

Identity-building and Language Variation in AVT

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¹ See Deborah Cameron, *Good to Talk? Living and Working in a Communication Culture* (London: Sage Publications, 2000); J. Byrd Clark, *Multilingualism, Citizenship, and Identity: Voices of Youth and Symbolic Investments in an Urban, Globalized World* (London: Continuum, 2009).

² Tope Omoniyi and Goodith White, eds., *Sociolinguistics of Identity* (London: Continuum, 2006), 6.

It is common knowledge that translators in general and audiovisual translators in particular need to be not only bi-lingual but also bi-cultural as they are mediating between two linguistic and cultural systems which are rarely, if ever, interchangeable. This is also due to the connotative scaffolding which stems from the mere denotative meaning in the two languages, source and target. Texts, in the widest sense of the term, are neither isolated nor hermetic and are always enmeshed in a web of social, ideological and cultural references which strike a chord in the target audience to which they are destined. Texts also embody acts of identity since discursive contexts are always moderated by social, cultural and of course linguistic factors, which are expressed through language.

Identity can never be considered a static, monolithic given. It is always fluid, fragmented and unstable and varies according to the social or communicative contexts within which the speaker finds him/herself;¹ moreover, according to Omoniyi and White, it “informs social relationships and therefore also informs the communicative exchanges that characterize them”.² When audiovisual texts are translated – whether dubbed or subtitled – although a number of component semiotic modalities necessarily remain unaltered, the linguistic exchanges, and therefore the social relationships they contribute to build, inevitably mutate. Such mutations can, in turn, bring about changes in the identity makeup of the characters, often leading to ‘gain’ for the target viewers who, apart from the clearly acquired textual comprehension, are also able to observe, through the agency of the communicative exchanges, a number of behavioural or identity traits which concur with and fit into the target setting. Such translated communicative exchanges can, however, modify or mask the original traits which mark the character in the source version of the audio-visual production, thus bringing about a ‘loss’ in terms of original character identity-building. In particular, when dealing with multilingual films, where one of the languages corresponds to the language of the target text, the process of dubbing/adaptation becomes even thornier, as Delia Chiaro aptly states:

Products containing characters speaking in a language other than the main film language present another translational quandary when the film is dubbed. In the case of multilingual films, the strategy in dubbing countries tends to be to adopt a mixture of dubbing and subtitling although, if one of the foreign languages in question happens to be the one into which the film is being translated, this will create additional difficulties.³

³ Delia Chiaro, “Issues in Audiovisual Translation”, in Jeremy Munday, ed., *The Routledge Companion to Translation Studies*, revised edition (London: Routledge, 2009), 159.

This paper investigates the manner in which some of the characters present in the American film *Eat Pray Love* (2010) where this very situation arises, undergo mutation of the linguistic and cultural identity they are perceived to possess, or are given in the original English source version, and thereby come to have instead a

number of linguistic and extra-linguistic cultural traits which allow them to take on a different, more indigenous, identities when ‘crossing over’ into the dubbed Italian target version.

Though there are instances of language variation in the ‘Pray’ (India) and ‘Love’ (Bali) chapters of the film, we have concentrated on the first part of the film ‘Eat’ which takes place in Italy and offers plenty of scope for our linguistic investigation on variation and identity-building.

Corpus and methodology

Eat Pray Love, based on Elizabeth Gilbert’s best-selling novel of the same title, is a dramatic film directed by Ryan Murphy, starring Julia Roberts as Elizabeth Gilbert. It was first shown on August 13, 2010 in the U.S., and then on September 13, 2010 in Italy in its dubbed version by CDC-SEFIT GROUP. The Italian dialogues were written by Elettra Caporello. Despite worldwide success, the film was strongly criticized for its stereotyped views on women, place and culture.

