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Chief Editors: Giuditta Caliendo & Maria Cristina Nisco

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The Discursive Representation of Globalised Organised Crime

Crossing Borders of Languages and Cultures

Giuseppe Balirano, Giuditta Caliendo, Paul Sambre (Eds)



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The Discursive Representation of Globalised Organised Crime:
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De-Queering Proxemics in the Screen Adaptation of *Camorra* Male Dyads: A Multimodal Prosody Analysis

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Abstract

The recent TV screening of the Neapolitan camorra¹ seems to be spreading a somewhat incorrect interpretation of 'queer masculinity' in dyadic non-verbal interactions occurring between televised camorra mobsters. Such faux constructions of camorristi might result from the fact that cross-cultural differences in non-verbal forms of communication, realised in subtitled texts, are a major constraint for audio-visual translators in their task of adapting a complex multimodal product into other cultures/languages. Despite the significant attention scholars have recently devoted to the effect of TV coverage on viewers, very little attention has been paid to the ways in which male social actors involved in the Neapolitan crime syndicate have been discursively re-semiotised in English-speaking contexts. When non-verbal communication crosses national, cultural and linguistic boundaries via subtitling, some context-bound references and differences on non-verbal behavioural dimensions may prevent the full appreciation of the source text. In particular, the manner in which personal space is interpreted cross-culturally, remains an unreadable culture-bound factor for the target audiences. This study seeks to confirm previous anthropological and linguistic research on personal space, an interesting academic field that has remained somewhat silent for a long period, and incorporates some of its insights into the analysis of audiovisual translation.

With this in mind, this paper provides a multimodal integrated investigation of the perception of the TV drama series Gomorrah (produced in Italy and subtitled in English) outside the boundaries of Italy, looking at data from both quantitative and qualitative perspectives. The study, which is a theoretical contribution to cross-cultural adaptation, employs "multimodal prosody" analysis in order to disambiguate the interpretation of camorristi proxemics and haptics as a queer representation.

Keywords

multimodal prosody, Gomorrah, queer representation, proxemics, audiovisual translation, queer masculinity, queer camorrista

¹ Throughout this paper, I reject the use of upper case letters when referring to horrid crime syndicates, such as *camorra* or mafia, as a form of respect for the thousand victims offended by organised criminal practices.

1. Introduction

The media have often acted as an ideal vehicle to spread knowledge and cultural tropes, in that they are the manufacturers of a large amount of information that circulates in our societies. It is particularly through visual media that people may gain instant access to



information, since they are the community's first contact with the outside world (van Dijk 1991). Public knowledge of crime, in particular, is largely derived from the visual media that play a key role in the discursive construction of criminality and the criminal justice system (Beale 2006; see also Tessuto in this volume). Millions of viewers consume criminal stories in their true or fictional portrayals worldwide so that, as Dowler *et al.* (2006: 837) have aptly pointed out, "crime as entertainment has cemented a place in popular culture". Recently, globalised organised crime has become a very trendy topic in news stories and a popular sub-genre in infotainment, entertainment and general television programming. The proliferation of the prime-time serial on television, enhanced by the introduction of time-shifting technologies of consumption together with an immediate international coverage, also due to audiovisual translations (henceforth AVT), has allowed for more extended narratives of organised crime. These relatively new stories are more and more popular worldwide since they deal, primarily, with a sense of universally unresolved social problems and an unsuccessful institutional response. The recurring representations of globalised organised crime on TV screens may shape the understanding of such intricate phenomena as several criminological perspectives, such as labelling theory and cultural criminology, have frequently posited. Such approaches share a belief in the power of media on the societal perceptions of people, groups and events (Becker 1973; Hall *et al.* 1978; Ferrell *et al.* 2008). In particular, since most people have very little direct experience regarding organised crime, TV programmes may provide a 'window on the world' and exert influence to shape public opinion (Barrat 1986). Although significant academic studies have recently contributed to the linguistic and visual investigation of the representation of crime and criminal actors in TV series and films (Machin *et al.* 2013), no specific attention has been devoted to the linguistic and semiotic constructions of organised crime syndicates across the world.

Against this backdrop, this study aims at investigating the foreign perception of the significant screening of male *camorra* criminals, the Neapolitan crime syndicate mobsters, which has recently and universally proliferated through the audiovisual adaptation of films, TV series and programmes. In particular, due to space constraints, the analysis will concentrate on a small multimodal corpus, *Gomorra – The Series* (aired in Italy in 2014 and 2015), which represents one of the latest instances of the way visual media representations may contribute to shaping audience's knowledge and interpretation. *Gomorra* stages the 'unwritten rules' of the Naples crime syndicate, otherwise known as the *camorra*, which differs enormously from the typical mafia practices represented in previous US productions. By destabilising the classic Hollywood gangster-film formula, the series tears down the archetypal mythology of the *mafioso* type, enduring from *The Godfather* (1972) through to *The Sopranos* (1999–2007). The programme makers sold the series to more than 30 countries, including the US, yet when migrating to foreign contexts via English subtitles, such a highly culture-bound multimodal product can be seen to betray, or simply lose, some important entities of meaning, or culture-specific



references (CSRs). *Camorra* CSRs do not travel conveniently in translation since they contain extremely problematic constraints for audiovisual translators who have to bear the highly multimodal product across borders of languages and cultures, both visually and verbally (see Chiaro 2009: 156). In particular, although the TV drama focuses on individual and hegemonic male power declined on a corrupt social structure, its English subtitled version seems to have contributed to the spread of an incorrect interpretation of *camorristi's* practices of hegemonic masculinity. Following a longstanding pattern of criminal narratives and including prevalently male heroes meeting goals through typical hypermasculine force of will and resort to violence, foreign viewers, with no experience of the source cultural context², seem to have misperceived some culture-bound forms of hegemonic male representations displayed in the series; as data derived from a statistical questionnaire will show in section 4. In particular, close proxemics and haptic behaviours, fundamental meaning-making cultural resources typical of interactions between *camorra* mobsters, do not successfully travel cross-culturally and are in no way aided by the published English subtitles of the series.

After briefly referring to the vast and consolidated literature on cross-cultural differences in proxemics and haptic behaviour and their basis for cross-cultural misperceptions, this paper will present a few tentative suggestions for creative solutions to the problem of contextual disambiguation in AVT, while also providing a theoretical contribution to cross-cultural adaptation. Moreover, the novel concept of “multimodal prosody” (Balirano 2017), applied to the analysis of specific culture-bound sequences, will be employed in the multimodal analysis to disambiguate a skewed perception of *camorra* men’s dyadic relationships. This type of semiotic reading may be an aid to the construction of a more precise inter-subjectivity of the meaning while avoiding unintended ‘semiotic tension’, typical of AVT, through the help of the practical application of overtly contextualised subtitles.

The following section will introduce some distinctive cultural mispremising which may occur when analysing the *camorra's* context of situation from outside the represented culture.

2. Queering the mobster

In his essay “Italian Masculinity as Queer”(2014: 1), John Champagne provocatively maintains that,

masculinity as it is articulated in a good deal of Italian art is queer, deconstructing binaries of masculine and feminine, homosexual and heterosexual, adult and child, active and passive, seeing and being seen.

² Both narrow and wide (and not just of the *camorra* context, but even of wider Mediterranean, Southern Italian or popular Naples cultural contexts).

