

Antonio Fruttaldo  
Univeristy of Naples 'L'Orientale', Italy

(Re)Translating Culture-Bound Elements in *Gomorrah – The Series*:  
A Corpus-Based Investigation into Relocated Identities

*There are three kinds of translation. The first acquaints us with the foreign country on our own terms [...]. A second epoch follows, in which the translator endeavors to transport himself into the foreign situation but actually only appropriates the foreign idea and represents it as his own. [...] the third epoch of translation [...] is the final and highest of the three. In such periods, the goal of the translation is to achieve perfect identity with the original, so that the one does not exist instead of the other but in the other's place [...]. We are led, yes, compelled as it were, back to the source text: the circle, within which the approximation of the foreign and the familiar, the known and the unknown constantly move, is finally complete.*

(Johann W. Goethe 1992 [1819]:  
60–63)

Abstract

The following investigation analyses the way in which *Gomorrah – The Series* has been adapted for an international audience. In particular, some of the processes that have brought a local reality into a glocal context will be analysed, focusing on how culture-bound elements are rendered in (re)translation. More specifically, the following study uses Corpus Linguistics methodologies in order to look at the specific linguistic patterns that can be highlighted in the construction through subtitling of a given representation of the reality in which the TV series is set and the characters are immersed. The

following contribution, therefore, wants to investigate to what extent (in the subtitles) the translation into Italian of the Neapolitan script of *Gomorra* – *The Series* and its (re)translation into English contribute to the transcultural remediation of the reality-construction process enacted in the translation of this AVT product. This will confirm some of the observations made in previous studies on other forms of the transmediation of the original exposé by Roberto Saviano (2006).

### *1. Introduction*

Translation can be seen as a process of creation, and this also entails a process whereby words in the target language create a new cultural landscape. More specifically, “[t]ranslations provide a tool for cultural interaction that shows certain synchronous aspects of the target culture at a given time” (Cadera 2017, 10; see also Bassnett and Lefevere 1990, 1992). Therefore, translations typically manipulate the text according to the target culture (Bassnett and Lefevere 1990: 12). In this process, translators play a fundamental role, being at the cross-roads and not only mediating between (two) cultures, (two) languages and (two) systems (Sales 2004), but also having the power to fashion specific images of a source culture, as it is interpreted by readers of another cultural system (Sales 2003). Bassnett and Lefevere (1992: vii) maintain that every translation implies the rewriting of the source text, which is manipulated in order to adhere to a specific target cultural system. Therefore, “the study of manipulation processes of literature as exemplified by translation can help us towards a greater awareness of the world in which we live” (Bassnett and Lefevere 1992: vii). In particular, Lefevere (1992) pinpoints four main factors of the target culture that may affect the translation process: ideology, poetics, the universe of discourse and language. While Lefevere (1992) regards ideology and poetics to be the most important ones, it is also crucial to highlight the roles played by discourse and language in translation.

Discourse is fundamental in rendering meaningful every aspect of our social, cultural and political environment. Indeed, something becomes ‘an issue’ as soon as it is recognised as such by people, and language and the way it is used in order to discursively convey and reproduce this

representation is seminal to this. Discourse, in other words, is what transforms our reality into a socially and culturally meaningful one (Blommaert 2005). In this process, identities and the way they are represented play a key role in the way reality is perceived. The way social actors are discursively constructed enables scholars to highlight what kind of discursive work is being done in a specific context of use. Therefore, close attention should always be paid to the way identities are shaped cross-culturally.

This is particularly true when it comes to audiovisual products that are representative of regional and local realities (Dore 2017). In the specific case of *Gomorra – The Series*, for instance, some of the language used is regional. Indeed, the language used by the characters in the TV series mixes Neapolitan with Italian expressions. Besides the peculiarities linked to the original script of the TV series, *Gomorra – The Series* has also served a disseminating function (Caliendo 2012): in a society where news about the Neapolitan criminal organisation known as the *Camorra* stays local, the TV series has shattered the boundaries of the local context and addressed a wider audience thanks to the Italian subtitles provided on-screen during the television broadcast on Sky Atlantic. This has allowed for a dissemination of specific cultural-bound elements and practices interlingually (i.e. among regions in the same country and in translation).

The following contribution wants to investigate to what extent (in the subtitles) the translation into Italian of the Neapolitan script of *Gomorra – The Series* and its (re)translation into English contribute to the identity building process of the *Camorra* reality in the TV series. More specifically, this contribution wants to focus on how the reality the characters depicted in *Gomorra – The Series* experience is rendered in the target language. If the meanings conveyed in a translation can be considered as something new that becomes something known once acknowledged by and transferred in the target culture, it is our intention to analyse the extent to which this something new becomes the basis for given discourses in the retranslation into a specific culture. Investigating the nature of these discourses can highlight given values and beliefs in cultural transfer. *Gomorra – The Series* represents a peculiar example of retranslation. Indeed, the TV series is

based on the homonymous book by Roberto Saviano (2006). The book was first adapted and, therefore, resemiotised into a movie and thereafter into a TV series. Thus, the latter represents a third step in the diachronic evolution and re-writing of the original material. Additionally, as previously said, *Gomorra* – *The Series*<sup>3</sup> script uses a language that combines dialogues in both Neapolitan and Italian. Therefore, the producers decided to distribute it in Italy with on-screen subtitles (in Italian). The subtitles, therefore, represent a first translation of the source material (i.e. a mix of Italian and Neapolitan). When it was distributed in the UK and the US, the TV series was subtitled.<sup>1</sup> The English subtitles hence represent a translation of an already translated text. Throughout this paper, we will therefore refer to retranslation as the process whereby an original regional source text, in crossing first the local boundaries to address a national audience, and then in going beyond the national confinement towards an international panorama, has been translated into a target language.<sup>2</sup> These processes of translation and retranslation of course have profound consequences on the way that given identity traits, expressed linguistically, are modified and adapted in the target culture, more so in the specific case of *Gomorra* – *The Series*, where the source text (i.e. a mix of Neapolitan and Italian) and its translation (i.e. English subtitles) are separated by an intermediate translational level (i.e. Italian subtitles) that both enriches but also changes meanings conveyed in the source text. This is particularly interesting if emphasis is placed on Fish's (1980) view of readers (and, in the specific case of AVT products, viewers) as part of an 'interpretive community'

---

<sup>1</sup> The growing influence of global on-demand Internet streaming media provider (e.g. Now TV, Netflix, Amazon Video, TVPlayer, Hulu Plus, etc.) on AVT practices can explain the fact that audiovisual products are increasingly being subtitled rather than dubbed.

