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FROM DEEP STATE TO DEEP TRANSLATION: THE *INSIDE JOB* OF TRANSLATING HUMOR, CULTURE, AND TABOOS IN AUDIOVISUAL PRODUCTS

Tesi di laurea magistrale in Audiovisual Transation

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To anyone who has ever felt like

they were falling behind in their journey.

To anyone who has ever held onto a dream

that felt impossibly out of reach,

but has persevered in their fight to see their goals fulfilled.

To anyone who has ever felt like they didn't belong in their own skin

and is longing to find their place in the world.

To those who have made it this far through sacrifices and sleepless nights,

and to those whose paths were cut short by pressures, doubts,

and a system that often fails to support.

To anyone who has ever had to deal with setbacks and obstacles,

but has had the strength to keep going.

To the dreamers and the resilient,

who will not give up on their aspirations

and will not let anyone else dictate their lives.

And to all the people who have contributed to my journey,

whether through support, encouragement, or simply by listening to my anxiety-driven rants,

thank you.

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ABSTRACT

This thesis explores the complexities of Audiovisual Translation (AVT), with a focus on cultural, humorous, and taboo elements. After presenting a theoretical framework of Audiovisual Translation and emphasizing the strategies and constraints of dubbing and subtitling, this thesis goes on to examine the types of cultural references, humorous elements, and taboo language in audiovisual products, identifying the key strategies used by translators and the main challenges these elements constitute in AVT. The second and more practical half of this thesis focuses on the Netflix TV series *Inside Job* and offers an in-depth analysis of some of the most significant instances of cultural, humorous, and/or taboo elements and of their translation in the Italian adaptations. The findings of the analysis reveal issues with literal translations and cultural localization in both the Italian subtitles and dubbed adaptation and highlight the need for better cultural training and unified strategies in AVT to ensure translations that are able to preserve the original script's intent, meaning, and effect. The purpose of this thesis is to offer insights into the complexities of translating audiovisual products and to shed light on the issues that arise when translating cultural, humorous, and taboo elements from English into Italian.

INTRODUCTION

In the last decades, the field of Audiovisual Translation (AVT) has been gaining significant attention from scholars due to the rapid advancement of technology and the proliferation of media content. This thesis offers a detailed examination of the complexities involved in translating audiovisual products, particularly when there are several instances of cultural, humorous, or taboo elements. The purpose of this thesis is to provide deeper insight into the difficulties and challenges that these elements may present for a translator, and to emphasize the importance of cultural sensitivity and knowledge in the translation process. The thesis will be divided into two theoretical chapters, one introductory chapter for the aforementioned show, and one final chapter containing a comparative analysis of the show's original script and its Italian adaptations.

Chapter 1 will serve as an overview of the theoretical framework of AVT. After defining and exploring the multimodal nature of this field, the chapter will go on to discuss the primary modalities of this practice, namely subtitling and dubbing, highlighting their respective processes, constraints, and strategies, while highlighting advantages and disadvantages of each modality.

Chapter 2 will explore the intricate challenges of translating cultural references, humorous elements, and taboo language in audiovisual products. The first section will be dedicated to the different types of cultural references present in audiovisual products and the challenges of translating these elements, together with an exploration of the possible strategies employable by the translator. Secondly, the chapter will discuss the various forms of humorous elements present in audiovisual media and the obstacles they may pose to the translator. Lastly, the third section of the chapter will provide a classification of taboo topics and an examination of taboo language, once again highlighting the possible difficulties they may present in translation.

Chapter 3 will provide an introduction to the TV series *Inside Job*, focusing on the genre of adult animation, as well as the themes, characters, and plotline of the show in question. Then, the chapter

will discuss the types of cultural references, humorous elements, and taboo language present in the show, together with a synopsis of all the episodes.

Chapter 4 will focus on the analysis of the Italian subtitled and dubbed adaptations of the TV series *Inside Job* and will present a detailed examination of a sample of scenes extracted from the show with their respective Italian subtitled and dubbed adaptations. The analysis will focus on the instances in which the original script of the show contained elements of humor, culture, and/or taboo, how these elements were handled in the Italian adaptations, and whether or not the translations proved to be effective.

CHAPTER 1 – THEORETICAL OVERVIEW OF THE FIELD OF AUDIOVISUAL TRANSLATION

1.1. What is audiovisual translation

1.1.1. Definitions

Initially overlooked by translation theory, in more recent years the field of Audiovisual Translation (AVT) has been growing rapidly and has been attracting the interest of an increasing number of scholars. The prime reasons behind the current boom of interest and activity that this practice is experiencing are, first and foremost, the development of new technologies and the increase in the production of multimedia products, which has created the need for audiovisual translations. When talking about AVT we refer to an interdisciplinary field that encompasses not only the research areas close to Translation Studies, but also a number of what Irene Ranzato defines as "ideologically charged disciplines […] that encourage to apply the notion of intersectionality to AVT […]" (2019:173). However, it should be noted that interdisciplinarity does not automatically exclude independence because, as Romero Fresco states, "the most faithful studies on AVT include or assume to some extent two basic notions: the independence of AVT as an autonomous discipline and its dependence on other related disciplines" (2006:43).

In *The Palgrave Handbook of Audiovisual Translation and Media Accessibility*, Elisa Perego and Ralph Pacinotti define audiovisual translation as the "process of interlingual transfer in a multimodal context" during which "a given portion of the ST is transformed and relocated in its new shape in the same complex audiovisual ensemble" (2020:4). Over the years, there have been numerous attempts at defining this new practice. For instance, Dìaz Cintas and Remael (2007), underline how the translation of audiovisual products can be considered more as a form of adaptation rather than a proper translation, mainly because of the many constraints that come with it. Similarly, these limitations are also the reason why Pavesi refers to audiovisual translation as "constrained translation" (2006:25). However, as Perego notes, all practices of translation are to some extent subject to constraints,

therefore a true "unconstrainted translation" does not exist and it probably never will (2005: 21). In 2003 Gambier attempted to coin the neologism "transadaptation" to refer to AVT, although today this term is not accepted in linguistics (Petillo, 2008:20). Additional labels include terms such as "film translation", "screen translation", and "multimodal translation", all of which are still largely used today. However, the first one excludes television and other audiovisual products such as videogames and online contents (Ranzato, 2010); the second one is more strongly linked to the physical medium used to consume audiovisual products rather than to the actual products; and to Orero (2004:12) both "screen translation" and "multimodal translation" are imprecise definitions as they both exclude other types of audiovisual texts. According to Petillo (2008: 14), the most accurate denomination would be "language transfer", as it underlines the multi-faceted nature of this practice. Nevertheless, during the '80 and the '90 the term "audiovisual translation" started to circulate and today is considered to be the most accepted and well-rounded definition of this complex and nuanced discipline. "Audiovisual translation" can therefore be considered an "overlapping umbrella term" (Chiaro, 2005: 141) as it incorporates a series of other definitions, such as "media translation", "screen translation", and "multimodal translation", all of which are based on "the interlingual transfer of verbal language when it is transmitted and accessed both visually and acoustically […] through some kind of electronic device" (ibid.).

1.1.2. The multimodality of AVT and its restraints

The multimodal nature of AVT is what differentiates it from written translation, since it is influenced not only by the written dimension, but also by the visual and acoustic channels. This means that the texts AVT is concerned with work on multiple levels simultaneously and the numerous codes that constitute them interact with one another to create an inseparable whole. Therefore, despite the fact that the translator can operate and intervene only on the verbal level, the visuals of the product are still to be taken into account because, as Gambier and Gottlieb highlight, "visual and sound elements are not cosmetic features of embellishment, but constructive parts of the meaning" (2001: xviii). In the translation of audiovisual products it is, therefore, fundamental to first interpret and comprehend

the meaning of the text, identifying the relationships between the different semiotic codes (Gambier, 2018), and then translate the verbal component, which communicates only a limited part of the overall meaning but is also the only component which can be altered and manipulated in the transfer from one language into another (Pavesi, 2006). According to Gambier (2018), there are fourteen semantic codes which contribute to the full meaning of the audiovisual product, which can be categorized into verbal and non-verbal elements, and divided between the categories of audio channel and visual channel. In his paper "Audiovisual Translation and Reception" (2018:45), Gambier presents a precise table of these semiotic forms, which are described as follows:

- Verbal elements.
  - Audio channel:
    - The linguistic code, which includes the dialogue, the comments, and the reading:
    - The paralinguistic code, which includes all the elements connected to the delivery of the dialogue (e.g. the accent, the intonation, the tone).
    - The literary and theatre codes, which concerns the plot, the narrative, the sequences, the progression, and rhythm.
  - Visual channel:
    - Graphic code, which involves all written forms, from letters and headlines, to menus, street names, intertitles, and subtitles.
- Non-verbal elements.
  - Audio channel:
    - Special arrangement code, which refers to special sound effects.
    - The musical code.
    - The paralinguistic code, referring to voice quality, pauses, silences, volume of voice, and vocal noises such as crying, coughing, and so on.
  - Visual channel:

- Iconographic code.

- The photographic code, which includes all elements of lighting, perspective, and colors.

- The scenographic code.

- The film code, encompassing all the elements of filming, such as shooting, framing, cutting and editing, genre conventions, and so on.

- The kinesic code, which refers to gestures, manners, postured, and facial features and expressions.

- Proxemic code, which consists of movements, use of space, and interpersonal distance.

- The dress code, which includes hairstyle and make-up.

This multimodal nature of the audiovisual product presents the translator with obstacles that are, of course, relevant in written translation as well, but that in this field reveal themselves to be much more problematic. In fact, it is vital for the audiovisual translator to make linguistic choices that are consistent with what is shown on the screen, in order to maintain the expressive synchrony between the audio and the visual channel as much as possible (Ranzato, 2010). However, aside from the numerous elements that the translator has to consider when approaching an audiovisual text, this practice also presents many technical constraints, which contribute to making the translation process much more complex. Moreover, as Ranzato (ibid.) observes, the field of AVT has to deal with market constraints, as well as the ones imposed by the cinematographic and television industries. According to Ranzato (ibid.), the practice of audiovisual translation is in fact strongly dependent on the entrance and the distribution of the product in the national market, an aspect which often contributes to additional constraints for the translator. Furthermore, the complexity of the translation of these multimodal texts is enhanced by the criteria with which the quality of a translation is evaluated, considering that it would be almost impossible to apply the same criteria used for other types of translations (Petillo, 2012). As Perego and Taylor (2012) observe, a valid translation of an audiovisual

product is the one that considers the intersection of all the codes and succeeds in obtaining the same effects on the target audience that the source text had on the source audience.

1.1.3 Modalities of AVT

Although research on AVT has been rapidly growing, "many of the translation concepts and theories that have been historically articulated cease to be functional when scholars try and apply them to AVT" (Diaz-Cintas, 2004:112). However, even if a universal method to audiovisual translation has yet to be delineated, translation scholars have been able to identify the most predominant methods used to translate multimodal material, which can be categorized into two macro-modes: revoicing and captioning (Chaume, 2013). In revoicing, the spoken language of the product is retained, and the original dialogue is replaced by a new soundtrack in the target language. This is the case of lip-sync dubbing and narration, where the replacement of the original soundtrack is total, and of voice-over and interpreting, where the original soundtrack is still audible in the background. Captioning, on the other hand, is the process of changing the spoken language of the screen product into written form by adding text on the screen. This method is mainly known as subtitling, and it includes interlingual, bilingual and intralingual subtitles (or close captions, for the deaf or hard of hearing, or SDH). To these two categories we can add those of audio description, mainly used to facilitate the visually impaired, surtitling, and videogame localization. In his paper "The Turn of Audiovisual Translation: New Audiences and New Technologies" (2013), Chaume offers a detailed overview of the different practices of audiovisual translation, which will be outlined below.

In the mode of revoicing, which is based on "recording and inserting a new soundtrack and subsequent sound synchronization" (Chaume, 2013:62), the most widespread modality is undoubtedly dubbing, followed by voice-over, simultaneous film interpretation, commentary, audiodescription, and fundubs, in no particular order. Following Chaume's study, dubbing can be defined as the "translation and lip-sync of the script of an audiovisual text, which is then performed by actors" (ibid.). Contrary to dubbing, where the original dialogue soundtrack is fully replaced by

the dubbed dialogue, in voice-over the original dialogue is still audible and the translated version plays at the same time, although "by convention, the original dialogue soundtrack is left at a lower volume" (ibid.:67). Primarily used for documentaries, voice-over is believed to offer a more realistic result as "the sound of the original voice, albeit faintly, lends more credibility to the product" (ibid.:68). Similarly, in simultaneous interpretation the original background is still audible, but the translated version is not recorded and played in the audiovisual product itself, but rather performed live by an interpreter. Despite being part of the field of audiovisual translation, this practice is considered to be more similar to interpreting. Moreover, it is "a little used AVT mode that is falling into even greater disuse […] restricted to certain occasions at film festivals and to specific screenings" (ibid.:63). Free commentary is the revoicing practice that most differs from translation, as it is mostly considered to be more of an adaptation. In fact, free commentary "is not a faithful reproduction of the original text; rather commentators are free to create and give opinions" (ibid.:64), as well as reformulate and paraphrase, adding information where they deem necessary. Audiodescription is probably the most inclusive practice in the revoicing macro-mode as it was born with the purpose of enhancing accessibility. In audiodescriptions everything that happens on screen is explained to the audience, including "details about the set, the way the characters are dressed, their actions, their gestures" and so on (ibid.). This modality is primarily aimed at blind and visually impaired people with the goal of making the final translated product accessible to them with as little loss of meaning and effect as possible. Finally, fundubs are "home-made dubbings of television series, cartoons, and trailers for films […] usually made by fans" (ibid.:62).

In the mode of captioning, based on a "written translated or transcribed text inserted on or next to the screen" (Chaume, 2013:63), the most well-known and wide-spread modality is subtitling, followed by surtitling, subtitling for the deaf and hard of hearing, respeaking, and funsubbing. Subtitling is the incorporation of "a written text in the target language on the screen where an original version of the film is shown" (ibid.). Surtitling follows the same principles as subtitling, with the difference that the translated text of projected above a stage during theatrical productions, rather than

on a screen during a film. Similarly to simultaneous film interpreting, respeaking or live subtitling can be positioned between the practices of interpreting and translation, as interpreters create subtitles for live programs with the aid of voice-recognition software. Subtitling for the deaf and hard of hearing falls into the same category of audiodescription, as both these practices strive to enhance accessibility. This particular type of subtitles follows the same concepts of regular subtitles, with the addition of information about sound effects, noises produced by the characters, general sounds, songs, and a color-coded characterization of the characters (ibid.). Finally, funsubs are "home-made subtitles", and therefore very similar to fundubs.

For the purposes of this dissertation, in the following sections I will be focusing on the practices of dubbing and subtitling, as they are considered to be the most widespread AVT modalities among the ones listed above. Furthermore, in Chapter 4 my analysis will revolve around the dubbed and subtitled version of the TV series *Inside job*, therefore it seems fitting to focus on these specific subcategories of audiovisual translation.

1.2. Dubbing and subtitling

1.2.1. Dubbing countries vs. Subtitling countries

In the European context the two most widespread modalities of AVT are subtitling and dubbing (Perego, 2005) and each country's predilection can be reconducted to a number of aspects. First and foremost, the economic expenses for each of these modalities play a fundamental role as dubbing costs are much higher compared to those of subtitling, and therefore many countries tend to utilize it primarily when it can be predicted that the dubbed audiovisual product will generate high earnings (ibid.). However, the preference of each country for either dubbing or subtitling is mostly determined by historical and social reasons. According to Pedersen (2011), one of the main aspects that each country's translation choice of the counties was the rise of nationalist powers during the 1930s. In Italy, for instance, during the years of fascism, it was prohibited to broadcast a film in the original language (Guardini, 1998), which therefore made dubbing an obligated choice if one wished to

release a foreign movie into the Italian market. Another significant element which contributes to the choice of AVT modality is the genre of the products (Pedersen, 2011). For instance, even in countries that prefer the use of subtitling there is a tendency to avoid subtitles and to opt for a dubbed version when it comes to audiovisual products aimed at children (ibid.). Conversely, for the genre of documentaries it is more common to use less expensive forms of AVT. According to a 2011 study conducted by Media Consulting Group for the European Commission, the "subtitling countries", in which the most used AVT practice is subtitling, are: Belgium (Flemish-speaking), Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Latvia, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Sweden, Switzerland (German-speaking), Turkey and the United Kingdom. On the other hand, the "dubbing countries", in which most audiovisual products are distributed in their dubbed version, are: Spain, Italy, Germany, Austria, Belgium (French-speaking), Switzerland (French- and Italian-speaking), and France. As mentioned before, the preference for one modality over the other is strongly connected to national politics, as the dubbing countries seem to be the ones in which the State has discouraged multiculturalism in order to protect the national language (Perego, 2005). As a consequence of this division, in some countries – such as some countries in Northern Europe – the practice of subtitling has reached extremely high levels of quality, and in countries such as Italy the same has happened for the practice of dubbing. However, in the case of Italy, in recent years there has been a decrease in the quality of the translations due to the necessity of maintaining production costs low and to the growing workload that comes with the increase of film releases every year (ibid.). Interestingly enough, this division between dubbing and subtitling countries seems to be undergoing a weakening process, as in many dubbing countries there has been a growing interest in seeing more subtitled audiovisual products (Pedersen, 2011), in the same way as subtitling countries are now starting to offer both a subtitled and a dubbed version of some products, mainly the ones of greater success (Perego, 2005). Therefore, it appears that a new path is being paved for a more balanced and diverse use of AVT practices in the future.

1.2.2. Dubbing

Dubbing is the process of replacing the original speech of an audiovisual product with a translated one, with the purpose of making the dialogues in the target language "look as if they are being uttered by the original actors" (Chiaro, 2008:144). In order to achieve this effect, the translator attempts to follow the timing, phrasing, and lip-movements of the original text as closely as possible. Although the main focus of this method is the spoken content, dubbing involves a translation process that works on different levels simultaneously. As a matter of fact, the translation of the written text (the script) is not the only process that takes place, the reason being that in order to produce an effective translation the translator has to pay close attention to the acoustic and visual contents, as well as to the story and the characters, in order to choose the most appropriate language. The oral sounds, such as intonation and interjections, and the special effects of the original soundtrack can get lost, therefore limiting the experience of the viewers. As for the visual aspect, the constraints concerning lip-synchronization can result in a translation that is less faithful in terms of content as the translator is sometimes forced to make choices that divert from the original script but that are more similar to the visuals on screen.

In this sense, it is worth differentiating between translation and adaptation. In the dubbing process, the written script is first translated by a translator, who usually provides a quite literal translation of the material. Thereafter, it is the adaptor who adjusts the drafted translation to fit the images and the lip-movements on the screen in order to make it sound like a natural target language dialogue (Chiaro, 2008). Traditionally, the adaptor does not need to be fluent in the source language as long as they are proficient and creative in the target language. However, it is undoubtedly important to have an understanding of the source text, therefore "it is becoming ever more common for the two processes (the translation itself and the adaptation) to merge and be carried out by a single translator who is proficient in both languages" (Chaume, 2006). Nonetheless, the process of dubbing is a complex one and it involves various additional professional figures who work alongside the translator, such as the dialog script writer or adaptor, the dubbing director, the sound and

synchronization technicians, and, of course, the voice actors. As we have seen, the task of the adaptor is to adapt the translated script to the visual images of the product, specifically to the lip movements of the actors on screen. This is one of the most important roles in the entire dubbing process as it represents what is probably the most complex element and requires a highly developed creativity in order to be able to find a compromise between maintaining the original meaning of the content and modifying the dialogue so that it is synchronized with the visual element. The dubbing director has the responsibility of choosing the right voice actors for the characters and to direct said actors during the recordings. The aspect of choosing the voice actors can be a crucial one because it can affect the perception of the audience. The voice of a character is, in fact, strictly connected to the voice of the original actor, their physical aspect, and their specific way of talking and acting, therefore choosing a dubbing actor who does not fit well with both the character and the original actor can result in an altered perception by the target audience. The sound technicians are part of a whole range of technical figures that take part in the recording process and that deal with all aspects related to sound quality, noises, and audio tracks, as well as the synchronization and the speed of the tracks. Finally, the voice actors are usually professionally trained dubbing actors and only participate in the recoding process. In order to reduce the costs of this practice it is not uncommon to see multiple positions covered by the same person, such as the translator being also the adaptor or the dubbing director being a voice actor themselves. Although it is important to make the process quicker and more cost effective, it is worth noting that a smaller variety of people working on one project can lead to a lack of psychological distance from the adaptation, resulting in a failure to evaluate its quality accurately (Chiaro, 2008).

1.2.2.1. The dubbing process

The dubbing process can be considered similar to an assembly line as every step is influenced by the previous one and it consists of various phases, which tend to be consistent in almost every country, with occasional alterations. The process starts with a client, usually a broadcasting station, who sends a copy of the audiovisual product to the dubbing studio to be translated. It is commonly requested

that client also send the script along with any notes regarding specifications on whether some elements, such as songs, are to be dubbed, subtitled, or left as they are. The translator then starts working on the video and, if provided, on the script or transcription of the video, producing a first draft of the translation which is then typically reviewed by another professional translator. The second phase concerns the synchronization of the translated dialogue with the screen times and the lip movements of the actors on screen. It is at this stage that the adaptor starts working on the translation to make any changes in terms of content and length, while trying to remain as truthful as possible to the original content. When the final and official translation is completed, the text is sent to the production studio, where it gets segmented into sections of approximately five to eight lines and prepared for the recording process. The sections are then grouped together for a first recording in the dubbing studio, where it is common to have different actors record part of the lines so that the client can choose the voice they prefer. In the final phase, the actors record their lines and, if necessary, some minor artistic or stylistic changes can be made to the script by the dubbing director or the actors themselves. As explained, this process can be long and complex, which is why it comes as no surprise that oftentimes the final version still presents some imprecise translation choices, although usually minor. As mentioned before, the most delicate step is undoubtedly that of synchronization, as its quality is mainly based on the creativity and effort of the adaptor. There are three types of synchronies that the adaptor needs to take into account during this phase. The first one is the lip synchrony, where the words of the translated script have to correspond as much as possible to the lip movements of the actor on screen, especially during close-up shots. The adaptor is therefore often forced to make translation choices that may not be completely equivalent to the original but that incorporate words that are pronounced in a similar way to the original utterance (Chaume, 2004). The second type of synchronization is the kinetic one, where the dialogist ensures that the movements and facial expressions of the actors, such as the ones they may make when denying or confirming something, correspond to what the voice actor is saying. And lastly, the adaptor has to deal with isochrony, which involves the duration as well as both the starting and ending time of a line. It is essential, in fact, to

have the dubbed utterance correspond to when the actor on screen starts and finishes speaking. Of the three types of synchronies the latter is considered to be the most crucial one, while in the case in which the adaptor is unable to find an ideal solution to satisfy all three aspects it is usually the lip synchronization that gets sacrificed first (Chaume, 2004).

1.2.2.2. The limitations of dubbing

Despite the fact that dubbing is considerably more expensive and time-consuming compared to subtitling, it is still an extremely common modality employed when dealing with AVT but, nonetheless, it still has its drawbacks. The complete replacement of the original dialogues with the translated ones makes dubbing a truly domesticating[1] practice in which the translator embodies the principle of invisibility (Venuti, 1995), which refers to how the translator is able to translate fluently and to produce a "readable" target text creating an "illusion of transparency" (ibid.). However, this can also become a double-edged sword. While the audience is able to experience the screen product in its entirety without the interference of either the source language or the source text, one of the most relevant arguments against dubbing is that it often results in a loss of authenticity. The original actor's voice, with all its prosodic features (accent, rhythm, pitch, intonation patterns, volume, and so on), is completely erased and this takes away the uniqueness of both the actor and the character they play. Not to mention that gestures, facial expressions, and body language are strictly linked to the actor's voice and work together to convey a considerable amount of information. Therefore, pairing the visuals of one person with the voice of another can cause incongruities and an overall loss of effect. As a result, the dubbing language often results uniform and flat, especially when the original product includes different accents and regional dialects that get completely removed in the dubbed version. On the other hand, nowadays it is not uncommon to see some adaptors attempt to maintain a level of variety in the language and the accents of the characters. However, this often leads to a stereotypical

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[1] According to Venuti there are two translation methods that the translator has to choose from: "domestication", which aims at reducing the foreign nature of the text in pursuit of an "invisible style" (1995:15); and "foreignization", which aims at making the receiving culture aware of the cultural and linguistic differences of the foreign text (ibid.)

representation of these languages like we see, for instance, in the use of the Sicilian accent for Italo American characters, who usually end up taking part in organized crime operations, or again in the use of a heavy stereotypical Indian accent for characters of Indian origins, or even in the use of unusual slang for Afro American characters. Consequently, despite the fact that the effort of representing a varied language is surely appreciated, the final product can sometimes still convey a sense of unauthenticity to the target audience, and, in some cases, it can even be considered offensive. A similar issue arises when the original script includes references or phrases in the language that it is being translated into. For instance, if a character says something in Italian during a scene, when the film gets translated and dubbed into Italian it becomes extremely difficult for the dialogist to come up with an adequate solution that reflects the goal of the original text, especially when the element is particularly relevant to the scene or there is some kind of response or reaction from the other characters. An example of this aspect will be presented and discussed in the analysis of show in chapter.

1.2.2.3. Constraints of dubbing

Aside from the hurdles of the dubbing process, translators also have to follow a number of specific constraints and restrictions because "dubbing ranks as the most constrained mode of translation" (Mayoral, 1988:109). These constraints prevent the translator from using the first natural option that they may find in their target language (Chaume 2020), but they can also be seen as a way of enhancing creativity and effectiveness. In his review of the dubbing approach, Ferriol (2010) identifies six categories of constraints that operate in this practice: professional, imposed by the commission and the working conditions; formal, concerned with quality standards and lip-synching; linguistic, imposed by registers, dialects, and language variations; semiotic, which are inherent to film language and primarily deal with coherence between the words and the images; sociocultural, focused on the two cultural systems involved; and void or absence of constraints. Consequently, as mentioned before, translating for dubbing involves a greater number of linguistic and translation issues that could compromise the quality of the final product. According to Chaume, the quality of dubbing resides

between the adequacy of the source text to sound realistic and credible, and the acceptance by the target audience (2013). As a way of determining the quality of a dubbed product Chaume (ibid.) proposed a model of analysis in which he examines the different factors that influence the quality of a translation. In his model Chaume differentiates between an external and internal level. The first one concerns all extratextual elements, such as historical (the period of the source text), professional (the working conditions of the translator), communicative (the client), and reception (the dubbing performance, the lip-synchrony and the credibility of the dialogue) factors. The internal level refers more generally to any translation problem both in exclusively written translations and AVT translations that contribute to the overall quality of the final product.