Elizabeth Gilbert, a successful New York writer, would appear to have been blessed with everything life can provide: a consolidated career, a comfortable apartment she has spent time and money renovating, a loving circle of close friends and colleagues, and a doting husband. She leaves for Bali to write an article about a renowned ‘medicine man’ and after hearing his prophecy, the confusion, bewilderment and uncertainty she has been attempting to smother for a considerable length of time begin to surface. Newly divorced and caught up in a sentimental relationship which appears to be as unsatisfactory as the preceding marriage, she decides to set off on a quest for self-discovery. Her travels will take her to Italy, to seek out the true pleasure of gastronomic nourishment, to India, to discover the power of prayer and spiritual nourishment to Bali to find inner peace and equilibrium. It is only after crossing a number of geographical, physical and emotional boundaries that Elizabeth’s soul-searching journey will come to an end.

Our linguistic analysis was carried out on the conveniently available computer-readable files of the two film-scripts, the original source text and Italian adaptation. We looked specifically for linguistic features to identify the changes and similarities which emerged in the translational process from English into Italian. Although the many markers of identity discourse, such as personal pronouns, culture-bound words, specialized lexis, code-mixing, code-switching, phonetic variation, special functions, and use of gestures are present throughout the entire film, we decided to concentrate our investigation on a few particularly striking choices to be found in the first part of the film, ‘Eat’, as mentioned earlier. As mentioned earlier, this ‘chapter’ takes place in Italy and introduces a whole community of Italian-speakers with whom the American protagonist has to interact linguistically in order to reach her ultimate goal: that of being able to order Italian food, a first step towards her construction of identity. The chapter, as we shall see, presents a series of interesting linguistic instances of how linguistic variation of various sorts

is treated in audiovisual translation.

Cultural ‘re-routing’ as a strategy in AVT

The lead character of *Eat Pray Love* Elizabeth Gilbert (Julia Roberts), a beautiful, successful, 30-something New York journalist and playwright is depicted, in the original, as a woman in search of identity. She has spent her entire life living up to other people’s expectations and moving from one unhappy relationship to the next, as she says: “Since I was fifteen, I’ve either been with a guy or breaking up with a guy, I have not given myself two weeks of a breather to just deal with, you know, myself!” Her decision to go to Italy, and then on to India and Bali, is prompted not so much by the idea of seeing the world, as a travel journalist she has travelled widely, but by the need to find herself. The ‘external’ journey, from country to country, and continent to continent will run parallel with an ‘internal’ journey of self-discovery.

When selecting Italy as the first country to visit, Elizabeth says to her personal assistant and confidant Delia (Viola Davis): “I could write a book about a woman who goes to Italy to learn Italian – I could call it Carbohydrates and Conjugations”. In the Italian dubbed version, our object of investigation, this surprisingly comes across as: “potrei scrivere di una donna che va in Italia ad imparare a mangiare – lo potrei chiamare carboidrati e Colosseo” (tr.: I could write about a woman who goes to Italy to learn to eat – I could call it carbohydrates and Colosseum). The Italian translation thus gives rise to a *skopos* shift from the original ideational function of the source text. Indeed, Elizabeth’s identity-building in the source text begins with her intention to become a *connoisseur* of Italian food and of the language. Through an act of ideological ‘re-routing’ in the target text, however, the adaptor brings Italian national culture and identity to the fore rather than the language by moulding Elizabeth into a proficient NS fascinated by Italian history and culture.

Later on in the film, as the idea of leaving for Italy becomes more of a certainty, Liz reiterates that she needs to go somewhere where she can marvel at something: “Language, gelato, spaghetti, something!” This is re-routed into Italian as “Linguine, Leonardo, Limoncello, qualcosa!” (Linguine, Leonardo, Limoncello – a typical southern Italian lemon-based alcoholic drink – something!).⁴ In the second example, although assonance is a stylistic gain in the target text through alliteration of the liquid sound ‘l’, the main variation between source version and target version lies in the terms selected to portray Italy, or rather to portray what Liz is looking for in Italy. Hence, in the original English source version, Elizabeth is going to Italy to eat good food and learn the language, in the Italian target version, her trip remains a gastronomic adventure, but also becomes a journey into its historical culture and heritage (the Colosseum, Leonardo). The two short excerpts quoted above are the first hints at the different way in which the Italian adaptor, through a process of ideological re-routing, has brought about a *skopos* shift which seems to betray the

⁴ Clearly in both the above excerpts the technical aspect of lip synchronization must be taken into consideration. It must be said that the Italian ‘coniugazione’ is, in terms of lip synch, closer to the original ‘conjugations’ than the selected term ‘Colosseo’.

original narrative structure.