<sup>2</sup> See, however, Chaume (in this volume) for a better definition of retranslation and mediated translation. Indeed, the case of *Gomorra* – *The Series* can be seen as another example where these two concepts seem to overlap, given the choices made by the translators (see Section 4) in approaching the text. In this sense, the translators may generally use the Italian subtitles as a reference text, but not always as their main source, to create the English subtitles. However, the English subtitles are also transformed and integrated with solutions inspired by the original source text (i.e. the original script of the TV series).

“whose limits are not really known and characteristics not easily specified” (Gambier 2018: 47). Such a heterogenous community can be defined as “a group of individual readers whose interpretation of texts is shaped and constrained by shared assumptions about reading and by a common set of interpretive practices” (Gambier 2018: 47). If interpretations of a text are culturally constructed, synchronic and, more importantly, discursively constructed in/by the text itself, this means that readers/viewers play a fundamental role in shaping a text. Gambier (2018: 47-48) distinguishes three types of readers/viewers that can help in better approaching the study of AVT products:

- the *ideal reader/viewer* or intra-textual intended reader, ‘encoded, built by and in the text/in the film’ (Ibid. 47);
- the *implied reader/viewer* or the reader whom a given work is designed to address; a ‘shadowy’ figure ‘targeted by the translator, who has mental representations about the horizon of expectation of this implied reader/viewer’ (Ibid.);
- the *empirical or actual reader/viewer*, ‘a member of an interpretive community and one who may be unable or unwilling to occupy the position of the implied reader/viewer’ (Ibid. 48). Fans of a specific AVT product discussing it online may be seen as belonging to this category.

Each of these reader/viewer categories influences in a way the translation and retranslation of a text. Going back to *Gomorra* – *The Series*, keeping in mind these three typologies of viewers can help us better understand what effects the crossing of the local boundaries towards an international audience might have.

Another important aspect of retranslations is that they need to be seen as “narrative versions which are elicited and constrained by specific conditions” (Brownlie 2006: 167; see also Zanotti 2015). These conditions can help explain the similarities and/or differences among the different translations (Deane-Cox 2014; Albachten and Gürçağlar 2018). According to Brownlie (2006), these conditions comprise wide social forces (i.e. changing ideologies, language change and variation, changing literary and translational norms) but also more specific situational conditions, such as “the particular context of production and the translator’s preferences,

idiosyncrasies, and choices” (Ibid. 167). In this sense, it must also be acknowledged that the retranslation of *Gomorra* – *The Series* combines and tries to mediate between two different media: the aural channel represented by the actual Italo-Neapolitan script and the Italian subtitles.<sup>3</sup> Therefore, the investigation of how this complicated picture shapes specific identities in the cross-cultural representation of given personas and realities can shed light on the mechanisms of translation that rests behind them.

Given this background, the following investigation will explore some of the processes that have brought a local reality into a glocal context (Robertson 1995), focusing on the way culture-bound elements are rendered in translation. More specifically, the following study uses Corpus Linguistics methodologies (Baker 2006, 2014; McEnery, Xiao, and Tono 2006; McEnery and Hardie 2012) in order to look at the specific linguistic patterns that can be highlighted in the construction of given televisual personas and realities. Before doing that, however, Section 2 of this contribution briefly reviews some of the previous studies done on the universe of *Gomorra* (the book, the movie and the TV series). Section 3 introduces the corpus and the methodologies used in analysing it. Section 4 discusses some of the most interesting aspects retrieved from the analysis of the data, with a particular focus on culture-bound elements and how they are retranslated in the target culture. The concluding remarks section discusses some of the limitations and future developments of this study.

## 2. *The Gomorra universe: A review of previous studies*

*Gomorra*, in its various adaptations (i.e. from the book to the movie, and then to the TV series) and resemiotisations (i.e. from the written medium

---

<sup>3</sup> This observation is based on the collection and building of the GTS\_en (see Section 3). Indeed, in annotating the corpus with information linked to the characters in the TV series, we have noticed that specific utterances that were not subtitled in the GTS\_it were however translated and subtitles were provided by the translators in the GTS\_en. Hence, this explains the interplay between different media and different stages of the translation process of the text.

of the book, the scripts of the movie and TV series to the multimodal channels of the performance of the actors in the movie and TV series), has been the focus of numerous scholarly investigations. In this section, a brief review of the previous studies on the universe of *Gomorra* (the book, the movie and the TV series) will be provided. This will allow a better understanding of the complicated picture that has been previously depicted in the case of the specific AVT product under investigation.

One of the very first studies focusing on the *Gomorra* universe was carried out by Caliendo (2012), who investigates the Italian and English versions of Roberto Saviano's (2006) book by exploring the strategies employed in translating the voices, activities and socioeconomic settings of Neapolitan mobsters. As Caliendo (2012) observes, *Gomorra* seems to pose a challenge for translation since the book is imbued with a sociocultural context which is far from the English-speaking target reader. Indeed, the book is highly populated by culture-bound elements and concepts, thus complicating the translation process. In particular, Caliendo (2012) highlights how the identities of the people described in the book operate via a complex network of meanings arising from culture-bound elements. In such a context, "identity construction is performed through the negotiation of the conflicts arising from cultural difference and the different social discourses involved" (Ibid. 207). According to Caliendo's (2012) comparative analysis of the source text and its English translation, the latter appears, however, to be "hesitant to give the *Camorra* an autonomous and independent cultural representation in the target culture" (Ibid. 207). In particular, the author notices how opportunities for exoticisation are often missed when importing culture-bound elements into the target language, thus eventually producing differences at the macro-level in the portrayal of the *Camorra*. Therefore, she concludes that the target text seems to be characterised by conservatism clashing with "the awareness-raising intent of the author and prevent[ing] the *Camorra* from gaining full narrative representation as a major criminal phenomenon whose repercussions are lethal, global, and can no longer be overlooked" (Ibid. 208). What emerges from this investigation is a tendency, in the translated text, to rely on representations of organised crime that are more

stereotypical, and therefore familiar, to an international readership. More specifically, Caliendo (2012) highlights the substitution of lexical items pertaining to the *Camorra* with the ones associated with more widely known Italian criminal organisations, such as the Sicilian Mafia. The identity building process in the target text thus fails to transfer the specificities of the Neapolitan *Camorra* from a local context to a glocal one.