1.2.2.4. The language of dubbing and user perception

From a linguistic perspective translating for dubbing presents the translator with a particular type of language which does not belong entirely to either the written or the oral field. Written language is usually more formal and controlled, it uses a more structured grammar and precise lexical elements, and since it does not have a direct contact with the reader, it tends to refer to elements in a more explicit and descriptive way. On the other hand, oral language is generally more dynamic and spontaneous, it has a less precise grammatical structure, and it tends to be more implicit as it relies not only on the language itself, but also on intonation, gestures, and interjections in order to convey meaning (Minutella, 2009). It is important to underline that language used in audiovisual products does not fall into either of these categories and, at the same time, it is part of both. Minutella (ibid.) highlights how this type of language cannot be classified as purely oral because it is language written to be spoken as if it was not written (ibid.). Film dialogue is, in fact, produced to sound as close to oral language as possible, but it never fully corresponds to the language that would usually be used in spoken everyday dialogue, although it does contain elements of spontaneous language. Moreover, it is worth noting that there is a difference between dubbing for the cinema and dubbing for television (Motta, 2008). While the first reaches a limited audience and is more controlled as the process can take a long time, the second has a higher and more diverse number of viewers and the production

times are often much shorter, especially for TV series where the time allotted to the translator to work on one episode is usually one week (Chaume, 2013). As a consequence, the translations of dubbed television products are oftentimes less precise and much more exposed to source language interferences, such as foreign borrowings and calques, and to the use of formulaic language (Minutella, 2015). This results in a particular type of language which is often referred to as "dubbese", "a hybrid language used by the dubbing industry to transpose both fictional and non-fictional foreign TV and cinema products" (Antonini, 2008:135). Because of its specific characteristics, "dubbese" does not appear to belong to either to the source or the target system, but rather to a "third norm", that is the dubbing language itself (Pavesi, 1996). However, according to Chaume, "dubbese" is created to sound natural and credible, and it provides a balance that avoids overacting and follows the constraints of lip-synch (2014). Interestingly, because of the over exposure to dubbese that the audiences experience every day, this language has come to influence the spoken language of the viewers, who have started incorporating expressions and sayings into their vocabulary often without even noticing. Because of this phenomenon, it becomes interesting to analyze how this language is received and perceived by the audience and whether or not it sounds natural enough to be accepted. In this sense, there have been a few audience-oriented studies that investigate viewer perception, and a particularly relevant one is the one conducted on Italian audiences by Chiaro and Antonini in 2009. With the premise that when a person watches a dubbed audiovisual product, they expect to hear a natural-sounding text in their language, Chiaro and Antonini observed that for language-specific features the reception scores pointed "towards average acceptance" (2009:111). This means that Italian audiences are perfectly aware of the presence of "dubbese" and, although they were "hardly convinced of their Italianness" (ibid.), none of the linguistic elements were rejected. Because of these results, Chiaro and Antonini describe Italian viewers as affected by "linguistic bipolarity" because "on the one hand they are aware that TV dubbese is unlike real Italian, on the other hand they are willing to accept it as long as it remains on screen" (ibid.:112). However, the reaction of the audience was not always so accepting, particularly when it came to cultural references, humor, and taboo

elements, which are conveyed not only by the words but also by elements strictly linked to spoken language as well as to the visual element and cultural background of the original product. In the presence of these elements there are instances in which the translation does not work properly in transferring the message of the original product into the dubbed one, which results in a loss of meaning and oftentimes in the audience being confused. These cases are described by Chiaro and Antonini as "lingua-cultural drops in voltage" (2009:100), which refer to "viewer perception of lingua-cultural uneasiness or turbulence, such as a cultural reference which is not completely understood, an unnatural sounding utterance, an odd-sounding idiom or a joke which falls flat" (ibid.). During their research project, Chiaro and Antonini found that when the humorous element required a relatively straightforward translation the question of the quality of the translation itself was not particularly relevant. The reason for this being that the successful reception of a fairly easily translatable humorous item "depends almost entirely on whether the recipient is au fait with a certain piece of knowledge or not" (Chiaro, 2004:49). In other words, in these cases the funniness depends on the viewer's encyclopedic knowledge. Conversely, when the humorous element depended on a "linguistic element (e.g., a pun) or a combination of language and culture" (ibid.), the quality of the translation itself was indeed a significant factor for the audience. As far as cultural references are concerned, Chiaro and Antonini found that most of the allusions that were not adapted to the target culture were either not noticed or not understood, and therefore they created puzzlement in the viewer. It is important to note that even in the instances in which the references are adapted to the cultural context of the target language, their understanding largely depends on the knowledge and cultural background of the viewers. Moreover, while 70% of the audience declared to have understood all the references, the final results revealed how 80% of the cultural references were actually unknown by the viewers, showing how little knowledge the average viewer has of a foreign culture despite being exposed to it daily. On one hand, this study demonstrates how dubbese has come to be accepted and has become part of the everyday language and is used by the audience unconsciously, sometimes without even understanding the content or the meaning. On the other hand, it shows how the technical

constraints of this practice are only a part of the enormous amounts of hurdles that the translator has to face when translating for dubbing. The time and synchronization norms, together with the many visual, audio, and cultural elements contribute to making this process a truly complex and demanding one. However, whenever the translator and, particularly, the adaptor, is able to comply with the many constraints and to make strategic and effective choices in the process, dubbing can become a state-of-the art practice, which is why it is not surprising to see that it remains one of the most favored audiovisual translation approaches in large parts of the world.

1.2.3. Subtitling

Subtitling is the second most common approach to AVT and can be defined as the rendering in a different language and in written form of the spoken dialogue of a screen product and of other "verbal information that appears on screen (letters, banners, inserts, or that is transmitted aurally in the soundtrack" (Dìaz Cintas, 2012:274). Contrary to dubbing, which completely erases the verbal exchanges happening on the screen, subtitling preserves the original text and adds an extra layer of information. This results in a final product that is made up of three essential elements: the original text (spoken or written), the original image, and the added subtitles. As observed by Luyken, subtitles present themselves as "condensed written translations of the original dialogue which appear as lines of text, usually positioned towards the foot of the screen […] where they appear and disappear to coincide in time with the corresponding portions of the original dialogue […]" (1991:31). The use of the written form is the main aspect that distinguishes this practice from dubbing and that makes it a diasemiotic type of translation (Petillo, 2008), meaning that during the process of subtitling there is a shift from the semiotic channel of orality to that of written language (ibid.). According to Gottlieb (1992) there are five aspects that characterize the practice of subtitling and that contribute to it being a unique method of language transferring. Gottlieb (ibid.) defines subtitling as a type of translation that is: written, aspect that sets it apart from other AVT modalities; additive, because the subtitles are integrated into the original product; immediate and synchronous, as it appears at the same time as the oral component, although this is not always possible; and polymodal or polysemiotic, because the

meaning is conveyed through two semiotic channels, namely the oral and the written one (Perego, 2005). Because of the additional layer of written content, subtitles need to follow the norms of written text while also being influenced by the spoken language, which is why this practice is such a particular one (Chiaro, 2009).

1.2.3.1. Types of subtitles

Gottlieb (1992) provides a classification of the types of subtitles dividing them according to a linguistic and a technical parameter. From a linguistic point of view subtitles can either be interlingual, when they are translated from one language to another, or intralingual, referring to the transcription within the same language. The second parameter allows us to differentiate between open subtitles, which cannot be eliminated from the screen, and closed subtitles, which can be removed by the viewer. Furthermore, Gottlieb (1992) distinguishes between vertical subtitles, which transcribe oral discourse, and diagonal or oblique subtitles, which transports the text from oral discourse in the source language to the written text in the target language. Later on, Dìaz Cintas and Remael (2020) analyzed and expanded this classification by adding the type of audiovisual product they are most used for and their respective target audience. For instance, intralinguistic subtitles are often used for karaoke or screen products that include elements of singalong, in products that aim to characterize a specific way of talking of one or more characters, however they are more commonly aimed at deaf or heard of hearing viewers (ibid.). In this regard, Petillo (2012) notes how subtitles for a hearing or a non-hearing audience are deeply different because in the latter there is usually a reduction of content and simplification of structure, as well as the insertion of additional information. Concerning interlinguistic subtitles, Dìaz Cintas and Remael (2020) distinguish between monolingual, bilingual, and multilingual subtitles. Monolingual interlinguistic subtitles are the most commonly used and seen, as they include the passage from one source language to one target language. Bilingual subtitles are usually implemented in countries with two official languages or in international festivals and are comprised of two separate lines, one for each language (ibid.). Finally, in multilingual subtitles multiple languages appear on screen at the same time. Moreover, as Dìaz Cintas and Remael (2020)

and Perego (2005) note, both interlingual and intralingual subtitles are widely used by teachers and students as an educational tool aimed at strengthening linguistic knowledge.

1.2.3.2. The subtitling process

Although subtitling, and in particular the creation of interlingual subtitles, is considered to be much faster and cheaper compared to dubbing, the process is far from simple and incorporates different phases. Firstly, the subtitles are synchronized with the original soundtrack through a process known as "spotting", "timing", or "cueing" (Dìaz Cintas and Remael, 2021). However, it is not always possible to achieve a perfect synchronization, especially when the scene is comprised of multiple events happening simultaneously or in rapid sequence. In the cases in which the message is particularly meaningful there is the possibility to have the subtitle appear on screen slightly before the beginning of the utterance, or to have it remain on screen for a longer period of time after the character has finished talking. Nonetheless, it is fundamental to ensure that the subtitle does not remain on screen for too long and especially not during a scene change (Zojer, 2011). This can prove significantly difficult when dealing with dynamic movies that have many scene changes, such as action movies where the dialogue is often alternated with action scenes. In the instance in which it is not possible to avoid keeping the subtitle on screen for longer, it is advisable to not move it during the actual scene change as this could disturb the viewer (ibid.). Nevertheless, aside from the problems in specific situations like the ones aforementioned, it is common practice to have a subtitle appear when a character starts talking and have it disappear when said character has finished their utterance. After the first step of spotting, the translator can proceed with the actual translation and adaptation of the text, following specific constraints and strategies that will be illustrated in the following sections. Afterwards, the translated subtitles are tested with a simulation to ensure that everything runs smoothly and, if necessary, final adjustments are made.

1.2.3.3. Strategies for subtitles

In regard to the strategies used for subtitles there is not a precise and universal list, as subtitling is still a relatively young discipline and, additionally, the strategies implemented may vary based on the genre of the text, the target audience, and the languages involved in the process (Perego, 2005). According to Antonini (2009), in order to obtain an effective translation in subtitling, the translator has to carry out three essential operations: elimination of elements that do not modify the meaning of the dialogue (e.g. hesitations) or that can be grasped from the visuals (e.g. a nod); rendering, which often results in the elimination of linguistic features, such as dialects or slang; and condensation, which refers to the simplification of the original syntax so as to facilitate reading. However, a more comprehensive attempt of categorization is that of Gottlieb, who in "Subtitling – a new University Discipline" (1992) introduces ten translation strategies for subtitling, namely expansion, paraphrase, transfer, imitation, transcription, dislocation, condensation, reduction, deletion, and resignation, although over the years some have been assimilated into one another. The ten strategies are described as follows: expansion refers to when an expression gets expanded in order to be suitable for the target language in the instances in which it is necessary to insert additional information to clarify the meaning; paraphrase occurs when an expression gets modified and adapted in the target language while still maintaining the original message; transfer is applied when it is possible to implement a word-by-word translation of the original message, therefore preserving the content, form, and syntactic structure; imitation refers to segments of the original text reported in the exact same manner, and usually refers to elements such as proper names, song lyrics or citations; transcription requires a high level of creativity and flexibility as it is utilized to render non-standard expressions of the source language, such as dialects, idioms, word play, or cultural references; dislocation occurs when the source text contains some kind of culture-specific element that gets translated with a different expression but similar meaning in the target language with the purpose of producing the same effects on the target audience; condensation consists of eliminating superfluous elements that do not contribute to the meaning of the message; reduction, refers to the elimination of parts of the source

text that convey informative content but that are not essential to understand the overall meaning with the purpose of making the translation clearer and shorter; deletion, similar to reduction, includes the elimination of elements but in this case it targets whole portions of the source text and not just single words, and it is commonly used when there are multiple characters talking at the same time (Dìaz Cintas and Remael, 2021); finally, resignation occurs when the source text presents untranslatable elements, such as culture specific expressions that do not have an equivalent in the target language and therefore need to be neutralized (Perego, 2005). The goal of subtitles is therefore not to report every single word said by the characters, but rather to propose an exhaustive summary of the information with the purpose of guiding the viewer. Consequently, the most implemented strategy in subtitling is reduction because "the deletion or condensation of redundant, oral features is a necessity when crossing over from speech to writing" (Gottlieb, 2001:vii). Because of the space and time constraints, which will be introduced later on, it is extremely difficult and rare for subtitles to faithfully report the entire original dialogue, especially when it is not necessary because of the aid of the visual element (Dìaz Cintas and Remael, 2020). Therefore, during the creation of subtitles the translator synthesizes the source text, which in some cases could compromise the authenticity of the text and even the perception of the characters and their personality (Pérez-Gonzàlez, 2014). It becomes essential, then, to accurately choose which elements should be preserved and which can be eliminated, taking into account that "a decision as to which pieces of information to omit or to include should depend on the relative contribution of these pieces of information to the comprehension and appreciation of the target film as a whole" (Karamitroglou, 1998). In this regard, Dìaz Cintas underlines how "subtitlers must act on the principle of relevance" (2012:277) and preserve fundamental elements as much as possible while also allowing enough time to the viewer to read the subtitle and enjoy the visual component of the product (Karamitroglou, 1997). Depending on the genre of the product and the closeness of the languages involved in the translation process there could be a different percentage of information loss, which according to Antonini (2005) could go up to seventy-five percent. It is also important to notice that according to Dìaz Cintas and Remael (2021)

there can be two different types of reduction, total or partial. Total reduction is more similar to omission as it tends to completely eliminate words or sentences of the original text (Perego, 2005). Partial reduction, on the other hand, occurs when the message is condensed and presented in a more concise way compared to the original text, which avoids a complete loss of information and is more similar to paraphrasing and condensation. In this regard, Dìaz Cintas and Remael (2021) offer an overview of some of the translation strategies utilized in subtitles when it is necessary to perform some kind of condensation or reduction. Some of the examples they provide concern the simplification of verbal phrases, the generalization of enumerations, the use of shorter synonyms, the modification of the sentence structure, the transformation of direct discourse into indirect discourse, the use of pronouns to substitute nouns, the fusion of two or more sentences, and many other (ibid.). Needless to say, in order to choose which elements can be excluded or reduced in the translation the subtitler has to view and understand the product in its entirety (Perego, 2005), paying attention to the elements that occur systematically throughout the text. Of course, reduction needs to avoid being excessive because the viewer has to believe that no information has been left behind (ibid.). It is important, then, to remember that when watching a subtitled product, the viewer has access to the original dialogue and therefore it is easier for them to spot substantial changes (Dìaz Cintas, 2012).

1.2.3.4. Advantages, disadvantages, and constraints of subtitling

Despite being a delicate and complicated process, subtitling seems to enjoy a more positive reputation compared to dubbing. One of the most practical advantages of subtitling is that, in most cases, it is a much cheaper and quicker process. Nevertheless, the retention of the source language is undoubtedly the most significant benefit of this practice. Firstly, the presence of the original visual and acoustic contents of the product allows the audience to experience the full effect of the original acting. The actor's voice is not substituted with the one of another, so the viewer is able to receive the information conveyed through vocal elements and body language, without the risk of creating misunderstandings. For example, a change in pitch or intonation that could potentially get lost with dubbing is retained in subtitling and paired with the translation of the actual utterance so that the audience will understand

the message as a whole. Furthermore, with the original dialogue always present and accessible, the viewers who are familiar with the source language can follow the acoustic element along with the subtitles. However, when the viewer is somewhat familiar with the source language the translation is required to have a higher degree of accuracy. The reason for that being that in this case, we would find ourselves in front of what Dìaz Cintas calls "vulnerable translation" (2007:40), in which the subtitles will have to "stand up to the scrutiny of an audience" (ibid.).

Much like dubbing, subtitling also has its limits and disadvantages. On a visual level, there could be a contrast between the textual and the visual elements. Subtitles could be hiding part of the image, or, vice versa, the image could render the textual element difficult to read. Plus, if the subtitles are not adequately timed with both the speech and the image, the audience might fail to comprehend what is happening and therefore will be left confused and disoriented in front of the screen. Additionally, the presence of written text on the screen could turn the audience's attention to the captions and away from the image, thus resulting in even more loss of information. Another important issue with subtitles is the one concerned with written language. First of all, reading subtitles that are synchronized with images is different than reading written sentences that remain still. Therefore, if the viewer is unable to read the whole line or to understand it properly, it is not possible to go back and reread the content of the text. This is why, in order to enhance readability, brevity and contractions are the essence, but this often results in a loss of information as well as of lexical meaning.

Aside from the drawbacks that adding subtitles to a screen product presents, this practice is also filled with constraints and restrictions that translators have to follow. In 'Subtitling for the DVD industry' (2009), Georgakopoulou proposes a classification of the constraints based on three parameters: textual, linguistic, and technical. Textual constraints refer to the transfer from speech to writing as subtitling can be described as an intersemiotic translation because it deals with a source text in spoken form and a target text rendered in written form. However, this shift in mode may create issues as the written text will have difficulties reproducing the characteristics of spontaneous speech because subtitles fail to conform to "real writing as their goal is to reflect speech" (Georgakopoulou,

2009:32). The linguistic parameter refers to the discourse elements. With reduction being the most utilized strategy in subtitling, the translator has to be able to differentiate between the indispensable elements that must be translated, the partly dispensable elements that can be condensed, and the dispensable elements that can be omitted (ibid.). Finally, and most importantly, the technical constraints mainly refer to the space, time, and presentation of the subtitles. Regarding these norms it is not possible to define them as a whole, as every production studio and distributor generally implements their own guidelines. However, it is possible to identify some general time and space conventions that seem to be applied almost universally, with occasional variations and changes (Dìaz Cintas and Remael, 2020). First and foremost, subtitles need to follow spatial norms. It is usually preferred to position them at the bottom of the screen to limit their interference with the image (Perego, 2005) and to "attract as little attention as possible" (Dìaz Cintas, 2012:276). It is highly unadvised, in fact, to position the subtitles in different parts of the screen or to change their position repeatedly in the same audiovisual product, as this can cause the viewer to miss important visual elements as they search for the text (Karamitroglou, 1997). Moreover, subtitles are usually comprised of two lines, whereas subtitles for the deaf and hard of hearing and bilingual subtitles are often made up of four lines. In relation to time constraints, as mentioned before, synchronization, spotting, and time permanence on screen constitute the first steps in the subtitling process as they are some of the main aspects that can influence the perception of the audience and their viewing experience (Dìaz Cintas and Remael, 2020). As stated earlier, synchronization and spotting have to follow the starting and finishing point of a sentence, while also respecting camera cuts and scene changes. Additionally, the amount of time a single subtitle can remain on the screen is usually dictated by the "six-second rule", which determines the maximum duration of a two-line subtitle. Conversely, it is usually advised to avoid leaving a subtitle on screen for less than one and a half seconds as to avoid a "flash" effect (Perego, 2005: 54), which would hinder the viewer's understanding of the meaning. Furthermore, subtitles need to follow specific segmentation rules, typographic norms, and other numerous limitations. However, these norms tend to be unique to each company and to evolve overtime, as

viewers become more and more accustomed to reading subtitles, therefore allowing for more loose restrictions (Dìaz Cintas, 2012). Given that the analysis of this dissertation will mainly focus on the content of the subtitles rather than on their structure and composition, it does not seem fitting at this moment to illustrate and elaborate on all the different variable technical norms.

Having underlined the theoretical aspects that characterize AVT, dubbing, and subtitling with their respective challenges, advantages, and disadvantages, the second chapter of this dissertation will focus on the hurdles and strategies of translating cultural, humorous, and taboo elements in screen products.

CHAPTER 2 – CULTURE, HUMOR, AND TABOO IN AUDIOVISUAL TRANSLATION

2.1. Translating culture

In the field of Translation Studies, the topic of culture and the translation of cultural references is one of the most common aspects that researchers and translators have had to deal with. As Toury points out, translations are "cultural facts of a target culture" and "there is no way a translation could share the same systemic space with its original" (1995:5). This is to say that, although the cultural element is persistently influencing the translation process, most of the time it constitutes an issue, and it presents the translator with a considerate number of obstacles. An element or a reference that is deeply tied to the cultural system of the source language will rarely have an exact correspondent in the target language that allows the translator to perform a perfect transfer of meaning. This kind of awareness is the result of a fairly recent shift of mentality in the field of Translation Studies. Until the 1990's, in fact, most of the research revolving around the process of translation focused on the principle of equivalence to the source text. It was only a few decades ago that we witnessed a true shift from the conception of translation as purely linguistic to a more culture-oriented perspective through a phenomenon that Mary Snell-Hornby defines as "the cultural turn" (1990:39). In this sense, it is worth briefly mentioning the great contribution of the Skopos Theory, which was firstly introduced by Vermeer and Reiss in 1984. As stated by Vermeer and Reiss, "skopos" refers to the purpose of a text, as both the source text and the target text are always deeply shaped by their aim and their function in their relative linguistic and cultural contexts (1984:119). Consequently, it is fundamental for the translator to recognize the function of the source text in its cultural environment and to attempt to achieve a similar outcome with the target text, although this is not always achievable (ibid.). This new outlook on the field of translation has brought on a plethora of research on the influence that culture has on language and, therefore, on the act of translating. Because translation is now considered to be an act of intercultural communication rather than a simple language transfer, it is imperative to always consider the sociocultural environment of both the source text and the target text with the purpose of preserving the original meaning of the source text while also avoiding any "culture bumps"

(Leppihalme, 1997:3). To understand the implications of a "culture bump" it is important to define the concept of "cultureme". The idea of "culturemes" was first introduced by Varmeer (1983:1), and subsequently expanded by Vermeer and Witte (1990:137), who define it as a "cultural phenomenon" pertaining to a specific culture which, if compared to a similar phenomenon of another culture (under specific circumstances) appears to be specific to the first, and to be relevant only to members of that particular culture (ibid.). This concept was then broadened by Agar, who relates to the idea of culture itself and introduces the concept of "languaculture" (1994:60), underlining the deep connection between language and culture. Consequently, translating a text becomes a cultural act where the translator strives to introduce a cultural concept of one culture into another and deals with variable amounts of "rich points", which represent the level of distance and diversity between the two cultures. As a result, Agar considers "culturemes" to be moments of surprise and incomprehension, where the expectations of an external observer, who is not part of the culture, are not satisfied (2006:2). This then brings us to the problem of transferring cultural concepts of a source language into a target language, and therefore culture, that does not have an equivalent. When the translator does not apply any strategies to the translation of a "cultureme" what comes to the surface is a "culture bump" (Leppihalme, 1997). Archer (1996:141), and subsequently Leppihalme (1997:3), define "culture bumps" as a softer version of culture shock, i.e. communication disturbances that occur when culture-specific elements hinder the transferring of the message, which then creates confusion and uneasiness in the receiver of the target culture (ibid.). An additional expansion of the concept was given by Antonini and Chiaro with the metaphor of "drops in translational voltage" (2009:100), already briefly mentioned in Chapter 1, which refer to all untranslatable linguistic and cultural elements that cause misunderstandings and confusion because of their inability to be transferred into the target culture. Therefore, as mentioned above, in order to limit the occurrences of "culture bumps" and "drops in translational voltage" it becomes essential for the translator to master their linguistic skills as well as their cultural knowledge to successfully fulfil their role of intercultural mediator. This means that the translator needs to be both bilingual and bicultural (Taft, 1981).

2.1.1. Cultural references

Culture-specific references are described by Ramière as "verbal and non-verbal signs which constitute a problem for cross-cultural transfer because they refer to objects or concepts that are specific to the original sociocultural context […]" (2006:155). Similarly, Chiaro defines such elements as "highly culture-specific references (CSRs)" (2009:156) and presents Katan's classification of the three different approaches translators can opt for when handling these references: "chunking up", which involves the use of hypernymy to make the CSRs in the target text more general than the ones in the source text; "chunking down", which occurs when the source text reference is replaced by a more specific one in target text; and "chunking sideways", when the CSRs are replaced with same level equivalents. Many scholars have analyzed the issue of translating cultural references and have introduced classifications and strategies to help the translators understand what it is that they are dealing with, and which approach it is best to employ. The study of the translation of cultural items is mainly concerned with the relationship between source and target culture. Nonetheless, most researchers stress the importance of taking the point of view of the target audience and adopting a more target text-oriented approach. Among them, Ranzato (2020) proposes a classification of cultural references and identifies two main categories: real-world references and intertextual references. The first category refers to non-fictional elements and can be further divided into: source culture references, which are elements embedded into a given culture and are more or less known to other cultures; intercultural references, which are concepts of the source culture that have been absorbed to some degree by the target culture; third-culture references, which don't belong to either of the cultures involved in the translation process; and target culture references, which originate from the target culture. On the other hand, intertextual references deal with direct or indirect allusions to other texts and can also be further classified into: overt intertextual allusions, when there is an explicit quote of a text; covert intertextual allusions, when there is an indirect reference from a text; and intertextual macroallusions, when the whole audiovisual text is an allusion to other texts (Ranzato, 2020).

2.1.1.1. Allusions

It is almost impossible to talk about the translation of cultural references without mentioning the concept of allusions. Leppihalme's study of allusions has had such an impact on the field of Translation Studies that, to the present day, scholars use the terms "allusion" and "reference" almost interchangeably. According to Leppihalme allusions are "small stretches of other texts embedded in the text at hand, which interact with it and color it, but may be meaningless or puzzling in translation" (1997:3), and although allusions are usually described as a literary phenomenon, Leppihalme observes how they can be found in all types of text, including audiovisual products. In the literary world allusions are mainly figures of speech that refer to other works, events, historic or well-known people, but Leppihalme expands this concept and proposes an extensive analysis of this phenomenon while also presenting a list of strategies to overcome the problems that allusions pose. One of the most relevant aspects of allusions is that they imply a particularly active participation by the audience (ibid.), who are required to detect and understand them. As we have seen in the previous sections, failure to do so will result in "culture bumps". On the other hand, when this process is successful, the members of the target audience will feel satisfied and in tune with both the product and the allusion (ibid.). Consequently, it becomes evident that the success of an allusion is rooted into the concept of shared knowledge, as only members with an understanding of the underlying reference an allusion makes would be able to absorb its full meaning. For this reason, it is essential for the translator to always consider the type of audience they are translating for, as the quality and correctness of a translation would have little importance if it is not understandable by the viewers.