Inspired by Foucault’s concept of ‘queer’ investigating the adult-child binary relationship – which de-constructively links queerness to questions around masculinity and male sexuality – Champagne adds Garrone’s feature film, *Gomorra* (2008), to his long list of “queer representations of Italian masculinity” (2014: 13). The author, specifically,



applies his queer reading to a central and dramatically violent scene in the popular film, in which two young and would-be *camorra* criminals, Marco and Ciro, are on the beach, practising with their new weapons stolen from another gang. He labels the scene as a highly homosocial/homoerotic passage climaxing in (Champagne 2014: 11):

[a] kind of simultaneous orgasm, the two of them shouting and cheering as the camera moves back and forth several times between them. In a homosocial reversal of the face-off, rather than a public confrontation in which one man challenges the virility of another in order to assert his own masculinity, the two young men proudly and lovingly display their virility to one another.

Although one could, arguably, appreciate a sort of romanticising value of such a description, the scene can hardly be perceived as an intentional account of 'orgasm' on behalf of the film-maker who is, on the contrary, rather staging a criminal *Bildungsroman* in a complex one-and-a-half-minute scene. The whole context of situation, despite a seemingly homosocial setting, does not directly or indirectly hint at sexuality. According to the American anthropologist Edward T. Hall (1976), cultures differ in the degree and depth of their use of context and information to create meaning. In what Hall defines "high context cultures" – as the Neapolitan one can undoubtedly be seen to be (Vincent Marrelli 1989; Vincent 1994, 2006), context is a vital element to detect and fully understand the meaning-making potential of any act of communication among its members. Meaning in such cultures resides even more in the implicit and shared context than in the explicit message, with respect to low-context cultures. Similar to other scholars like Bateson (1979), Hall claims, albeit in general, that there is no meaning without a combination of explicitly given information and context. Context represents a privileged point of observation, i.e. "a transparent vantage point around which individuals orient meaning" (Harrington/Rogers 1988: 7). To a Neapolitan viewer, all the elements employed by Champagne (2014: 11) in order to *queer* the scene, such as the "bikini briefs and tennis shoes" worn by the boys and the "glimpses of their genitals and buttocks", are simply the 'vantage points' through which it is possible to orient the inner meaning potential of the scene. With his talented narrating skills, Champagne construes an irrelevant homoerotic scene, which is totally outside the tragic filmic recount of the two young lads' realistic and sad rite of passage. Although nakedness, for instance, is most often performed during, with or alongside practices of sexuality, in some high context cultures it may connote otherwise. In Naples, young boys from the poorer social classes are used to playing half-naked in the street; whether because temperatures, especially in the summer, may easily reach 35° C, or just because for young *scugnizzi* – who are 'educated' and raised in the streets – being half-naked is not perceived as an obscenity, but as a common occurrence. The experience of being half-naked is, in fact, rather directly connected to the low level of privacy afforded within some Neapolitan – private, but overcrowded – lower-class households, in the streets or at the beach. Naples, as already noted, belongs to a high context culture (Vincent Marrelli 1989), that



is, in Hall's words (1976: 39), a "culture in which people are deeply involved with others and where subtle messages with deep meaning flow freely". An illegitimate sexual reading of the boys' nakedness, presenting the embodied self in a mode of eroticisation, represents a de-contextualised breakdown of the implied meaning also of several other portrayals of *Gomorra's* non-sexual nakedness. Marco's and Ciro's nudity is, first and foremost, legitimated by their roles as young *camorra* boys during their final rite of passage, and thus openly defuses any possible reading of homoeroticism. Furthermore, Champagne's effort to queer *Gomorra*, opening with a long description of what he deems non-hegemonic elements of masculinity, works to queer the context. He begins his description with a reference to the 'tanning booth' in the first sequence of Garrone's film, and the 'manicure' some mobsters are receiving while wearing "heavy gold chains around their necks and bikini briefs". He then moves on to the description of the way the male criminals "smooth their skin with lotion in the moments before they are killed. Wearing stud earrings, bracelets, rings, a silver necklace and a pendant," to finally underline the way "the young Totò plucks his eyebrows in front of a mirror" (Champagne 2014: 13). From a Neapolitan point of observation, that is within the producing culture, all the elements Champagne forces into a queer discourse, seem to collocate, rather perfectly, within the appropriate Neapolitan sub-class and lower-class context of situation, being deeply rooted in, and hence representative of, a certain *camorra*-related subculture. Therefore, such visual elements, never perceived as symbols of queerness to a Neapolitan viewer, refer to the symbolic universe of a certain social class and mentality, and fit into the realistic and coherently meaningful *camorristi's* portrait created by Garrone.

The alleged queer masculinity construed by Champagne is only one of the several askew attempts at tinging Southern Italians, and in this case Neapolitan organised criminals, with unconvincing queer tones. The idea of using queerness as a tool to differentiate the social actors in the representation from the spectators is also brought forward by Messina (2015: 181) who, in his articulated riposte to Champagne, states:

The depiction of the characters of *Gomorra* as queer is intended precisely to create a distance between the character and the audience, which in turn serves to isolate and stigmatize the behaviour of the *camorristi*, to prevent the possibility of identification with the characters. The queerness of the characters is only one of the features that serves to pinpoint them as Others within Italian society: several other characteristics, all ascribable to common representations of Southern Italy, are used to this purpose.

In Messina's terms, queerness is used as a distancing lens to portray the young Neapolitan mobsters as the negative 'others' or as deviant to a non-Neapolitan, heterosexual, audience (Messina 2015). However, such a limited reading of 'queerness' as a mere and weak synonym for 'otherness' – a deconstructive definition which asserts that anything outside of any norm, sexual or not, is 'queer' – can only strongly contradict the whole history of Italian crime and criminal justice, where the dual compounding aspect of violence and masculinity are without



any doubt of great significance. Moreover, the repeated anti-normative positioning of queerness is progressively itself becoming the norm (see Milani forthcoming). Champagne, thus, conjures up a somewhat misapplied logic of queerness when describing the young *camorristi*'s coming-of-age scene with the apparent consequence of reinforcing the typical, political and historical binarism between Italians and Southern Italians, where the latter are always seen as the deviant, criminal and consequently queer 'other'. Since queer masculinity pre-designates a complete set of negative values, this promptly applies to the social construction of *camorristi* men, and inevitably moves on to the characterisation of all Southern Italians as queer. By constituting a break with typical male power, the implied homosexual behaviour of Neapolitan *camorristi*, would thus be politically labouring to undermine dominant tropes on masculinity and their connection to *camorra* power and violence. A queer theory grounded in Marxism, however, can easily and critically assess the contradictions of such a concept, in the manner that queer theory, according to Floyd (2009: 8):

[...] has consistently maintained that any representation of sexuality in isolation from [...] other dimensions of the social, [...] as always already localized, particularized, or privatized, is a misrepresentation of the social as well as the sexual.

Therefore, we could simply rehash Floyd's words in order to posit that queer representations of the social without a specific sexual dimension, which is exactly what is taking place in Garrone's scene, could certainly lead to a misinterpretation of both categories when spawned from a completely wrong understanding of the cultural context in question. Additionally, the relocation of such an indeterminate space of queerness within the visual representation of Southern-Italian criminals works to reinforce particular heteronormative agendas. An obsessive reading of the Southern mobsters as 'queer monsters' on the small screen softens the pathological anxiety of the non-normative by fabricating a completely negative queer imagery that can no longer challenge the language of normative authority.

Such misinterpretations, often enflamed by the prolific representation of culture-bound images (Figure 2.1) which do not seem to travel well across distant cultures, may easily lead to faux perceptions about *camorra* men's masculinity.