In her investigation on the film adaptation of Saviano's exposé, Cavaliere (2010) ponders not only the particular issues raised by translating from a literary to a visual format but also the double step of a linguistic translation from Neapolitan into standard Italian and finally into English for the cinematic product. The author thus focuses on the difficulties and challenges involved in a translation process that sees different genres and media (i.e. written text [Saviano's book] vs. filmic adaptation [*Gomorra*] vs. written text [i.e. Italian and English subtitles]) clashing together in the context of a text that moves first from a dialect (i.e. Neapolitan) to a standard language (i.e. Italian subtitles), and from one national language (i.e. Italian subtitles) to another representative of 'global communication' and the global film industry (i.e. English subtitles). Cavaliere (2010) highlights how national and personal identities are therefore unavoidably displaced in the process of translating the text since:

the translation from Neapolitan dialogue into standard English subtitles, via standard Italian subtitles, is clearly shown to be problematic because of the absence of translations of the Neapolitan dialect available in English and so many of the sociocultural-specific references embedded in the [s]ource text are likely to remain opaque (Ibid. 184).

Therefore, as can be noticed, the concluding remarks offered by Cavaliere (2010) interestingly dovetail with those found in Caliendo (2012), thus highlighting a possible failure in adapting *Gomorra* for an international audience without losing the peculiarities linked to the regional context that the book and the film portray.

One of the very first pieces of research analysing *Gomorra – The Series* is represented by Balirano (2017b), on the basis of work the author had



already presented (see Balirano 2015, 2016). In particular, Balirano (2017b) more systematically analyses AVT video data in the Italian TV series from a multimodal perspective. By introducing a new methodological approach defined as Multimodal Prosody (see also Balirano 2017a, 2017c) and concentrating on dyadic non-verbal interactions between televised *Camorra* mobsters, Balirano's (2017b) contribution demonstrates how "the English screen adaptation of the TV drama [...] seems to have spread a somewhat incorrect interpretation of *camorristi's* masculinity" (Balirano, Caliendo, and Sambre 2017: 11). Therefore, the cross-cultural interpretation of personal space is investigated in order to test whether or not the representation of *camorristi's* masculinity in the TV series, in crossing the regional and national boundaries, may be misinterpreted in the target culture. The author, thus, concludes that "[t]he televised representation of the criminals' micro-space, their non-verbal intentions and non-explicit beliefs cannot be perceived by foreign viewers without clear and explicit linguistic cues which may be added to subtitles" (Balirano 2017b: 82). In this way, the author seems to highlight another important aspect that was not previously underlined in investigations on the resemiotisation of *Gomorra*: the importance of transferring meanings associated with non-verbal expressions in the target language translation. Indeed, the movie and the TV series adaptations of the original book make abundant use of gestures and other non-verbal behaviours specifically linked to the culture these media are representative of. Therefore, "the translator's re-semiotisation of *camorristi's* non-verbal behaviours needs to be, where possible, contextualised in the verbal texts" (Ibid.).

While previous contributions have adopted in their analysis a more qualitative approach to the data, Fruttaldo (2017a, 2017b) adopts a corpus-based approach (Baker 2006, 2014; McEnery, Xiao, and Tono 2006; McEnery and Hardie 2012) in order to analyse the specific idiolect of each of the dominant characters represented in *Gomorra – The Series*. In particular, the author first uses a statistical measure (i.e. the Manhattan Distance) in order to determine whose lexicogrammatical status in the TV series is more peculiar when compared to all the other characters. The author then proceeds to a keyword analysis of the Italian subtitles of the

TV series and a keyword analysis of the English subtitles. This comparison helped to trace the linguistic profile of these dominant personas, unveiling some peculiar features of these characters, which seem to be enhanced in the translation process, highlighting some of their concerns or personality traits, or reshaping their entire identity. Once again, Fruttaldo (2017a, 2017b) also highlights how the target language seems to foreground specific identity traits (expressed in the text) while backgrounding others. This means, of course, that opportunities for exoticisation in the representation of these dominant personas are lost in favour of strategies that seem to reshape their identity.

Raffi (2017) also focuses on how the world of *Gomorra* – *The Series* is rendered in the English subtitles. In particular, the author analyses how cultural-bound elements have been translated for the target audience. In this regard, Raffi (2017) notices that “Direct Translation and Retention are the most frequent options” in the English subtitles, and that, in the specific case of Retention, “the foreignness of the original elements is never signalled to the audience, thus taking the form of an extreme source-oriented solution” (Ibid. 190). Therefore, in contrast with the previous studies, by focusing only on cultural elements, Raffi (2017) contends that the choice to leave unchanged cultural elements that are so local that even the majority of the source-text audience could not know them “seems to confirm the general tendency [...] to preserve the authentic Neapolitan flavour of *Gomorra* – *The Series*” (Ibid. 191). In the case of honorifics, however, the author notices how Omission seems to be the preferred choice in the English subtitles, thus highlighting a difference with the source text (Ibid.).<sup>4</sup>

This brief overview of the different research carried out on the *Gomorra* universe has highlighted the difficulties that the translation

---

<sup>4</sup> In the context of Film Studies, it is also worth mentioning the work done by Rimini (2012, 2017), Renga (2016), Benvenuti (2017) and Guerra, Martin, and Rimini (2018). While focusing on different aspects of the *Gomorra* universe (i.e. the movie, the TV series, the transmediation of the book into a movie and, then, a TV series), these references specifically focus on cinematic and literary aspects that have contributed to the creation of film and serial products inspired by Saviano’s book.

process encountered in bringing the cultural context that *Gomorrah* depicts outside its regional and national boundaries. These challenging conditions related to the *Gomorrah* universe have been underlined by looking at different aspects related to the representation of the Neapolitan organised crime depicted in the book, the movie and the TV series.

In the following sections, a further investigation of the transcultural representation of the reality portrayed in the TV series will be carried out. In particular, as will be shown, additional problems arise when investigating what have been generally referred to as cultural keywords (Balirano 2017c). Indeed, in the (re)translation of specific elements that are particularly imbued with the cultural context they are representative of, they seem to acquire, lose or be enriched by new meanings that, in a certain way, create a new representation of what the TV series in the construction of its characters wants to convey.