In her categorization, Leppihalme (1997:6) differentiates between "proper allusions" and "stereotyped allusions". The first group contains "proper-name allusions" (PN allusions), which are allusions that contain a proper name linked to the source culture, and "key-phrase allusions" (KP allusions), which do not contain a proper name and simply contain an element connected to the source culture. The category of "stereotyped allusions" contains allusions which are so frequently used that

they become part of the everyday language and difficult to trace back to a source, such as clichés and proverbs. To these we can add "semi-allusive comparisons" (or SACs), also defined as "superficial comparisons", which are more general and superficial associations, and "eponymous adjectives", which are adjectives derived from proper names. In her book '*Culture bumps*' (1997), Leppihalme mainly focuses on proposing solutions to the translation of PN and KP allusions, since these are also the most common ones found in texts. When encountering a PN allusion the translator can choose between retaining the name and, if needed, adding some guidance for the target text reader (e.g., small alterations and additions); replacing the name with another source language name or with a target language name that would convey similar information; or omitting the name by either using a common noun in its place or omitting the allusion altogether. On the other hand, KP allusions can pose a greater number of translation problems, since it is not rare for them to also contain an element of humor. Therefore, Leppihalme's proposes a more articulated list of translation strategies for KP allusions, which includes: use of a standard or "official" translations that have been accepted; minimum change, i.e. performing a word-for-word translation; use of extra-allusive guidance, where the translator can add information to clear confusions in the target text readers; use of marked wording and syntax that differ from the style of the source text to signal the presence of borrowed words; rephrasing the allusion, which results in an omission of the original reference; re-creating the allusion in a creative way while still conveying the connotations of the original reference; and, finally, completely omitting the allusion. Moreover, Leppihalme discusses the difference between "transcultural" allusions, which are shared by both the source and the target culture (ibid.:10), and "culture-specific" allusions which belong only to the first. It is interesting to see that Leppihalme also identifies the various functions of allusions. In general, the associations they evoke give an additional meaning and effect to a text, whether they are used to emphasize the themes of the text or to characterize the protagonists from a personal, emotional, educational, and economic perspective (ibid.). Additionally, allusions are often also used to convey humor, especially because modified allusions can generate play on words and puns (ibid.).

Unfortunately, Leppihalme's analysis of allusions, however pioneering in its field, does not provide an exhaustive investigation of their sources as her corpus mainly draws from biblical texts and 20th century literature, and her study tends to neglect other types of culture-specific allusions, such as those linked to "material culture" (e.g., proper names of things used metonymically to indicate food, drinks, and so on) (Dore, 2008:192). Furthermore, although Leppihalme's allusions cover a wide area of topics, they mainly refer to other texts and, thus, demand for intertextuality as a prerequisite to be included in the list. For this reason, her research is often paired with that of Pedersen, which will be explored shortly, as he provides a definition of cultural references which covers references to anything that is extralinguistic and culture bound, and not just to other texts (Pedersen, 2005:2).

2.1.1.2. ECRs

When talking about cultural references, or "realia", it is important to differentiate between culture-specific elements, which are linked to a particular culture, and "cultural" elements, which are connected to the concept of culture but are globally known (Ranzato, 2010:40). Pedersen (2005) focuses his analysis of cultural references on the first group, as they are considered to be the ones that create the most issues in translation. Pedersen bases his research on the concept of transculturality in order to define what he calls "Extralinguistic Culture-bound References (ECRs)", which he describes as references created "by means of any culture-bound linguistic expression, which refers to an extralinguistic entity or process […]" with a "referent within the encyclopedic knowledge of the audience […]" (2005:2). In other words, ECRs are expressions pertaining to realia, to cultural items, which are not part of the language system (ibid.). Although admitting to the great influence that Leppihalme's work had on his own, Pedersen also highlights the differences, which deal first and foremost with the very concepts of "allusions" and "ECRs". Despite the fact that Leppihalme's allusions cover a wider range of topics compared to ECRs, as they include intralinguistic cultural expressions and KP allusions, ECRs constitute a more complex and complete notion, as they

encompass any extralinguistic and culture-specific element in a text. Therefore, while, allusions are mostly intralinguistic and intertextual, ECRs are fundamentally extralinguistic but can sometimes include elements covered by allusions, such as PN allusions, which means that the two models often end up complementing and integrating each other.

In "How is culture rendered in subtitles?" (2005), Pedersen differentiates between three types of ECRs based on the parameter of transculturality. Transcultural ECRs are not bound to the source text and can be understood by both source text and target text audiences, as they derive from common encyclopedic knowledge; monocultural ECRs are references intrinsic to the source culture and, therefore, less identifiable by the majority of the target text viewers. This is the category of references that create what Pedersen calls "translation crisis points" (ibid.:4). Lastly, microcultural ECRs are bound to the source culture but they are extremely specialized, which means that the majority of both the source text and the target text audiences are unable to recognize and understand them. A more detailed classification of ECRs, particularly of those found in audiovisual products, was proposed by Dìaz Cintas and Remael (2014:210), who categorize them into three main groups: geographical references, which include places of physical geography, geographic objects (such as squares and streets), and flora and fauna of a place; ethnographic elements, mainly referring to objects of everyday life, measurements, and references to work life, art, culture, and nationality; and finally, sociopolitical references, including institutions, administrative or territorial units, and military institutions. Furthermore, we can identify more specific categories, such as the ones proposed by Antonini and Chiaro (2005), which add references to education, sports, national hobbies, foods and beverages, and celebrities.

In his analysis of ECRs, Pedersen investigates the different approaches for the translation of such items. However, he neglects the verb "translate" and instead opts for "render", as not all methods include a process of translation. According to Pedersen (2005), when it comes to transferring ECRs from a source language to a target language, the translator can choose from a list of seven strategies. Using an official equivalent that has been "authenticated" and has become part of the target language

is undoubtedly the most effective strategy and the one that entails fewer difficulties. Unfortunately, the cases in which a cultural element has an official equivalent in the target language are rare. Retention "allows the element in the source language to enter the target language" (ibid.:5) and can sometimes be adjusted to meet the target language conventions by changing the spelling or the pronunciation. This is the strategy that "displays the most fidelity towards the source text" (ibid.). Specification involves the retainment of the ECRs but adds information to the reference, through either explicitation or addition. Direct translation is mainly used for proper names and does not involve any additional information. However, performing a direct translation could sometimes result in calques, which are "the result of a literal translation that may appear exotic to the target text audience" (ibid.:7). Generalization simply means replacing the ECRs with a more general item in the target language. Substitution involves the replacement of the ECR in the source language with either a different ECR (cultural substitution) or a paraphrase (either retaining or omitting the sense and connotations of the ECR). However, the translator needs to pay particular attention when employing this strategy because an inconsiderate or excessive use could result in a "credibility gap", where the substitution does not insert itself smoothly and in a credible way in the source text. Moreover, when talking about paraphrase we can differentiate between paraphrase with sense transfer, where the ECR is reformulated in order to convey the same information as the source text, and situational paraphrase, where the meaning of the ECR gets removed and replaced with an element fit for the situation, which is the most used strategies when dealing with ECRs contained in puns. Lastly, omission is the complete elimination of the reference. Although often frowned upon, omission can sometimes be the only valid method employable as long as the translator resorts to it only after having considered all the other strategies. Retention, specification, and direct translation are considered to be source language-oriented strategies, whereas generalization, substitution, and omission are more target language-oriented approaches. It is worth mentioning that, especially when dealing with AVT, and particularly with subtitling, these strategies are likely to overlap, and the translator may also opt for a modification of the source text prior to translating.

2.1.1.3. FEIs

While allusions and ECRs can be both linguistic and extralinguistic, it is important to note that cultural references can also present themselves as purely linguistic elements, as it is the case with fixed expressions and idioms. Since culture and language are so deeply intertwined, as we have previously seen, it comes to no surprise that the translation of language-based expressions is likely to present problems related to transferring both the meaning and the stylistic features of the text (Dore, 2002:43). Idioms and fixed expressions (FEIs) are extremely common in everyday discourse, especially in the English language, so it is of outmost importance for the translator to be familiar with them and to recognize their cultural background. Idiomatic expressions have both a literal meaning, which is usually insignificant, and a metaphorical meaning, which is the one that prevails and communicates the message. If the translator is not able to recognize that they are dealing with an idiomatic expression, they run the risk of performing a literal translation of the sentence. This can result not only in the creation of confusion in the target audience, but also in a loss of the metaphorical meaning implied by the source text. FEIs are "frozen patterns of language with little to no variation in form" (Baker, 1992:63), which means that they contain very specific words and allow little space for word order variations. This element is extremely relevant in the case of AVT. Because of their cultural nature, FEIs may require some sort of rephrasing and explicitation in order to render the message clear to the target audience. If in written texts the translator can decide to add extra information through addition and explicitation (excluding the cases in which there are space and length constraints), translating audiovisual products takes away this freedom. In the case of dubbing, the importance of lip-synchronization can be problematic if the transferring of a FEI in the target language requires more words than the original dialogue. With subtitles, space and time constraints may impede the translator to give the needed explanations to the audience and may sometimes result in a complete omission of the expression.

2.1.2. Translating culture in audiovisual products

Until now we have dealt with cultural references mainly expressed through the verbal channel. However, when dealing with audiovisual products, it is not uncommon to encounter references conveyed through the visual and auditory channel as well. In this sense, it is worth mentioning the study of Chiaro, who focuses on "culture specific references" or CSRs (2009:156). Chiaro defines CSRs as elements pertaining exclusively to one culture (ibid.), and she is the one of the first researchers, together with Ramière (2006), to recognize the polysemiotic nature of cultural references in audiovisual products as they both define these CSRs as being both verbal and non-verbal. This aspect becomes particularly relevant in the field of audiovisual translation as the visual and acoustic nature of the products presents the translator with a higher number of cultural references that could very well be linked to the verbal, visual and acoustic channel at the same time. In fact, a cultural item in an audiovisual product could be linked to a particular song, or the accent of a specific person, or a visual element of a place, and so on. Consequently, while a verbal element allows the translator to explain or modify the reference to some extent or to eliminate it when this is not possible, an item linked to the images and the sounds on screen does not allow for any type of freedom and creates a myriad of issues for the translator. Because of the complexity of these problems, there has not been an extensive investigation in the field of audiovisual translation, and many researchres, such as Ranzato (2010), recognize the limitations of the studies applied to this particular topic. However, one of the authors who highlights the importance of adopting a translation approach that integrated the linguistic aspect as well as all the other semiotic components of a multimedial product is Taylor (2016). According to Taylor the goal of an audiovisual translator is to find a linguistic expression that best expresses the integration of all the various semiotic forces at play (ibid.). Therefore, the translator's choices should include an analysis of all the components of a product and should be rooted in the translator's own encyclopedic knowledge, which together with their cultural awareness and the understanding of the audience's limits, can constitute a determining factor when dealing with cultural references. As a solution, Taylor proposes the use of the "multimodal transcription", first introduced

by Thibault (2000). This consists in a table divided into columns and rows that contain a description of a specific scene, of the sounds and the events, accompanied by screenshots taken at predetermined intervals. This kind of information could be a valuable asset for the translator, who would be able to take into account all the different meanings conveyed by the semiotic channels when making a decision. However, Taylor (2016) also recognizes that applying this process to all audiovisual translations would be extremely time consuming, especially with longer products such as films, and would not work in a realistic situation. Additionally, he also underlines that the overall field of audiovisual translation, and in particular the attention to its multimodal nature, is still a relatively new field of study where choices and theories are still heavily based on written translations (Taylor, 2016). Therefore, it comes to no surprise that many of the meanings conveyed by either the visual or the acoustic channel are often lost and that the lack of attention towards these components becomes particularly evident in many translated texts (ibid.). In any case, the specific domain of AVT poses an undoubtedly higher number of obstacles when translating cultural references. As mentioned above the polysemiotic nature of the products is the most relevant issue, however it is worth noting that a significant number of hurdles are caused by the specific modalities of AVT. For instance, if we consider the practice of subtitling, this issue becomes even more evident as the source text and the target text coexist and are presented to the viewer simultaneously. This could result in either the translator being forced to make a translation choice that is closer to the source language but more difficult to understand for the viewer, or in the translator deciding to adopt a more domesticating approach, and therefore adapting the element to the target language, with the risk of creating incongruities, especially to an audience that is to some extent familiar with the source language. Moreover, in both dubbing and subtitling, the specific constraints of these methods (e.g., time and space constraints, lip-synchronization), create even more hurdles for the translator, who has to face cross-cultural differences while not having as much freedom as they would have with a written text. Moreover, compared to other types of texts, audiovisual products are extremely tied to the cultural background they originate from and therefore contain a much higher number of culture-specific

elements that influence the perception and appreciation of the product itself. By nature, every text is in fact governed by the concept of "cultural embeddedness" (Ranzato, 2010:36), which represents the extent to which the elements of a product are rooted in their sociocultural environment. In this sense, the more ingrained a given text is within the environment in which it was produced, the more difficult it will be to transfer it and reproduce it in another culture (Pym, 2010). According to Ranzato, audiovisual texts are in fact the product of a specific context in all of their elements, from language and images to geographic places, time period, and non-verbal communication (2010:37). Therefore, if it is true that any translation represents a communication between languages, in AVT this aspect becomes particularly relevant because audiovisual products allow for an encounter with another culture, which can easily influence the perception of said culture. In fact, as stated by Ramière:

> translation for the cinema, because of its tremendous social impact and visibility as a mode of [i]ntercultural exchange, may […] affect cultural representations to a greater extent than other types of translation – both in the way a national cinema is perceived abroad and, more importantly perhaps, in how cultures perceive each other […]. (Ramière, 2006:153)

This intercultural exchange often brings together two deeply different realities, and the translator has the task of ensuring a successful communication despite the differences, keeping in mind that "translation does not simply involve the translation of words, but also the translation of worlds" (Chiaro, 2008:587).

2.2. Translating humor

Together with cultural references, the translation of humor is an extremely problematic aspect of translation practice. Because of the difficulties that humorous elements present in translation, the fields of Humor Translation, Translation Studies, and AVT "have favored different peaks of academic interest" and are becoming "flourishing and challenging research interests" (Veiga, 2009:158) among scholars. The (un)translatability of humor has been a highly debated topic among researchers, who have developed two opposite lines of thought. On one hand, scholars like Chiaro, favor the view that translating humor is simply impossible because of its culture-bound nature and its inability to cross both linguistic and cultural boundaries. Chiaro (1992) claims that "the intertwining of formal

linguistic features and socio-cultural elements contained in a joke is often so specific to a single language community that, beyond its frontiers, the joke is unlikely to succeed" (ibid.:5). On the other hand, there have been scholars who not only consider the translation of humor to be possible, but who also strive to demonstrate that the translations can sometimes prove to be more effective than the original. It is also true that some studies, such as the one conducted by Attardo (1994:9), have tried to find a balance between the two extremes. Regardless, there is no doubt that tackling the translation of a humorous text is no easy task.

One of the primary reasons for which the translation of humor represents such a challenge resides in the definition of the concept of humor itself. At first glance, defining humor may not seem like an arduous task, as it could be described simply as something that generates laughter (Vandaele, 2010). However, what seems to pose the most difficulties is identifying what it is that triggers this reaction. Some of the most accredited theories in the field of Humor Studies rely on the concept of "incongruity", which occurs when the cognitive rules are contradicted and therefore the created expectations are not satisfied (ibid.:151). This "incongruity" can be related to what a person says as well as to their behavior, which together with an element of surprise generate a humorous effect (ibid.). On the other hand, some theories are built on the concept of "superiority", which relates to the social aspect of humor. According to this theory, humor arises from the mockery of a target, defined as the "butt of the joke", and therefore creates a social dynamic where the ones who participate in the joke feel included, while the target gets excluded from the group (ibid.148).

However, incongruity and superiority are not the only elements that define humor, as one of the main influences that determine what is considered funny by a certain audience is the element of culture. Humor is present in every culture, but, paradoxically, it is also extremely culture specific, which is why an element that would be considered innately funny by a specific group, often does not retain the same humorous effect when it is transferred into another culture, or even into different groups of the same cultural background. Moreover, it is important to note that while humor can be considered deeply cultural, it is also highly individualistic and its reception may vary from one person

to another as "different people are amused by different things" (Chiaro, 1992:5). It comes to no surprise then, that scholars have had a difficult time trying to propose a universal definition of the concept of humor. However, the one shared belief among researchers seems to be that humor is subjective, meaning that it varies across cultures but also among individuals and proves to be effective when there is some kind of shared knowledge between the sender and the recipient (Mateo, 1999). In order find a neutral solution among the different interpretations of humor, Attardo simply describes it as "whatever a social group defines as such" (1994:9).

These premises on the complexity of the concept of humor make it easy to understand why these elements present so many challenges in translation. One of the main reasons for this being that humor can be either linguistic, for instance with puns and play on words, or cultural, when it includes elements that are considered funny by a specific culture. In this sense, Attardo proposes the concepts of "referential jokes" and "verbal jokes", where the first are solely based on the meaning of the texts, while the second also consider its lexical and phonological elements (Attardo, 1994:95). Similarly, on the topic of referential humor, Low further develops the concept by differentiating between "language-specific jokes" and "culture-specific jokes", which contain humorous elements that are seen as such exclusively by one culture, as they are based on shared knowledge (2011:59). Nevertheless, in most cases these two categories coincide and create humorous elements that work on both the linguistic and the cultural level simultaneously. This is the case of "verbally expressed humor" or "VEH" (Chiaro, 2010:1), which undoubtedly generates numerous additional issues for a translator, especially when it is based on elements that do not exist in the target culture. Regardless of the way VEH is expressed (a short joke, a longer text, and so on), and of its category (irony, satire, parody, and so on), the translation of VEH will always present both practical and theoretical problems based on two fundamental concepts of Translation Studies, namely equivalence and translatability (Chiaro, 2010:12). What Nida (1964) defined as "formal equivalence", referring to the lexical and syntactic similarity between source and target text, becomes almost impossible to achieve when dealing with VEH, as a literal translation would clash with its cultural and linguistic specificity and

result in a loss of the humorous effect. This is particularly true when talking about elements such as puns and play on words, which exploit linguistic ambiguity in the source language, and elements such as homophones and homographs, which can rarely be reproduced in the target language. Moreover, VEH can include elements of the source culture that, if inserted directly in the target culture, would be intelligible to the target audience, and therefore they would create confusion and an overall loss of the humorous effect. In this sense, Chiaro writes that

> the issue of equivalence is especially significant with regard to the translation of VEH because the nature of these texts tends to be such that the source text is either so language-specific or culture-specific that the translator is compelled to make radical changes in the target text if she wishes to retain the text's original communicative function i.e., that of attempting to amuse the recipient." (Chiaro, 2008:575)

Because of this, the strategies for the translation of VEH usually take a step back from "formal equivalence" and tend to favor the application of what Nida (1964) calls "dynamic equivalence", creating a greater distance between the source and the target text, justified by the need of reproducing the same humorous effect on the target audience that the source text had on the source audience (Chiaro, 2010:8). Given that any translator should strive to produce a translated text that is as similar as possible to the source text whenever possible, in the cases in which adopting a dynamic translation seems the only viable option, it could be beneficial to retain at least one element that was essential in the original VEH element in order to maintain cohesion (Chiaro, 2010:2). In reality, this is not always possible as VEH is so culturally and linguistically specific that the translator is often forced to make extreme changes to the text in order to maintain the communicative function of the source text. However, it becomes fundamental for the translator effectively recognize the humorous element in the source text and to understand its cultural implications and how it is linked to the cultural environment of the source language. Subsequently, the translator can make a weighted choice on which elements can be retained from the source text and which ones need to be tailored around the target audience. Therefore, as it was mentioned in the previous subchapter, it is vital for the translator to have a deep understanding not only of the two languages involved, but also of the two cultures, as the most effective translations will prove to be the ones which take into account the context and the readers of the target text.

Strictly linked to the concept of equivalence is that of translatability, which refers to the ability of transferring a meaning from one language into another by avoiding making radical changes in the target text (Chiaro, 2017). Considering that VEH is deeply rooted in the cultural background it originates from, it becomes almost impossible to recognize the cultural elements that it contains if the audience has not had the chance to come into direct contact with them (Chiaro, 2010). For this reason, humor should be defined as untranslatable, but because it is so globally present, and therefore translated, this untranslatability is to be taken more as a difficulty and a complexity, rather than an absolute impossibility (Low, 2011). What becomes apparent is the need to for the translator to distance themselves from the source text and to adopt an approach that favors dynamic equivalence. Consequently, translating humor is indeed possible as long as there a linguistic and cultural compromise (Chiaro, 2008), justified by the intrinsic priority that VEH has, which is to reproduce the humorous effect of the source text in the target text, and to evoke the same amusement in the receiving audience.

2.2.1. Types of humor and the strategies for their translation

Over the years, researchers in the field of Humor Studies have produced many classifications of the types of humorous elements. One of the most significant attempts at a categorization of humor is the one of Attardo and Raskin (1991), who propose a "General Theory of Verbal Humor (GTVH)". This theory is heavily influenced by the aforementioned concept of incongruity and that of "script opposition", meaning that according to Attardo (1994) the most common instances of humor arise when the expectations of the audience in a particular situation are not respected, but rather opposed (ibid.). Attardo presents six parameters, which he refers to as "knowledge resources" (ibid.), that form the base for the GTVH and that a translator should follow if they wish to perform a respectful translation while retaining the humorous effect. The first and most important parameter for Attardo is that of script opposition, which is when typical information, such as routines and common ways of life, is not respected or is opposed to a different script. The second parameter is the logical mechanism

behind the relationship between the scripts, while the third relates to the situation of the humorous element in a specific context and with specific participants. The fourth parameter is linked to the target of the joke, whereas the fifth highlights the importance of the narrative strategy because every humorous element must be inserted in some sort of narrative. Finally, the last parameter refers to the language, which contains all the necessary information, and from which derives the verbal structure of the text. However, as Attardo himself recognizes, in most cases it would be impossible to follow all parameters in every translation, and therefore he states that it would be better to take this guide with a more functional approach, striving to respect as many "knowledge resource" as possible and whenever necessary.

Another important framework, although very similar to Attardo's, is that of Zabalbeascoa (2005), who presents a more exhaustive list of parameters that "are proposed to be considered for 'mapping', when appropriate, i.e. they could be used as 'types'" (2005:188), therefore also providing the bases for a classification of the forms of humor. The parameters proposed by Zabalbeascoa (ibid.) prove to be particularly relevant in this context as the author purposefully defines them as being a useful tool from a translation perspective, therefore avoiding strict classifications and favoring the overall goal of the translator to create a relationship between the source and the target text (ibid.). In his paper, Zabalbeascoa defines the different elements that a translator needs to consider when dealing with a humorous item as follows:

- Unrestricted jokes, international or bi-national, which cause the least amount of translation problems as they refer to items that are based on the shared knowledge among the recipients of both the source culture and the target culture.
- Restricted jokes caused by the audience's profile traits, which deal with the different linguistic and encyclopedic knowledge of the audience, or with the various degrees of familiarity with or appreciation for specific topics and kinds of humor.

- Intentionality, as the translator needs to understand whether a humorous element in the source text was intentionally rendered as humorous by the author or its effect is due to casualty, mistakes, or external factors.

- Signals of the intention of the joke, which can sometimes be missed by the translator resulting in a more overt form of humor compared to the original, thus often risking an overall loss of the humorous effect.

- Private or in-group jokes, which rely on people belonging to a particular group as they include elements that can be understood and interpreted solely by a restricted category of people, whether it is a specific profession, social class, or political party.

- Linguistic and textual elements, as it is important to remember that humor can arise from a linguistic perspective, with elements such as puns and wordplay, or from a situation that unfolds in the narrative.

- Target, as it is mostly common for humor to be directed towards a "victim", but the translator needs to understand the implications of target-based humor as it could be perceived differently in another culture.

- Meaning, with refers to the fact that unlike mainstream translation, humor relies on double meanings, ambiguity, metaphors, and abstract meanings which all complicate the process of translation and need to be taken into account by the translator.

- Familiarity and optionality, which relate to the instances in which humor is expected or frowned upon. In both cases the translator will need to adhere to the social expectations.

- Taboo, which will be explored later on in this chapter.

- Metalinguistic elements, which refer to the instances in which the object of humor is the language itself.

- Verbal and non-verbal elements, which is particularly relevant in the field of AVT as it refers to humorous elements that operate on both the verbal and the visual level.

Having presented the different parameters to consider when translating humor, it is worth taking a step further and define the different ways in which humor can be expressed. As stated before, verbal humor can operate on a linguistic level, arise from cultural references, or in most cases present elements of both, as we see in items such as puns and wordplay, which is what Chiaro defines as "VEH in the strict sense" (2010:10). However, it is also possible to find forms of humor that do not depend on any specific linguistic or cultural elements, where the jokes constitute an ironic comment or an allusion to a global culture, which are defined by Chiaro as "good lines" and classified as "non-specific VEH" (2010:11). On the other hand, Low considers puns and wordplay to be "language-specific jokes" and describes them as being particularly problematic from a translation perspective (2011:9). By contrast, in the cases in which the humor is based on the content of the text, or on elements such as irony, absurdity and paradoxes, Low talks about "easily translatable jokes" (ibid.:10). Finally, the instances in which humor arises from a cultural element pertaining to the source culture are defined by Low as "culture-specific jokes" (ibid.:9) and considered to be the most challenging to translate. While in Chiaro's model it is evident how the different elements that contribute to the humorous effect can often work simultaneously, in Low's explanation there seems to be no space for any overlapping. Nevertheless, these two authors have been taken as a reference point to propose an identification of the different forms of humor as they both take into account the linguistic and the cultural aspect and recognize how fundamental they are to the expression of humor.

2.2.1.1. Jokes

In his paper "Translating jokes and puns", Low considers jokes to be "short units of verbally expressed humor" (2011:3) and offers a series of strategies for tackling their translation. Following his model, the translator should always start by translating the punchline first and preparing the grounds for the translation process by contemplating whether there is a need for explanations of implicit details. As for the strategies that can be implemented, Low favors a very target text-oriented practice. The strategies he proposes include:

- "Delivery, then preparation", which consists of translating the punchline first and then working backwards to translate the set-up.

- "Compensation in kind", which involves the replacement of the joke with other forms of verbal humor.

- "Compensation in place", which refers to the addition of a witty allusion in a nearby sentence.

- "Dilution", which occurs when the jokes present in a text are not all translated, especially if there is a high number of them.

- "Explicitation", which requires additional information to be included and can often result in a longer sentence in the target language.

- "Exaggeration", which may result useful when the translation of the joke does not prove to be particularly effective.

- "Signaling", which refers to when the translator has the need to signal the presence of a joke to the reader although this proves to be more of a "fallback tool" for when there is no other option.

- "Substitution", which involves the substitution of the original humorous element with one that is different but evokes the same effect.