In the next two excerpts we will look at how the dubbing choices opted for in the Italian version radically change the way Liz is portrayed to the viewers in the target country and therefore inform the identity she acquires by means of her communicative exchanges. She acquires practically NS status, fully aware of Italian national culture and history, though she clearly maintains her status as a foreigner. This is at odds with the original.

Upon arriving in Rome, in the English source version, Elizabeth speaks virtually no Italian and the setting in the first scene is that of a typical language learning situation. In the Italian dubbed version, due, presumably, to the traditional AVT industry's reliance on the canonical suspension of disbelief and the need for target audience comprehension and enhanced enjoyment, Elizabeth speaks fluent, accentless Italian. The scene is set in a typical Roman pavement 'trattoria', in the early evening, where Giovanni (Luca Argentero) and Liz are having dinner. Giovanni was introduced to Liz on her first day in Rome by Sofi, a Swedish acquaintance, who vouched for Giovanni's skill as a language teacher.

In order to display our linguistic investigation on the two small sub-corpora, composed of the English and the Italian dubbed versions, we have organized our multimodal tables as follows: in the first column on the left [F] we report the number of selected frames; the second column from left [Characters, Setting, Camera] serves to describe the physical setting, the non verbal soundtrack and the movements of the characters; the third and fourth columns, respectively, reproduce the original English version and the text of the dubbed Italian version with a literal English translation. As regards transcription conventions, in square brackets we signal overlapping speech, in parentheses we indicate the camera movements, in double parentheses we refer to gestures and speakers' gaze, and in italics and parentheses we provide the translation of the Italian script. Three dots indicate that that part of the dialogue in either version has not been rendered in the other text.

F	Characters Setting Camera	Source Text	Target Text
1	Liz [Diegetic, Italian music as camera approaches table] ((out of frame))	...	I monumenti di Roma sono pieni di frasi latine... mi aiuti a capire qualcosa? <i>(The monuments in Rome are full of Latin phrases... can you help me to understand something about them)</i>
2	Giovanni (camera now on G. at the same point as 'You can say...' in the original version)	You can say 'egli attraversò'	Come no, partiamo dalla prima in classifica SPQR <i>(Of course, let's start with the most well-known one SPQR)</i>
3	Liz	'Egli attra[versò]'	Non significa... Senatus.. qualcosa <i>(doesn't it mean... Senatus... something)</i>
4	Giovanni	[attraversò] it's a past ... ((uses past gesture over shoulder)) noi attraversammo	Populus Romanus...sai come lo traduciamo anche a Roma? <i>(Populus Romanus... do you know how else we translate it in Rome?)</i>
5	Liz	Noi attraversammo	No... come lo traduciamo a Roma? <i>(No... how do we translate it in Rome?)</i>
6	Giovanni	Voi attraversaste...essi attraversarono	Mmh...Sono porci questi romani, quale preferisce dei due? <i>(Mmh... These Romans are pigs, which do you prefer of the two?)</i>
7	Liz	Too fast...but ok	La versione originale...vai avanti <i>(The original version... carry on)</i>
8	Giovanni ((close up of mouth))	You can say attraversiamo	Ok.. Amor vincit omnia
9	Liz	Attraversiamo	Che cosa romantic... <i>(How romantic...)</i>
10	Giovanni ((close up of mouth))	Yeah	Sì <i>(yes)</i>
11	Liz ((close up of mouth))	Attraversiamo	Tutto attraverso l'amore <i>(Everything through love)</i>
12	Giovanni	Attraversiamo?	E Carpe Diem? <i>(And Carpe Diem?)</i>
13	Liz	Attraversiamo?	Cattura il momento? <i>(Capture the moment?)</i>
14	Giovanni	((nods))	Mmh hmm ((nods))
15	Liz	((enunciating clearly)) Attraversiamo, oh, what a beautiful word	Ho indovinato.. sto imparando... sono quasi bilingue <i>(I guessed... I'm learning... I'm almost bilingual)</i>
16	Giovanni	Come on it's... ((sweeping/crossing hand gesture)) 'let's cross over' it's so ordinary	In fondo... ((sweeping/crossing gesture)) il latino è il preludio dell'italiano <i>(After all... Latin is the prelude to Italian)</i>
17	Liz	No it's a... perfect combination of Italian sounds.. it's the wistful 'a', the rolling trill, the soothing 's', mmh...	Ma certo... due musiche diverse con la stessa sonorità... le malinconiche 'a', le rotolante 'r', le ondeggianti 's' <i>(Of course... two different tunes with the same sounds... the melancholic 'a', the rolling 'r', the undulating 's')</i>
18	Giovanni	It's true	Est verus
19	Liz	((not in frame)) I love it ((in frame)) Alright... Let me teach you a word	((not in frame)) L'adoro ((In frame)) Bene... ora t'insegno io una parola <i>(I love it... right... now I'll teach you a word)</i>