Figure 2.1. *Camorristi*'s kissing





In Figure 2.1, the stereotype of Southern Italian men, described as extremely manly and strong, seems to be challenged by the typical kiss on the lips of *camorra* men. While in the Sicilian mafia, the mobsters' kiss may index the death penalty, in the *camorra* it seals a vow of silence, so no information will be revealed to the police or judges. The *camorristi's* typical kiss on the lips, indeed, a common practice among members of the Naples criminal syndicate, describable on the haptic dimension, indexes, as said, an unmistakable pledge of silence. Consequently, it has nothing to do with a queer or homoerotic representation.

The Independent (Day 2011) clarified to its British readers the significance of the *camorra's* male kissing in order to fully disambiguate the meaning potential of the images (in Figure 2.1), which were travelling internationally some years ago. The English newspaper perceived that such images might lead people from outside the specific cultural context to an immediate misinterpretation. Day (2011) reported that *La Repubblica* was not that surprised at the scene depicting two *camorristi* engaging in what, to a non-expert eye, might seem a passionate French kiss. According to the Italian newspaper, "similar things happen with the *camorra* in the eastern parts of the city, that is Barra, Ponticelli, San Giovanni a Teduccio", since, "a kiss on the lips between men is a real tradition" (Day 2011). A full kiss on the lips between *camorra* mobsters is a powerful haptic sign, which, when made public, signals that the bonds of the crime syndicate would remain strong and the arrested man would respect the code of silence (aka *omertà*).

Another important cultural reference which saturates the whole TV series, and which might also have nurtured erroneous queer readings of *camorra* masculinity, involves the representation of nonverbal forms of communication conveyed by means of culture-bound material objects. Body-decoration artefacts like clothing, jewellery, tattoos, etc. are very often connected with the typical Neapolitan 'neomelodic' musical culture which, in Naples and most other Southern Italian towns, is very often bred in *camorra* corrupted/influenced environments. Neomelodic music, according to McDonnell (*The Guardian*, 14/04/2009), is:

[...] performed by thousands of singers, mostly from working-class neighbourhoods in Naples and the surrounding towns in Campania. Although there are, of course, singers who have nothing to do with any kind of criminal behaviour, many are ex-criminals, have Camorra managers or perform for mafia bosses. It's not unusual for neomelodic artists to pay homage to criminals in their songs, which are almost always performed in the Neapolitan dialect.

The so-called '*neomelodici*' sing their stories of love and the crime that surrounds them, the dreams of success and escape, and their running away from the law. Their melodramatic songs tend to be vulgar, but very melodious at the same time, resonating with their specific audience much more than any other musical genre. Neomelodic singers are worshipped as authentic superstars and their particular look (see in Figure 2.2 their typical shaved chests, plucked eyebrows, orange tans, golden necklace, skin-tight shirts, and hair gel) implies the non-



universal hegemonic representation of masculinity which might have led Champagne towards his misconstrual. The Neomelodic look epitomises a real symbolic universe, a popular fashion followed by some working-class Neapolitans and, in particular, by *camorra* kinsmen, regardless of their sexual orientation. As Argyle (1988) has accurately maintained, body artefacts are important elements in non-verbal communication; they are, indeed, fundamental signals to understand social behaviour. Fashion is one of the distinct and visible parts of a culture and although there are cultural variations in bodily decoration, the same principles apply to all. Clothes, along with facial expression, gaze, gestures, posture, bodily contact, spatial behaviour, non-verbal vocalisations and smell, are all examples of non-verbal signals (Argyle 1988: 1). Similarly, Davis (1992: 13) has claimed that clothes are important cultural symbols, which work to communicate “the totality of our symbolic universe” in the same way music, food, furniture and health beliefs do in order to express specific cultural meanings.

Figure 2.1. Neomelodic singers



Neomelodic male fashion also perfectly fits into what Hofstede (1991), following Hall (1976), describes as a high-context means of communication, since in neomelodic lyrics, for instance, the emphasis is not placed on that which is explicitly stated, but often on that which is only alluded to. Their songs are a privileged vehicle to communicate secret information to the criminal world. Not incidentally, the author of one of the most popular neomelodic song, “Chill va pazz pe’ te”, is Luigi Giuliano, the boss of the so-called ‘new family’ group, an alliance of clans feuding Cutolo’s *camorra* syndicate. This vision contrasts with low-context cultures and their explicit ways of communication, since such cultures prefer to exchange explicit messages: what people say is what they mean. Moreover, the Neapolitan and Southern Italian (and generally Mediterranean) symbolic male universe, represented by men’s closer proxemics, simply belongs to what are well-known in the cultural anthropological literature as more haptic high-contact cultures, as well as high-context ones (as opposed to the low-context and low-contact ones inhabited by Northern Europeans). Samovar *et al.* (2015) and Hofstede *et al.* (2011) have, in fact, included Italy among the countries with the highest hegemonic masculinity index scores. Southern Italian men, in particular, who otherwise tend to be more relaxed than their Northern fellow nationals, also adhere to the masculine culture which perceives competition, assertiveness, equity, and performance as



important, as opposed to a feminine culture where values such as equality, solidarity, nurturance, and compassion are most important.

The *camorra's* system of cultural representation, when signaling important sociocultural identity and culture-bound markers of identity, inevitably clashes with the personal experience of the English viewers (Caliendo 2012: 207). When non-verbal communication crosses national, cultural and linguistic boundaries via filmic products, whether accompanied by dubbing or subtitling, some cultural misinterpretations may, in fact, prevent the full appreciation of the source text, since the way in which 'personal space', or touch, for instance, are used and interpreted across cultures is always a culture-bound factor (see Hall 1959, 1969; Kendon 1977: 200, 1990; Scollon/Scollon 1995: 145–146, 189–191). Therefore, queering the Neapolitan mobster based on an unknown and unintelligible context of culture can only produce a wrong perception of the criminal phenomenon. Against this backdrop, since *Gomorra – The Series* is strongly rooted within Neapolitan culture, this study seeks to answer, at the macro-level of text interpretation, the following general research questions: how much of the non-verbal meaning-making mechanisms engrained in the TV series images can be properly perceived in English-speaking contexts? Which meanings carry over successfully and which do not (even with AVT)? In order to answer these questions, I will specify the empirical material and research methodological tenets employed for analysis before embarking on the discussion of the preliminary findings.

3. Corpus and methodological tenets

The focus on language as a social practice has produced increasing awareness of the multimodal nature of communication suggesting that “spoken language as it is actually used cannot be adequately understood without taking non-verbal communication into account” (van Leeuwen 2014: 281). Academic interest in the use of Halliday's Systemic Functional Linguistics (1978) for multimodal analysis has progressively fostered the development of semiotic tools for the interpretation of the nonverbal channels of communication (see also Baldry/Thibault 2006; Bateman 2008; Iedema 2001, 2003; Lemke 1998, 2002; Martin 2002; Martinec 2005; O'Halloran 2004, 2005; Royce 1998; van Leeuwen 1999, 2005; Ventola *et al.* 2004). The re-semiotisation of Halliday's theory has been extensively applied to linguistic research on films and TV programmes since filmic narratives best integrate all the linguistic, visual, and auditory modalities participating in the meaning-making process of multi-semiotic texts. Indeed, audiovisual products, as Pedersen (2015: 162–163) argues, employ several channels of communication, which participate together in the meaning-making process:

In an audiovisual text (e.g. a film or a TV programme), there is not only the verbal channels of discourse, i.e. spoken language (the verbal audio channel) and written language (the verbal visual channel, e.g. in the form of captions and headlines), but there are also two non-verbal channels: one audio (e.g. music and/or sound effects), and



perhaps more strikingly a non-verbal visual channel, which includes everything you see on screen.