### *3. Methodological framework and data collection*

As previously argued, the aim of the following investigation is to explore the specific processes that have brought the local, regional reality represented in *Gomorrah – The Series* (hereafter referred to as GTS) into a glocal context by focusing on the ways in which the expressivity and characterisations of given characters are represented (Bednarek 2010, 2011, 2018). In particular, the current contribution wants to focus on how culture-bound elements are rendered in the (re)translation of the source text (i.e. the spoken dialogues found in GTS). In order to do so, Corpus Linguistics methodologies (Baker 2006, 2014; McEnery, Xiao, and Tono 2006; McEnery and Hardie 2012) have been adopted so as to look at the specific linguistic patterns that can be highlighted in the construction of given televisual personas.

More specifically, in order to analyse the way GTS has been (re)translated, corpora of the Italian (i.e. the GTS\_it) and English (i.e. the

GTS\_en) subtitles of the TV series have been collected. Table 3.1 offers an overview of the corpora:<sup>5</sup>

**Table 1.** The GTS\_it and GTS\_en corpora.

	<i>Number of tokens</i>	<i>Number of speakers</i>	<i>Number of sentences</i>	<i>Number of tokens (gender)</i>		<i>Number of utterances (gender)</i>
<i>GTS_it</i>	62,100	380	8,641	Male	51,867	3,743
				Female	9,994	825
				Indistinct	239	23
<i>GTS_en</i>	65,433	419	8,624	Male	52,770	4,065
				Female	12,406	1,015
				Indistinct	257	49

The information displayed in Table 1 has been extracted thanks to the semi-automatic annotation of the data collected following the standards used by the OPUS (OpenSubtitles) project.<sup>6</sup> Additional information (such as utterance boundaries, speaker's identity, gender of the speaker, etc.) was gathered through XML encoding, using the following tags:

- `<tuv xml:lang='en-us|it'>`: (Translation Unit Variant) specifies the language of a given text;
- `<seg>`: the text in a given segment;
- `<u>`: utterance boundaries;
- `<who>`: identity of the speaker;
- `<sex='M'>` or `<sex='F'>`: gender of the speaker.

<sup>5</sup> The GTS\_it and the GTS\_en corpora are still under construction. At the time of writing, only the subtitles found in Season 1 and Season 2 of the TV series have been automatically extracted, cleaned and semi-automatically encoded with the metadata described in this section.

<sup>6</sup> Further information on the OPUS (OpenSubtitles) project and the corpora created by this initiative can be found online at <http://opus.lingfil.uu.se/OpenSubtitles.php>.

The corpora, thus annotated, have allowed not only the analysis of the different ‘voices’ in the TV series and, consequently, the identification of given linguistic traits that were peculiar to them in comparison to the other characters in GTS (see Fruttaldo 2017a, 2017b), but also the alignment of the two corpora in order to investigate phenomena of translations from the Italian subtitles to the English adaptation thereof.

As previously argued, as TV series are increasingly becoming a global phenomenon thanks to the development of communications systems and multi-platform instruments of marketisation, analysing how given culture-bound elements are (re)presented in a different culture can highlight the systems of beliefs and values that TV writers communicate inside and outside the boundaries of national confinements. This is particularly interesting if TV series are regarded as agents of socialisation (Lippi-Green 2012), whereby specific characterisations can lead to given representations of what people experience in their everyday lives. In this way, the analysis of how realities and identities are shaped in TV series and re-shaped in a target language can help us understand “TV writers’ internalized beliefs which are transmitted through the created dialogue into a globalized community of TV viewers across the world” (Bednarek 2010: 63). Indeed, if “dialogue lines are explicitly designed to reveal characters” (Kozloff 2000: 44), analysing how they are cross-culturally translated into another culture can highlight given traits that producers want to underline about specific characters and their reality.

Therefore, in the following section, Sketch Engine (Kilgarriff *et al.* 2004, 2014) will be used in order to retrieve the most idiosyncratic patterns in GTS\_it and GTS\_en by performing a keyword analysis on the two corpora. A reference corpus will be used, that is, the OPUS corpus, which is a parallel corpus available on Sketch Engine that possesses a section comprised of a sampled collection of subtitles taken from the *OpenSubtitles* website. This is due to the fact that, while in previous investigations (Fruttaldo 2017a, 2017b) particular attention has been paid to specific characters, a broader overview of the peculiarities of the TV series has not been investigated. Therefore, in this contribution, by using the same methodologies adopted by Fruttaldo (2017a, 2017b), a wider perspective on

GTS and its transposition into another culture will be offered. However, due to reasons of space, specific attention will be placed only on given aspects highlighted in the keyword analysis, so as to analyse how specific patterns can help us shed light on the way the reality conveyed in the Italian subtitles and retranslated in the English subtitles is rendered.

#### 4. *Languageing the criminal city: places in Gomorrah – The Series*

As previously said in Section 3, a keyword analysis has been performed on GTS\_it and GTS\_en by contrasting the two corpora to reference corpora similar to the genre under investigation (i.e. the Italian and English sections of OpenSubtitles in the OPUS corpus available on Sketch Engine). Tables 4.1 and 4.2 respectively display the results of such comparisons.

**Table 2.** Keyword analysis of the GTS\_it compared to the Italian OPUS corpus (OpenSubtitles section).

#	word	GTS_it		OPUS2 Italian		Score
		average reduced frequency	average reduced frequency/mill	average reduced frequency	average reduced frequency/mill	
1	I'	157	2527.8	155.20	0.7	1512.8
2	Ciro	93.50	1505.2	7.30	0.0	1460.0
3	Gennaro	84.70	1364.1	8.50	0.0	1316.9
4	Savastano	45.50	732.2	0	0.0	733.2
5	Genny	43.70	704.4	1.40	0.0	701.2
6	Pietro	53.10	855.6	146.20	0.6	524.7
7	po'	31.90	514.4	0	0.0	515.4
8	un'	34.30	552.7	43.80	0.2	465.6
9	L'	32.90	529.6	57.20	0.2	425.4
10	Conte	33.60	540.4	121.50	0.5	354.9
11	Salvatore	27.80	448.0	105	0.5	308.8
12	Don	70.10	1128.1	622.20	2.7	305.8
13	d'	19.70	317.4	28.60	0.1	283.4
14	Imma	16.40	264.8	1	0.0	264.6
15	No.	10.90	175.7	0	0.0	176.7
16	Tonino	10	161.3	12.80	0.1	153.8