In the same paper, Low (2011) talks about jokes and humorous elements that are not particularly problematic from either a linguistic or cultural perspective. These elements of "non-specific VEH" are what Low calls "easily translatable jokes" (ibid.:10), already introduced above, and they constitute "more manageable kinds of humor" (ibid.) for the translator as they contain humorous elements that can be understood by different cultures and, therefore, easily transferred from one to the other. In the same category, Low includes the subcategories of "idiot jokes" (ibid.), which are based on the stupidity of a group of inhabitants of a certain area, such as the people living in a nearby town. In these cases, even if the joke contains some kind of culture-specific nuance, it is not necessary to retain as the main theme is that of stupidity (ibid.). Similarly, "idiot jokes" can also be

inserted into the class of "underdog jokes", which are targeted mainly at the people of other countries or of a specific profession. In these cases, the translator has the possibility of substituting the "butt of the joke" of the source text to recreate a similar joke in the target text (Chiaro, 2005:142). To do this, it is obviously necessary for the joke to adapted to the target culture so that it can be recognized by the audience, and this implies a deep knowledge of the translator of said culture. However, these kinds of jokes still fall under Low's "easily translatable jokes", which means that even when they contain a cultural undertone, this is not essential to the success of the joke itself. By contrast, the translation of a joke becomes much more problematic when it is entirely or partially based on a cultural element. As mentioned before, Low describes such instances as "culture-specific jokes", as they include all cases in which humor arises from cultural specificity (2011). Here, the translator deals with elements that inserted in a particular culture and therefore would be partially, if not completely, intelligible by members of another culture. In the source language and culture these types of joke work well because of a "shared knowledge" (Chiaro, 1992:10) among the members of the audience, who share the same cultural background. Consequently, if the target culture does not contain such elements it will have to deal with "culture-specific obscurity" (Low, 2011), which will undoubtedly cause a loss of the humorous effect. As Low states,

> most humor is addressed to people who know things. The author [of the joke] assumes that they know not only the source language, with most of its words, meanings, famous quotations, idioms, and fixed expressions – [but] they also know the country they live in, its leaders, its customs, its institutions. Some jokes even allude to recent events, popular TV shows, and personalities – audience knowledge permits the author to refer to these with a sort of shorthand. (Low, 2011:68)

Having said that, however difficult it may seem to tackle the translation of a linguistic or cultural joke, according to Low (ibid.), with the right strategies it is always possible to perform a successful translation of humor. Chiaro (2010) proposes four main strategies for the translation of VEH, which she considers to be applicable when dealing with audiovisual products as well. The first strategy, which can only be employed when the VEH contains linguistic or cultural aspects that do not cause any particular issue, is to leave the humorous element unchanged. However, in most cases a literal translation causes a loss of the humorous effect. The second is undoubtedly the most effective

one for the target audience as it substitutes the VEH in the source text with a different one in the target text, which retains the same underlying meaning and humor. The third relies on the replacement of the source VEH with an idiomatic expression in the target language. This is probably the most challenging technique but also one that allows the translator to play with their own creativity and inventiveness. The least advisable but still viable option is to ignore the VEH completely. Moreover, the translator has the possibility to "compensate" (ibid.) the omission or modification of a humorous element by creating VEH in parts of the target text that was not present in the source text.

2.2.1.2. Puns and wordplay

Often considered to be a subcategory of jokes, puns present what is probably the most challenging issue for translators because, unlike the majority of verbal humor, "they use specific features of a particular language" (Low, 2011:59). Puns are defined by Low as "wordplays that exploit the ambiguities of words and phrases" (ibid.). This means that puns are created on some kind of linguistic asymmetry, which often results in "cases of inequivalence in translation" and in the need for "a wider range of linguistic maneuvering" (Sanderson, 2009:125). In many cases, wordplay is based on a pun defined as "a word with two meanings often used in jokes and verbal witticism" (Chiaro, 2010), but this definition can be expanded to include all forms of linguistic duplicity that exploit linguistic elements with the goal of creating humor (ibid.) In order to better understand how puns work, Delabastita analyzes the different types of wordplay focusing on the "degrees of formal similarities between the two components" (1993:78). He distinguishes between: homophony, when two words or phrases have different spelling but same pronunciation; homography, when two words of phrases have same spelling but different pronunciations; homonymy, when two words or phrases are identical in spelling and pronunciation; and paronymy, when two words or phrases are almost identical in spelling and pronunciation. Because different languages have different semantic structures and vocabularies, transferring a pun from the source text to the target text is an extremely difficult task for the translator. The translator has to evaluate which feature of the pun is more relevant and has to

be retained, the stylistic and linguistic form or the humorous sense. Although the translation of puns can be a complicated and challenging process, scholars like Delabastita believe in the possibility of successfully transferring them from the source text to target text. In his investigation of the translation of wordplay, Delabastita (1993) offers a list of translation techniques for the translator to choose from:

- The pun in the source text can "be rendered with a pun in target text" (ibid.:192). This is undoubtedly the most effective strategy, but it is only employable in rare cases.

- The pun can "be translated with a non-punning element" (ibid.:202) in the target text by retaining either one or both meanings of the source text's pun.

- The pun can be transferred in the target text "by using some other wordplay-related rhetorical device" (ibid.:207).

- The pun can be transferred in its original form without being translated or be adapted to the target text's linguistic system.

- In less frequent cases the translator can translate a portion of the source text that has no pun with some sort of wordplay or, alternatively, create a pun in the target text "from zero" that will not have any counterpart in the source text (ibid.):215.

- Lastly, the translator can choose to omit the pun. As we have seen in the previous sections of this chapter, this strategy, although valid, should be resorted in only when there is no other alternative, especially when translating audiovisual products.

It goes without saying that if a pun plays a fundamental role in a humorous element of a text, the main goal of the translator should be to replicate it at the best of their ability. In this sense, Low (2011) describes puns as the possibility for the translator to adopt a creative approach and he explains the reasoning behind their translation using geometric shapes to illustrate the "steps" or "leaps" (ibid.:64) that a translator has to go through in order to recreate a pun in the target text. He also proposes a list of possible strategies to implement for the translation of puns, which will not be listed

as they are quite similar to the ones presented by Delabastita illustrated above. However, it is worth noting how multiple authors across decades agree on the hurdles of translating a pun and on the best possible strategies to apply in the translation process. However, the extreme linguistic specificity of puns and the fact that they are, by nature, rooted in the relationship between the linguistic structure and the meaning, makes it seem as if they would be the perfect definition of "untranslatability" (Chiaro, 2008). As Chiaro states,

> when dealing with an example of wordplay which pivots around a pun, an interlingual translation is bound to involve some kind of compromise due to the fact that the chance of being able to pun on the same word in two different languages is extremely remote. And even in the prospect of such a possibility, the chances of finding the same type of pun (i.e., a homophone, a homograph, a homonym etc.) are even slimmer. (Chiaro, 2008:571)

However, as Delabastita and Low also noted, in the cases in which the translator is forced to pivot away from the initial pun, it is always possible to find other solutions that allow the humorous element to be retained. It is also important to note that, much like jokes and any other humorous occurrence, puns can be constructed on both linguistic and cultural elements, which makes their translation much more difficult.

2.2.2. Translating humor in audiovisual products

As it is the case for the translation of cultural references in audiovisual products, the aspect that poses the most obstacles in the translation of humor in AVT is the multimodal nature of the product itself. The visual and acoustic elements that characterize an audiovisual product do not allow the translator to manipulate the text to the same extent as a written text would, meaning that the translator will always have to consider how the VEH interacts with the visuals and the sounds on screen in order to produce a coherent product with the overall goal of evoking laughter. Therefore, when translating humor, particularly in AVT, the translator needs to make use of "recontextualization" which "consists of totally or partially abandoning the literal, prepositional or locutionary level, while maintaining the illocutionary act as far as possible" (Hickey, 1998:222). In other words, the rendering of the humorous effect on the target viewer is much more important than the performance of a literal translation, or a translation that is close to the source text in terms of language and content.

As we have seen, while many scholars insist on the untranslatability of humor, others believe the opposite. Among these, Diana-Elena Popa claims that nearly all humor can be translated as long as the translator is aware of the complexity that derives from having to transfer "the situational, cultural, and linguistic content of the source language joke to the target culture" (Popa, 2005:49). In her article "Jokes and Translation" (2005), Popa adopts a target audience-oriented and Skopos-oriented approach and states that the translator has to focus on both the "target-language socio-cultural framework" (ibid.) and the purpose of the humorous text in order to determine which translation strategy to employ. According to Popa, being able to transfer all the features of a joke from the source language to the target language does not automatically guarantee an effective translation and "the two jokes co-exist in terms of time but in different spatial frames of reference" (ibid.). Therefore, it becomes apparent that one of the primary tasks of a translator who has to deal with the translation of a joke is the identification of its purpose, function, and importance. Because of this, as Bucaria notes that,

> when talking about the translation of verbal humor on screen we most often think in terms of the possibility to achieve, in Nida's terms (1964), dynamic equivalence […]. As opposed to formal equivalence […], dynamic equivalence privileges target language solutions that are able to facilitate a more thorough understanding of the source text and not just convey its literal meaning. In this view, an efficient adaptation of audiovisual humor cannot be expected to necessarily reflect the formal structure of the source language joke, but, instead, to successfully render its intention, which is, presumably, to amuse the audience […]. (Bucaria, 2017:436)

While in written translation the instances in which the priority is given to style are more frequent, in AVT the situation is reversed and, in most cases, because of the visual aspect of the screen product, the humorous characteristics of the text have to prevail as they are not exclusively linked to language, and the unexpected semantic layer that produces the humorous effect is also rendered visually (Sanderson, 2009). Consequently, the translator needs to prioritize the cohesion between the visual and acoustic channels over the retainment of the semantic structure. Surely, this aspect poses more problems for the subtitler, as the elimination of the original voices during the dubbing process "enables the translator to manipulate the text to a higher degree" (ibid.:130).

As a result, as it is the case with the translation of cultural references, the AVT practice that creates the most challenges when translating humorous elements is subtitling. The numerous technical

constraints that surround subtitles often force the translator to adopt strategies such as condensation and reduction, which will undoubtedly result in a loss of meaning and/or a loss of the humorous effect. According to Bogucki, the task of the subtitler is to "render this humorous effect not as faithful as possible to the source text, but as logic as possible in the target text" (2013:75). Certainly, the situations in which the translator decides to completely omit the humorous element are not rare. However, in most cases, the link between the visual aspect (e.g., written texts, body language of the actors), the acoustic elements (e.g., music, sound effects), and the dialogue itself, makes it impossible to leave the humorous element out of the translation. On the importance of the acoustic element in the translation of humor Bucaria (2017) underlines that while this aspect can sometimes contribute to the overall humorous effect, in the cases in which the product presents elements such as "canned laughter", which signals to the audience that something funny has been said, it can constitute an additional restraint. As Antonini (2005:212) also notes, the use of the "canned laughter", particularly in sit-coms, puts a greater pressure on the translator, who has to ensure a correspondence between the joke and the sound. In the cases in which the translator fails to reflect the humorous intent of the source text, the audience will be left with a sense of confusion and frustration, as they will be made aware of the presence of a joke while feeling completely left out of it. As for the visual elements, in an audiovisual product the instances in which a humorous element relies on the linguistic as well as the visual component are not uncommon. As Chiaro (1992) observes, there are visual elements that are considered to be funny by most cultures, as it is the case for slapstick humor, but, much like the sounds, the images on screen can often constitute a significant restraint for the subtitler, who can only operate on the dialogue and the verbal component.

On the other hand, the specific constraints of dubbing also propose their own obstacles when it comes to the translation of humor. Factors like timing, turn-taking, lip-synchronization and, in the case of sitcoms, canned laughter, do not leave much freedom to the translator, who runs the risk of creating misunderstandings in the viewer. Although to a lesser degree compared to subtitling, the interference of the source text and of the source language in dubbing may result in a lack of coherence

and intelligibility, a loss of the humorous element, and a loss of naturalness (Zabalbeascoa, 1994:91). However, it is worth noting that, because dubbing completely removes the original soundtrack, the adaptors have more room to manipulate the text and can therefore detach themselves from it to a greater degree when dealing with humorous element that rely on sounds.

Finally, the multimodal nature of audiovisual products does also present a silver lining for the translator, which can be summarized by Pedersen's concept of "intersemiotic redundancy" (2007). Whenever the source product contains a humorous element that is easily understandable from the visuals and sounds on screen and that is able to produce a humorous effect on the audience without the support of the verbal component, the translator has the possibility to omit a portion of the dialogue, a pun, or a joke, which allows for shorter and more concise subtitles. Unfortunately, the same cannot be said for dubbed products, where the need for lip-synchronization does not allow for many omissions.

2.2.2.1. Types of humor in audiovisual products

Regarding the expressions of humor in audiovisual products, Bucaria (2017) states that VEH elements such as puns and wordplay are actually not very frequent, and most of the humor on screen is made of "non-specific VEH" (Chiaro, 2006:203), which does not demand as much effort and creativity from the translator (Bucaria, 2017). However, many of the paralinguistic elements that accompany non-specific VEH, such as irony, intonation, and mimicking, in which the understanding of the humorous situation relies on clues such as facial expressions, gestures, and prosodic elements, can undoubtedly pose many obstacles to the translator. One of the main aspects that contribute to the creation of humor in audiovisual products remains that of cultural references and realia. In fact, Bucaria (2017) notes that non-specific VEH is often accompanied by "referential humor" (Attardo, 1994:95) and therefore "culture-specific jokes" (Low, 2011:59), which allude to elements of the source culture. Because of this, the translator has to ensure that the translated verbal message does not clash with the culture-specific element shown on screen (Bucaria, 2017).

Regarding the specific ways in which humor is usually expressed in audiovisual products, Zabalbeascoa proposes a classification of jokes to help translators, specifically those involved in the practice of dubbing, make sure that the original purpose of the joke is retained. In his model, jokes can be categorized into:

- International or bi-national jokes, when they don't rely on any language or cultural feature and their humorous effect solely depends on the content. In this case the translator's knowledge of the target culture is essential. Here we can fine the Low's "easily translatable jokes" and Chiaro's "non-specific VEH".

- National-culture-and-institutions jokes, which contain some sort of culture-specific reference, and which require the translator to have a deep understanding of the source culture. Here we find Low's "culture-specific jokes".

- National-sense-of-humor jokes, which usually refer to stereotypes and, therefore, "may not convey the same humorous effect in another culture" (ibid.). In this case, the translator may resort in a substitution and replace the stereotype with one more familiar to the target culture.

- Language-dependent jokes, which involve language-specific features. This is the case of puns and wordplay, and they often require substitutions or extreme manipulation.

- Visual jokes, which include both visual and non-visual elements that the translator has to match coherently.

- Graphic jokes, which refer to rhetoric figures that include multiple words and that work on different levels simultaneously. This is the case of humor derived from written messages on screen.

- Acoustic jokes, which derive from elements such as foreign accents, tone of voice, and impersonations.

- Complex jokes, which "can incorporate two or more of the aforementioned typed of jokes" (ibid.). In most cases these are the jokes that depend on both the linguistic element and the cultural references.

2.3. Taboo language

According to Allan and Burridge, the definition of the word "taboo" is "a proscription of behavior for a specific community, at a specifiable time, in specifiable contexts" (2006:2). Taboo words, in this sense, are "expressions whose use is restricted or prohibited by social custom" (Díaz-Cintas and Remael, 2021), because considered to be against certain values and beliefs shared by a particular society. Of course, as we have explored in the previous sections of this chapter, every culture is different and therefore the set of beliefs of each community will differ to some extent, and so will the elements that are considered to be offensive, embarrassing, and "a potential cause of discomfort, harm, or injury" (Allan, 2019). Considering the strong link between taboo language and culture, it is not surprising to note that taboo words evolve over time and differ not only between culture, but also among communities of the same cultural background. However, the research on the classification of taboo language over the years has been quite consistent, meaning that the categories of what is considered to be taboo are often similar among different studies. Initially, Allan and Burridge (2006) proposed four categories of taboos: naming and addressing; sex and bodily effluvia; food and smell; and disease, death, and killing. Subsequently, the research was expanded by other scholars, such as Hughes (2006), Jay (2009), and Ferklova (2014), to include different areas of taboo topics, which can be categorized as follows:

- Sex, which encompasses all elements related to sexual acts (including, masturbation, adultery, prostitution, incest, homosexuality, etc.), body parts, and bodily functions related to sexual activities.

- Bodies and effluvia, which relate to all bodily secretions and health related issues.

- Food and drugs, which refer to instances of food preparation and consumption, which may vary among culture, and to sexual euphemism related to this category.

- Naming, which includes all insults targeted towards minorities or social groups, such as people of color, women, peoples of different sexual orientations, and disabled people.

- Diseases, death, and killing.

- Religion, including references to sacred beings, objects, and places.

When talking about taboos, and more specifically about taboo language, it is necessary to mention swearing as well, as it is considered to be one, if not the most, common and wide-spread category of taboo words. Over the years, swearing has been given many definitions, such as bad language, profanity, cursing, foul or rude language, and so on. However, the definition that seems to be the most exhaustive is that of Trudgill (1990:53), who describes swearing as a "type of language use in which the expression: (a) refers to something that is taboo and/or stigmatized, (b) should not be interpreted literally, and (c) it can be used to express strong emotions and attitudes" (ibid.). Moreover, it is worth noting that depending on the context and the culture there are words that would normally not be considered to be either taboo or curse words, but that in a specific situation could count as such if deemed inappropriate or offensive. In fact, in expanding Trudgill's definition, Fagersten explains that "swearing refers to the use of words which have the potential to be offensive, inappropriate, objectionable, or unacceptable in any given social context" (2012:4). This means that swearing has less to do with the words used and more with the specific behavior and intentions behind said words. Additionally, many researchers have shown that the use of swear words is not always necessarily linked to the need to offend, but rather to socio-cultural factors as well as to the emotional and psychological needs of the speaker. According to Pinker (2007) there are at least five functions of swear words: descriptive, when the taboo and the curse words are used literally; idiomatic, when they are used with a metaphorical meaning; abusive, when the intent is to offend people; emphatic, when they function as a way of emphasizing strong emotions towards someone; and cathartic, when the speaker uses them merely as a way of express a feeling of the moment. Over the years other functions have been added to this categorization by numerous scholars, however what seems to be a shared belief is that swear words and taboo language can be used in both a positive and negative manner, which mainly depends on the context in which they are employed and on the level of intimacy of the relationship between the people involved in the conversation.

Additionally, another widely accepted concept is that taboo language and swear words are strongly connected to humor. In *Taboo Comedy on Television* (2016), Bucaria and Barra provide an extensive analysis of the implications of taboo humor, particularly of its reception, drawing from the theories of superiority and incongruity already mentioned in Chapter 1 of this dissertation. The main takeaway from their analysis is that the appreciation of taboo humor depends on the juxtaposition of "either content (death, disability, etc.) with a seemingly inappropriate form (comedy, jokes, farce, etc.) or two contrasting situations (bad timing, inappropriate circumstances)" (ibid.:7). Moreover, taboo humor is also described as coping mechanism and a "as a device to overcome situations of distress and oppression" (ibid.:9). From a wider perspective, taboo humor generally "encompasses the whole spectrum of comedy themes and subjects with which potential audiences might struggle because of its unconventional and at times intentionally shocking nature" (ibid.:2). In regards to the categories of taboo humor, the list of thematic areas presented by Bucaria and Barra seems to correspond to those of taboo language and topics aforementioned, as they include the categories of dark humor (related to death, sickness, and disability), sexual humor, minority humor (including all humor directed at people of different races, sexualities, ethnicities, and ages), gross-out or sick humor (mainly related to bodily fluids), religious humor, and physical appearance humor (ibid. - partially based on Allan and Burridge, 2006).

2.3.1. Translating taboos

Translating taboo language poses unique challenges for translators, because it requires careful consideration of cultural sensitivities while also preserving the original meaning and impact of the source material. According to Davoodi (2007), there are three possible situations the translator can find themselves in: (1) the taboo word in the source text is not considered a taboo in the target culture, therefore the translator can translate it directly; (2) the taboo word in the source language is considered a taboo in the target culture too, and (3) the term that in the source text is not a taboo is considered one in the target language. Unfortunately, considering that the most predominantly widespread

categories of taboos are usually swearwords, sex, death, and religion, and that these are seen as taboos in a considerate number of cultures, it is rare to find oneself in the first situation. Because of this, Davoodi (ibid.) also provides four translation strategies to employ when dealing with taboo language. The first approach is censorship or omission, which appears to be the easiest way of dealing with these items as it avoids the hurdles of finding a way to convey something prohibited in another language and culture by simply ignoring the taboo. However, in all occurrences in which the taboo element is crucial to the meaning and overall effect of the source text, this strategy is not acceptable as it would remove a layer of meaning and result in a distorted text. The second strategy is substitution, considered to be a softer form of censorship, as it is does not simply ignore the taboo, but rather substitutes it with a term that is accepted and not prohibited in the target language. However, similarly to what was said about the first strategy, this procedure runs the risk of distorting the meaning of the source text and therefore should only be applied when strictly necessary and when there is certainty that changing the nuance of the expression would not result in an incoherent final product. The third strategy is "taboo for taboo" (ibid.), which refers to the translation of a taboo term in the source language with a corresponding taboo term in the target language. This strategy is undoubtedly the most faithful to the source text, but depending on the cultural environment of the target culture it could cause embarrassment and offense. Moreover, considering the culture-bound nature of taboos, it is not always possible to find an effective correspondence between the two languages. The last and most often employed strategy is euphemism, which implies the substitution of the offensive expression with a more agreeable expression, through synonyms, paraphrases, or metaphors, in order to address the taboo topic without offending the reader (ibid.). The goal of euphemisms is to tone down an expression by replacing it with a softer, less offensive one. Leech gives a semantic meaning to euphemism stating that "it is the practice of referring to something offensive or delicate in terms that make it sound more pleasant or becoming than it really is" (1981:45). According to Linfoot-ham "the need for euphemism is both social and emotional, as it allows discussion of 'touchy' or taboo subjects without enraging, outraging, or upsetting other people,

and acts as a pressure valve whilst maintaining the appearance of civility" (2005:229). Despite euphemisms' ability to render taboo topics of the source language in a milder and less inappropriate manner, the translator has to, once again, evaluate the purpose of the taboo element in the source text. In fact, substituting a more aggressive expression with a toned-down version may result in a discrepancy in communicative force between the source and target texts. However, on many occasions euphemisms may prove to be a useful tool for the translator to avoid omitting the element completely.

Overall, much like it is the case for the translation of cultural references and humorous elements, when dealing with instances of taboo language the translator needs to be aware of the impact and the meaning that the element has in both the source text and culture, while also being well-versed in the cultural implications and restrictions of certain taboo topics and words in the target culture.

2.3.2. Taboo language in AVT

Today, taboo and swear words have become an important part of people's everyday language and communication. As a result, these kinds of expressions have found their way into cultural products such as movies and TV shows, particularly when products are aimed at adults and teenagers. The seasons for this being that the goal of audiovisual products is to represent reality and therefore also the current linguistic and cultural landscape. By incorporating everyday language and taboo language into the dialogues, these products are able to provide a more accurate and realistic representation of the characters and of their identity, culture, and community. Moreover, in movies and TV shows taboo and swear words can be used to express particular feelings or to represent the speaker's attitude towards a situation, which is why "the translation of taboo words and swear words is crucial when they contribute to characterization or when they fulfil a thematic function in a film" (Díaz Cintas and Remael, 2007:197). For the purpose of this dissertation, and because the instances of taboo language that will be analyzed in Chapter 4 will revolve mainly around taboo humor, it is worth mentioning

the work of Bucaria and Barra. In "Taboo Comedy on Television: Issues and Themes" (2016), they focus on the interaction between taboo comedy and television and analyze the elements that characterize it as well as those that determine its acceptance. Their study revolves around three main concepts:

- The tension between mainstream and niche audiences, which refers to the fact that while television has always been a medium that caters to a broad audience, the use of controversial humor challenges traditional norms and pushes the boundaries of acceptability while also having to abide to the specific topic and language constraints.

- The relationship between reality and imagery, which refers to the fact that taboo comedy has the ability to expose uncomfortable truths and to serve as a tool for social commentary, shedding light on overlooked issues and critiquing societal norms. However, the tension between "authenticity and exaggeration contributes to the multifaceted nature of taboo humor on television" (Bucaria and Barra, 2016:5).

- The contrast between long-term programs and one-off events, which refers to the difference in perception between taboo comedy elements becoming a reoccurring element of a TV show and the instances in which they are used in stand-alone events. When a product has succeeded in consolidating an element of taboo humor as being part of the story or of a character's behavior, the audience can find it innovative and shocking at first, but then "revolution becomes the (new) norm" (ibid.:8). The result is that the taboo element may become more and more accepted, but, consequently, it also becomes less and less incisive and influential. On the other hand, when taboo comedy is exploited in a one-off occurrence, it appears to retain its effect more easily.

Having given an overview of the complex dynamics of taboo topics and comedy in audiovisual products, for the purpose of this study it is worth mentioning the trends of Italian translators when dealing with these elements. Given that the majority of audiovisual products imported in Italy come from the United States, there have been numerous studies about the issues of translating these

products from English into Italian. For instance, Pavesi and Malinverno (2000) deal with the use of taboo language in audiovisual translation, Chiaro (2007) studies the treatment of sexual references on the Italian screen, Bucaria (2007 and 2009) studies the relationship between translation and censorship in Italian television and the humorous function of swearing in TV series. Among these studies and many more there seems to be a general observation that Italian audiovisual translation leans towards the omission of taboo words and swear words. This is, of course, caused by the long tradition of censorship in Italy, established under the Fascist regime and still endorsed by the presence of the Vatican and the general old-fashioned mentality of the country. In fact, the linguistic and extralinguistic censorship is mainly due to moral, cultural, and social considerations and beliefs and the difference in appropriateness between the two cultures (Parini, 2014). However, over the past few decades, the threshold of acceptability of vulgar language has changed considerably, but there are still categories of taboos that are subject to linguistic interdiction. The categories of taboo language most vulnerable to censorship are those of religion and profanity, and sexuality, which are, whenever possible, completely eliminated from the translated product. However, it is worth noting that, despite the fact that the overall tendency of Italian translators is to neutralize these expressions and to self-censor (Sandrelli, 2016), this can sometimes "lead to a more vulgar translation due to the few choices available and the compensation strategy used by translators/adapters" (ibid.). Moreover, particularly when dealing with swear words, the lack of semantic and functional correspondence between the source and the target language can influence the translator's choices just as much as the socio-cultural environment (Parini, 2013). For instance, compared to English, Italian has less freedom in the syntactic organization of words, so while English is free to insert common swear words practically anywhere, Italian has more constraints to comply with.

Having provided a theoretical overview of the complexities of cultural references, humorous elements, and taboo language, and having analyzed the issues and strategies related to their translation in audiovisual products, the next Chapter will provide an introduction to the TV series *Inside Job*, its themes, plot, characters, and language, and specifically the types of references, humor, and taboos it

contains. Chapter 4 will then present an analysis of the translation of said elements from English into Italian, where the theoretical premises of this chapter will find their practical application.

CHAPTER 3 – THE OBJECT OF THE ANALYSIS: "INSIDE JOB"

3.1. The genre of "adult animation"

Adult animation traces its roots back to the early 20th century with experimental short films and cartoons that targeted mature audiences, such as the Fleischer brothers' *Betty Boop* (1930–1939) and *Popeye* (1960–1962). These early works often explored risqué themes and suggestive content that pushed the boundaries of conventional animation while paving the way for more explicit and sophisticated adult-oriented products in later years. The 1980s and 1990s saw adult animation gain mainstream recognition with the success of shows like *The Simpsons* (1989–) and *South Park* (1997–), that appealed to both adult and adolescent audiences with their satirical humor and storytelling, while also leaving space for a more traditional type of humor that was meant to cater to the whole family. As the genre matured, adult animation began to explore a wider range of themes and genres, including science fiction, fantasy, and drama, but its success also allowed it to venture into a darker kind of humor that was now aimed specifically at adults. Shows like *BoJack Horseman* (2014–2020) also demonstrated the genre's versatility and ability to tackle complex narratives, incorporating darker themes and diving into the real-life struggles of the modern world. Today, the shows pertaining to this genre often represent an analysis, which most times turns into satirical critic, of current events and social issues, combined with black humor and satire to satisfy the age and maturity of the viewers. One of the most influential series in this context is undoubtedly *The Simpsons*, which became a model to be replicated and is considered to be one of the most iconic cartoons of American satire on a global level. Its indescribable success inspired a new wave of similar products, such as *Family Guy* (1999–), *American Dad* (2005 –) and *Futurama* (1999 – 2003), which often delved into darker themes with a heavier parody style, but which still owed much of their success to the pioneering role of *The Simpsons*. In the 2010s and 2020s, the rise of streaming services like Netflix has provided a platform for a new wave of adult animated series. These shows often feature serialized storytelling, sophisticated humor, and diverse representation, catering to a wider and more modern audience. Adult animated series are becoming more and more appreciated for their comedic representation of modern

problems, but, in reality, the reasons behind their success are much deeper. This type of shows can be compelling despite featuring animated characters because of their heavy employment of satire and parody, which allow the audience to see the obscure reality of things, exposing them to real social events and encouraging critical thinking by mocking the vices, flaws, and hypocrisy of humankind. On the other hand, the edgy humor, controversial topics, and the use of swear words and taboo expressions often create pushback from people and attract heavy criticism but, regardless of the critics, these shows continue to be loved and defended by fans. According to Mittell (2014), the reason why this combination of satire and animation works so well is that since they are unrealistic cartoons, they can dare to expose current issues and topics and to push the boundaries of what is acceptable because they do so with the "innocence" that characterizes children's cartoons. At the same time, the specific target of these products allows creators to explore provocative themes without the restrictions of traditional animation aimed at children.

