Translation Studies*, edited by Mona Baker & Gabriela Saldanha, 233-236. London: Routledge.
- Törnqvist, Egil. 1995. "Fixed Pictures, Changing Words: Subtitling and Dubbing the Film *Babettes Gæstebud*." *Tijdschrift voor Skandinavistiek* 16, 1: 47-65.
- Valoroso, Nunziante. 2006. "Il Problema del Ridoppiaggio". *Disneyrama*, https://disneyrama.com/index.php?Itemid=31&id=60&option=com_content&task=view (last accessed 15/12 2018).
- Van Order, M. Thomas. 2009. *Listening to Fellini: Music and Meaning in Black and White*. Madison: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press.
- Vanderschelden, Isabelle. 2000. "Why Retranslate the French Classics? The Impact of Retranslation on Quality." In *On Translating French Literature and Film II*, edited by Myriam Salama-Carr, 1-18. Amsterdam: Rodopi.
- Votisky, Anna. 2007. "The Questions of Redubbing Films (in Hungary)". Paper presented at *MuTra - Multidimensional Translation Conference: LSP Translation Scenarios*, Vienna, 2007.
- Wehn, Karin. 1998. "Re-dubbings of US-American Television Series for the German Television: The Case of *Magnum, P.I.*". In *Translating for the Media*, edited by Yves Gambier, 185-99. Turku: University of Turku.
- Williams, John. 2009. "Global English Ideography and the Dissolve Translation in Hollywood Film." *Cultural Critique* 72: 89-136.
- Zanotti, Serenella. 2015. "Investigating Redubs: Motives, Agents, and Audience Response." In *Audiovisual Translation in a Global Context -*

Mapping an Ever-changing Landscape, edited by Jorge Díaz Cintas & Rocío Baños Piñero, 110-139. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.

Filmography

Fellini, Federico. 1954. *La Strada*. (104'). Italy.

Francesca Raffi holds a PhD in English for Special Purposes and Audiovisual Translation from the University of Napoli 'Federico II' and she is currently Postdoctoral Research Fellow at the University of Macerata, Italy. Among her latest publications are "Translating Migrants: Lost Voices in the Italian Documentary Film 'Come il Peso dell'Acqua' and its English Subtitles" (*InVerbis*) and "Translating and Retranslating Italian Cinema Across Time: Fellini in the UK and in the US" (*Altre Modernità*). She co-edited the book *Languaging Diversity 3: Language(s) and Power* (Cambridge Scholars Publishing) and she is guest co-editor of the special issue of *mediAzioni* entitled "On the Move: Sites of Change, States of Insecurity" (forthcoming).