Unlike iso-semiotic translation which only tackles one channel of discourse (i.e. the written word), the translation (or rather adaptation) of such complex multimodal products, needs to take into consideration four different types of communication channels (Gottlieb 1997: 143) which complicates the process of translation from the original source text to the translated target one. Specifically, visual channels of communication involve the exact underlying values and cultural systems producing them. They vary according to the different cultural contexts in and through which people represent their personal space and other people in their proximity. Over the last fifty years, the study of personal space, otherwise known as proxemics³, has long insisted on the similarities and differences among diverse cultures; yet, non-verbal forms of communication are still a major constraint for audiovisual translators when adapting filmic productions into other languages (Chiaro *et al.* 2008).

Notably, very little attention has been paid to the way the Neapolitan crime syndicate has been discursively re-semiotised, and therefore perceived, in English-speaking contexts, through AVT. Therefore, the need to disambiguate personal space cross-culturally calls for a necessary investigation, which goes beyond the analysis of the mere linguistic dimension in order to fully understand those modes of communication pointing to specific territorial proxemic behaviours (Hall 1963, 1968). Body signals and gestures, the proxemic and haptic behaviour of *camorristi's* body signals or gestures on the screen, work to convey important messages, including the mediation of personal micro-space as a form of male power.

The multimodal corpus under scrutiny comprises seasons one (2014) and two (2015) of the Italian TV drama series *Gomorra*. The series comprehends 12 episodes, with a total of 650 minutes of running time from the first season, and 12 episodes – 672 minutes total – from season two, for a total running time of 1,322 minutes. The corpus is a parallel multimodal one since both images and verbal texts have been considered for analysis together with the transcription of the original soundtrack in Italian (or rather, Neapolitan) and its corresponding English subtitles, as broadcast in the US, the Republic of Ireland and the UK. The parallel and comparable corpus incorporates the original Italian series and its subtitled English translations. The Italian series, Sollima's television adaptation of Roberto Saviano's 2006-best-selling fictional reportage, just as the film-director's earlier productions⁴, has met with a fair amount of controversy encouraging several negative advertising campaigns. Yet, *Gomorra* is currently the most watched Italian TV series, in Italy and abroad (Renga 2016). Such a massive popularity partly derives from the series' various transmedial offshoots – such as blog sites, fan fiction, and spoofs – which have spawned several paratexts such as apps, Facebook pages, official websites and fan pages. This colossal parallel media production has fostered the highest interest of the series' target audience: (mainly young) Neapolitan viewers.

³ The term “proxemics” was first coined by Edward T. Hall (1963: 1003) who defined it as “the study of how man unconsciously structures microspace – the distance between men in the conduct of daily transactions, the organization of space in his houses, buildings and ultimately a layout of his towns”. Hall (1969: 117-125) identified four zones of proxemic distances: *Intimate zone* (6-18in, 15-45cm), *Personal zone* (1.5-4ft, 45cm-1.2m), *Social zone* (4-12ft, 1.2-3.6m) and the *Public zone* (above 12ft or 3.6m).

⁴ The Italian film director Stefano Sollima was best known, before *Gomorra*, for his crime-drama works such as *Romanzo criminale – La serie* (2006–2008), *ACAB – All Cops Are Bastards* (2012), and *Suburra* (2015).



From a procedural viewpoint, each episode in the two seasons was uploaded in the software ATLAS.ti 7.0, and then appropriately segmented into meaningful micro-level units for the analysis of the represented *camorristi's* proximity. In order to follow the natural flow of each scene in the corpus, a rhythmic alternation between the selected micro-level units was created by segmenting them into a number of specific segments or “proxemic meaning making” phases (van Leeuwen 1985: 220–221).

My main research hypothesis is that the process of masculinity construction of *camorra* men in the corpus is achieved by means of a complex combination of linguistic and multimodal meaning-making mechanisms requiring several adjustments between image processing and text processing in order for the subtitled product to be cognitively effective (see Perego *et al.* 2010). In particular, since perception of the levels of intimacy of space is culturally determined (Hall 1963, 1969), the study seeks to establish whether and to what extent Anglophone viewers perceive differently the territorial and proxemics behaviours semiotised in the series under scrutiny; and whether a different perception of space may create discontinuation in the viewers' cognitive process.

Hall (1963) stressed that differing cultural frameworks for defining and organising space, which are internalised in all people unconsciously, can lead to serious failures of communication and understanding in cross-cultural settings. With that in mind, the research questions encouraging the present multimodal study are mainly four, all addressing the kinds of criminal identities and their performances of masculinity observable at the micro-level of the audiovisual text:

1. What significant male identities are construed in the corpus, both semiotically and linguistically?
2. What is the function of proxemics in the TV series under scrutiny? What do the represented participants' gestures index?
3. How can the analysis of “multimodal prosody” favour the translator's re-semiotisation of *camorristi's* non-verbal behaviours?
4. How does “multimodal prosody” work to disambiguate the perception of *camorristi's* alleged ‘queerness’ and the construction of the inter-subjectivity of the meaning in a foreign and/or non-Neapolitan audience?

The methodology employed for the analysis of the corpus explicitly draws upon Kress and van Leeuwen's (2001) adaptation of SFL – as introduced by Halliday (1978) – and its later applications to visual media and film analysis (Wildfeuer 2016; Liu/O'Halloran 2009; Tseng 2009; O'Halloran 2004). In particular, the concept of ‘multimodal prosody’ will be introduced in section 5 with the aim of developing some methodological tools to implement the investigation of proxemics and haptics in audiovisual texts.

4. The perception of *camorristi's* proxemics through AVT

In order to determine whether and to what extent the English subtitled version of *Gomorra – The Series* were suitable in helping



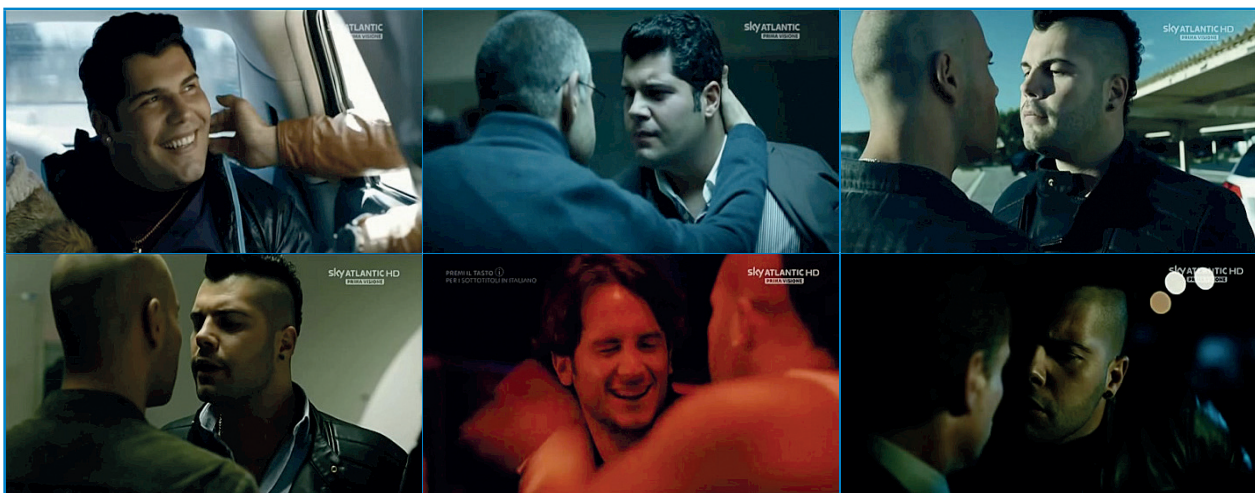
foreign audiences (specifically, Anglophone viewers) to fully appreciate and understand the types of male relationships staged in the series, it was necessary to generate an experimental paradigm. A questionnaire measuring the foreign viewers' understanding of the male *camorristi's* dyadic relationships in the corpus can be a useful quantitative tool to demonstrate that processing a subtitled product is not always a cognitively effective practice. Subtitles may, in fact, lead to poor perception of the product content, especially when the culture represented is significantly distant from the viewer's own.