20	Giovanni	((no speech, just looks expectant))	Dai! <i>(go on then)</i>
21	Liz ((picks up carafe and holds it up))	Mmm... therapist	Hmm... terapistus
22	Giovanni	laughs	laughs
23	Liz ((points at carafe))	Therapist!... That's good... you gotta learn humour	in vino veritas... mozzarella vincit Omnia... Cin cin
24	Giovanni ((clinking glasses – out of frame))	[It's not!]	Brava
25	Liz	[Come on. Cheers]	...

Table 1. Liz and Giovanni – The dinner scene

In Table 1, in the source text column, there would appear to be a typical teacher/student situation. Giovanni enunciates a linguistic structure, in this case the Italian simple past of the verb ‘attraversare’ and Liz diligently repeats it attempting to mimic the correct pronunciation and intonation. One may wonder why Giovanni is initially teaching Liz a verb form that is seldom used in everyday conversational exchanges, however, the main focus of the exchange lies with the 1st person plural imperative/exhortative ‘attraversiamo’, which appears to contain all that Liz most admires about the Italian sound system, and which is a key word in the identity construction of the protagonist and in the general narrative development of the film. An investigation of the missing narrative loop is presently being developed elsewhere. Giovanni’s apparently superior epistemic stance as the teacher is then confuted by the role-switch, in which Liz jokingly teaches him the term ‘therapist’ indicating the carafe of wine which, she claims, can provide good therapeutic support.

In the dubbed Italian version, with the target audience reception and ease of viewing in mind, as is, indeed, common in dubbed films in which a foreigner speaks the language of the target country’s viewing community, Elizabeth speaks fluent Italian throughout the exchange. It could therefore be argued that teaching Italian terms or verb forms would be in complete contrast with the character-building which has taken place in the previous scenes where she was made to speak perfect Italian. So, the interlocutors move into a third dimension, neither English nor Italian but Latin, in which the learning process, the teaching exchange can indeed still take place. Giovanni not only imparts knowledge about the most well-known (and perhaps rather trite) Latin phrases, but also gives them some local, Roman, colour by providing the local ‘interpretation’ of the classical *SPQR* acronym. It is interesting to note in [F5], that Liz repeats “Come lo traduciamo a Roma?” (*How do we translate it in Rome?*), therefore demonstrating that she belongs to the Italian language community and is indeed operating within the ‘third dimension’ mentioned above. In [F15] she exclaims: “Ho indovinato... sto imparando... sono quasi bilingue” (*I guessed... I’m learning... I’m almost bilingual*), but in this case the

two languages over which she would appear to have almost total command are Italian and Latin.