GTS_it				OPUS2 Italian		
#	word	<i>average reduced frequency</i>	<i>average reduced frequency/ mill</i>	<i>average reduced frequency</i>	<i>average reduced frequency/ mill</i>	Score
17	Daniele	10.50	169.2	30.80	0.1	150.2
18	Napoli	14.70	236.8	139.90	0.6	148.1
19	all'	11	177.9	53.70	0.2	145.1
20	Trak	8.20	131.7	0	0.0	132.7
21	quest'	8	128.6	4	0.0	127.4
22	Marzio	7.50	120.3	1.40	0.0	120.5
23	piazze	9.50	153.8	69	0.3	119.2
24	Rosario	7.70	123.5	19.50	0.1	114.8
25	Capaebomba	7	113.5	0	0.0	114.5
26	Qua	15.90	256.5	329.30	1.4	106.2
27	dell'	9	145.3	90.90	0.4	105.0
28	bordello	9.30	149.3	134.40	0.6	95.1
29	Zecchinetta	5.40	86.4	1	0.0	87.1
30	Ciruzzo	5.10	82.6	0	0.0	83.6
31	Attilio	4.40	71.4	2.40	0.0	71.6
32	Madonna	7.80	124.9	184.40	0.8	70.0
33	Noemi	4.30	68.5	1	0.0	69.2
34	dall'	4.60	74.1	21.60	0.1	68.7
35	Però	31.90	513.4	1,51	6.5	68.3
36	piazza	12.10	194.7	431.80	1.9	68.2
37	stronzata	11.70	189.1	412.90	1.8	68.2
38	clan	6.60	106.2	141.20	0.6	66.6
39	cazzo	108.20	1742.2	5,862.50	25.4	66.1
40	Malamore	4	64.6	0	0.0	65.6
41	no.	9.20	147.8	304.30	1.3	64.2
42	Mh	5.60	89.9	96.10	0.4	64.2
43	motocicletta	5.20	84.3	79.40	0.3	63.5
44	scemi	5.30	85.4	88.60	0.4	62.4
45	Gennarino	3.70	60.2	4.20	0.0	60.1
46	Donna	12.30	197.4	555.20	2.4	58.3
47	Russo	5.40	87.2	129.20	0.6	56.6
48	Secondiglia	3.40	55.1	0	0.0	56.1

GTS_it				OPUS2 Italian		
#	<i>word</i>	<i>average reduced frequency</i>	<i>average reduced frequency/mill</i>	<i>average reduced frequency</i>	<i>average reduced frequency/mill</i>	<i>Score</i>
	no					
49	comandia mo	3.50	57.1	13.10	0.1	55.0
50	Manu	3.40	54.5	7	0.0	53.9

**Table 3.** Keyword analysis of the GTS\_en compared to the English OPUS corpus (OpenSubtitles section).

GTS_en				OPUS2 English		
#	<i>word</i>	<i>average reduced frequency</i>	<i>average reduced frequency/mill</i>	<i>average reduced frequency</i>	<i>average reduced frequency/mill</i>	<i>Score</i>
1	n't	513.20	7842.9	0	n't	513.20
2	Ciro	90.10	1377.5	27	Ciro	90.10
3	Gennaro	59.30	906.2	30	Gennaro	59.30
4	Pietro	54.60	834.8	87	Pietro	54.60
5	ca	73.40	1122.2	468	ca	73.40
6	Savastano	35.70	544.9	0	Savastano	35.70
7	Genny	34	519.1	7	Genny	34
8	wo	32.40	494.7	160	wo	32.40
9	Conte	26.80	410.3	22	Conte	26.80
10	Salvatore	21.80	332.9	120	Salvatore	21.80
11	Naples	17.40	265.8	234	Naples	17.40
12	Imma	12.30	187.4	2	Imma	12.30
13	Let's	10.60	162.7	0	Let's	10.60
14	Savastano's	10.10	153.9	0	Savastano's	10.10
15	Marzio	10	153.5	1	Marzio	10
16	Conte's	8	122.5	0	Conte's	8
17	Patrizia	7.80	118.7	10	Patrizia	7.80
18	Tonino	7.70	117.6	18	Tonino	7.70
19	Rosario	7.10	109.0	54	Rosario	7.10
20	Malamore	6.30	97.0	0	Malamore	6.30
21	Savastanos	6.30	96.0	0	Savastanos	6.30
22	Daniele	6.30	95.6	16	Daniele	6.30



GTS_en				OPUS2 English		
#	word	<i>average reduced frequency</i>	<i>average reduced frequency/mill</i>	<i>average reduced frequency</i>	<i>average reduced frequency/mill</i>	Score
23	euros	8.30	127.6	298	euros	8.30
24	Pietro's	5.80	88.6	0	Pietro's	5.80
25	shits	8.80	135.2	440	shits	8.80
26	Zecchinetta	5.60	85.7	0	Zecchinetta	5.60
27	name's	5.50	83.4	0	name's	5.50
28	di	8.40	129.0	499	di	8.40
29	Trak	5.10	77.5	2	Trak	5.10
30	Ca	6	91.4	159	Ca	6
31	Ciro's	4.90	75.4	0	Ciro's	4.90
32	Azzurra	4.90	74.4	1	Azzurra	4.90
33	Genny's	4.50	69.2	0	Genny's	4.50
34	mon	17.60	268.5	2,331	mon	17.60
35	mother's	4.50	68.1	0	mother's	4.50
36	Dwarf	4.70	71.5	56	Dwarf	4.70
37	clan	7.60	116.2	618	clan	7.60
38	Russo	4.70	72.0	87	Russo	4.70
39	euro	4.80	73.0	111	euro	4.80
40	Giuseppe	4.60	69.6	114	Giuseppe	4.60
41	Scianel	3.80	58.4	0	Scianel	3.80
42	Secondigliano	3.80	57.6	1	Secondigliano	3.80
43	Lelluccio	3.60	54.6	0	Lelluccio	3.60
44	Raffaele	3.60	55.1	14	Raffaele	3.60
45	Bomber	3.90	59.6	83	Bomber	3.90
46	guy's	3.50	53.5	0	guy's	3.50
47	Mulatto	3.50	53.7	6	Mulatto	3.50
48	son's	3.40	52.2	0	son's	3.40
49	Attilio	3.40	52.3	8	Attilio	3.40
50	Gennaro's	3.40	51.5	0	Gennaro's	3.40