The questionnaire comprises twelve equivalent scenes from the corpus, representing different male dyadic relationships. The selected male pairs of *camorristi* are unambiguously related via their role as partners in *camorra* crime, and, at least from a privileged – within-the-culture – point of observation, they all perfectly fit into the characterisation of hegemonic heterosexual men.

Data were collected in keeping with a two-fold procedure: 1. through a direct survey of English university students' perceptions undertaken in February 2015, at the University of Exeter, UK. Specifically, the students were the ones attending my seminars on AVT; 2. through the same questionnaire administered to a small group of students from University College Dublin (UCD) in March 2017. Students attending the UCD Library were randomly asked to participate in the experimental paradigm. The data set contains 132 respondents: 72% women, 28% men. The age of the respondents ranges from 22 to 31 years (mean age = 26,5).

The respondents had to watch (Italian audio/English subtitles) the selected scenes and then answer 15 questions, including three on informative core dimensions: the respondents' age and gender; degree of respondents' knowledge of *Gomorra – The Series*; self-esteemed degree of awareness of the *camorra* crime syndicate in Naples. The students were requested to look at the selected phases from the corpus (some are reported in Figure 4.1), and then to express their opinions on the types of dyadic relationships they deemed most appropriate while watching the scenes.

Figure 4.1. Selected stills from *Gomorra – The Series* questionnaire





The level of intimacy between the male dyadic representations in the corpus (see Figure 4.1 above) is mainly entrenched within the TV drama's portrayal of domination patterns among the represented mobsters indexing power and territorial control. It is easy to grasp the meaning of the represented proxemic and haptic behaviour 'from within' the producing culture: the actors' management of space characterises, in fact, an overt and immediate reading of the *camorra* syndicate hierarchical relationships in each scene. Hegemonic male gender roles are strengthened, in the series, by male dyads exchanging affiliative close interactions, while encompassing the absolute absence of non-hegemonic masculinity representations in dyadic roles of power. It is important to note again that, as with other types of body language, proximity range varies with culture, thus it does not necessarily and universally signal a personal space "into which intruders may not come" (Sommer 1969: 26). Hall (1968: 88), indeed, suggested that "physical contact between two people [...] can be perfectly correct in one culture, and absolutely taboo in another". According to Hall, "people from different cultures inhabit different sensory worlds. They not only structure spaces differently, but experience it differently because the sensorium is differently 'programmed'" (1968: 87). As is well known, in Naples people may engage in very close physical contact regardless of how close they are, and they may also greet one another by kissing on the cheeks. British people, on the other hand, prefer to shake hands, but while they have made some physical contact, they still maintain a certain amount of physical distance from the other person. According to Hall (1968: 87): "it [is] quite obvious that [...] apparently inconsequential differences in spatial behaviour resulted in significant misunderstandings and intensified cultural shock". People of different cultures have different beliefs regarding which spatial zones are appropriate in a given situation. Being aware of such differences is critical to successful cross-cultural communication, whether it be interpersonal or mediated through mass communication products, such as film or TV.

Most of the time close distance may include (voluntary or involuntary) touching. In all the selected scenes, dyadic interactions come about in such a close space that the actors almost touch or actually kiss each other. Haptics, physical contact and touching, in particular, a basic element of human communication that begins at birth, becomes a rather complicated topic when it comes to cross-cultural communication. Excluding openly hostile behaviours, such as slapping or hitting, the psychologist Richard Heslin (1974) outlines five separate haptic categories: 1) Functional/Professional; 2) Social/Polite; 3) Friendship/Warmth; 4) Love/Intimacy and 5) Sexual/Arousal. Since moving from one haptic category to another can become blurred by culture, these five categories were chosen as the major items in the questionnaire; the respondents had, in fact, to select the category they deemed as the best representative of the haptic behaviour presented in the dyadic relations in the scenes.

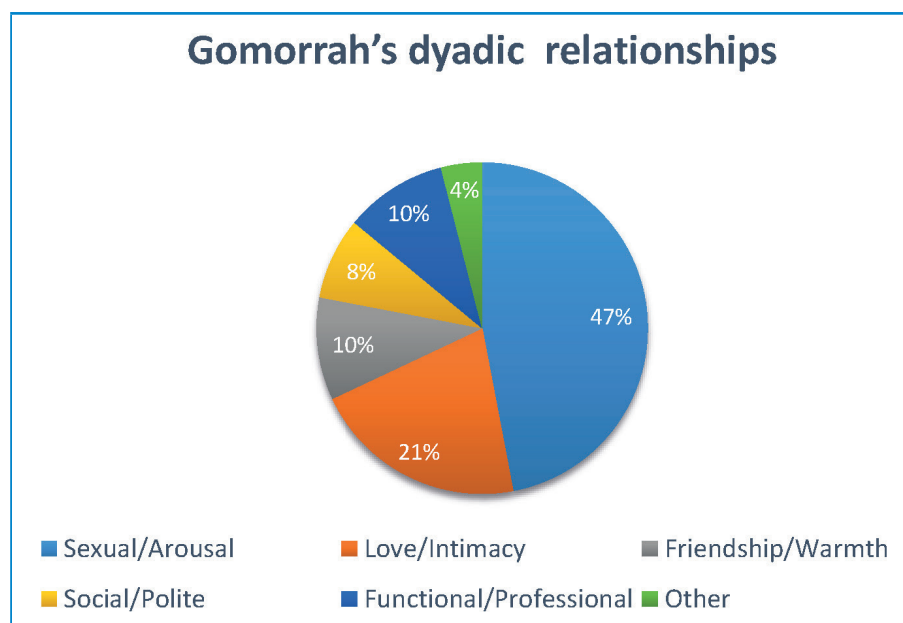
In relation to all the questions in the survey, the respondents tend to express average levels of appreciation of the scenes. Respondents generally indicate that they have no difficulties when watching the



subtitled phases to decode the 'linguistic' meaning of each scene. However, as we can infer from the following graph (Figure 4.2) resulting from the questionnaire's data, *camorristi* proxemics does not seem to travel well across cultures. Almost 50% of the respondents misperceives *Gomorra* men's dyadic interactions, considering them as part of a sexual encounter. 21% of the respondents perceives the scenes as representing a strong physical attraction between the dyads, while 10% recognise a sort of close and warm friendship between the represented pairs. Only 8% deems the represented relationships as belonging to a specific social and/or formal situation, while 10% of the respondents show awareness of the sort of power relation existing among the male dyads who are engaged in a sort of 'professional' relationship, being partners in crime.

The scenes selected from the corpus all easily fit within the category of "Friendship" which, according to Heslin and Alper (1983) expresses an idiosyncratic relationship, and into the "Social/Polite" category expressing ritual interactions between *camorra* mobsters. Touching, within a *camorra*-related context, serves to communicate specific social ritual interactions among the members of the same groups and their idiosyncratic relationships.