The language variation which occurs in the crossing from source text to target text, and which is exemplified by the linguistic and conceptual remodeling of the conversational exchanges, brings Elizabeth and Giovanni to acquire completely different linguistic and cultural identities. In the original English version, Liz is merely an enthusiastic foreign language learner who enjoys the sounds and morphology of the Italian language and Giovanni is a diligent teacher taking his student through her paces. In the dubbed Italian version, Liz becomes an *aficionado* of ancient culture and history, which gives her far greater cultural stance, and Giovanni is the erudite custodian of all things Latin which also leads to an enhancement of his epistemic stance.

We wish to posit that there may be a further reason for the Italian adaptor to have selected this excursus into Latin, rather than, for example, having Giovanni teach Elizabeth, now a fluent Italian speaker, idiomatic Roman sayings or Roman slang. Any form of interlingual translation, be it dubbing or subtitling, is necessarily going to have societal and language-political implications, as Lefevere states, though he is clearly dealing with the field of literary translation: “I simply want to make the point that, contrary to traditional opinion, translation is not primarily ‘about’ language. Rather, language as the expression (and repository) of a culture is one element in the cultural transfer known as translation”.⁵ The above dinner-scene excerpt focuses on the way the adaptor chooses to project a very specific self-image. Italy is to appear in the eyes of both national and foreign viewers (viewing the film in the Italian version with subtitles, perhaps) as the country of history and high culture and not merely of food, language or language learning as is emphasized in the original English language version.

⁵ André Lefevere, *Translation, Rewriting, and the Manipulation of Literary Fame* (London: Routledge, 1992), 54.

The theme which remains constant across the two versions, original and dubbed, is certainly however that of food, constantly underlined throughout the ‘Roman’ part of the film by close ups of extraordinarily appetizing Italian dishes. Returning to our excerpt above, in the Italian dubbed version Liz brings together her love of Italian food and her newly acquired knowledge of Latin and ancient Italian culture by exclaiming: “Mozzarella vincit omnia” (*Mozzarella conquers all*). Since the beginning of the ‘dinner scene’, Giovanni and Liz have been seen to be eating a Southern Italian dish known as ‘Mozzarella in carrozza’, hence the enthusiastic exclamation in [F23]. This culinary detail would probably be lost on a non-Italian audience, thus in the dubbed version the strategy adopted of using Latin as a ‘third dimension’ in this case also serves to grant greater credence to the visual images.

In Table 2, the setting is a Roman ‘trattoria’, rather more elegant than the one in the previous scene, at lunchtime. Although we will only be focusing on Elizabeth’s ‘ordering monologue’, she is in fact sitting at the table with Giovanni, his Swedish girlfriend Sofi and a group of Roman friends. As the monologue (in both languages) is made up of a relatively well-known selection of Roman and/or Southern Italian dishes, we did not feel it was necessary to translate the full text. We have merely

emphasized the additional items which appear in the Italian version by highlighting them in bold type. These additional items have also been translated.

This second excerpt illustrates Elizabeth’s prowess when ordering a meal in the Roman trattoria.

F	Characters	Source Text	Target Text
1	LIZ	((in strongly accented Italian)) Scusa... ((to waiter)) vieni qua ((head gesture ‘over here’)) per la tavola un piatto di carciofi alla Giudia, prosciutto e melone e melanzane e ricotta affumicata, poi spaghetti alla carbonara e pappardelle con ragù di coniglio e linguine con vongole, poi trippa alla Romana e saltimbocca, e altri due litri di vino sfuso di Genzano, grazie.	((with Roman dialectal inflexion)) Scusami... ((to waiter with accompanying head gesture ‘over here’)) Vieni un po’ qua (<i>come over here sharpish</i>) ... per cominciare un bel piatto (<i>to start off with, a really nice dish</i>) di carciofi alla Giudia, prosciutto e melone e parmigiana di melanzane con ricotta affumicata, poi spaghetti alla matriciana, pappardelle con sugo di cinghiale , e linguine con le vongole, trippa alla Romana anche se non è sabato (<i>even if it’s not Saturday</i>) e.. saltimbocca, e altri due litri di vino vostro (<i>of your wine</i>), quello di Genzano (<i>the one from Genzano</i>), bello, fresco mi raccomando (<i>lovely and cool, make sure of that</i>), grazie.