3.2. The show: *Inside Job*

Inside Job is a satirical adult animated television series created by Alex Hirsch and developed by Shion Takeuchi, both known for their work on the popular animated show *Gravity Falls* (2012 – 2016). *Inside Job* premiered on Netflix on October 22, 2021. Set in the fictional shadowy organization known as Cognito Inc., the series follows the adventures of the company's eccentric employees who engage in various clandestine activities to control world events, manipulate the masses, and maintain their grip on power. The premise revolves around Reagan Ridley, a brilliant young scientist who is reluctantly recruited by her estranged father, Mark Ridley, the enigmatic former CEO of Cognito Inc. The association where Reagan works, which is already in and of itself a clever play on the word "incognito", is a secret company that controls the United States Government and is responsible for creating, maintaining, and covering up all its conspiracies and secrets away from the public eye. Together with a quirky team of colleagues, Reagan navigates the complex inner workings of the organization while uncovering its dark secrets and morally questionable practices and simultaneously

dealing with the problematic relationship with her father and overcoming her inner battles. Each episode of "Inside Job" dives into different conspiracy theories, paranormal phenomena, and pop culture references, blending humor, satire, and social commentary to provide a witty and irreverent take on contemporary issues. The show's fast-paced storytelling, clever dialogue, and familiar animation style contribute to its appeal to audiences interested in offbeat comedy and conspiracy theories. With its tongue-in-cheek approach to themes such as corporate greed, government surveillance, and the nature of reality, *Inside Job* offers an interesting perspective on the absurdities of modern life.

The main themes of the show revolve around conspiracy theories and secret societies, represented in a way that pokes fun at popular myths and urban legends, while also addressing deeper issues of power and corruption. At its core, however, *Inside Job* is a story about friendship and loyalty, but also about problematic parental figures and the implications of growing up neglected. The complexity and depth of Reagan's character allow the creators to also show deeper issues related to mental illnesses and disruptive behaviors, which are elements that will make the viewer feel more connected to the personal story of the character while also being entertained by the absurd stories.

The show has unfortunately been cancelled by Netflix. Nevertheless, despite its short life, it has gained a lot of attention. On one hand, many fans of the show have praised its clever writing, irreverent humor, and unique premise. They appreciate the show's satirical take on conspiracy theories and its ability to tackle taboo subjects with wit and creativity. Moreover, fans have also shown admiration for the diverse cast of characters and their distinct personalities, as each character brings something unique to the show, leading to engaging interactions. The high saturation of jokes and references of each episode also allows for a high "replay value" as there are often subtle jokes that are easy to miss on the first watch. On the other hand, there has been criticism directed at the show for some of the same reasons. While some viewers appreciate its humor and creativity, others find it too niche or inaccessible. For some people, the rapid-fire jokes and intricate plotlines make it easy to feel overwhelmed and difficult to fully engage with the series. However, most of the criticism is

directed at certain taboo themes and sensitive topics the show tackles, such as religion, politics, and sex. Overall, the show was generally well-received and, even when it was not fully appreciated, it certainly sparked a conversation among members of the audience.

3.2.1. *Inside Job*: references, humor, and taboos

In "Inside Job," the types of language and humor employed are crucial elements that contribute to the show's comedic style and thematic exploration. The series cleverly incorporates various taboos, cultural references, and humorous elements into its narrative, often using them as comedic fuel and as a way to navigate sensitive topics.

As far as cultural references are concerned, the show is extremely saturated with nods to pop culture events, characters, and stories, to the point that it becomes tremendously difficult to catch all of them, as they are often even just shown in the background of some scenes. The most obvious references are the ones made to famous conspiracy theories, as they provide the whole premise for the show, and which are often exaggerated and twisted for comedic effect, highlighting the absurdity of some of them. Secondly, given that the show takes place in an organization, there are many references that poke fun at corporate culture and the world of big business, with references to multinational corporations, corporate scandals, and office politics that underline the craziness of corporate behavior and the power dynamics at play in the business world. Additionally, the show does not shy away from naming, and more often than not also showing, political figures, present and past, as well as famous celebrities and people in the entertainment industry. The references that appear to be more niche and US-centric are those to cinematic and television products, and all the nods to internet culture and memes, such as references to viral videos, internet slang, and online communities. Finally, the show occasionally references nostalgic elements from the past, including hints of retro video games, 1980s and 1990s pop culture, and vintage technology, adding a nostalgic charm to the humor. Overall, the cultural references in the show are diverse and wide-ranging, appealing to a broad audience with their cleverness and relevance to contemporary society. However, the creators' choice

to mostly reference American culture, makes it particularly hard for a person from a different culture to appreciate all the references, making it easy to miss a humorous element or a particular layer of the meaning.

In regard to the types of humor present in *Inside Job*, the range of humor styles contributes to its comedic appeal and renders it accessible to different kinds of audiences. However, the most dominant form of humor in the show is satire, which is employed to critique and ridicule various aspects of society, including politics, technology, and media. Through exaggerated characters and absurd situations, the show manages to masterfully expose the flaws and hypocrisies of real-world institutions and ideologies. Together with satire, parody also prevails in the show. *Inside Job* does a masterful job at parodying pop culture elements, including movies, TV shows, and internet memes, and by putting a humorous twist on familiar tropes and references the show subverts audience expectations and creates comedic contrast between the original source material and its satirical interpretation. From a linguistic perspective, despite the show's high number of jokes, the most common type of VEH present is represented by puns and wordplay. Clever puns are often incorporated either into the dialogue or in the visuals of the show, often in the background, as well as in the titles of the episodes. Moreover, the series also presents strong hints of sarcasm and irony, represented by the characters' sarcastic remarks and ironic observations that often serve as a means of pointing out the absurdity of a situation. This language-based humor adds an additional layer of comedy to the show and demonstrates the writers' wit, creativity, and attention to detail. Whether it's a clever play on words or a punny character name, these linguistic flourishes enhance the comedic experience for viewers, who could spend hours trying to decode the wordplay shown in the background of some of the scenes. Finally, although less predominant compared to other forms of humor, the show does also include elements of physical comedy in the characters' interactions. Slapstick moments, exaggerated facial expressions, and comedic timing contribute to the overall humor of the show and complement its satirical tone.

Being an animated series aimed at an adult audience the show also tackles various taboos and sensitive topics, challenging societal norms through a satirical and humorous lens. Aside from the evident taboo nuance of many storylines, which include elements of political corruption, sexual situations, drug abuse, violence, and religion, the show uses taboo language strategically to enhance its humor and satire, pushing the boundaries of comedy while addressing controversial topics. The most predominant category of taboo language in the show is that of swearwords and profanity. These words are used for comedic effect and to emphasize the characters' frustration, anger, or overall attitude, while also contributing to the creation of a more realistic and relatable portrayal of the characters and their world. The second most common category of taboo language in the series is sexual language, which adds an extra layer of humor and is used to satirize societal attitudes towards sex and relationships. The sexual innuendos incorporated in the show's dialogue and jokes can range from subtle references to more explicit ones, including jokes about sex acts, anatomy, and sexual orientation. The third most evident form of the show's taboo language is related to politics and religion. The show critiques politics and religion through its humor, occasionally using taboo language to challenge authority figures, institutions, and belief systems with jokes about politicians, religious leaders, and sacred texts, as well as commentary on controversial political and religious issues. Lastly, although to a lesser extent, *Inside Job* also incorporates racial and ethnic humor into its satire, including jokes about stereotypes, cultural differences, and identity, with the goal of critiquing prejudices and discrimination. The same can be said for the occasional instances in which the show addresses gender and LGBTQ+ themes with jokes about gender roles, sexuality, and LGBTQ+ identities, that are aimed at challenging traditional norms and promoting inclusivity. Overall, the show's unique blend of humor, cultural references, and taboo topics creates clever storylines and an engaging dialogue that challenge the viewer and provide sharp social commentary with a distinctive style.

3.2.2. *Inside Job*: the characters

For the sake of this dissertation only the main seven characters will be presented, as most of the elements that will be analyzed in Chapter 4 are either said or aimed at one of them.

Dr. Reagan Ridley is the main protagonist of *Inside Job*. She is a 30-year-old inventor and head of her team at Cognito Inc. She is the daughter of the company's former CEO, Rand Ridley, and Rand's ex-wife Tamiko. At first glance, Reagan comes off as insufferably brilliant, easily irritable, cynical, paranoid, and competitive to her core, with evident social awkwardness and social anxiety, which usually make her unable to establish a connection with those around her. She appears to be a callous misanthrope whose genius drives her headfirst into her work. While Reagan is very critical of others and sometimes downright hurtful, it's clear she does not wish to hurt anyone and simply tries to solve her problems the one way she can, as she has learned mainly from her father. It is clear she is deeply insecure and going along with a job she hates simply because it was established as her life goal by her self-serving father. A lot of her character flaws can be traced back to her abusive childhood, which crippled her emotionally and left her out of touch with her emotions. Throughout the series, she improves tremendously and is able to exhibit the more human and caring side of herself. Her character development becomes most apparent in her genuine friendship with Brett and the rest of the team, in her selfless sacrifice for Ron's good at the end of the show, and in her many attempts to connect with her father.

Rand Ridley is the main antagonist of the show. He is a genius inventor, Reagan's alcoholic and egocentric father, and former CEO of Cognito Inc. Much like his daughter, Rand is a genius of nearly unrivaled intelligence, but he is also an extremely manipulative man. He is presented as a highly egotistical and narcissistic person, characteristics that come out especially in her relationship with Reagan, whom he neglected and manipulated for years. His character has an interesting duality because, despite being aware of his clear character flaws, the audience is compelled to feel sorry for him in some situations, particularly at the very end of the show. However, the viewer is never entirely

sure whether Rand can be trusted or not, given the many twists and turns of his behavior, which goes from betraying his whole family to apologizing and trying to connect with Reagan. The choice of leaving Rand's intentions vague for most of the show appear to be a strategic choice from the writers, who seemingly put the viewer in Reagan's shoes, looking at her father, not being sure if he is trustworthy, and wanting to bond and forgive him for the sake of her own inner peace.

Brett Hand is the co-team leader at Cognito, Inc., alongside Reagan. Brett is presented as an extremely positive man who always tries to lighten up the mood for his team. However, Brett's positivity and eagerness to please others cause him to be easily manipulated and to put everyone else's wellbeing over his own. Throughout the show it is revealed that his obsession with being liked by other people is mainly caused by his family's neglectful treatment growing up, an element that allows him to bond with Reagan, with whom he establishes a beautiful friendship.

Dr. Andre Lee is the lead biochemist at Cognito Inc. He is often shown to be unable to focus and to remain calm without drugs, which he uses to self-medicate various disorders, including Tourette's Syndrome and OCD. He is also often presented as a highly sexual person, partaking in different kinds of sexual acts with different species.

Myc Cellium, also known as Magic Myc, is a genderless psychic mushroom-like organism from a hive mind deep inside Hollow Earth (the center of the planet). Their species is responsible for giving humanity intelligence, which is why one of their main characteristics is the ability to read and manipulate the human mind. Myc's main contribution to the team's interactions is comprised of snarky, sarcastic, and sometimes insulting remarks towards a member of the team or the situation itself. Their quick and witty commentary often complements with Andre's, as the two are shown to take jabs at each other at any given moment. However, Myc's insults and mockery are not exclusive to the members of his team but rather to anyone and anything, including themselves.

Gigi Thompson is the head of the P.R. and Media Manipulation Department at Cognito Inc. She is in charge of containing or spreading scandals, as well as controlling all media outlets to serve

the goals of the Deep State. She is often shown being on her phone and, among the other members of the team, she is the most well-versed in pop culture events, celebrity dramas, and internet scandals.

Glenn Dolphman is a former member of the United States military, and he is responsible for the company's weapon arsenal. During his employment at the organization, he underwent an operation that turned him into a dolphin-human hybrid super soldier. As a result, he can communicate with marine animals and he shares some abilities with dolphins, such as underwater breathing. Glenn is often shown as a strongly patriotic man, obsessed with weapons and American-like values. However, he is also very out-of-touch with modern society and technological advances, and often acts entitled regarding his status as a high-ranking military officer.

3.2.3. *Inside Job*: synopsis of the episodes

The show is divided into two parts with a total of eighteen episodes. The premises and plots of each episode will be presented below to give a better understanding of the story and to provide context for the analysis that will be conducted in Chapter 4.

Part 1, Episode 1 "Unpresidented". The show opens with Rand Ridley, former CEO of Cognito Inc., drunkenly ranting about conspiracies in front of the White House, nearly exposing the truth about the Deep State. His daughter, Reagan, swoops in just in time brings him back to Cognito Inc., where we learn its mission to control world affairs from the shadows. In the "war room", Reagan presents the day's mission to her team: replacing the president of the United States with a robot, named ROBOTUS, that she created. Her excitement about a potential promotion gets spoiled by the arrival of Brett Hand, her new co-leader. Brett's introduction allows the show to unveil the team's dynamics and Reagan's obsessive and sometimes unstable tendencies. Reagan's attempts to discredit Brett fail, leading to her temporary suspension from the company. However, after the mission goes awry when ROBOTUS becomes self-aware and threatens humanity, Brett seeks Reagan's help, and together they stop ROBOTUS. When Reagan is ordered to deactivate the remains of her robot (now

called Alpha-Beta), secretly keeps him operational and hidden away, setting up his recurring role in the series.

Part 1, Episode 2 "Clone Gunman". The episode starts with Reagan talking to ROBOTUS, her secret self-aware AI, which she hopes to analyze further. Meanwhile, J.R. informs the team of the financial problems of Cognito Inc., urging Reagan and Brett to find a way to cut costs. This leads them to consider cutting from the team Grassy Noel Atkinson, JFK's assassin, who has not had a mission in a while. As Reagan's co-workers worry about being laid off and try to impress her, she pretends one of them will be fired, which unsettles Brett. After discovering Noel's popularity, Reagan visits the clone department of Cognito Inc., where she ends up accidentally realizing all clones. Reagan and her team eventually defeat the clones by working together, ultimately shutting down the whole cloning department, which saves the company some money. In this episode we get a first glimpse into Brett's personality, who was physically unwell at the thought of deceiving his friends, which contrasts with Reagan's enjoyment of the whole situation.

Part 1, Episode 3 "Blue Bloods". The episode Reagan's family issues as we see her helping her mom Tamiko getting rid of her dad's things after the divorce. This is the episode where we really start to get deep into Reagan's past and her resentment about being undermined and ignored in her childhood. At her childhood home, Reagan and Brett find Bear-O, a robotic friend her father built for her. At Cognito Inc., Reagan presents her later invention, the Productivitron, while J.R. causes a P.R. disaster by making an offensive joke towards the Reptoids, a species of shape-shifting reptile-like humanoids funding Cognito Inc. To manage the fallout, the team attends the Reptoid gala, where Reagan struggles with the customary hug greeting because of her aversion to displays of affection. He decides to use the Productivitron to cope with the issue, but it malfunctions and causes an even greater scandal. Reagan is put on trial at the Reptoid Supreme Court, where she is asked to apologies and to hug the members of the community. During the trial, she realized that her revulsion for physical contact comes from her father's neglect, as he admits to having built Bear-O to distract her. At the

end of the episode the two come together for a hug, seemingly heading towards a healing of their relationship.

Part 1, Episode 4 "Sex Machina". The episode follows Reagan as she gets pressured by her mother and her co-workers to find a partner. After struggling with a dating app recently purchased by the company, she makes it her mission to find a boyfriend ultimately matches Bryan. Nervous about the first date, Reagan creates a robot version of him to practice her dating skills on but ends up embarrassing herself in front of the real Bryan. She continues dating the robot version of him, which soon grows tired of her and plots to make his own robot version of Reagan. After the situation inevitably escalates, Reagan destroys both robots and comes out of the experience as a changed woman. With each episode, we get more Reagan's personality, diving deeper into her genius mind, but also in her insecurities Meanwhile, at Cognito Inc., Brett and Glenn swap bodies as part of a bet, which leads them to learn that their personalities matter more than their appearance.

Part 1, Episode 5 "The Brettfast Club". This is dives into Brett's personality and past. Known as the "nice guy" with comedic existential dread, we learn about his family dynamics and attachment to the team. The mission of the week takes the team to a town that Cognito Inc. purposefully keeps stuck in the 80s to sell dangerous recall products, where they must infect the town with Nostalgia Max, a memory-altering chemical. While Brett's excitedly expresses his love for the 1980s culture, Myc falls out of the plane, forcing the team to search the town for him. Brett's suggests adopting fake identities to blend in but Reagan, unfamiliar with 80s culture, dismisses Brett's nostalgic excitement. Brett loses control and accidentally exposes himself to Nostalgia Max, which turns him into an 80s-themed monster, while Reagan comes to realize that Brett's nostalgia originates from his need to escape from his neglectful family. After battling Brett and turning him back to his normal self the group shares a heart-felt moment in which Brett realizes he has found a new family. The episode deepens the bond between Reagan and Brett, as they both grew up in neglectful households, consolidating their friendship through their shared need to escape their pasts.

Part 1, Episode 6 "My Big Flat Earth Wedding". The episode follows Reagan as she arranges her mom Tomiko's marriage to herself. Despite Reagan's efforts to keep the event secret, Rand discovers it and crashes the wedding, which is being held on a yacht. He shows up with a group of flat-earthers who take everyone hostage, demanding to be taken to the edge of the Earth. With a clever diversion and teamwork, Reagan manages to get rid of the flat-earthers and to give her mom the wedding day she deserves. This episode does not give us much more than the story itself, other than a closer look at Reagan's parents relationship and how it affects her.

Part 1, Episode 7 "Ghost Protocol". After her mother's wedding, Reagan's sleeps with Rafe Masters, a British secret agent. Regretting her decision, she is forced to work with him on a mission to take down his nemesis, Doctor Skullfinger. When Reagan attempts to break up Refe, she feels guilty about it as he has not done anything bad to her, aside from exhibiting an unhealthy obsession for her. However, pressured by her team, Reagan uses the Ghost Protocol to fake her own murder and get rid of Refe. The plan backfires and Masters starts investigating her death. Tempted to use Skullfinger's mind-wiping machine on him, Reagan ultimately decides confront Masters.

Part 1, Episode 8 "Buzzkill". While Reagan is dealing with a traumatizing memory of her father, the team prepares for a mission on the moon in response to a distress call from an established free-love community of astronauts living there. Meanwhile, Reagan finds out from her dad about her parent's past trip to the moon. On the mood, Reagan and Brett find an advanced city led by the ageless Buzz Aldrin. Rand follows Reagan to the moon to confront Buzz about sleeping with Tamiko, Reagan's mom, sparking Reagan's mixed feelings about the possibility of Buzz being her real father. After unveiling that Buzz murdered Neil Armstrong, Rand and Brett have doubts about his true intentions and worry about Reagan's safety. Reagan eventually discovers Buzz's plan of moving the moon away from the Earth and works with Brett to stop him.

Part 1, Episode 9 "Mole Hunt". In this episode we get a look behind the scenes of the "Shadow Board", which is looking for a new member. Reagan learns that J.R. was chosen for the position,

which offers her the chance to become the new CEO. Once she comes into her new position, J.R. reveals that a mole stole an incriminating file, forcing Reagan to find the culprit. Feeling pressured, Reagan starts suspecting her team, and uses a truth serum on them with no success. When Rand shows up to the office everyone's suspicions fall on him and, despite their troubled past, Reagan decides to trust him. After battling the team, it is revealed that the mole was actually Bear-O.

Part 1, Episode 10 "Inside Reagan". Programmed by Rand to make Reagan happy, Bear-O attempts to destroy the stolen files and turns hostile, targeting Reagan's friends. Reagan tries to deactivate it but soon realizes that she cannot remember the password, which leads to her and Rand physically going into her memories to find it. In her mind, Reagan discovers suppressed memories of her childhood friend Orrin, erased by Rand to push her academically. Meanwhile Brett follows them into Reagan's mind and discovers the password. Reagan confronts her dad for tempering with her memories and kicks him out of her life. The following day, it is revealed that the Shadow Board has removed Reagan from her position, and they reveal that the new CEO will be Rand. Rand's betrayal exposes his true nature and causes Reagan to feel deeply manipulated.

Part 2, Episode 1 "How Reagan Got Her Groove Back". Reagan decides to cope with her father's betrayal by joining "Anonymous Anonymous", a therapy group for members of shadowy organizations. There, she meets Ron Staedtler from the Illuminati, who shares his guilt over his duties. At a secret gathering of the six world-ruling societies (the Reptoids, the Atlanteans, the Catholic Church, the Juggalos, Cognito Inc., and the Illuminati), both Reagan and Ron attempt to sabotage their agencies, but they fail. In hiding, they bond over their frustrations and sleep together, marking Reagan's first real interest in someone. In her conversation with Ron Reagan reflects on her life choices and her commitment to Cognito Inc., while Ron struggles with his morally challenging tasks in the Illuminati.

Part 2, Episode 2 "Whoas-Feratu". Reagan's mom, Tamiko, announces her relationship with movie star Keanu Reeves, which stirs jealousy in Rand, who decides to take a youth serum to appear

more appealing to his ex-wife. The experiment fails and he is into an infant. Meanwhile, Reagan finds out that Keanu is a vampire who drinks the blood of young women to stay young and convinces Keanu to reveal his secret to Tomiko. At Cognito Inc. the team discovers that there are many vampire celebrities in Hollywood who do the same and who are trying to kill both Tamiko and Keanu. Using Rand's blood Reagan manages to kill all the VIPs except for Keanu, with whom Tamiko breaks up. The episode satirically references allegations about Hollywood actors never aging.

Part 2, Episode 3 "Reagan & Mychelle's Hive School Reunion". When it is revealed that Myc is feeling nervous about their Hive school reunion, the team agrees to help them and to pose as their cluster's to appear more accomplished in front of their old schoolmates. Because of Myc's insults, Reagan reveals the truth, leading to Myc becoming part of the hivemind. Meanwhile, under the influence of strong drugs, Glenn and Andre find out that the mushrooms plan to take over the world. The team gets together to try and turn Myc back into their old self, which results in them breaking the mind hive.

Part 2, Episode 4 "We Found Love in a Popeless Place". Reagan volunteers for an upcoming mission in Rome aimed at brainwashing the Pope into becoming less tolerant. She uses the mission to test Ron's true feelings, but her impatience leads to the mission and the Pope getting out of control and unleashing artificial Hell, created by Cognito Inc. When Staedtler reverses the effects of the "Catholicizer", he sacrifices himself to fix the situation. Reagan apologizes, and the two officialize the relationship.

Part 2, Episode 5 "Brettwork". Brett's deals with his emotionally abusing family and his feelings of neglect, when he decides to replace one of Cognito's fake news host, which leads him to gain public favor and his family's approval. However, Rand forces Brett to run against his brother Jagg for senator, causing friction between Brett and his family. After failing to cause scandals to avoid disappointing Rand and his family, Brett decides to fake his own death, causing even more

tension among his supporters. To avoid further chaos Brett comes clean and when an attempt is made on Jagg's life, he sacrifices himself to save him.

Part 2, Episode 6 "Rontagion". Reagan tries to integrate her boyfriend Ron into Congnito Inc. and asks for Brett's help in convincing him of accepting the job. Brett's initial dislike of Ron leads Andre to create a virus to make Brett like Ron, but it spreads uncontrollably across the staff and causes everyone to develop a violent obsession for Ron. When the situation gets resolved by Andre, Reagan develops concerns about Ron's intention for the job and the relationship.

Part 2, Episode 7 "Project Reboot". While Reagan waits for Ron's text, J.R. panics when he spots a movie poster discrepancy, which leads him to tell the team about how he met Rand. The two met at Harvard and created a series of failing inventions until they succeeded in creating a reality-altering machine called "Project Reboot". When the Shadow Board offered them the lead of Cognito Inc. in exchange for the machine destruction, the two accepted but Rand secretly hid the machine. Reagan starts suspecting that her father might be using the machine again, she and her team try to go search for him. When Andre is accidentally pulled into the alternate reality, the team discovers that in the new timeline their life is better and decide to abandon Reagan. When Reagan and Brett find Rand, Reagan sends Brett away to protect him and goes to confront her father. Despite being prepared to deal with an evil plan, Reagan discovers that her dad had been trying to create a timeline where he was still married to Tamiko and Regan did not resent him. After an heartfelt conversation, they shut down the machine, but J.R. decides to use the machine to get his wealth and power back, and is ultimately stopped by the team. The original timeline gets restored while Rand and J.R. are sent to Shadow Prison X.

Part 2, Episode 8 "Appleton". Reagan, now CEO of Cognito Inc., celebrates with her team. When she meets with Ron, he reveals that he wants to run away to Appleton with her to leave their past behind. Meanwhile, the Shadow Board invites her to their secret headquarters and reveal to her their controversial history of influencing human events for what they deem the greater good, and they

offer the opportunity to work for them to make the world a better place. Faced with a difficult decision between personal happiness and global influence, she secretly erases Ron's memories and sets him free, sacrificing their relationship.

CHAPTER 4 – ANALYSIS OF THE ITALIAN SUBTITLES AND DUBBING OF THE SHOW *INSIDE JOB*

4.1. Premise and methodology

The purpose of this chapter is to provide a comparative analysis between the original English script of the Netflix TV series *Inside Job* and its Italian adaptations, while also examining the differences between the translations presented in the Italian subtitles and the Italian dubbing. The aim of this study is to find critical points in the translations, specifically focusing on instances of humor, cultural references, and taboos, and to investigate the reasons behind the success, or lack thereof, of the translations performed. The scenes presented in this chapter were selected with the aim of finding the most exemplary instances of the topics introduced in the previous chapters of this dissertation. Most of the scenes that will be analyzed were chosen because of either a particularly effective solution in the Italian adaptations, or because of a choice that resulted in a loss of meaning or effect. Observations on the effectiveness of the Italian dubbed and subtitled adaptations, in comparison with the original English scenes, are based on subjective criteria. However, the original English scenes were oftentimes also presented to an American English native speaker, who provided valuable insight on some of the more obscure cultural references and, most of all, assisted me in the instances in which it was not clear how a specific line would be received and what implications it might have had for a native speaker.