Figure 4.2. A graph representation of *Gomorra*'s dyadic relationships as perceived by the respondents



The type of misunderstanding perceived by the low-contact Anglophone respondents may have stemmed from the fact that within their also low-context culture, dyadic male interactions generally take place within a wider space range (4 to 10 feet; see Hall 1969). In the Neapolitan high-contact (and high-context) culture represented in the corpus, social proximity occurs at an intimate distance (0 to 18 inches). At this close range, in fact, vision is distorted and any vocalisation is a whisper or a grunt, inducing the Anglophone respondents to perceive such a confidential distance as the one involving sexual intercourse or



very strong physical attraction. Within the original cultural context, the haptics and proxemics in the corpus index, rather, a strong logic of possession, dominance, hierarchy, power, and territorial control rather than the representation of what would be queer sexual relationships.

As a means to debunk the misperceived 'queerness' in the corpus, the following section therefore introduces and proposes the concept of "multimodal prosody" aimed at providing a few tentative suggestions for resourceful solutions to the problem of context disambiguation in the subtitling process of a highly culture-bound multimodal product.

5. Multimodal prosody in AVT: de-queering the mobster

The multimodal analysis proposed below of the semiotic resources (sound, gestures, verbal soundtrack, etc.) employed in the construction of the *camorra* dyadic relationships, is carried out with the implementation of some useful corpus linguistic tools resulting from the re-elaboration of the concept of "semiotic prosody" as presented in Hoey (2005). Corpus linguistics investigates several kinds of linguistic aspects bringing new insights about language behaviour. Semantic prosody, in particular, is an interesting aspect that corpus linguists define as the typical behaviour of distinctive lexical items occurring as *nodes* or *KWICs* (key words in context) in concordance lines (Sinclair 1991, 2004; Louw 1993; Stubbs 1996; Partington 1998, 2004; Tognini-Bonelli 2001; Hunston 2007). Louw (1993: 157) describes semantic prosody as "a consistent aura of meaning with which a form is imbued by its collocates with the consequent transfer of meaning to a given word from its habitual co-text". Accordingly, the meaning-making process can be drawn from a unit that goes beyond the individual word expected to have semantic prosody if characteristically co-occurring with other words belonging to a particular semantic set (Hunston/Francis 2000: 137).

By situating collocation within a psycholinguistic domain, since it is "a psychological association between words", Hoey (2005: 5) revises the theory of priming in order to introduce his concept of "semantic priming" when discussing the way a word may trigger other 'target' words. In Hoey's terms (2005), a collocational pattern exists only if one recognises that every word is psychologically primed within its context for collocational use. He argues that words are primed to occur in relationship with particular semantic associations and particular semantic functions; when primings are in agreement with each other, they can enact what Hoey terms "priming prosody". When readers, for instance, encounter the word *MAFIA* in a written passage, they will identify the word *MOBSTER*, appearing at a later stage, more quickly than if they had previously come across an unrelated word, such as *KISS*. In this sense, *MAFIA* is said to semantically prime the readers for *MOBSTER*. The word *MAFIA* establishes a strong word association with *MOBSTER*, which the word *KISS* cannot immediately trigger. In Hoey's discussion, semantic priming is a property of the word and what is primed enhances meaning to the priming item rather than *vice*



versa. Therefore, while semantic prosody refers to the meaning resulting from the choices made in a sentence, priming prosody involves “the processes of utterance construction” (Hoey 2005: 166). In psychology, priming can be analysed in different stimulus repetitions involving perceptual, semantic, and conceptual stimuli. The psychologists Kolb and Whishaw (2009: 453–454, 457) claim that when people see an incomplete familiar image, they are unable to immediately identify it. However, when they are shown more of the same picture, they are able to recognise it, and in a future circumstance, they will identify the same image at an earlier stage. Similarly, Balirano (2017: 158–161) introduces the notion of “multimodal prosody” to discuss the way priming semiotic resources, such as a word, an image, a gesture or a sound, may recall other semiotic resources, also occurring between different modes. An image, or any other resource, primes the way an audience recognises its meaning within the context and co-text in which the semiotic resource co-occurs most frequently. Therefore, according to Balirano (2017: 161), the meaning-making of an individual semiotic resource can be said to co-occur with other semiotic resources in previously primed semiotic contexts, when cohesion is achieved within a given multimodal text:

Multimodal prosody is observable when semiotic cohesion is created within a text in a given context. The coherent integration of an item with its surroundings discloses how the rest of the image can be interpreted functionally. Such functional changes will probably also alter the way we perceive the original image priming new possible scenarios.

A functional interpretation of images and other semiotic resources cohesively integrated within a multimodal product may help the viewers from different cultural contexts to understand cross-cultural messages. The analysis of multimodal prosody, the repetition of a coherent integration of images and other semiotic resources working together to prime the context of situation, may also be of aid to audiovisual translators when rendering a context-bound product in other words. In the corpus under scrutiny, the representation of the *camorristi's* relationships is construed, in fact, through a series of co-occurrences of images, sounds and words. Such a recurring co-deployment of close personal space, behaviour, gestures, gaze and verbal exchanges, will prime the audience for subsequent similar stimuli relating to the perceptions of the represented context. The functional co-deployment of meaning with which a filmic scene is imbued through its semiotic collocates will help transfer the meaning to a scene from its habitual and recurring co-text. The meaning-making process can be drawn from resources to be found beyond the individual scene, which is assumed to have a specific multimodal prosody if typically co-occurring with other resources belonging to a particular semiotic set. The implementation of a contextualised multimodal prosody analysis may help disambiguate some visual CSRs, including proxemic and haptic elements, providing that also the translator involved in the process of re-semiotisation take on or assume a visible agency in the process of translation (see also Caliendo 2012: 193).






The following multimodal grids (Tables I, II and III), based on some useful and significant achievements in the multimodal transcription introduced by Paul Thibault (2000) and later implemented by Baldry and Thibault (2006) and Balirano (2007), can be a useful tool for audiovisual translators when analysing multimodal prosody as an aid for translation/adaptation. Thibault developed his multimodal analysis offering an inclusive synoptic perspective with the purpose of framing all the relevant elements of video-supported material. Multimodal transcription procedures are useful to show the semiotic basis of text meaning, considering all the different semiotic resources which co-occur in the meaning-making process. Since not all the categories listed and arranged by Thibault are instrumental to our kind of study, a wide range of adaptations and integrations have necessarily been introduced in order to be consistent with the type of filmic texts taken into consideration and with their linguistic adaptation.

The multimodal analysis of *Gomorra*'s dyadic relationships is designed as follows: 1) the visual elements are framed in screenshots by means of the software ATLAS.ti 7.0 which can capture still images the same size as the original DVD frames, thanks to the interpolation technology. The images, selected from specific segments representing proxemic meaning-making phases, are then reduced to fit in a table. 2) The minimum unit of the captured screenshots is set either by the occurrence in the scene of a visual haptic behaviour or by any relevant verbal utterance. The visual frames (reported in the analysis in square brackets) have been trimmed to fit into a table, thus they do not represent the actual action from the TV shots, but only the pictures needed to unfold ambiguous interpretation of queerness, either semiotically (images or sound) or verbally expressed. 3) A narrative description on significant aspects of the kinetic action, annotated in the Scene column, includes a general account on the characters, their proxemics and gestural movements in the scene. Further, this column may also annotate elements, which provide important visual information such as camera movements and the distance between the represented dyads. According to Kress and van Leeuwen (1996: 130), in fact, in visual semiosis, close or long shot perspective can represent interpersonal closeness or distance between viewers and actors or among the agents in the text. 4) The original verbal soundtrack, transcribed in standard Italian (rather than in the original code-mixed/code-switched Italian-Neapolitan version), can be found in the Source Text column, together with some comments on the relevant illocutionary and perlocutionary elements of the text; while the Target Text column displays the English subtitles. 5) The last column includes a schematic representation of *camorristi* multimodal prosody catering for dyadic proxemics, gestures, general haptic behaviours and their corresponding meaning-making mechanisms within the scene.