Table 2. Elizabeth’s ordering monologue

Again, the variation which appears when crossing from original to dubbed version succeeds in granting Liz a different identity in the two languages. When ordering the meal in Italian, in the English version of the film, Elizabeth wows the other guests by showing that, as a language learner, she has now acquired a certain degree of fluency in Italian. Her newfound confidence is made evident by the typically Italian head gesture she uses to beckon the waiter over to her side of the table and by the way she rolls out the order, dish after dish. It must however be said that this is done in a very strong foreign (Anglo-American) accent and that she very often misplaces the word stress in the terms she employs. Moreover, the dishes she orders are, for the most part, those which foreign (non-Italian) viewers are familiar with (“spaghetti alla carbonara”, “melanzane”, etc.) Her identity is thus that of a foreigner in Italy who now possesses a reasonably good degree of linguistic fluency and accuracy and deserves congratulations from the other native speakers present at the table. In the target version, Elizabeth is re-routed as a fully integrated Italian speaker, indeed, the Roman inflection she attributes to certain terms is an instantiation of the fact that if one were to listen to her speaking, without the visual image of Julia Roberts, she would come across as a NS from Rome. Her identity is thus no longer that of a foreigner and language learner but of a person fully immersed in Roman language and culture.

Certain ‘additions’ in the Italian version such as the “un po’” in [F1] which is added to the “vieni qua” (*come here*) in the source text, and the “mi raccomando”

(*I'm trusting you to do this/make sure you do this*) which is used as a tag at the end of the order in the target text, serve not only to illustrate Elizabeth's fluency in the language, but also her locutionary authority; she is absolutely on a par with NSs and therefore is entitled to behave as a demanding and choosy customer. Liz's identity as a NS is further compounded by her in-depth knowledge of Italian dishes: the 'melanzane' in the source version become 'parmigiana di melanzane' in the dubbed version, the rather bland international 'spaghetti alla carbonara' becomes the Roman 'spaghetti alla amatriciana' spoken with a Roman inflection. Her cultural knowledge is indeed so extensive that when ordering tripe she specifies 'even if it's not Saturday' (traditionally tripe was a poor but filling dish eaten in Rome on Saturday by those who could not afford better).

From being a good language learner who is making rapid progress in the original source version, Elizabeth has become an expert on Italian culture and culinary traditions in the dubbed version.

Identity building through language variation

Investigation of the two excerpts above has allowed us to illustrate the manner in which Elizabeth Gilbert's linguistic and cultural identity varies and undergoes significant changes when crossing over from source text to target text in the version under scrutiny. Such changes are clearly not attributable to mere equivalence in language transfer, but call into play a considerable number of extra-linguistic, socio-cultural variables inherent to the image a country or a society wishes to project of itself and of those who represent it or in some way interact with it. Before attempting to understand whether such identity changes constitute a 'loss' or a 'gain', and if so, to whom, we will briefly look at the way in which two other minor characters undergo identity changes when moving from the English to the dubbed Italian version.

When Elizabeth Gilbert arrives in Rome she rents a flat in the historical center of the city. Though the building and the flat therein were once lavishly decorated and most probably inhabited by members of the Roman nobility, they are now dirty, decrepit and dilapidated. There is no hot running water and the ceiling in the vast *salone* is held up by scaffolding.

Upon arriving in the flat, Elizabeth is greeted by her landlady, an old, rather dirty, bad-tempered woman. In the original English version, the landlady speaks heavily accented English or occasionally standard Italian tinged with a touch of Roman dialect, in the Italian dubbed version the landlady speaks with a broad Sicilian accent and peppers her outbursts with words and full sentences in a pastiche Southern Italian dialect.⁶

⁶ For example, she uses the word 'stagnino' (copper welder), and the verb 'incugnare' (to put, pour or push) which are found in Southern Italian dialect.