Tables 2 and 3 both show similarities and differences in the way the characters linguistically construct their reality and social context. As previously said, due to reasons of space, only some of these peculiarities

will be commented on. In particular, it can immediately be noticed how names play a particularly key role in the comparison of GTS\_en and GTS\_it to the reference corpora selected. This is not surprising since these names are peculiar to the corpora under investigation. Differences, however, can be noticed in the way specific names are first translated into Italian and then retranslated into English if compared to their equivalent in the original script. This is particularly evident in the specific case of nicknames. These are conspicuously used in GTS as they are typical of the criminal organisation's language that the TV series wants to depict. Hence, they are representative of the cultural and contextual background GTS wants to represent. Example (1) is offered to better understand the previous observations:

[Season 1, Episode 8]			
	Original script	Italian subtitles	English subtitles
(1)	Chillu scemo 'e Capa 'e Bomba m'ha ditte tutte cose.	Quello scemo di Capaebomba mi ha detto tutto.	Bomber told me everything.

Example (1) shows one of the most interesting cases that can be found in the keyword lists provided in Tables 4.1 and 4.2, represented by the retranslation of the nickname of the character Capa 'e Bomba. The nickname, in the original language, indicates a person who has a big head. The Italian translation merges together the various elements of the original nicknames, thus demonstrating that the cultural reference and specificity of such a nickname have not been picked up by the translator. The English translation further complicates the already difficult situation. Indeed, the nickname is translated using the word 'Bomber', which designates a person who makes or detonates bombs. Therefore, the reference to physical appearance is lost in the various steps of the translation process. Additionally, it is worth noticing how the process of retranslation enriches the text with meanings that were not there in the source language. Indeed, the retranslation changes the reference to physical appearance of the nickname in the source text into a language of violence, maybe in line with

the theme of the TV series but, nevertheless, enriching the text with meanings that were not present either in the original script or in the Italian subtitles.

An inconsistency can be noticed regarding the nickname of the character of Malamore, which undergoes various changes of form in the Italian (i.e. ‘Malamore’ [15 occurrences], ‘Malamò’ [7 occurrences], and ‘Malamo’ [1 occurrence]) and English (i.e. ‘Malamore’ [24 occurrences], ‘Malamò’ [5 occurrences], and ‘Malammore’ [1 occurrence]) subtitles. A plausible explanation for the inconsistent translation of this term could again be due to the difficulty experienced by the translators in understanding the cultural reference behind this term. Indeed, the original word expresses the oxymoronic meaning associated with an ‘evil love affair’, a well-known concept to all those who share a Neapolitan linguistic and cultural background: a type of love that makes the person who experiences it suffer and, therefore, display an attitude that conveys this inner state of mind. Both the English and Italian subtitles chose terms that seem not to recall any meaning that could be associated with the feeling previously described, as can be seen in the following example:

[Season 1, Episode 12]			
	Original script	Italian subtitles	English subtitles
(2)	Malammo’ se n’è iute e Genny Savastano s’è chiuse rint’ e Vele.	Malamore se n’è andato e Genny Savastano si è chiuso dentro le Vele.	Malamore’s gone and Genny Savastano is holed up in the Sails.

In example (2), the translation in the English subtitles of ‘le Vele’<sup>7</sup> in ‘the Sails’ also introduces another peculiarity that the keyword analysis has highlighted in the corpora under investigation: the way geographical references are represented both in the Italian and English subtitles. Indeed, while the keyword analysis only highlights Secondigliano and Naples as the places that are typically discussed in the TV series, the following examples

---

<sup>7</sup> The Vele di Scampia (trans.: ‘sails of Scampia’) is a large urban housing project built between 1962 and 1975 in the Scampia neighbourhood. The name is a reference to the triangular shaped buildings, which are reminiscent of a sail.

also show how there is a tendency to disregard the specificities linked to the connotational meanings associated with given places:

[Season 1, Episode 1]			
	Original script	Italian subtitles	English subtitles
(3)	O forse sta cantanne O' <i>Sole Mio</i> a Secondigliano.	Starà cantando [...] forse O' <i>sole mio</i> a Secondigliano.	Maybe she's singing [...] O <i>Sole Mio</i> in the neighborhood.

[Season 1, Episode 3]			
	Original script	Italian subtitles	English subtitles
(4)	Rapina e sequestro a Mergellina, 'na gioielleria.	Rapina e sequestro a Mergellina, una gioielleria.	Robbery and kidnapping in a jewelry store in Naples.

[Season 1, Episode 8]			
	Original script	Italian subtitles	English subtitles
(5)	M'agge fatte 3 anni a Poggioreale, so asciute doje semmane fa.	Mi sono fatto 3 anni a Poggioreale, sono uscito due settimane fa.	I got out of jail two weeks ago.

In example (3), the city of Secondigliano in the English subtitles is completely erased and is substituted by a more general term, thus losing the specificity of where the action is taking place. This may, however, be due to the fact that this utterance is found in one of the very first scenes of the TV series. Therefore, since the audience might not yet be familiar with the geographical setting of GTS, this was a sensible solution for the translation of this particular utterance.<sup>8</sup> In the case of example (4), the translators preferred to opt for a solution that is more in line with the audience's knowledge of the context they were translating. Therefore, the coastal area

---

<sup>8</sup> This is also testified by the fact that the term 'Secondigliano' is then increasingly found in the English corpus (8 occurrences vs. 7 occurrences in GTS\_it). For instance, in Season 1, Episode 2, the character Nunziata says: 'You raised hell in Secondigliano and now the cops are everywhere'.

of the city of Naples referred to as ‘Mergellina’ is kept in the Italian subtitles but substituted in the English version, since viewers might not be familiar with it. While ‘Secondigliano’ is a term that, once the storyline develops, is then retained in the target language, the ‘Poggioreale’ prison (see example [5]) is however never found in the English subtitles. In this case, the socio-cultural reference might be too difficult to reproduce in the target language and, therefore, the translators decided to completely omit the reference to the quarter of the city of Naples famous for its prison. By doing so, of course, the target text loses a cultural reference that is not only indicative of a given place in the city of Naples but also the connotational association that is generally drawn between this part of the city and its jail.