The following three synoptic tables represent a mere instantiation of the way translators/adaptors of audiovisual products may try to integrate the verbal soundtrack of a visual product with the relevant semiotic and/or nonverbal communicative acts in a contextualised



Table 5.1. The multimodal grid for the analysis of contextualised subtitles (1)

I	FRAME	SCENE	SOURCE TEXT	TARGET TEXT	MULTIMODAL PROSODY
1		Outside, dark. Genny is trying to persuade Ciro that he can now be seen as a mature <i>camorra</i> mobster. [I.1: seq. 12. T. 12.55]	G.: <i>La prossima volta che fai il barbecue a casa di Conte, mi devi chiamare, hai capito?</i> [A directive illocutionary act claiming for acceptance and inclusion]	G.: <i>Next time there's a barbecue at Conte's house, call me!</i> [Simplifies the illocutionary force of the original request]	Close Proxemics = power relation. Proximity: Friendly/Familiar bond.
2		As above. [I.1: seq. 12. T. 12.59]	C.: <i>Stai tranquillo, non mancherà occasione.</i> [Fake commissive act of reassurance]	C.: <i>Relax. I'll let you know.</i> [same as in ST]	Close Proxemics = power relation. Haptics: self-referential.
3		As above. [I.1: seq. 12. T. 12.55]	G.: <i>Ciao.</i> [Verbal informal salutation vs haptic salutation]	G.: <i>Bye.</i> [same as in ST]	Haptics: Friendship/Warmth

rendering, which may verbally explicitate important semiotic resources co-deployed within the original source text.

The analysis of multimodal prosody may help the translator disambiguate the high-context culture embedded in the dyadic proxemic and haptic behaviours by favouring a 'contextualised' rendering of the source verbal text. Following Pedersen's (2005: 3) intuition, "instead of 'translate', the verb 'render' will henceforth be used about the different strategies involved in transferring ECRs from a Source Text (ST) to a Target Text (TT), as not all of the strategies actually involve translation".

In [I.1], the Italian utterance [*La prossima volta che fai il barbecue a casa di Conte, mi devi chiamare, hai capito?*]⁵ which is rendered into the official English subtitle [Next time there's a barbecue at Conte's house, call me!], does not clearly illustrate the idiosyncratic power relation that Genny, the son of the *camorra* boss, means to affirm with his father's right-hand man, Ciro. The apparent familiar bond between the two participants, indexed by the dyadic close proxemics, may be misleading when read from outside the context culture. The English subtitle fails to refer clearly to Genny's power over Ciro, as it is multimodally co-deployed by the close proxemics in the image and reinforced by the Italian original verbal text. The subtitle should provide some cues about the represented visual/social context in

⁵ [Next time you plan a BBQ at Conte's, you must call me. Got it?] (My translation).






order to guide viewers from other cultures to better appreciate the type of dyadic relationship between the participants. The translator could have rendered full illocutionary power to Genny's utterance by translating it with a veiled threat act: "Next BBQ at Conte's, you've got to call me! OK?". This would underline the hierarchically superior role of the speaker; the underlying menace should the addressee not do so, with the invariant tag 'OK?' making it evident that the addressee's discursive rights are contextually severely constricted. Dyadic power relation is, in fact, re-established through the use of a direct question introduced by the invariant tag [OK?], and further enhanced through the deontic modality expressed by the modal verb 'have to', which is surprisingly left untranslated in the official subtitle. Such a contextualised adaptation may also help the foreign viewers catch the meaning of the dyad's haptic intimate gesture, their final long kiss, which repeated several times in the series, primes the viewers with a connotative meaning, which disambiguates any possible queer reading. The dyadic haptic enhancement (Ciro is kissing Genny) refers to the informal but strong represented power-relationship between the participants. In [I.3], although Genny is on a superior level of power – owing to his father's position in the *camorra* hierarchical scale – he is explicitly allowing Giro to enter his personal sphere. Genny is friendly exercising his power since, although he needs to learn how to become the boss from Giro, he firmly reminds his father's *consigliere* of each other's social/functional roles in the gang.

In [I.3], the subtitler chooses to translate literally Genny's closing salutation phrase [*Ciao*], with the English equivalent [Bye]. Such an equivalent translation cannot provide the viewers with the specific cultural cue needed to grasp the haptic dimension of the visual scene, in which the young would-be boss, Genny Savastano, exerts his power through a haptic gesture of supremacy. He leans towards the other participant, in the typical *camorra* boss' style, to receive his kissing ritual. Rendering the Italian [*Ciao*], instead, with a more explicit utterance such as [Now you can go!], would explicitate the dyad's hierarchical haptic dynamics and make it clear, on a linguistic level also, that rather than receiving a friendly salutation, Giro is effectively being dismissed.

A contextualised translation of the scene might help the foreign viewer understand the context of situation and prime it for future similar occurrences within its habitual, recurring co-texts. Semiotic priming, as the property of the image, works here to enhance meaning to the priming item, that is the power relation enacted through the dyad's close proxemics and apparently friendly haptics, namely, the dyad's kissing custom. The resulting priming prosody will suggest the way in which the process of *camorrista's* identity construction is achieved within the multimodal product. This proxemic meaning-making phase, integrating images, sounds and texts, can disambiguate the representation of personal space by contextualising, for the benefit of a low-context/low-contact audience, the dyads' territorial proxemic behaviour.



Table 5.2. The multimodal grid for the analysis of contextualised subtitles (2)

II	FRAME	SCENE	SOURCE TEXT	TARGET TEXT	MULTIMODAL PROSODY
1		Outside, dark. Don Pietro is trying to persuade Ciro that the killing of Attilio (Ciro's best friend) was a necessary deed. [1.1: seq. 23. T. 45.40]	DP: <i>Mi dispiace per Attilio.</i> [Fake expressive act of apology]	DP: <i>I am sorry about Attilio.</i> [same as in ST]	Haptics: strong act of possession indexing power and territorial control. DP owns Ciro.
2		As above. [1.1: seq. 23. T. 45.45]	DP: <i>Lo sai pure tu che si doveva fare 'sta cosa, no?</i> [assertive statement disguised in the form of an indirect request through tag question]	DP: <i>But it had to be done, right?</i> [Impersonal declaration, followed by an invariant tag question]	H: hierarchy and power.
3		As above. [1.1: seq. 23. T. 46.03]	DP: <i>Bravo, immortale.</i> [praising the other as an act of superiority]	DP: <i>Good job, immortal.</i>	H: conferring trust by showing superiority




In Table II, haptics is employed to signal Don Pietro's, the chief *camorra* boss in the series, power over his trusted advisor Ciro. He has recently killed Ciro's best friend, Attilio, and in this sequence, he is briefly dismissing his cruel deeds deeming the murder of Attilio as a necessary act, without having to provide any other linguistic explanation. His haptic behaviour – he keeps touching Ciro on the face – is self-explanatory in Neapolitan *camorra*-related contexts; as if the *camorrista* were saying: “doesn't matter what I did, you still belong to me and do what I please”. In [II.2], the subtitler adapts the Italian utterance [*Lo sai pure tu che si doveva fare 'sta cosa, no?*]⁶ with an English impersonal declaration, followed by a tag [But it had to be done, right?]. Foreign viewers may perceive the short invariant tag pronounced by Don Pietro [right?], as a signal of power asymmetry between the interlocutors. Lakoff (1973, 1975) maintains that speakers in a position of 'low power' tend to be more likely to use tag questions. Although such a claim has since been challenged with empirical research presenting a wider likeliness in the use of tags (see Cameron *et al.* 1989), the English subtitle could have made the context of situation a bit more explicit by explaining Don Pietro's haptic behaviour, which reverses any possible form of 'low power' representation in his utterance. His initial utterance in the original text begins with [*Lo sai*] (EN.: you know) which hinges on the dyad's knowledge about the shared background assumptions. Ciro, who on