F	Characters	Source Text	Target Text
1	Landlady ((out of frame – while water pours into bath))	...	E' una simana che aspetto 'o stagnino <i>(I've been waiting for the welder/plumber for a week)</i>
2	Landlady ((pouring water into bath))	((in very heavily accented English)) You heat the water on the stove	Ti devi scaldare l'acqua sopra la stufa <i>(you have to heat the water on the stove)</i>
3	Liz	So.. if I want to bathe...	((accentless Italian)) E io... come lo faccio il bagno? <i>(and how should I go about having a bath?)</i>
4	Landlady	You put the water <u>in the tub</u> ((vigorous pointing gesture towards tub))	C'incugni l'acqua rint'a bagnarola ((gesture towards tub)) <i>(you pour the water into the tub)</i>

Table 3: The Sicilian Landlady

Sicily and Sicilians have a long history in the dubbing of Anglo-American films. The Sicilian accent or dialect is often used when there is a need to portray or index gangsters, mobsters or generally people with a low cultural/educational level. It is interesting to note, however, that in this case the decision to cast the landlady as a Sicilian was taken by the Italian adaptor or the casting agents or production team.

The decision to change the language variety adopted, where no such change appeared to be necessary, would seem to stem once more from recurrent cultural identity-building motifs. On the one hand it is difficult to imagine, for an Italian, that such a prestigious though run down flat in the historical centre of the city would still be in the hands of an ignorant, elderly Roman woman: she would presumably be well aware of its immense value on the property market and would long since have sold up and moved to the suburbs. On the other hand, it can also be posited that many Italians themselves consider Sicilians, or Southerners in general, to be the embodiment of ignorance, dirt and low culture. Once again, by means of a re-routing strategy which in this case modifies the language variety used by the character, the adaptor performs some changes on the landlady's speech on the diastratic and diatopic dimensions with the intent of re-stereotyping the source text which could be seen as an unrealistic characterization of an Italian landlady to the target audience. The lewd words and gesture (reported in Table 4 below) would appear to bolster this hypothesis and further explain why it was felt that the linguistic and geographical identity of the landlady needed to be changed.

F	Characters	Source Text	Target Text
1	Landlady ((gesture for 'here' pointing at floor)) ((shakes finger in front of face))	Io ho una regola... ogni uomo che viene qui non si ferma a dormire la notte! ...voi ragazze americane quando venite in Italia volete solo... pasta ((moves into heavily accented English – lewd winding gesture)) and sausage!	Io ho una regola... ogni uomo che viene qui... (<i>I have a rule.. every man who comes here...</i>) non si ferma (<i>doesn't stay</i>) a dormire la notte!... (<i>overnight!</i>) voi ragazze americane quando venite in Italia... (<i>you American girls when you come to Italy</i>) cercate solo pasta e ((lewd, winding gesture)) e sauszizza! (<i>just look for pasta and sausage!</i>)

Table 4: The lewd gesture

Sofi is the first friend Elizabeth Gilbert makes upon arriving in Rome. Though a very minor character in the film, she too undergoes an interesting, and perhaps inexplicable identity change when crossing from the original English version into the dubbed Italian one.

Sofi is a beautiful Swedish tourist who arrives in Rome six weeks before Elizabeth. She spots Elizabeth attempting to order a *cappuccino* in a very crowded bar in the center of Rome and presumably out of a sense of solidarity for a fellow-foreigner, proceeds to place the order herself.

F	Characters	Source Text	Target Text
1	Sofi ((close up of Sofi, very determined expression, two fingers up to indicate two cappuccinos.	((Good, though grammatically incorrect Italian, foreign accent)) Due cappuccino per favore, latte tiepido stavolta... perché ieri... troppo caldo mi sono scottata la lingua! (<i>two cappuccino please, warm milk this time because yesterday... too hot I burnt my tongue!</i>)	((no foreign accent, very clear Italian)) Allora, due begli espressi al volo Enzo... macchiati, al vetro, bollenti, chiaro? amari, senza schiuma e con una spruzzata di cacao! (<i>Right then, two nice espressos double quick Enzo... with a drop of milk, in a glass, piping hot, got that? No sugar, no froth and with a sprinkling of cocoa powder!</i>)
2	Barista ((out of frame))	mi dispiace cara!	...
3	Sofi	Do you like Napoleons?	Ti piacciono i diplomatici? (<i>do you like diplomatici?</i>)
4	Liz	Of course!	Proviamo! (let's try them!)
5	Sofi ((to bartender))	E due Napoleoni per favore! (<i>and two Napoleons please!</i>)	E due diplomatici super! (<i>and two extra special diplomatici!</i>)
6	Barista	((out of frame)) Benissimo... tutto quello che vuoi cara!	...