Each scene will be reported in a table where the first column will present the original English version of the show, the second column will contain the Italian subtitles of the scene, and the third column will provide the Italian dubbed adaptation of the same scene. After a line has been presented in all three versions, the original meaning and intended effect will be explained and made explicit. Subsequently, the content and the strategies employed in the two Italian adaptations will be analyzed, drawing from the topics introduced in the previous chapters. Lastly, the Italian versions will be evaluated to determine whether or not they were successful in retaining and conveying the intended meaning and effect of the source text. It is worth noting that the scenes that will be analyzed in this

chapter do not represent the entirety of the instances of humor, cultural references, and taboo of the show, but they are meant to represent a curated selection of some of the most interesting cases. Moreover, it is important to note that most scenes of the entire show incorporate elements of humor, culture, and taboo simultaneously. Therefore, the analysis of the selected examples will be divided into seven categories, namely (1) examples containing exclusively cultural references, (2) examples containing exclusively humorous and language-related elements (including jokes, puns, play on words, and elements connected to English idioms and sayings), (3) examples containing exclusively taboo language, (4) examples containing both humorous elements and cultural references, (5) examples containing both humorous elements and taboo language, (6) examples containing both cultural references and taboo language, and lastly (7) examples working on all three levels simultaneously.

The show *Inside Job* was chosen for this study because I believe it poses a series of challenges for translators due to its high saturation in elements of humor, cultural references, and taboo subjects. Therefore, by analyzing the translation of these elements I hope to provide an insight on the complexities and the challenges of cross-cultural translation in the field of Audiovisual Translation.

4.2. Analysis

4.2.1. Translation of cultural references

This section will present and analyze the examples extracted from the TV series *Inside Job* that contain cultural references.

Table 1: Culture_Example 1

English original	Italian subtitles	Italian dubbing
Brett: We get knocked down, bit we get up again. They're never gonna keep us down.	Brett: Ci buttano giù, ma noi ci rialziamo. Non riusciranno mai a farci fuori.	Brett: Se finiamo al tappeto, abbiamo la forza di rialzarci. Nessuno potrà batterci, mai!

During one of the final scenes of this episode, Reagan and Brett are trying to save the world from ROBOTUS and they call the rest of the team for help. As a way to encourage them Brett starts giving what at first sounds like a simple pep talk, but as we keep listening it is clear that he is reciting the words from the well-known 1997 song "Tubthumping" by Chumbawamba. Unfortunately, there is not an effective way to translate this reference if not to retain the English lyrics, which would not be the most successful choice, therefore it comes to no surprise that both the Italian subtitles and the adaptation opted for somewhat of a literal translation of the message. In this way, the overall effect of encouragement to the team was retained, while the cultural reference to the song was completely omitted. However, this does not create any particular problems because the fact that Brett was quoting a song is not acknowledged by the rest of the team.

Table 2: Culture_Example 2

English original	Italian subtitles	Italian dubbing
Rand: Don't touch anything. This is a science lab, not a <u>Dave and Buster's.</u> […] Reagan: Even in my own brain I'm a paranoid maniac who shops at <u>Michael's</u>.	Rand: Non toccare niente. Questo è un laboratorio scientifico, non una <u>sala giochi</u>. […] Reagan: Perfino nel mio cervello sono una maniaca paranoide che compra da <u>Michaels</u>.	Rand: Non toccare nulla. Questo è un laboratorio, non una <u>sala giochi</u>. […] Reagan: Anche nel mio cervello sono una paranoica che spende tutto in <u>bricolage</u>.

While preparing to enter Reagan's mind to find the password to destroy Bear-O, Rand leaves Brett in charge of looking after them while they will be unconscious. However, given Brett's clumsy nature, Rand urges him to not touch anything because he is not in a "Dave and Buster's". This cultural reference to the popular American restaurant and arcade chain was completely omitted in both the Italian subtitles and the dubbed adaptation, in favor of a generalizing strategy. The mention of this

specific arcade is in fact translated with a generic "*sala giochi*", which in the context of the scene, despite being less culturally bound, successfully conveys Rand's message to Brett. Shortly after, when Reagan finds herself wandering in her own brain and sees that all of her memories are organized on a board, she mentions the DIY store chain Michael's. Interestingly, despite the two lines being in the same scene, the strategies adopted by the Italian subtitles and adaptation differ. While the dubbed version opted for a similar generalizing path by explicitating the fact that the materials seen on screen are usually connected to DIY projects, the Italian subtitles chose to retain the reference unchanged. Unfortunately, given that this particular shop chain is not present in Italy and that its name does not give away any information about the products that are sold in the stores, the Italian viewer is likely to fail in identifying the reference being made.

Table 3: Culture_Example 3

English original	Italian subtitles	Italian dubbing
Gigi: You're our Timberlake, Reagan. Glenn: Turns out <u>it's not gonna be "me", it's gonna be "us"</u>.	Gigi: Tu sei la nostra Timberlake, Reagan. Glenn: A quanto pare, <u>non sarò io, ma saremo noi</u>!	Gigi: Tu sei la nostra Timberlake, Reagan. Glenn: <u>Ora sì che siamo proprio come una band</u>.

After talking to the band NSYNC, who is seen locked away in Cognito's headquarters, the team reconsiders the relationship among the group and rushes to Reagan's aid. Once the mission is complete, the team recognizes Reagan's leadership and importance in the team, comparing her to Justin Timberlake. The reference to Timberlake is an obvious one, considering that his band is also shown in the previous scenes, and the comparison with Reagan is connected to the fact that Justin Timberlake has always been considered as the leader of the band. Given NSYNC's global success, the reference is retained in both the Italian subtitles and dubbed adaptation. However, when Glenn goes on to say that from now on the team is going to work as one because "it's gonna be us", he

intentionally references one of NSYNC's most famous songs: "It's Gonna Be Me". As it is the case with all other instances in which a song was referenced in the show, it becomes quite impossible to retain the allusion in Italian, as the lyrics cannot be translated literally, at least not in a way that would allow the Italian audience to grasp the reference. However, that is exactly the strategy that was adopted by the Italian subtitles, where the lyrics recited by Glenn were translated directly, resulting in a sentence that not only fails to convey any particular meaning, but also fails to fit into the scene and the context. Contrarily, the Italian dubbed adaptation decided to completely paraphrase Glenn's comment, choosing to focus on the communication of the message rather than on the retention of the reference, resulting in a much more effective translation. Additionally, the Italian adaptation does manage to maintain the presence of an allusion to the band, although in a different manner, which adds to the overall tone of the scene.

Table 4: Culture_Example 4

English original	Italian subtitles	Italian dubbing
Staedtler: <u>That's me in the corner, losing my religion</u>.	Staedtler: <u>Sono io nell'angolo che perdo la fede</u>.	Staedtler: <u>In casa mia non c'è Dio ma se trovi il senso del tempo risalirai dal tuo oblio</u>.

In this scene we are, once again, presented with a musical reference when Ron shows a picture of himself to Reagan and recites part of the song "Losing my Religion" by R.E.M. As it was previously mentioned, it is particularly difficult to retain a musical reference to a song with English lyrics when translating into Italian. However, the Italian adaptation chose to adapt the reference to the target culture by substituting the original song with an Italian song by the band Maneskin that talks about similar topics. The only issue is that the R.E.M. song is vastly more known and popular, and therefore more easily recognizable. In contrast, the Italian subtitles chose to perform a literal translation of the lyrics, which in this case also proves to be an effective choice given that Ron's

comment was to describe himself in the picture. Nevertheless, even though the audience is able to understand the conversation, the cultural reference is lost.

4.2.2. Translation of comedic and language-related elements

This section will present and analyze the examples extracted from the TV series *Inside Job* that contain language-related comedic elements, such as jokes, puns, play on words, and FEIs, as well elements connected to the Italian language and dialects.

Table 5: Humor and language_Example 1

English original	Italian subtitles	Italian dubbing
Brett: <u>No big deal-io, just keep it real-io.</u>	Brett: <u>Niente di che. Stiamo in campana.</u>	Brett: <u>Sarà un vero scherzone senza dubbione.</u>

Worried about the outcome of the mission, Brett is shown panicking in the control room, where he mumbles this sentence to try and calm himself down. The structure of the line is purely idiomatic as both "no big deal", used to downplay the importance of a situation, and "keep it real", meaning to be true to oneself, are considered to be idiomatic sentences. Moreover, the decision to add "-io" at the end of both phrases is a reflection of a particular characteristic of American English, particularly seen in Hip Hop culture. Once again, this choice is purely idiomatic and does not really have anything to do with the rhythm of the sentence because "deal" and "real" would have rhymed with each other in any case. The Italian subtitles decided to paraphrase the whole line in order to simply convey the state of mind Brett was in. However, they do retain some degree of idiomaticity with the phrase "*stiamo in campana*", meaning to be attentive, which given the stressful situation of the scene appears to be an appropriate response. The dubbed adaptation, on the other hand, attempts to retain the rhyme and rhythm of the sentence as well as the meaning. However, while the sarcastic meaning of the original is effectively rendered, the modification of the words with the suffix "*-one*",

although intelligible by an Italian viewer, does not work effectively and makes the whole line sound particularly unnatural and forced.

Table 6: Humor and language_Example 2

English original	Italian subtitles	Italian dubbing
Reagan: I left you a special <u>de-liver-y</u>. Free JFK livers.	Reagan: Ti ho lasciato una <u>consegna speciale</u>. Fegati di JFK gratis!	Reagan: Ho un regalo speciale per uno <u>sfegatato</u> come te. Fegati di JFK gratis!

At the end of the episode, Rand finally gets the supply of new livers he was promised and Reagan surprises him with it by telling him that she has a "special de-liver-y" for him, playing on the fact that the word "delivery" contains the word "liver". The Italian subtitles completely omit the pun by only conveying the meaning of the word "delivery" with the Italian word "*consegna*". This choice proves effective because the pun is never acknowledged and therefore the viewer does not feel like something is missing from the translation. However, the Italian adaptation choose to maintain the element of the pun by adding the adjective "*sfegatato*", which includes in itself the word "*fegato*". This strategy proves to be more effective as it succeeds in conveying both the meaning of the line and the humorous element of it.

Table 7: Humor and language_Example 3

English original	Italian subtitles	Italian dubbing
J.R.: I've signed you all up for Reptoid sensitivity <u>training</u>. Brett: Training? Hell, yeah. Who's ready to get some reps in? Oh, no. Is "<u>reps</u>" offensive to say?	J.R.: Vi ho iscritto a un <u>corso di addestramento</u> alla sensibilità dei Reptoidi. Brett: Addestramento? Cazzo, sì. Pronti a sbattersi per i	J.R.: Vi ho iscritto a un <u>corso di aggiornamento</u> alla sensibilità dei Reptoidi. Brett: Un corso? Evvai! Chi si sbatterà per i Reptoidi? Oh, no.

	Reptoidi? Oh, no. Dire "sbattersi" è offensivo?	Scusatemi, non volevo dire <u>una cosa così biricchina</u>.

In an effort to remedy his mistakes with the Reptoids, JR forces the whole team to go through Reptoid sensitivity training. Although it is clear that JR is talking about some sort of HR course, Brett misunderstands and associates the word "training" with physical exercise, showing his excitement at the prospect of doing "reps", an abbreviation for "repetitions" used primarily in the field of weight training and sports. Brett immediately loses all enthusiasm and asks concerned if the word "reps" might result offensive for Reptoids, playing on the fact that the two words sound very similar. This joke is quite layered, and all the different meanings and comedic nuances overlap in a short and fast line, therefore making it even more difficult for a translator to find an effective solution. The first layer of meaning that concerns the double meaning of the word "training" is somewhat retained in Italian subtitles, which chose to translate it as "*addestramento*". However, the overall line "*un corso di addestramento alla sensibilità*" does not make much sense because "*addestramento*" is more generally associated with physical movement and it is not often used in collocation with the word "*corso*". On the other hand, the Italian adaptation opted for "*corso di aggiornamento*", which is a more appropriate translation for "sensitivity training", although it still fails to communicate the exact same meaning. Nevertheless, the collocation does sound more natural in Italian, but it also fails to convey any double meaning related to physical exercise. Secondly, Brett's comment about "reps" is translated both in the Italian subtitles and the dubbed adaptation with the verb "*sbattersi*", which in this particular case does not prove effective as it does not clearly communicate any meaning to an Italian viewer. Lastly, Brett's mortified comment is treated very differently in the two Italian versions. While the subtitles maintain the structure of the original by repeating the same word, the adaptation takes a completely different route and decides to simply convey Brett's feeling. However, the choice of using the phrase "*non volevo dire una cosa così biricchina*" sounds particularly out of character

and does not fit seamlessly into the context of the scene, therefore causing an interference for the Italian audience.

It is worth noting that a similar joke was found in the previous episode where Brett thought that the movie "Training Day" was an exercise video. In that case the translators were presented with an even more difficult task, given that part of the joke was given by an official movie title, which could not be modified. In this case, both the Italian subtitles and the adaptation relied on the audience's knowledge in hopes that they would be able to make the connection between the word "training" and the Italian word "*allenamento*", given that among young people this particular English word is rather known.

Table 8: Humor and language_Example 4

English original	Italian subtitles	Italian dubbing
Mr. Mothman: Don't use phrases like "<u>hissy fit</u>" or "<u>see you later, alligator</u>"	Sig. Mothman: Non usate frasi pesanti come "<u>lingua biforcuta</u>" o "<u>ci si vede, alligatore</u>".	Sig. Mothman: Non dovete usare frasi come ad esempio "<u>lingua biforcuta</u>" o cantare "<u>Il cobra non è un serpente</u>*"*.

During the Reptoid sensitivity training, Mr. Mothman, head of HR at Cognito, is explaining to the team what expressions it is best to avoid around Reptoids, focusing on those that include some kind of reference to the world of reptiles. The two expressions he mentions are "hissy fit", typically used to refer to a tantrum, and "see you later, alligator", an informal greeting. For the translation of the first expression both the Italian subtitles and the adaptation opted for "*lingua biforcuta*", which has a completely different meaning to "hissy fit", but which is a very effective choice as it represents a widely used Italian idiomatic expression containing a reference to reptiles. On the other hand, for the second expression the Italian versions apply different approaches. The Italian subtitles present a quite literal translation of the English saying, which does not exist in Italian, therefore providing an extremely confusing line of which an Italian viewer would not grasp the meaning. On the other hand,

the solution proposed in the adaptation appears particularly clever, as the English expression was translated with the name of an Italian song that references a type of snakes. This choice results in a very effective translation that is able to also retain the humorous element of the original.

Table 9: Humor and language_Example 5

English original	Italian subtitles	Italian dubbing
Reagan (with Italian accent): Sorry, I just working in the back, being super Italian. Sbarro! Mario Kart!	Reagan: Scusi, lavoro nel retrobottega, sono super italiano. Sbarro! Mario Kart!	Reagan (con accento italiano): Scusa, sto sono andando a lavorare ai fornelli, perché sono super italiano. Viva la pizza! Mario Kart!

When Reagan embarrasses herself in front of her crush in an Italian restaurant, she decides to act like one of the workers to escape the situation. Given that the scene takes place in an Italian restaurant, she starts talking (in English) with a heavy Italian accent and saying random words associated with Italian culture, such as "Mario Kart". The Italian subtitles and dubbed adaptation provide a rather literal translation of the whole line, but what appears more interesting is the accent used in the dubbed version. While in the original English version of the scene it makes sense that Reagan would adopt a heavy Italian accent to try and appear like one the workers, in the Italian dubbed version, where everyone is already speaking in Italian, the choice to retain the exaggeration of the accent seems unusual and confusing, and an Italian viewer would probably be perplexed when hearing it.

Table 10: Humor and language_Example 6

English original	Italian subtitles	Italian dubbing
Skullfinger: But you do want to take over the world, right?	Skullfinger: Ma vuoi conquistare il mondo, giusto?	Skullfinger: Ma vorresti dominare il mondo, giusto?
Reagan: Everyone wants that.	Reagan: Lo vogliono tutti.	

Skullfinger: Honey, "Denial" isn't just a river I tried to steal with a laser.	Skullfinger: Tesoro, la negazione è non dover mai dire "mi dispiace".	Reagan: è qualcosa che vogliono tutti. Skullfinger: Tesoro, la realtà è non dover mai dire "mi dispiace".

When Reagan goes to visit Skullfinger in prison to ask for his help in stopping Refe, the two start talking about wanting to dominate the world, and when Reagan seems reluctant to admit her desire Skullfinger tells her that she is in denial. The expression he uses is rather common in today's speech, and it plays on the similarity of the word "denial" with the name of the African river "the Nile". Of course, in Italian the name of the river has its own official translation ("*Nilo*") and the word "denial" ("*negazione*") has a completely different sound, which means that it was necessary to find a different way of communicating Skullfinger's message while preferably maintaining the element of the pun. From the perspective of an Italian viewer, both solutions presented in the Italian translations appear perplexing and quite confusing. However, the line in the dubbed adaptation represents an allusion to the movie *Love Story* (1970), which can be seen as an attempt to retain the allusive characteristic of the line, but which ultimately fails in the context of the conversation and runs the risk of not communicating any meaning to an Italian viewer unfamiliar with the movie, especially because it is a fairly old one.

Table 11: Humor and language_Example 7

English original	Italian subtitles	Italian dubbing
Alpha-Beta: Do us all a favor, build a bridge and get over it. Am I right folks?	Alpha-Beta: Facci un favore. Prendi un libro e volta pagina. Giusto?	Alpha-Beta: Fai un favore a tutti. Costruisci un ponte e falla finita. Ho ragione ragazzi?

After going to Alpha-Beta for help with the mole hunt, Reagan is reluctant to let him out of his glass cage because she fears he might put in place on if his evil schemes to dominate the world. In an attempt to convince her to let him help the team Alpha-Beta encourages Reagan to forget their history and to "get over it". The expression he uses is a play on the English verb "to get over", which can be taken literally as the action of passing above something, which explains the connection with the bridge, or metaphorically, as the action of moving on and leaving events in the past. While the Italian dubbed adaptation chose to perform a literal translation of the expression and to retain the mention of the bridge, the Italian subtitles opted for a more idiomatic and much more effective solution. In fact, the expression "to get over something", in its metaphorical meaning, can be compared to the Italian expression "*voltare pagina*", which is connected to the literal image of turning a page, which justifies the connection with the word "*libro*". In contrast, the adaptation fails to convey both the meaning of Alpha-Beta's comment and its play on words, resulting in a rather confusing sentence that would leave any Italian viewer perplexed.

Table 12: Humor and language_Example 8

English original	Italian subtitles	Italian dubbing
Presenter: <u>They wear sandals and create scandals</u>. It's the Catholic Church! Pope (with Italian accent): <u>Mamma mia, Buca di Peppo</u>.	Presentatore: <u>Indossano sandali e creano scandali</u>. È la Chiesa Cattolica. Papa: <u>Mamma mia, Buca di Peppo.</u>	Presentatore: <u>Hanno i sandali e ci danno giù di scandali</u>. Sono quelli della Chiesa Cattolica. Papa: (con accento spagnolo) <u>Madre de Dios, que calor.</u>

When the annual competition among the main secret organizations of the world begins, we see the host of the night presenting all the different contestants. When it is time to introduce the Catholic Church, the presenter makes a joke playing on the rhyme between the words "sandal" and "scandal". Luckily, the two words in Italian have very similar translations, therefore the choice made in both the Italian subtitles and the dubbed adaptation to perform a direct translation proves

particularly effective. However, when it is time for the Pope to speak, he does so with a heavy and almost stereotyped Italian accent, saying random Italian words such as "mamma mia" and "Buca di Peppo", which is an Italian-style restaurant chain in the US. As we have seen from previous examples, the exaggeration of the accent and the list of seemingly random words whenever a character is presented as Italian seems to be the common path in the show. However, when it comes to the Italian translation the situation is once again complicated. While the Italian subtitles chose to perform a literal translation, which in this particular case does not prove to be effective for an Italian viewer, the dubbed adaptation decided to have the Pope speak with a Spanish accent while saying random Spanish words. The decision to present the Pope as Spanish rather than Italian in an attempt to make him stand out was already implemented in previous episodes when the Pope was briefly shown on screen and appears to be rather successful given that the current Pope has Argentinian origins.

Table 13: Humor and language_Example 9

English original	Italian subtitles	Italian dubbing
Reagan: Yeah! This is not gonna <u>suck</u>! I mean, <u>bite</u>. I mean, let's do it!	Reagan: Sì, questo non farà <u>sangue</u>. Cioè, <u>schifo</u>, insomma andiamo.	Reagan: Certo, non sto <u>succhiando</u>. Voglio dire, <u>mordendo</u>. Voglio dire, si va gente!

When Reagan finds out that Keanu is secretly a vampire, she is initially speechless, but immediately after she finds herself having to talk to her mother while trying to keep this newly discovered secret. While battling the shock and the nerves she finds herself unable to say anything other than words related to vampires, such as "suck" and "bite" when replying to her mother's questions. The humor of the conversation is given by the fact that both "suck" and "bite" are words that, beside their literal meaning, are also used as a way of saying that something is not good, and therefore they would have been acceptable answers to Tomiko's questions. In contrast, the Italian translation for the two verbs, respectively "*succhiare*" and "*mordere*", can only be used in their literal

meaning, and despite both verbs can be used in reference to vampires, neither communicates the metaphorical meaning of the original. Although in different ways, both the Italian subtitles and the dubbed adaptation opted for a rather literal translation, which unfortunately sounds very unnatural in Italian and mostly meaningless, which means that the Italian viewer is once again left confused and wondering if there might be some information being omitted from the Italian version.

Table 14: Humor and language_Example 10

English original	Italian subtitles	Italian dubbing
Girl: Oh my God. You're so sweet, and hot, but like non-threatening, like a cousin, but still kind of hot.	Ragazza: Santo Cielo. Sei così dolce e fico, ma affidabile come un cugino, ma comunque fico.	Ragazza: Amo, sei così dolce e affascinante, con un'attitudine da cugino poco minaccioso, ma comunque fico.

This particular interaction between Brett and a girl at the bar does not present any particular translation-related issues. However, what strikes as interesting is the Italian adaptation of the girl's accent. In the English original, in fact, the girl speaks with what in today's US pop culture would be defined as a "valley girl accent". This stereotypical linguistic feature is usually associated with Californian upper-middle-class white women, and it presents a distinct vocal intonation and specific interjections[2]. Because an Italian viewer would not be able to recognize such linguistic features, especially in a translated dialogue, the Italian adaptation makes the clever choice of making the girl speak in "*corsivo*", a specific and rather peculiar way of speaking that became popular among young Italian girls due to a TikTok trend[3], and which, ironically, it does have many similarities to the "valley girl accent", at least in the sound. This choice may appear unusual, but it works rather effectively in

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[2]

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Valley_girl#:~:text=A%20valley%20girl%20is%20a,of%20the%20San%20Fernando%20Valley.

[3] https://www.wired.it/article/parlare-in-corsivo-tik-tok-cosa-vuol-dire/

the context of the scene, and it does contribute a great deal to the comedic undertone of the conversation.

Table 15: Humor and language_Example 11

English original	Italian subtitles	Italian dubbing
Steadtler: <u>When in Rome</u>, right? Reagan: I was waiting for an opportunity for one of us to say that.	Steadtler: <u>Quando sei a Roma</u>, giusto? Reagan: Aspettavo che lo dicesse uno di noi.	Steadtler: <u>Ciò che accade a Roma</u>, si dice così? Reagan: Stavo aspettando che uno di noi pronunciasse questa frase.

Once Reagan and Staedtler finally get to their hotel room in Rome, they decide to put work aside for a moment and to enjoy themselves with some Italian drinks, justifying their enjoyment with by saying "when in Rome". This English saying, which in its complete form reads "when in Rome, do as the Romans do", is usually used to say that when you find yourself in another country you should adapt to the customs of the people in that place[4]. The phrase is not necessarily funny in and of itself, but the fact that the characters are actually located in Rome gives the interaction a subtly humorous undertone. Given that this expression does not have an equivalent in Italian, the choice of the subtitles to perform a direct translation proves to be ineffective, as the Italian viewer is left wondering about the meaning of this comment. Whereas the Italian dubbed adaptation chose to translate the expression with a phrase similar to the English saying "what happens in Vegas, stays in Vegas", with the obvious alteration of substituting the city of Las Vegas with that of Rome. Although this solution may run the risk of still sounding unnatural, it does prove to be more intelligible

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[4] https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/when-in-rome-do-as-the-romans-do

compared to the Italian subtitles, as the viewer has at least some kind of indication as to what Ron was trying to say.

Table 16: Humor and language_Example 12

English original	Italian subtitles	Italian dubbing
Reagan: I've been training my robot-arms to learn <u>Italian</u>. "<u>Pronto, prego, pasta</u>." Steadtler: Not offensive to Italians at all.	Reagan: Le mie braccia robotiche sanno <u>l'italiano</u>. <u>Pronto, prego, pasta</u>. Steadtler: Per niente offensivo per gli italiani.	Reagan: Sto insegnando il <u>dialetto</u> alle mie braccia robotiche. "<u>E daje, levate. Se famo du spaghi?</u>" Steadtler: Secondo me non è per nulla un cliché.

While preparing to go meet the Pope Reagan tells Ron that she has been training her robot-arms to speak Italian and proceeds to show him how the arms replicate hand gestures usually and stereotypically associated with Italians while she yells random Italian words. While the Italian subtitles chose once again to perform a direct translation of a meta-linguistic reference, resulting in an unsuccessful result, the Italian dubbed adaptation chose a different and much more effective path. In fact, given that the two characters are in Italy and that the show is dubbed in Italian, everyone already has already been speaking Italian and therefore saying random words would result odd. Instead, because the two characters are in Rome for an occasional trip, the adaptation does not mention that the robot-arms have been taught the Italian language, but rather that they have been trained to speak in the Roman dialect. Reagan then proceeds to say random words, but instead of using standard Italian, they are said in the Roman dialect and with a heavy Roman accent. This solution proves to be extremely effective in communicating the meaning of the dialogue while retaining the cultural reference and the humorous effect.

In the first scene of Part 1, Episode 3 "Blue Bloods", when JR communicates to the team that will have to deal with a PR scandal that happened between the humans and the Reptoids, it is revealed that many Hollywood celebrities are actually part of the Reptoid species, and their names are shown on screen in the background. The screens of the room show names of famous celebrities all slightly altered with some sort of pun related to the world of reptiles. Given that the conversation among the team continues throughout the whole scene, the names are not translated in Italian. However, the pictures of the celebrities are quite big and hard to ignore, and an Italian viewer might recognize the face of an actor but not the name, which may lead to a sense of confusion. Some of the names more clearly visible on the screens are Bella Thorny, Miley SSSYrus, Snake Gyllenhaal, John Scarry, Lizard McGuire, Hissy Elliot, Naomi Clawbell.

4.2.3. Translation of taboo language

This section will present and analyze examples extracted from the TV series *Inside Job* that exclusively contain instances of taboo language.