⁶ [You know it had to be done, don't you?] (My translation).

the other hand does not approve the murder of Attilio, is thus linguistically forced to interpret Don Pietro’s utterance against such a powerful and binding presupposition. Given this interpretation, it is obvious that the use of the invariant tag [no?], which usually awaits confirmation on behalf of the hearer, cannot be described as a means of seeking verification/confirmation/corroboration in the ordinary sense; rather, it is a means of coercively getting the hearer, Ciro, to pretend to agree. From a haptic dimension, the *camorra* boss is touching Ciro’s neck while speaking, a semiotic act that implies hierarchical order and superiority and that is not automatically readable from outside the context of culture. The subtitle might have helped foreign viewers understand the hidden dimension of Don Pietro’s non-verbal communication by explicitly saying: “As you know, it had to be done!”. Phase [II.2] is a semiotic factual statement that employs both verbal (“it had to be done”) and non-verbal communication (Don Pietro’s gesture) to express power and control in the interaction.

Table III presents another interesting semiotic act incorporating and summarising the multimodal prosody conveyed by the *camorristi* frequent kissing in the series (there are 34 occurrences of similar meaning-making phases, in the whole corpus). At this point, specifically at the end of the first series, differently from the situation of the students/respondents to my empirical paradigm (see section

Table 5.3. The multimodal grid for the analysis of contextualised subtitles (3)

III	FRAME	SCENE	SOURCE TEXT	TARGET TEXT	MULTIMODAL PROSODY
1		Outside, dark. Genny and Ciro see each other after a long separation. Genny is now the new boss and Ciro owes him respect. [1.8: seq. 35. T. 0217]	C: <i>Sono contento di vederti.</i> [Declarative. Fake statement of fact]	C: <i>I'm glad to see you</i> [same as in ST]	H: Friendly/Familiar attitude. Idiosyncratic relationship.
2		As above. [1.8: seq. 35. T. 02.22]	C: <i>Sei tornato da tre giorni, e ti fai vedere solo ora?</i>	C: <i>You've been back three days, but show up now?</i>	H: Detachment/Forced Distance. Lack of intersubjectivity.
3		As above. [1.8: seq. 35. T. 02.33]	G: <i>E' un problema?</i> [face-threatening implicature] C: <i>Nessun problema!</i> [perlocutionary effect]	G: <i>It's a problem?</i> C: <i>No problem!</i>	MP: Declarative multimodal act of 'excommunicating' the other from one's personal sphere. Total lack of dyadic inter-subjectivity.



4), who only had access to a limited representation of male dyadic relationships, the viewers have all the elements to fully understand the meaning-making of the multimodal representation. Semiotically primed by close dyadic haptics since the first scenes of the series, the spectators will have realised by now that *camorra* male dyads' use of proxemic and haptic dimensions is different from their low-contact proxemics. Multimodal prosody, frequently occurring in the whole series, will grant the viewers awareness about the dyadic relationships shaped in the filmic narrative. Despite the long kiss in [III.1], and Ciro's warm affirmation [I'm glad to see you], it is immediately evident from the subsequent phases that the typical idiosyncratic relationship between the dyad has changed from [I.3]. The first symptom of such a change comes from the perceivably, at least from an in-group privileged point of observation, wider distance in the dyad. The participants are still framed in a very close proximity, but the space is visibly wider than in previous similar images. In phase [III.2], Ciro is touching Genny with both of his hands as if to beg him to listen, while Genny's unperceivable gaze turns elsewhere, avoiding to establish a close contact with his partner. In [III.3], there is no haptic behaviour, the two look at each other in the eyes and the resulting material process suggests a blatant disregard. All semiotic resources concur to signal a sense of detachment and indifference signifying the total lack of intersubjectivity in the dyadic relationship. The English subtitles again fail to help the Anglophone viewers to grasp the context of situation, which apart from the tones of the voices and the slight distance in proximity, it is quite impossible to grasp by relying only on the verbal soundtrack of the scene. Genny's final short utterance [G: *È un problema?*]⁷ is a clear face-threatening implicature. He is warning Ciro that he is the new boss, so he is the one who rules. From a dyadic interactional perspective, Ciro's performative answer [*Nessun problema*], through which he intends to avoid a conflict (semantically enacted by the noun 'problema') with Genny, brings about a perlocutionary effect fully recognising Genny's role as the boss. Consequently, forcing the original text into the disambiguating utterance [I'm the boss now!] followed by Ciro's total acceptance with [I know!] or [Yes, you are!] could help the Anglophone spectator access, more effectively, the haptic source text and its related linguistic implicature.

6. Conclusion

I would like to conclude with a simple disclaimer: this paper is not a way of evaluating audiovisual translation practices, since the author is personally well aware of the so many variables interfering with the difficult task of AVT. Indeed, there are several factors challenging the audiovisual rendering of a multimodal work, or any other form of translation. Zabalbeascoa (1999: 175), in his attentive analysis of the priorities and restrictions in translation, has pertinently clarified that: "it is unfair to evaluate a translation without considering all of the intervening factors, including translators' motivations, goals,

⁷ [G: Any problem with that?] (My translation).



constraints, and the sociohistorical circumstances". This paper is rather an attempt to highlight the importance of embedding the analysis of proxemic and haptic dimensions in the thorny cultural process of subtitling a high-context multimodal product. Reading correctly or deeply understanding a given culture is a fundamental process every audiovisual translator should go through in order to fully render the semiotic representation in the target context beyond any pre-assumed stereotypical interpretation.

The analysis has taken into account the well-known and much debated Italian TV production *Gomorra – The Series* that portrays hegemonic male identities of *camorra* characters, construing them both semiotically and linguistically. The *camorristi* construction of social identities and their social and personal relationships, in the filmic representation, are inevitably carried out on the small screen through the use of culture-bound signs which can be verbal, but also – and above all – nonverbal. Translating cultures means above all being able to interpret reality and organise experience (Katan 1999: 17) through the different ways of perceiving the intentions, values and beliefs of the source culture. The televised representation of the criminals' micro-space, their non-verbal intentions and non-explicit beliefs cannot be perceived by foreign viewers without clear and explicit linguistic cues which may be added to subtitles. As a questionnaire administered to English-speaking viewers has revealed, single scenes from the series, with English subtitles, cannot fully disambiguate what Hall (1969) calls the hidden dimension of culture. Therefore, the difficult process of rendering the Neapolitan organised criminal culture, as represented in *Gomorra – The Series* in English-speaking cultural contexts via AVT, needs to be reconsidered. AVT can in fact supply a more intelligible meaning-making of the *camorra* haptic and proxemic meanings through a clear linguistic explicitation of the context, as observed and elaborated in this paper. Moreover, a tentative analysis of multimodal prosody has suggested that the translator's re-semiotisation of *camorristi's* non-verbal behaviours needs to be, where possible, contextualised in the verbal texts. This might obviously provide the translator with a certain visible agency in the process of rendering, at least some important parts of, the Neapolitan and *camorra* influenced high-context culture represented in *Gomorra – The Series*.

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