Table 5. Sofi and the art of ordering coffee

Blonde, Swedish and blue-eyed, Sofi is undoubtedly the epitome of the beautiful foreign tourist in Rome. In the original English version, though her Italian is very good, the fact that it is slightly grammatically and syntactically incorrect and spoken with a lilting foreign accent makes her all the more endearing. Her identity as the beautiful foreigner is in fact confirmed by the fact that the barista⁷ (despite the chaos and noise in the crowded bar) regularly intervenes in a friendly and sympathetic manner although his asides [F2, F6] must be totally incomprehensible to the English viewers.

In the dubbed Italian version, Sofi loses her foreign accent and acquires a perfect knowledge of grammatically and syntactically correct Italian. In the target text she is re-routed as someone who is perfectly at ease with those small gestures and daily routines, which allow a person to be entirely integrated in a given culture. From being a NNS foreigner, albeit with good language skills, she ‘goes native’. Her familiarity with everyday Italian routines is not only clearly demonstrable on a linguistic level: the complex technicalities of ordering coffee, the move from the canonical ‘cappuccino’ in the source version to the more indigenous ‘espresso’ in the target version, but also on a ‘behavioural’ level: she is a regular in the bar, she calls the barista by name and expresses herself in a fairly peremptory tone: ‘al volo! (*double quick*) Chiaro? (*got that?*)’. Language variation and the character’s move from NNS to NS status contribute to flatten the original identitary portrayal and enhance the standing of the target setting in order, as we see it, to empower the target audience.

Concluding Remarks

The modulation of language variation in AVT products, far from being neutral, can be employed in several different ways to manipulate meaning and exercise a strong pressure on society by introducing and/or resisting biased cultural values. It may play an exclusive role in developing national identities by de-stereotyping a somewhat biased image of the target context as seen in non-national representations. However, according to Baker and Hoche, “the transmission of cultural values in screen translation has received very little attention in the literature and remains one of the most pressing areas of research in translation studies”.⁸

The present paper has attempted to make some observations on audiovisual translation and language variation in cinematic products. In this respect, the analysis of some excerpts from the film *Eat Pray Love* has shown that choice of language and the characteristics of the speakers’ use of language are necessary markers of the characters’ identity construction. In terms of identity, were Italian viewers to focus on the original English version of the film (and even its Italian subtitled version), the image they would get of Elizabeth would be completely different than that perceived through the dubbed version, no longer that of a self-confident American expat, but that of a fragile foreigner in search of her identity. Therefore, although the target text adaptation is of a very high level indeed, we feel that due to what we

⁷ The Italian word *barista* is used in English to refer to a male or female bartender, who typically works behind a counter, serving both hot drinks (such as *espresso*), and cold alcoholic and non-alcoholic beverages. The plural in English is marked with a regular plural –s therefore *baristas*.

⁸ Mona Baker and Braño Hochel, “Dubbing” in Mona Baker, ed., *Routledge Encyclopedia of Translation Studies* (London and New York: Routledge, 2001), 76.

⁹ Due to time and space constraints in the present paper, we are only briefly referring to re-routing as a possible AVT strategy which we are fully developing elsewhere.

have only tentatively termed a re-routing strategy,⁹ employed when an AVT product presents culture-bound and multilingual constraints, the Italian version still fails to fully convey the true *skopos* of *Eat Pray Love*. In the dubbed text the whole narrative structure of the film, based on linguistic and identity crossings, has in fact not been fully rendered. The transmission of cultural values in the ‘Italian chapter’ of *Eat Pray Love* is skewed exclusively in favour of target text viewers through identity switches which occur by means of language variation and serve to counteract the cultural stereotypes present in the source text.