Table 18: Taboo_Example 1

English original	Italian subtitles	Italian dubbing
Rand: <u>Bullshit.</u> Listen up, kids. Everything they told you in school is a lie. […] Have you ever folded a one-dollar bill? Look! You can make it say "<u>boobs</u>". What does it mean?	Rand: <u>Cazzate</u>. Ascoltate, ragazzi. Tutto quello che vi insegnano a scuola è una bugia. […] Avete mai piegato una banconota da un dollaro? Guardate, esce scritto "<u>tette</u>". Cosa significa?	Rand: <u>Cazzate</u>. Statemi a sentire, tutto quello che vi insegnano a scuola è una <u>vagonata di cazzate</u>. […] Avete mai piegato una banconota da un dollaro? Guardate, c'è scritto "<u>bombe</u>". Che cosa significa?

The opening scene of the series shows Rand drunk in front of the White House, yelling at kids who are there on a school trip, that the American government is all based on lies. The first element of his speech that stands out is the use of swearwords, which already gives the audience an idea of the kind of person he is. In these particular lines he uses the swearword "bullshit", which is translated in Italian with "*cazzate*". This translation choice works perfectly and conveys exactly the same effect intended by the original. However, although Rand only says it once in these lines, the Italian dubbed adaptation chooses to reinforce the intensity of Rand's rage by inserting an additional swearword in the following sentence and translating "lie" with "*vagonata di cazzate*". The second most predominant element of this scene is the visual joke of the one-dollar bill. To prove to the children that the government is not real and that it is all one big conspiracy theory, he folds up a one-dollar bill to make the word "boobs" appear on the bill. In this specific case, the joke relies not only on the action shown on screen, but on an actual English word shown on the bill. This means that with any translation in any language there is always going to be a clash between the translated word and the English word on the screen. The Italian subtitles chose to use a literal translation of the word "boobs", which is rendered as "*tette*". In this way the visual element of the joke is completely ignored to favor a literal translation, which succeeds in communicating the same message Rand intended, but which could also leave some viewers confused, especially those who are not at all familiar with the English language. On the other hand, the Italian dubbed adaptation chose to translate the word "boobs" with the word "*bombe*", which is not close in meaning to the original but works better on a visual level because it incorporates parts of the word shown on screen, therefore resulting more convincing to the audience. Moreover, in this case it was not essential to retain the meaning of the word "boobs", as Rand's intent was merely to show something that would prove his conspiracy theory, therefore the choice to render it with the word "*bombe*" proves to be successful here.

Table 19: Taboo_Example 2

English original	Italian subtitles	Italian dubbing
Rand: Fucking brown-noser. […] Reagan: Get your shit together. […] Reagan: Suck my dick! J.R.: […] Says "suck my dick" too much for a woman	Rand: Maledetto leccaculo. […] Reagan: Datevi una regolata. […] Reagan: Succhiatemelo! J.R.: […] è una donna ma dice "succhiamelo" un sacco di volte.	Rand: Leccaculo di merda. […] Reagan: Datevi tutti una regolata. […] Reagan: Ciucciatemi il calzino. J.R.: Dice "ciucciami il calzino" un po' troppo per una donna.

The three lines presented were selected from different points in the episode because they all contain swearwords which were translated in Italian with different strategies.

In the first instance, when Rand calls one of the employees of Cognito Inc. a "fucking brown-noser", implying that he is being nice just to suck up to the boss, the Italian translations, although in a slightly different manner, both rely on a direct translation of "brown-noser" with "*leccaculo*", which succeeds in conveying the intended message. Moreover, while the subtitles chose to translate "fucking" with "*maledetto*", resulting in a milder expression compared to the English, the adaptation uses "*di merda*", which effectively retains the swearword of the original but also connects it to the meaning of the words "brown-noser" and "*leccaculo*":

Shortly after, Reagan is shown talking to her team about their behavior and pressures them to start acting more professionally by yelling "Get your shit together!". Interestingly enough, in this instance the swearword is omitted and replaced with the less intense Italian expression "*datevi una regolata*". The same translation appears both in the Italian subtitles and in the adaptation, and even

though it does not correspond perfectly with the English, it proves effective in conveying the intention behind the phrase while appearing more idiomatic to an Italian viewer.

The third case taken in exam here is particularly interesting. When it is announced that Reagan will be the leader of the team, she starts dancing and bragging, and she yells "Suck my dick!", to which J.R. later responds by saying that some co-workers complained about Reagan saying that expression too often for a woman. This comment made by J.R. implies that the expression "suck my dick", when used by a woman, sounds unusual and unnatural to native English speakers because of the obvious connection with the male genitalia. Consequently, the translation of this exclamation needed to reflect this abnormality of use, which is well-represented by the Italian subtitles. By translating the expression with "*succhiatemelo*", the subtitles are able to convey Reagan's initial intention while also making sense of J.R.'s comment, because in Italian as in English this expression would sound unnatural if said by a woman. The only note here would be that the Italian subtitles tone down the intensity by omitting the actual swearwords. However, the truly interesting aspect is found in how the expression is rendered in the Italian dubbed adaptation. The adaptor chose to translate "suck my dick" with the expression "*Ciucciatemi il calzino*", therefore transforming a non-allusive sentence into a KP allusion, specifically referencing the famous Bart Simpson's tagline from *The Simpsons*, which in English is "Eat my shorts". The result of this choice is that J.R.'s subsequent comment on Reagan's language does not really make sense to an Italian viewer because the expression "*ciucciami il calzino*" does not entitle a specific gender. Moreover, considering that this conversation happens halfway through the episode and that the audience has already had the chance to understand the type of person Reagan is, this expression seems very out of character and random. Finally, it goes without saying that in this instance the swearwords are completely censored, and even the sexual innuendo that was retained in the subtitles gets completely omitted here.

Table 20: Taboo_Example 3

English original	Italian subtitles	Italian dubbing
Brett: Are they <u>milking him</u>? Should we be watching? Myc: It's much grosser than that. […] Hey, soft hands. <u>Less talky, more milky</u>. […] Oh God, <u>I'm excreting</u>. Worker: Quick, <u>get him a cigarette</u>!	Brett: Lo stanno <u>mungendo</u>? Dobbiamo proprio guardarlo? Myc: è molto più disgustoso. […] Ehi, mani morbide. <u>Parla meno e mungi di più</u>. […] Oh, Dio, <u>sto secernendo</u>! Lavoratore: Presto, <u>portategli una sigaretta</u>!	Brett: Cosa? Sta <u>producendo latte</u>? E dovremmo guardare? Myc: Oh, è molto più disgustoso di così. […] Ehi, mani morbide. <u>Meno parole più fatti</u>. […] Dio, oddio, <u>sto espellendo.</u> Lavoratore: Presto, <u>dategli una sigaretta</u>.

From previous interactions we are told that Myc's psychic abilities derive from a liquid he produces in his body, which gets also extracted from his tentacles by Cognito Inc. to use in their memory-erasing guns. During this episode we are shown the process of this extraction when Reagan and Brett walk in on Myc being "milked" by Cognito workers using a strange machine. The entire scene, because of the visuals and of Myc's comments, has a fairly strong sexual undertone alluding to the fact that this process could be related more to masturbation rather than milking. Because of the uncomfortable situation Reagan and Brett find themselves in, Brett asks if it is appropriate to just stand there and watch. When Myc starts encouraging the workers to work faster he says: "Less talky, more milky". The structure of the sentence is fairly simple and easily replicable in Italian. However, the addition of the suffix "-y" to the words "talk" and "milk", which results in a rhyming and more rhythmic sentence, is lost in the translation, and with it some of the comedic effect of the overall line. While the Italian subtitles opt for a more literal translation, choosing to retain the verbs "talk" and "milk", respectively translated as "*parlare*" and "*mungere*", the dubbed adaptation took a more idiomatic path, translating the line as "*meno parole, più fatti*", and therefore omitting the literal meanings while efficiently communicating Myc's intention to rush the workers. The scene ends with

Myc completing his process and announcing that he is "excreting", using the same tone and voice one would use at the end of a sexual act. The underlying sexual innuendos of the scene are then confirmed again by the workers urging their colleagues to bring Myc a cigarette, which is an act often associated with the end of a sexual act. This second part of the scene does not create any particular problem from a translation perspective, as the innuendos are maintained in both the Italian subtitles and the adaptation. The only issue is the translation of the word "excreting", which in the dubbed version is translated as "*espellendo*". In this case, the effect is somewhat lost as it sounds very unusual to an Italian viewer, while the choice of the subtitles to translate it as "*secernendo*" results much more appropriate for the context.

Table 21: Taboo_Example 4

English original	Italian subtitles	Italian dubbing
Reagan: Shut the fuck up, Bear-o.	Reagan: Chiudi il becco, Ors-o.	Reagan: Chiudi quella bocca, Ors-o.

This scene is not particularly relevant to the episode, but it does represent one of the few occasions in which a swearword in the original English dialogue is not maintained in either the Italian subtitles or the dubbed adaptation. The choice to censor the expression "shut the fuck up" in both versions appears interesting because Reagan's rage and overall way of speaking make it seem like it would be necessary to maintain the element of the swearword. However, this choice in the Italian translation does not create any issue in the communication of the message to the Italian audience, although it does cause a loss of effect and emotion.

Table 22: Taboo_Example 5

English original	Italian subtitles	Italian dubbing
Rand: Motherfucker!	Rand: Brutto cazzone!	Rand: Ma porco cazzo!

Andre: Well, he is <u>fucking Reagan's mother</u>. So yeah, motherfucker.	Andre: Beh, sì sta scopando la madre di Reagan. <u>Avrà un cazzone.</u>	Andre: In effetti <u>è quello che cerca la mamma di Reagan</u> quindi, sì, commento appropriato.

When Reagan announces to the Cognito team that her mother is dating actor Keanu Reeves, Rand's jealousy starts running wild. When Rand calls Keanu a "motherfucker", Andre comments on the fact that it is a particularly appropriate insult considering that he is, in fact, having sexual relations with Reagan's mother. The joke plays on the fact that the word "motherfucker" can be used as a generic and non-literal insult to someone who has wronged us, or it can be taken in his literal meaning of someone having sex with someone's mother. Given than in Italian there is no swearword or insult that encompasses the same double meaning as "motherfucker", both the Italian subtitles and the dubbed adaptation chose to render the curse with swearwords related to the male genitalia. Although Rand's original insult retains the same sentiment in the Italian versions, Andre's subsequent comment does not insert as seamlessly into the interaction as it does not appear to be a response as natural as it is in the original, despite not creating any particular intelligibility problems for the viewer.

4.2.4. Translation of cultural and humorous or linguistic elements

This section will present and analyze examples extracted from the TV series *Inside Job* that contain both cultural references and comedic or language-related instances, therefore working simultaneously on two different levels to convey meaning.

Table 23: Culture and Humor_Example 1

English original	Italian subtitles	Italian dubbing
Brett: It's my second week and my third can of <u>Axe body spray.</u>	Brett: Sono alla seconda settimana e alla terza <u>bomboletta di deodorante.</u>	Brett: Sono solo alla seconda settimana e questo è già il mio terzo <u>deodorante.</u>

[…]	[…]	[…]
Atkinson: Do you have gun?	Atkinson: Hai una pistola?	Atkinson: Non ce l'hai una pistola?
Brett: No, but I do have an <u>Axe</u>.	Brett: No, ma ho l'<u>Axe</u>!	Brett: No, però in tasca ho un <u>deodorante</u>!

The episode opens with Brett being excited about going to his new job with Reagan and mentioning that because of his nervousness he has already used three cans of Axe body spray. This particular brand of spray deodorant is quite well-known in the US, and it is usually associated with young white men. The reference to the specific brand gets generalized in both the Italian subtitles and dubbed adaptation, given that the brand does not exist in Italy. Therefore, both translations opt for "*deodorante*" as a translation for "body spray", with the only difference being that the subtitles retain the element of it being a spray can by adding the term "*bomboletta*". In this particular instance the generalization of the reference does not create any interference, other than the fact that the subtle nod to the people who are usually thought to use Axe products gets lost. However, later on in the episode, while Brett finds himself fighting off clones with Atkinson, the name of the deodorant brand becomes more relevant. In fact, when Atkinson asks Brett if he has a gun to defend himself, he takes out his deodorant and says that all he has in an Axe, playing on the fact that the name Axe is a homophone to the word "ax", which is a weapon. In this case, the generalization of the reference would result in a loss of the wordplay and of the added comedic effect, which is what happens in both the Italian subtitles and the adaptation. On one hand, the subtitles chose to retain the reference unchanged and therefore to maintain the original name of the brand, which appears like an unusual choice considering that the same reference was treated differently earlier on in the episode, and which runs the risk of leaving the Italian viewer confused. On the other hand, the dubbed adaptation chose to generalize once again, leaving out the linguistic element, but opting for a clearer translation. In both cases, the

scene does still retain some of the comedy because of the visuals shown on screen of Brett taking out a deodorant to defend himself.

Table 24: Culture and Humor_Example 2

English original	Italian subtitles	Italian dubbing
Gigi: Reagan, honey, do you really think one of your science experiments is <u>boyfriend material</u>? Reagan: Gigi, I literally made him out of boyfriend material. […] He even has 2 settings: <u>"Netflix" and "chill".</u>	Gigi: Reagan, Tesoro, credi davvero che uno dei tupi esperimenti sia <u>il fidanzato ideale?</u> Reagan: Gigi, l'ho letteralmente creato per essere <u>il mio fidanzato ideale</u>. […] ha perfino due configurazioni: <u>serata Netflix e relax finale</u>.	Gigi: Reagan, bellezza, credi seriamente che uno dei tuoi <u>esperimenti scientifici</u> possa essere il tuo ragazzo? Reagan: Gigi, l'ho creato forgiandolo con <u>le sembianze di un ragazzo ideale</u>. […] Ha anche due impostazioni: <u>Netflix e Sexflix</u>.

After giving up on her search for love on the dating app, Reagan decides to create her own robot boyfriend and to start a relationship with it. When she goes to show her latest invention to Gigi, she asks Reagan if she really thinks the robot could be "boyfriend material", an expression usually used to refer to someone who is considered to be a suitable partner for someone. Reagan then jokes about the fact that she did in fact make the robot from actual boyfriend material, pointing to a box in front of her that reads "boyfriend material", which results in a joke that works both on the verbal and the visual level. The joke plays on the fact that the word "material" is both part of the idiomatic expression and can also be interpreted as physical components. Because of the image of the box shown on screen and of the idiomatic English expression used by Gigi, it becomes particularly difficult to find a successful translation for the joke and to communicate both of the original meanings. In fact, both the Italian subtitles and the dubbed adaptation made the decision to only retain the first meaning of "boyfriend material" which was translated with "*ragazzo ideale*", although with slightly different structure. The result is that the audience understands Gigi's comment, but is somewhat

confused by Reagan's response, as the line clash with the images shown on screen. Moreover, when explaining her new robot-boyfriend's functions, Reagan plays on another popular American expression, "Netflix and chill", used in slag as a euphemism for sexual activity[5]. The Italian subtitles opted for a literal translation of "Netflix" and the verb "chill", which unfortunately does not result in a successful solution as the overall sentence comes out to make little sense to an Italian viewer. The dubbed adaptation, on the other hand, implemented a clever strategy and effectively communicate both meanings of the expression, while also succeeding in maintain the comedic effect of the joke.

Table 25: Culture and Humor_Example 3

English original	Italian subtitles	Italian dubbing
J.R.: I can't believe Jeff Bezos is dad. And <u>right in his Prime</u>.	J.R.: Non riesco a credere che Jeff Bezos sia morto e <u>proprio da primo</u>.	J.R.: La sua <u>dipartita è davvero Prim-atura</u>. È proprio triste che Bezos <u>sia stato Amaz-ato</u>.

At the end of the episode, after we see Jeff Bezos hiding in the restroom of the yacht from the flat-earther terrorists, we see the yacht going up in flames and being attacked by the Kraken. After understanding that Jeff Bezos is therefore dead, JR comments on the tragedy and jokes about Bezos having died in his "Prime", making a clear reference to Bezos' business empire Amazon and its most known feature: Amazon Prime. The pun plays on the double meaning of the word "prime", which is used to refer to someone's most successful part of their lives[6] and is part of the official name of the Amazon service. The audience understands that JR intends to make a joke because of his intonation and because of everyone's reaction. The Italian subtitles unfortunately fail to convey the comedic effect of the line, choosing to translate "prime" with "*primo*", which in the context of the scene and of the episode does not make much sense and does not justify everyone's laughter. This means that, when hearing the laughter of JR's colleagues, the Italian audience is left to think that something funny

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[5] https://www.urbandictionary.com/define.php?term=Netflix%20and%20Chill
[6] https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/prime

was said and that there might have been some kind of mistranslation. On the other hand, the Italian dubbed adaptation takes a step further and decides to include an additional pun into the line, playing on both the words "Prime" and "Amazon", and helping the delivery of the joke with some alterations in the tone and the pronunciation. This way, the obvious puns, however forced they may feel, do justify the laughter of the characters on screen and convey the same meaning as the original.

Table 26: Culture and Humor_Example 4

English original	Italian subtitles	Italian dubbing
People of moon-topia: Have a great after-moon. Buzz: Don't moon-tion it. […] Reagan: Wow, free moon-iversity? Moon-iversal health insurance? A minimum moon-nable wage? Fuck, we are fucking up on Earth. […] [Shown on screen: "Capri-Moon"]	Cittadini della Luna-topia: Buon lune-riggio. Buzz: Non luna-telo neanche. […] Reagan: Wow, lun-iversità libera? Sanità lun-iversale? Un salario lunare minimo? Cazzo, stiamo rovinando tutto sulla Terra. […] Capri-luna	Cittadini della Luna-topia: Buon lune-riggio. Buzz: Buon lune-riggio a voi. […] Reagan: Wow, universi-luna gratuita? Sanità lun-iversale? Un sa-lunario minimo decente? Facciamo solo cose inutili sulla terra. […]

Part 1, Episode 8 – "Buzzkill" is particularly interesting from a translation point of view because it takes place on the moon, and all the writers went above and beyond to include as many moon puns as possible into the dialogue. In fact, Buzz and all the citizens of Moon-topia speak primarily by using puns with the word "moon". Some examples and their translations will be reported below.

In both the Italian subtitles and the dubbed adaptation, all the puns made with the word "moon" were retained and made with the Italian word "*luna*" and its variations. The solutions between the two versions are quite similar, although there are cases in which one works better than the other. For instance, "*lun-iversità*" for "moon-versity" in the subtitles sounds much more natural than "*universi-luna*" in the adaptation. In contrast, the choice of the adaptation to repeat "*lune-riggio*" instead of attempting to retain the English "moon-tion", results in a much more intelligible pun. Moreover, during the episode, the characters are seen drinking "Capri-moons", which is a reference the popular fruit juice brand Capri-sun. Given that the object is only ever shown on screen the only Italian translation is the one of the subtitles, which opted for a literal translation. Although the translation "*Capri-luna*" works well structurally, to an Italian viewer the reference would be lost because the brand does not exist in Italy.

4.2.5. Translation of taboo language and humorous or linguistic elements

This section will present and analyze examples extracted from the TV series *Inside Job* that contain both taboo language and comedic or language-related instances.

Table 27: Humor and Taboo_Example 1

English original	Italian subtitles	Italian dubbing
Alpha-Beta: There's DJ, who likes to DJ. And BJ, who…well, you'll never believe this. Reagan: <u>Likes BJs?</u> Alpha-Beta: No, what? He's a <u>youth pastor who kicked heroin</u>.	Alpha-Beta: C'è anche DJ, a cui piace fare il DJ. e BJ, che…bhe, non ci crederai mai. Reagan: Gli piacciono i pompini? Alpha-Beta: No, cosa? <u>È un pastore che ha smesso con l'eroina.</u>	Alpha-Beta: C'è anche DJ, a cui piace fare il DJ. e BJ, che…bhe, non ci crederai mai. Reagan: è a favore della bigamia? Alpha-Beta: No. <u>È un giovane pastore che si faceva di eroina.</u>

At the end of episode, we see Alpha-Beta heling Reagan in her quest to find love, as he reads to her all the names of the people that he thinks would be suitable for her. The first man Alpha-Beta mentions is called DJ, which is also his passion. Fortunately, the verb "to DJ" in Italian remains unchanged, so the play on words for this first possible partner is effectively translated in both the Italian subtitles and the adaptation. In contrast, when Alpha-Beta mentions a man called BJ, Reagan immediately associates him with the abbreviation "bj", which refers to "blowjob". In this way, although subtly because of the use of the abbreviation instead of the complete word, Reagan's joke acquires a sexual undertone. Because the abbreviation does not mean anything in Italian, both the Italian subtitles and adaptation decided to explicitate the sexual innuendo of the joke by translating "bj" with "*pompini*" and "*bigamia*". This choice, however, presents two problems. The first is that in the subtitles the word "*pompino*" is much more explicit than using the abbreviation "bj", which results in a line that is somewhat out of place. Secondly, and most importantly, the connection between the man being named BJ and the sexual act is completely lost, and the viewer is left wondering why Reagan would make such a strong comment, resulting in a confusing and rather surprising scene.

Table 28: Humor and Taboo_Example 2

English original	Italian subtitles	Italian dubbing
Brett: Let me know if you need a <u>bitchin' Spotify playlist</u>. Oh my God, <u>Spoti-spy playlist</u>.	Brett: Ditemi se vi serve una <u>playlist di Spotify</u>. Oh, mio Dio, una <u>playlist Spoti-spia</u>.	Brett: Fatemi sapere se devo venire a <u>salvarvi il culo</u>. Oh, mio Dio. Questo farebbe di me un "<u>salvagente</u>".

After meeting him at Reagan's mom's wedding, the team finds out they will have to assist Refe in a secret mission to destroy his number one enemy. Excited about being able to work with a secret spy, Brett offers to create a playlist for the mission and calls it a "Spoti-spy playlist", playing on the words "Spotify" and "spy" in an attempt to appear appealing to Refe. The music streaming service Spotify is extremely widespread in Italy, therefore the reference can easily be retained without

causing confusion in the Italian audience. However, the play on words might constitute a bigger hurdle. In the Italian subtitles we see that the translation attempted to recreate the exact same pun, which results in a somewhat successful choice given the similarity between the English "spy" and the Italian "*spia*". In contrast, the Italian dubbed adaptation chose to entirely rephrase the joke, omitting all of the meanings conveyed by the original. This strategy is certainly a valid one in the cases in which there is a way of rendering a humorous comment in a more efficient way. In this instance, however, the Italian joke results corny and does not fit particularly well into the scene, especially because it is presented as braggy remark, which Brett as a character would not make. Additionally, the adjective "bitching" used by Brett to describe the playlist, which in slag means "excellent, great, wonderful"[7], is completely omitted in both Italian versions.

Table 29: Humor and Taboo_Example 3

English original	Italian subtitles	Italian dubbing
Refe: Seems I managed to <u>penetrate your defenses</u>. Skullfinger: I assure you that the last thing you're going to penetrate. Gigi: Are you sensing kind of a vibe between these two? Reagan: I don't know, everything this guy says is horny. Refe: Skullfinger, <u>prepare to receive my load</u>. Reagan: Okay, yeah. I do hear it.	Refe: Sembra che io sia riuscito a <u>penetrare le tue difese.</u> Skullfinger: Ti assicuro che è l'ultima cosa che penetrerai. Gigi: Non senti un po' di tensione tra quei due? Reagan: Non lo so, tutto quello che dice è sempre sul sesso. Refe: Skullfinger, <u>preparati a prenderlo come meriti</u>. Reagan: Ok, sì, sento la tensione. […]	Refe: Sembra che io sia riuscito a <u>penetrare le tue difese</u>. Skullfinger: Tesoro, quella sarà l'ultima cosa che penetrerai. Gigi: Non ti sembra ci sia tipo del feeling tra quei due? Reagan: Non lo so, quello che dice allude sempre al sesso. Refe: Skullfinger, <u>è il momento di darti quello che meriti</u>. Reagan: Ok, forse c'è feeling. […]

[…] Refe: Now that we got rid of the skull, <u>it's time to finger</u>.	Refe: E ora che ci siamo liberati del cattivo, <u>tocca a te una bella sculacciata</u>.	Refe: E adesso che il cattivone è sistemato, <u>sta a te essere sculacciata</u>.

As it is mentioned multiple times throughout the episode, Refe is known for his corny puns and sexual innuendos, which become most evident in his interactions with the super villain Skullfinger. One of the first sexual puns Refe makes is about "penetrating" Skullfinger's defenses, which was translated rather directly in both the Italian subtitles and dubbed adaptation, given that the English verb "penetrate" and the Italian "*penetrare*" share the same double meaning. Later, while Refe is preparing to shoot his enemy, he warns him about his "load", a word used in the field of guns as well as in reference to a man ejaculation. In this case, the Italian subtitles attempted at retaining this sexual innuendo by using the verb "*prendere*" and the pronoun "*lo*", which is easily recognizable as a nod to the male genitalia. In contrast, the Italian dubbed adaptation completely omitted the underlying sexual tone of the line and focus on the general meaning of Refe's warning. Because of this, Reagan's subsequent comment about feeling some sort of sexual tension between the two appears unmotivated. Lastly, as soon as the team is able to beat Skullfinger, Refe refers to Reagan alluding to the fact that he would like to have sex with her and playing on the word "finger", which is contained in the villain name and is also a sexual practice. In both of the Italian versions this suggestion was translated as "*sculacciata*", which succeeds in communicating Refe's general intentions, but completely overlooks the play on words used in the original, which results in a lack of information and in a reduced humorous effect of the line.

Table 30: Humor and Taboo_Example 4

English original	Italian subtitles	Italian dubbing
Principal: Myc, I'm happy to declare you "<u>moist improved</u>" since high school. Myc: This is heavy. Good thing I have my human cluster here to carry it home. They're used to taking all <u>my big loads</u>.	Preside: Sono felice di proclamarti <u>il più migliorato</u> dalle superiori. Myc: è pesante. Ma ho il mio cluster umano per portarlo a casa. <u>Non si stancano mai di me.</u>	Preside: Sono felice di premiarti perché sei quello che è <u>più migliorato</u> dai tempi della scuola. Myc: Quanto pesa questo premio. Me lo porterà a casa il mio cluster umano. Di solito <u>si occupano loro dei miei pacchi</u>.

During the hive school reunion, as it is case for most US actual high school reunions, some awards are given out to the former students. Myc is given the "moist improved" award, which plays on the word "most" and the adjective "moist", often associated with fungi and molds. In this instance, it would be rather difficult to retain the wordplay element of the award, which is why both the Italian subtitles and the adaptation opted for an omission, retaining only the more basic layer of information in order to avoid creating confusion in the viewer. Shortly after receiving his trophy, Myc comments on the fact his human friends are "used to taking his loads". As we have seen in a previous example, the word "load" can often have a sexual undertone aside from its literal meaning, and given Myc's giggle and the crowd's reaction, this comment was undoubtedly made with a sexual innuendo. While the Italian subtitles chose a more censored translation, paraphrasing the joke completely, the Italian adaptation attempted to recreate the pun by using the word "*pacco*", which can be used with its literal meaning of "package", or as a sexual reference to male genitalia. In this instance, the solution proposed by the Italian adaptation proves to be quite successful in conveying the double meaning and the humorous effect of the line.

Table 31: Humor and Taboo_Example 5

English original	Italian subtitles	Italian dubbing
Narrator: Jagg Hand for Senator. Because in Virginia "Hand" means "jobs". Andre: Ah. Nice.	Narratore: Jagg Hand per il Senato. Perché in Virginia, <u>Hand significa lavoro</u>. Andre: Fantastico.	Narratore: Jagg Hand per il Senato degli Stati Uniti. Perché in Virginia, <u>Hand fa rima con lavoro.</u> Andre: Grande.