Finally, another interesting element highlighted in the keyword analysis and, in particular, in GTS\_it is represented by the lemma ‘piazza’. This term is generally used by criminal organisations to refer to the dealing spots under the influence of a specific clan. In the *Camorra* hierarchy, these places might also be the turf occupied by given families who have not obtained control of an entire area. While the original script consistently uses this term and the Italian subtitles seem to translate it *ad litteram*, the English subtitles allow a degree of variation. Indeed, the lemma ‘piazza’ is translated either with the term ‘(dealing) spot’ (44 occurrences) or with the term ‘(drug) market’ (12 occurrences). Such variations may, however, respond to the ambiguity already represented by the original term that allows both a more local interpretation and a broader reference to dealings that go beyond the city’s boundaries.

##### 5. Final remarks

In the present investigation, a reflection on a different way of interpreting the concept of retranslation has been offered in the analysis of a case study based on the translation of *Gomorrah – The Series* both for an Italian audience and for an international one. The analysis of a corpus that has been built in order to provide a comparison between the different steps in the (re)translation process has allowed further exploration of the way that

cultural elements are cross-culturally transferred in this televisual product. Far from being a comprehensive investigation into the way *Gomorra* – *The Series* is represented in a glocal context, this contribution has nonetheless highlighted a tendency in the way cultural elements are translated in the target language. Indeed, while our purpose was not to make any positive or negative judgement on the work done by the translators of the TV series, this paper aimed to underline how the (re)translation process, when it comes to works that are representative of an extremely local society, may in a way impoverish the source context references in the target language environment; this was the case for *Gomorra* – *The Series*, where a lower culture-specificity can be highlighted in the translation process.

Certainly, further investigation needs to be done for the case study here presented. Indeed, a more detailed analysis of how cultural elements are represented in the target language needs to be offered. Additionally, an integration of the analysis of both the textual and visual elements present in the TV series needs to be performed.

### Bibliography

- Albachten, Özlem B., and Şehnaz T. Gürçağlar. 2018. *Perspectives on Retranslation: Ideology, Paratexts, Methods*. New York/London: Routledge.
- Baker, Paul. 2006. *Using Corpora in Discourse Analysis*. London/New York: Continuum International Publishing Group.
- Baker, Paul. 2014. *Using Corpora to Analyze Gender*. London/New York: Bloomsbury.
- Balirano, Giuseppe. 2015. “*Trans-lating Gomorra: A Sociolinguistic Approach to AVT*”. Lecture given at the University of Exeter, UK, February 23.
- Balirano, Giuseppe. 2016. “*Donna Imma, Scianel e le Altre: Analisi Linguistica Multimodale delle Donne di Camorra*”. Paper presented at the III Jornada Internacional em Estudos de Género, Lisbon, University of Lisbon, November 21–23.

- Balirano, Giuseppe. 2017a. “Who’s Afraid of Conchita Wurst? Drag Performers and the Construction of Multimodal Prosody”. In *Mapping Multimodal Performance Studies*, edited by Maria Grazia Sindoni, Janina Wildfeuer & Kay O’Halloran, 154–179. London/New York: Routledge.
- Balirano, Giuseppe. 2017b. “De-Queering Proxemics in the Screen Adaptation of *Camorra* Male Dyads: A Multimodal Prosody Analysis”. In “The Discursive Representation of Globalised Organised Crime: Crossing Borders of Languages and Cultures”, edited by Giuseppe Balirano, Giuditta Caliendo & Paul Sambre. Special issue, *I-LanD International Journal* 1, 1: 77–102. DOI: 10.26379/1006.
- Balirano, Giuseppe. 2017c. *Gardaí & Badfellas: The Discursive Construction of Organised Crime in the Irish Media*. Naples: Editoriale Scientifica. *puntOorg book series* (General Editor: Luigi M. Sicca).
- Balirano, Giuseppe, Giuditta Caliendo, and Paul Sambre, eds. 2017. “The Discursive Representation of Globalised Organised Crime: Crossing Borders of Languages and Cultures”. Special issue, *I-LanD International Journal* 1, 1.
- Bassnett, Susan, and André Lefevere, eds. 1990. *Translation, History and Culture*. London: Pinter Publishers.
- Bassnett, Susan, and André Lefevere. 1992. “General Editor’s Preface”. In *Translation, Rewriting and the Manipulation of Literary Fame*, edited by André Lefevere, vii–viii. London: Routledge.
- Bednarek, Monika. 2010. *The Language of Fictional Television: Drama and Identity*. London/New York: Continuum.
- Bednarek, Monika. 2011. “Expressivity and Televisual Characterisation”. *Language and Literature* 20, 1: 3–21.
- Bednarek, Monika. 2018. *Language and Television Series: A Linguistic Approach to TV Dialogue*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Benvenuti, Giuliana. 2017. *Il Brand Gomorra: Dal Romanzo alla Serie TV*. Bologna: il Mulino.
- Blommaert, Jan. 2005. *Discourse: A Critical Introduction*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Brownlie, Siobhan. 2006. “Narrative Theory and Retranslation Theory”. *Across Languages and Cultures* 7, 2: 145–170.