When Brett finds out his brother is running for senator, he rushes to watch his campaign video, where we hear his slogan "Hand means jobs". The phrase plays on the words "job" and "hand", which is Brett's family name, and the clear connection between the two, which allude to the sexual practice of giving a "handjob". Because of the meanings of the word "hand" is the slogan is actually a name, it must be retained unchanged in the translation, meaning that recreating a pun in Italian would be fairly difficult. In fact, the Italian subtitles opted for a solution that manages to convey the first and most important layer of meaning while omitting the sexual allusion altogether. The Italian dubbed adaptation did the same, although using a different structure, which in this case proved to be less successful compared to the subtitled version. The reason behind this is that the sentence used in the subtitles is constructed in the same way a political slogan would be, making it more appropriate for the context. On the other hand, the sentence of the adaptation does not work as much because the words "Hand" and "*lavoro*" do not rhyme as the slogan claims. Nevertheless, in both versions the sexual innuendo is omitted, and, subsequently, Andre's immediate comment and giggle appear unmotivated and run the risk of leaving the viewer confused.

Table 32: Humor and Taboo_Example 6

English original	Italian subtitles	Italian dubbing
Myc: It's not a party without a <u>Trojan</u>, right?	Myc: Non è una festa senza un <u>Troiano</u>, vero?	Myc: Non è una festa senza gli <u>spartani</u>, giusto?

During the Halloween costume party Reagan throws for Ron, Myc shows up wearing a Trojan battle costume and announcing the importance of having a Trojan at the party. Aside from the literal reference he makes about his own costume, Myc also clearly references the US brand Trojan, which specializes in condoms and other products aimed at enhancing sexual activity. Because this brand does not exist in Italy, both the Italian subtitles and the dubbed adaptation chose to perform a direct translation of the word, therefore retaining only the reference to Myc's costume. Because of the visuals on screen, this solution appears successful and does not clash with the scene. However, aside from the fact that one of the layers of meaning gets omitted, the group's reaction to Myc's comment results exaggerated for a person who is only able to grasp the allusion to the costume, and therefore it could lead to some confusion. Moreover, it is interesting to note that while the Italian subtitles translated "Trojan" with "*Troiano*", the Italian adaptation chose to use "*Spartano*", because it would be more recognizable by the audience but, most importantly, it would not run the risk of communicating any additional sexual double meaning like the word "*Troiano*" would because of its similarity the Italian "*troia*" (in English, "whore" or "slut"). However, in this particular case, given that the original English line also hides an underlying sexual double meaning, the choice of using "*Troiano*" would have been appropriate and in line with the tone and the context of the scene.

4.2.6. Translation of cultural elements and taboo language

This section will present and analyze examples extracted from the TV series *Inside Job* that contain both taboo language and cultural references.

Table 33: Culture and Taboo_Example 1

English original	Italian subtitles	Italian dubbing
Reagan: <u>Oh Jesus Christ</u>. Don't listen to my father kids. He gets his news from <u>Facebook</u> and <u>Ambien</u>. […] Rand: Hey, Reagan. Let's go to the mall and get a <u>Wetzel's Pretzel</u>. They got those ones with the cheese inside the crust.	Reagan: <u>Oh santo Dio</u>. Non ascoltate mio padre, ragazzi. Si informa tramite <u>Facebook</u> e <u>sonniferi</u>. […] Rand: Ehi, Reagan. Andiamo a fare un giro al centro commerciale. Hanno i <u>pretzel</u>, quelli col formaggio nella crosta.	Reagan: <u>Oh Cristo santo</u>. Ragazzi non date retta a mio padre. Si affida a <u>Facebook</u> e ai <u>sonniferi</u>. […] Rand: Ehi, Reagan. Andiamo al centro commerciale, ho voglia di <u>pretzel</u>. C'è un negozio che ha quelli col ripieno ai quattro formaggi.

After Rand's conspiracy theorist speech, Reagan picks him up with her car and they have a conversation on the way to Cognito Inc. This is the first of many instances in which one of the characters uses some kind of exclamation related to religion. In this specific case Reagan's frustrated "Oh Jesus Christ" gets translated with the same taboo language in both the Italian subtitles and the Italian dubbed adaptation, respectively with the expressions "*Oh santo Dio*" and "*Oh Cristo santo*". While both solutions work in conveying both Reagan's anger and the taboo of religious language, I would argue that the solution that proves slightly more effective is the one provided in the dubbing, particularly because of the highest correspondence between the English "Christ" and the Italian "*Cristo*", although the solution of the subtitles may result more idiomatic.

In the same utterance we get the first real cultural reference of the show. While trying to justify her father's crazy behavior, Reagan invites the people on the street to ignore Rand's claims because they are based solely on Facebook and Ambien. Unfortunately, the reputation surrounding Facebook and fake news seems to be an international one, meaning that leaving the reference unaltered will convey the same implication that if someone gets their news from Facebook, they are probably not

the most well-informed person. On the other hand, the reference to Ambien, a sedative and hypnotic drug used primarily to treat insomnia[8], is a more obscure one even to an American viewer. Being Ambien a prescription drug and not an over the counter one, it is more probable that a non-expert American viewer would not know what Reagan is referring to. Because of this, the choice to generalize the reference and to substitute it with the broader term "*sonniferi*" in both of the Italian translations appears to be the most appropriate strategy to avoid any confusion in the viewers.

A few seconds later Rand suggests going to the mall to buy pretzels, but he specifically asks Reagan for a "Wetzel's Pretzel". This refers to a well-known fast-food chain in the US, located primarily inside malls, which specializes in different kinds of pretzels. Because this chain is not present in Italy, both the Italian subtitles and the Italian adaptation chose to adopt a generalizing strategy, where the name of the place was replaced by the name of the food, in this case "*pretzel*". What is interesting is that the dubbed adaptation went a step further in the translation of the type of pretzel. While the original English talks about pretzels "with the cheese inside the crust", which was translated literally in the subtitles, the adaptation opted for a "*ripieno ai quattro formaggi*". Although this is not quite the same as the original and does not exist as a flavor at Wetzel's Pretzel, it does convey the same underlying meaning while adding a more Italian nuance to be more recognizable to Italian viewers.

Table 34: Culture and Taboo_Example 2

English original	Italian subtitles	Italian dubbing
ROBOTUS: I'll take a little <u>sugar</u> with that if you know what I mean.	ROBOTUS: E prendo anche un po' di <u>zucchero</u>, non so se mi spiego.	ROBOTUS: E gradirei anche uno <u>zuccherino</u>, se capisci cosa voglio dire.
Reagan: As you can see, I've gone above and beyond. Now ROBOTUS is just as	Reagan: Come potete vedere, ho fatto di tutto e di più. Ora ROBOTUS è <u>insopportabile</u>	Reagan: Come potete vedere stavolta mi sono davvero fatta in quattro. Adesso ROBOTUS

unsufferable as the real thing. […] His brain is just a slurry of <u>Super Bowl commercials</u> and <u>Aaron Sorkin</u> dialogue.	quanto un presidente vero. […] Il suo cervello è solo un ammasso di <u>spot del Super Bowl</u> and dialoghi di <u>Aaron Sorkin</u>.	è <u>insopportabile proprio come un vero presidente</u>. […] Il suo cervello è un miscuglio tra una <u>televendita</u> e i dialoghi di <u>Aaron Sorkin</u>.

While Reagan is showing to the team the latest improvements she made on ROBOTUS, she offers him a cup of coffee and he replies in a sexually allusive way by saying that he would like some "sugar" with it, and proceeds to slap Reagan on her behind. The sexual innuendo of the sentence is given by the fact that "sugar" is often used in English to imply some sort of sexual practice, although most times it simply refers to kissing. While the Italian subtitles chose to perform a direct translation of "sugar" and to render it simply as "*zucchero*", the adaptation chose to use the term "*zuccherino*", which in Italian is more prone to having implicit meanings. Moreover, despite the variations of the word "*zucchero*" do not convey the exact same meaning rendered here by "sugar", the visuals of the robot smacking Reagan, the overall tone of the scene, and following suggestive sentence are all elements that contribute to the sexual and harassing tone of the scene.

Shortly after, when asked if ROBOTUS would have the ability to rebel against Cognito Inc., Reagan reassures everyone by saying that he does not have a consciousness and that his brain is just a mix of "Super Bowl commercials and Aaron Sorkin dialogue". On one hand, Super Bowl commercials are "known for their humor, unpredictability, and ability to tug at the heartstrings" (Bartlett, 2024[9]). Their goal is to appeal to millions of Americans with heartfelt stories and witty humor, while utilizing pop culture moments to connect with the audience. On the other hand, Aaron Sorkin, screenwriter and director, is known for his complex, quick-witted, snappy, and sometimes

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[9] https://news.bryant.edu/what-do-super-bowl-ads-say-about-us#:~:text=Super%20Bowl%20ads%20%E2%80%94%20known%20for,for%20a%2030%2Dsecond%20commercial.

pretentious style (Garff, 2023[10]). All of these characteristics are implied by Reagan when describing ROBOTUS' personality, which is therefore presented as wordy, pretentious, and appealing to Americans, just like a real president would be. The Italian subtitles chose to retain both allusions unchanged, while the adaptation decided to retain the PN allusion of Sorkin and to substitute the "Super Bowl commercials" with "*televendita*". It is unclear why the adaptor chose to apply different strategies to these allusions, particularly because it would have probably been more effective to retain the reference to the Super Bowl, which is likely to be more recognizable by an international audience. However, it is unlikely that anyone, American or not, who is not passionate about movies and screenwriting would recognize the allusion to Sorkin, which is why retaining it in both of the Italian translations evokes the same reaction in the viewers.

Table 35: Culture and Taboo_Example 3

English original	Italian subtitles	Italian dubbing
Reagan: I don't know dick about '80s pop culture. My dad threw out the TV to make me focus on science. Andre: *Weird Science*? Reagan: Yeah. Wait, if that's a reference to something, I don't get it.	Reagan: Non so un cazzo della cultural popolare anni '80. Mio padre mi buttò la TV per farmi concentrare sulla scienza. Andre: *La donna esplosiva*? Reagan: Già. Aspetta, se è un riferimento a qualcosa, non lo capisco.	Reagan: Non so un cazzo della cultural popolare anni '80. Mio padre mi aveva buttato la TV per farmi concentrare sulla scienza. Andre: Come *La donna esplosiva*? Reagan: Già. Aspetta, se è la citazione di qualcosa, non l'ho capita.

When the whole team is excited about going back to the 80s to relive their childhood, Reagan is dreading the experience, as she knows nothing about the pop culture of that time. The expression

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[10] https://heritageherald.com/2023/04/19/aaron-sorkin-and-sorkinisms-the-identity-of-a-screenwriter/#:~:text=Sorkin%20screenplays%20feel%20like%20a,snappy%2C%20sometimes%20perfectly%20pretentious%20style.

"I don't know dick" Reagan uses appears slightly unusual in English, but it also represents one of the very few occasions in which a literal translation of an English swearword in Italian conveys the same exact meaning with the same exact structure, which is why both Italian translations using "*non so un cazzo*" prove to be extremely successful. Shortly after, Reagan goes on saying that she does not know much about pop culture because her dad made her focus on science, to which Andre responds with "Weird science?", which could be interpreted as a simple question to follow up on what Reagan has just said, but that is in fact a reference to the 1985 movie *Weird science*. The Italian translation of the movie title is *La donna esplosiva*, which does not include any reference to science. Because of this, both the Italian subtitles and the adaptation fail to find a successful solution that is able to connect to Reagan's comment and to reference the specific 80's film. Interestingly, the plot of the movie does include scientific experiments, therefore the choice of the dubbed adaptation of adding the "*come*" at the beginning of the question makes the reference more intelligible, although not completely.

Table 36: Culture and Taboo_Example 4

English original	Italian subtitles	Italian dubbing
Gigi: You know a man on the inside of The Illuminati? <u>This is some Deep Throat shit.</u> Reagan: Gigi, this is my source, Staedtler. Gigi: Oh, you two are banging, aren't you? Oh, <u>this really is some deep throat shit</u>, I love it.	Gigi: Conosci qualcuno negli Illuminati? <u>È roba da Gola Profonda</u>. Reagan: Gigi, il mio informatore, Staedtler. Gigi: Voi due scopate, vero? <u>Questa è davvero roba da Gola Profonda</u>. Fantastico.	Gigi: Conosci qualcuno negli Illuminati? <u>Tipo Gola Profonda del Watergate</u>. Reagan: Gigi, questa è la mia fonte, Staedtler. Gigi: Voi due strombazzate, ho capito. <u>Allora è vero che sei una Gola Profonda</u>. Mi piace da morire.

When Reagan goes to Gigi to tell her that she has an informant from inside the Illuminati, Gigi makes a joke about the situation being very "Deep Throat", therefore making an allusion to the

key informant in the Watergate scandal whose information lead to the President Nixon's resignation[11]. Once Gigi finds out that Reagan is also having sexual relations with her informant, Gigi jokes once again playing on the fact that "deep throat" is also a form of oral sex[12]. Luckly, this particular double meaning is easily replicable in Italian, given that the name of the Watergate informant has its official equivalent "*Gola Profonda*", which is a direct translation of "Deep Throat", and that the same expression can be used in a sexual context to refer to oral sex practices. Therefore, both the Italian subtitles and the dubbed adaptation managed to retain both meanings with a simple direct translation, which is indeed a rare instance. Additionally, the word "shit" that Gigi uses is an interesting linguistic feature of the English language. In fact, the term "shit" is interesting in and of itself as it can have many different meanings, often opposite of each other, however in this particular case it is used as a substitute for the word "thing" or "stuff". Subsequently, the choice of translating the expression with the Italian "*roba*" proves rather effective, although it results in a somewhat milder solution because of the element of the swearword gets omitted.

4.2.7. Translating cultural references, humorous elements, and taboo language

This section will present and analyze examples extracted from the TV series *Inside Job* that contain cultural references, humorous or linguistic elements, and taboo language. Because of the multilayered nature of the show, these instances where quite common throughout the show. However, for reasons of space this section will analyze the one scene that appears to be most interesting from a social and a translation perspective.

Table 37: Culture, Humor, and Taboo_Example 1

English original	Italian subtitles	Italian dubbing
Glenn: Ah, <u>Still Valley</u>. Where Ronald Reagan is always president, and "<u>Me Too</u>" is just	Glenn: Ah, <u>Still Valley</u>, dove Ronald Reagan è sempre presidente, e "<u>Me Too</u>" era	Glenn: Ah, <u>Still Valley</u>, dove Ronald Reagan è sempre presidente, <u>e le attrici si fanno</u>

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[11] https://www.dictionary.com/e/slang/deep-throat/
[12] https://www.dictionary.com/e/slang/deep-throat/

an answer to "who else wants to go to Bennigan's?"	ancora solo "anche io" quando chiedevano se volevi andare al bar.	sbarazzare dai registi senza dire #MeToo.

When the team arrives in Still Valley Glenn admires the surroundings and reminisces about life in the 80s. Because the audience knows that Glenn is an extremely patriotic military man, it comes to no surprise that his first comment references the US President Ronald Reagan, whose tenure went from 1981 to 1889, meaning that in a city stuck in the decade of the 80s he will always be president. Taking a step back, the name of the city itself is also a reference to its particular condition. The word "still" in "Still Valley" references its meaning of "not moving"[13] and therefore the condition of the city being unable to move on from the decade. In Italian, both in the subtitles and in the adaptation, the name remains unchanged meaning the Italian audience misses out on this subtle play on words, although this does not cause any issue with the intelligibility of the episode. During Glenn's commentary he references the movement "Me Too", but he plays on the linguistics of it by saying that before the movement was born in 2017, this expression was still just a normal answer to a question. The feminist movement born in the US made its way to Italy quite fast and today its name is still well-known and recognizable. However, its linguistic structure and its literal translation is not something that an Italian viewer would necessarily know, meaning that Glenn's sexist joke risks not getting highlighted as much, especially in the Italian subtitles, where it is translated literally. Contrarily, the Italian dubbed adaptation decided to omit the play on the grammar of the sentence and to explicitate the underlying meaning of the joke, making it clearer and more intelligible. Additionally, Glenn also references the American restaurant chain Bennigan's, founded in 1976. Because of the structure of the overall line and of the very specific cultural reference, both the Italian subtitles and adaptation chose to omit this reference completely, focusing on the much more important sexist undertones of Glenn's observation. Lastly, one slight issue with the Italian subtitled version of

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[13] https://www.collinsdictionary.com/it/dizionario/inglese/still

this scene is the use of verbal tenses. Given that the city is still currently stuck in the 1980s, all the references are made in the present tense, therefore the decision made by the Italian subtitles of mixing both the present and the past tense seems unnecessary and risks creating confusion in the viewer.

Throughout the study of the show, more than 200 examples were extracted and analyzed. However, for reasons of space and for the purpose of this thesis, only a small part of the most interesting ones from a translation perspective were reported. The following section will present a discussion of the results obtained from the analysis, which will be based on observations made on all lines extracted from the show, including those not reported in the present analysis.

4.3. Discussion

This section will provide a discussion of the findings presented in the previous analysis, highlighting the key points regarding the strategies employed in the Italian subtitles and adaptation of the TV show "*Inside Job*." This discussion will focus on general translation tendencies observed in the examination of all 200 examples extracted from the show, putting emphasis on the translation of humorous elements, cultural references, and taboo language. The comparative analysis of "*Inside Job*" revealed several notable tendencies in the Italian translations, both in the subtitles and the dubbing. From a more general perspective, the translations for the Italian adaptation often resulted in longer dialogues. In live-action dubbing, this would typically pose a problem due to the need for lip-synching but given that the show analyzed is an animated series, the lack of strict lip-synch requirements allowed for more fast-paced dialogues without disrupting the viewing experience. This approach highlights the unique advantage of dubbing animated series, where visual constraints are less rigid compared to live-action productions. In regard to the Italian subtitles, the examination revealed recurring grammatical errors, particularly with the subjunctive tense, which, despite not causing any major intelligibility issue, did result in odd-sounding solutions. Additionally, it was observed that the subtitles were oftentimes longer than necessary, meaning that they had the tendency to overexplain the lines with unnecessary details, sacrificing important pieces of information. For instance, one

example comes to mind where the formulation of the sentence in the Italian subtitles presented a grammatical error and, because of the length and time restrains of subtitling, omitted an important interjection. In this case, it was noted that a formulation of the phrase with the correct Italian grammar would have given the subtitler enough space to also include the interjection. Although this is one of the most extreme cases, it unfortunately does not represent the totality of instances in which this dynamic was noticed. Lastly, one aspect that was noted, although not strictly related to translation, is that as the show progressed into deeper and emotional storylines there was a decrease in the presence of cultural references and jokes. This shift required the translators to focus more on conveying the emotional development of the characters, which resulted in more straightforward translations and therefore less notable examples to analyze in this thesis.

4.3.1. Italian translation of the cultural references

As it is evident from the previous chapter, cultural references are a significant part of the show *Inside job*, and as we have seen in previous sections of this thesis, their translation requires careful consideration. In general, it was observed that the strategies to translate cultural elements employed in the Italian subtitles and in the adaptation coincided more times than not. References to globally well-known actors and/or movies were mostly retained unchanged in both versions, even though at times the celebrity was not so easily recognizable by an Italian audience. However, there were instances in which references pertaining to American TV shows, such as *Saturday Night Live*, or to movie titles that have an official Italian translation different from the original, such as *Face/Off* and *Weird Science*, caused issues for the translators. While the first were mostly retained unchanged, causing confusion in a possible unfamiliar viewer, the latter forced the translators to utilize the official Italian title, which resulted in jokes and play on words present in the original script that felt as if they were not being adapted to the target culture. On a similar note, the same problem occurred whenever a character inserted song lyrics into the dialogue, particularly when a humorous element was linked to the line itself. In these cases, as it would not have been acceptable to retain the original English

lyrics, the lines were translated as dialogue, which worked at times (e.g. Brett quoting "*Tubthumping*" by Chumbawamba), while other times it resulted in an unusual translation that ran the risk of confusing the viewer (e.g. Glenn quoting "*It's gonna be me*" by NSYNC, specifically referring to the translation in the Italian subtitles). In contrast, when it came to references to American restaurant chains, stores, foods, and so on, they were rarely retained unchanged, although there were instances in which they were, and were instead often generalized or omitted. We can find multiple examples of this strategy in the examples analyzed in Chapter 4 when places such as Wetzel's Pretzels, Dave and Buster's, and Micheal's were mentioned. Because most of these references would not be understood or even recognized by an Italian viewer, most of the times it made sense to generalize them. However, it is worth noting that in doing so, especially when the instances are so numerous, there is a risk of causing a loss of specificity and of the original version's cultural nuance. In short, the high saturation of references to American cultural elements definitely posed an obstacle for the translators, particularly because these references were often intertwined with humor. Aside from references to famous Hollywood personalities, many of the cultural items present in the original were either lost because of generalization, or retained, which very frequently resulted in intelligibility issues for the Italian audience.

4.3.2. Italian translation of the humorous elements

The translation of comedic elements in the show definitely posed some of the biggest challenges for the translators, considering also the number of instances of humor present in every single scene. The show presents a particularly high saturation of referential humor and wordplay, which are arguably the most arduous types of humor to deal with in translation. In analyzing the examples extracted from the show, the effort to retain the comedic elements present in the original was noted in both the Italian subtitles and the adaptation. However, as it was extensively explained in previous chapters of this thesis, it is not always possible to transfer a funny element, particularly if it is based on a pun, from one language to another. In fact, the main problem that emerged from the analysis is that the Italian versions often resorted in a literal translation of the jokes and puns, which resulted in a loss of comedic

effect and in translations that just fell flat, oftentimes on occasions in which the viewer could sense from the scene that something funny was said. This failure to satisfy viewer's expectations, together with the instances in which literal translations resulted in unnatural and awkward dialogue, contributed greatly to the loss of effect and overall tone of the whole show. Additionally, it was observed that when the Italian subtitles presented a more idiomatic and effective translation of the comedic elements, the dubbed version did not, and vice versa. For instance, when a joke was adapted idiomatically in the subtitles and therefore the humorous effect was retained, the dubbing either completely missed the joke or performed a literal translation which did not land in Italian. In contrast, in cases when the dubbed adaptation managed to retain the humorous elements more effectively and to transfer them with natural-sounding and idiomatic expressions, the subtitles missed the mark and remained too literal. This lack of coordination between the two translation teams is particularly evident when putting the two Italian versions into comparison, and it results in two overall deeply different versions of the same show, though neither measure up to the extremely clever humor of the original.

4.3.3. Italian translation of taboos and taboo language

From the analysis performed in Chapter 4, it may appear as if the show did not present any particular instances of taboo topics, though this is far from the truth. In fact, the reason behind the lack of specific examples of taboos in the previous chapter is that their translation rarely posed a challenge. This is mainly due to the similarities in categories of taboos between the US and Italy, which resulted in the fact that a direct, and sometimes rather literal, translation proved to be fairly effective most of the times. The other factor that influenced this lack of examples is the fact that most instances of taboo topics in the show were strictly, and sometimes exclusively, linked to the visuals shown on screen, meaning that there was no need for their translation. Nevertheless, the analysis did succeed in identifying the most common categories of taboo topics present in the show, namely sexual practices (which was the category most linked to the visual element), sexual orientations, religion (particularly in the mocking and subtle critic of the Pope and the Catholic Church), gun violence, political

corruption, mental disorders and the stigma around them, terrorism (including references to and jokes about 9/11), physical violence, sexism and discrimination against women (often presented in a comedic way), and racism (particularly against Asian people and Andre's Korean background).

Concerning taboo language, the show presented a high presence of swearwords. During the analysis, it was observed that both the Italian subtitles and dubbed version attempted to retain most instances, although the occasions in which swearwords were omitted were not rare, especially in the translations of the subtitles. Oftentimes, when it was not possible to insert the swearwords in the same lines as they were in the original, the adaptation inserted them in other lines, usually directly before or after the line in question, to compensate for the absence of said swearwords. In this way, the ratio of swearwords present in the original English version and in the Italian dubbed version remained fairly balanced. Nevertheless, there were instances in which some swearwords were censored both in the Italian subtitles and in the dubbed adaptation, which often resulted in unnatural and unusual dialogue in Italian. Additionally, it is worth highlighting that, when the translations managed to maintain the intensity of the dialogue, it occasionally resulted in a harsher tone in the Italian dubbing because when the English lines made use of milder expletives, the Italian opted for stronger expressions, resulting, although rarely, in an altered perception of the character's emotions, intentions, or overall personality.

CONCLUSION

The analysis of the Italian translation of the show *Inside job* provided an overview of the intricate challenges associated with audiovisual translation, and shed light on the fact that this process goes beyond the mere linguistic aspect, as it requires a deep understanding of cultural nuances, humor, and taboos in order to create an engaging and coherent experience for the target audience. In particular, the need to adapt culturally specific references to make sure that they resonated with an Italian audience was a recurrent challenge, and the failure to do so often resulted in a loss of meaning and in the viewer's confusion. Additionally, the performance of literal translations for elements such as jokes, puns, and idioms often failed to capture the humorous intent of the original script and resulted in a lack of idiomaticity and flow in Italian. Moreover, the inconsistencies in retention and intensity of the swearwords also resulted in a loss of effect, and oftentimes in unnatural dialogue in Italian.

Overall, the two main issues the analysis brought to light were inconsistency and lack of effective cultural localization. The lack of consistency observed both in the Italian subtitles and the adaptation as two separate wholes, and in their comparison, suggests that multiple translators worked on different episodes without a unified and agreed strategy. Unfortunately, nowadays this is often the case, and as this thesis has proved, it has become essential to have specific guidelines on how to handle certain elements, as well as an exact idea of how the overall tone and effect of the show is to be portrayed. However, the most evident hurdle was undoubtedly the cultural adaptation, whether it was in relation to cultural references alone, or in combination with humorous elements and swearwords. The numerous literal translations and loss of crucial elements sheds light on the importance of training translators to, first and foremost, recognize the cultural nuances and the comedic intention of a certain joke, and secondly, to provide tools for an effective transfer of both meaning and effect.

It is important to note, however, that this thesis does not mean to criticize or discredit any of the work performed by the translators, but merely to shed light on the still very predominant problems

present in the field of Audiovisual Translation. This analysis, in fact, aims to underline the multifaceted nature of this field and its many challenges, with the hope that by addressing these very challenges there could be an emphasis on the need for a deeper and more thorough cultural knowledge of the translators as well as a development in the strategies related to the translation of comedic elements and taboo language. My greatest hope, however, is that I myself will be able to contribute to these improvements in my career as a translator, with the future goal of being able to implement them in my own translation of an audiovisual product. For now, I am grateful to have had the opportunity to carry out the goal I had given myself at the end of my Bachelor's thesis, which was to perform a more in depth investigation of the concepts behind translation issues and to make use of the theoretical overview I had given in a more practical analysis. The writing of this thesis has provided a crucial steppingstone into the field as well as a precious insight into the challenges of translating specific elements, and it will hopefully not only assist with future endeavors but also grow as more projects are undertaken with a similar goal.

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