- Cadera, Susanne M. 2017. "Literary Retranslation in Context: A Historical, Social and Cultural Perspective". In *Literary Retranslation in Context*, edited by Susanne M. Cadera & Andrew S. Walsh, 5–18. Bern: Peter Lang.
- Caliendo, Giuditta. 2012. "Italy's Other Mafia: A Journey into Cross-Cultural Translation". *Translation and Interpreting Studies* 7, 2: 191–210.
- Cavaliere, Flavia. 2010. "Gomorrah: Crime Goes Global, Language Stays Local". *European Journal of English Studies* 14, 2: 173–188.
- Deane-Cox, Sharon. 2014. *Retranslation: Translation, Literature and Reinterpretation*. London/New York: Bloomsbury.
- Dore, Margherita. 2017. "Camilleri's Humour Travels to the UK and the USA". In *Translation Studies and Translation Practice: Proceedings of the 2<sup>nd</sup> International TRANSLATA Conference, 2014* (Part 2), edited by Lew N. Zybatow, Andy Stauder, and Michael Ustaszewski, 43–52. Bern: Peter Lang.
- Fish, Stanley. 1980. *Is There a Text in this Class? The Authority of Interpretive Communities*. Cambridge (MA): Harvard University Press.
- Fruttaldo, Antonio. 2017a. "Constructing Transcultural Identities: The Case of *Gomorrah – The Series*". In *Transnational Subjects: Linguistic Encounters Vol. 2. Selected Papers from XXVII ALA Conference*, edited by Liliana Landolfi, Eleonora Federici & Flavia Cavaliere, 158–170. Naples: Liguori.
- Fruttaldo, Antonio. 2017b. "The (Re)Presentation of Organised Crime in *Gomorrah – The Series*: A Corpus-Based Approach to Cross-Cultural Identity Construction". In "The Discursive Representation of Globalised Organised Crime: Crossing Borders of Languages and Cultures", edited by Giuseppe Balirano, Giuditta Caliendo & Paul Sambre. Special issue, *I-LanD International Journal* 1, 1: 60–76. DOI: 10.26379/1005.
- Gambier, Yves. 2018. "Translation Studies, Audiovisual Translation and Reception". In *Reception Studies and Audiovisual Translation*, edited by Elena Di Giovanni & Yves Gambier, 43–66. Amsterdam/Philadelphia: John Benjamins Publishing Company.
- Goethe, Johann W. 1992 [1819]. "Translations" (trans. by Sharon Sloan). In *Theories of Translation: An Anthology of Essays from Dryden to Derrida*, edited by Rainer Schulte & John Biguenet, 60–63. Chicago (IL): University of Chicago Press.



- Guerra, Michele, Sara Martin and Stefania Rimini, eds. 2018. *Universo Gomorra: Da Libro a Film, da Film a Series*. Milan: Mimesis.
- Kilgarriff, Adam, Vít Baisa, Jan Bušta, Miloš Jakubíček, Vojtěch Kovár, Jan Michelfeit, Pavel Rychlý and Vít Suchomel. 2014. The Sketch Engine: Ten Years on. *Lexicography* 1, 1: 7–36.
- Kilgarriff, Adam, Pavel Rychlý, Pavel Smrz and David Tugwell. 2004. “The Sketch Engine”. In *Proceedings of the Eleventh EURALEX International Congress: EURALEX 2004*, edited by Geoffrey Williams & Sandra Vessier, 105–116. Lorient: Université de Bretagne-Sud.
- Lippi-Green, Rosina. 2012. *English with an Accent: Language, Ideology and Discrimination in the United States* (2<sup>nd</sup> edn.). New York (NY): Routledge.
- McEnery, Tony, and Andrew Hardie. 2012. *Corpus Linguistics: Method, Theory and Practice*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- McEnery, Tony, Richard Xiao and Yukio Tono. 2006. *Corpus-Based Language Studies: An Advanced Resource Book*. London/New York: Routledge.
- Raffi, Francesca. 2017. “Gomorrah – The Series Flies to the UK: How Is Gomorrah’s World Rendered in English Subtitles?”. In *Transnational Subjects: Linguistic Encounters Vol. 2. Selected Papers from XXVII AIA Conference*, edited by Liliana Landolfi, Eleonora Federici & Flavia Cavaliere, 179–193. Naples: Liguori.
- Renga, Dana, ed. 2016. “Gomorrah: La Serie”. Thematic section, *The Italianist* 36, 2: 287–354.
- Rimini, Stefania. 2012. “Gomorrah fra Teatro e Cinema”. In *ImmaginAzioni: Riscritture e Ibridazioni fra Teatro e Cinema*, 175–192. Acireale/Rome: Bonanno.
- Rimini, Stefania. 2017. “‘Come una Sorta di Necessità’: Gomorra in Scena”. In “Un Altro Mondo in Cambio: Gomorra fra Teatro, Cinema e Televisione”, edited by Michele Guerra, Sara Martin & Stefania Rimini. Special issue, *Arabeschi* 5, 9. Available online at <http://www.arabeschi.it/21--come-una-sorta-di-necessit-gomorrah-in-scena/> (Last accessed: November 1, 2018).
- Robertson, Roland. 1995. “Glocalization: Time-Space and Homogeneity-Heterogeneity”. In *Global Modernities*, edited by Mike Featherstone, Scott Lash, and Roland Robertson, 25-44. London: SAGE.

- Sales, Dora Salvador. 2003. “‘I Translate, therefore I Am’: La Ficción Transcultural Entendida como Literatura Traducida en el Polisistema Poscolonial”. *Linguistica Antverpiensia* 2: 47–60.
- Sales, Dora Salvador. 2004. *Puentes sobre el Mundo: Cultura, Traducción y Forma Literaria en las Narrativas de Transculturación de José María Arguedas y Vikram Chandra*. Bern: Peter Lang.
- Saviano, Roberto. 2006. *Gomorra. Viaggio nell’Impero Economico e nel Sogno di Dominio della Camorra*. Milan: Mondadori.
- 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. Clevedon: Multilingual Matters.

#### Filmography

- Garrone, Matteo 2008. *Gomorra*. Italy.
- Sollima, Stefano 2014–present. *Gomorra – La Serie*. Italy.

**Antonio Fruttaldo** received a PhD in English for Special Purposes (ESP) from the University of Naples Federico II. He is currently a Research Fellow at the University of Naples “L’Orientale”. He is also Assistant Professor in Applied Linguistics, Corpus Linguistics and English Language at the University of Naples “L’Orientale” and the University of Naples Federico II. His research interests lie in the intersections between different methodological approaches, such as Corpus Linguistics, (Critical) Discourse Analysis, and Genre Analysis, among others. His research has mainly focused on Media Discourse – in particular, on digital media and news discourse. He has published extensively in the field of Media Studies, and his most recent contributions include: *Contrasting News Values in Newspaper Articles and Social Media: A Discursive Approach to the US Ruling on Same-Sex Marriage* (2019); *The Shade of It All: Queering Academia via Twitter* (2018); *News Discourse and Digital Currents: A Corpus-Based Genre Analysis of News Tickers* (2017); *Constructing Transcultural Identities: The Case of Gomorra – The Series* (2017); and *The Chocolate Battle: Media Representation of Product Quality in the British Press* (2016).