Pronouns in film dubbing and the dynamics of audiovisual communication

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Abstract

A crucial research question in audiovisual translation has recently been the degree of orality exhibited by the language of dubbing. More specifically researchers have begun to look for the structures which are entrusted with the reproduction of orality in dubbing or which set dubbese apart from spontaneous spoken language. In this perspective the source language may be considered one cause of possible divergences from the language norms of the target community. This paper will focus on the frequency of subject pronouns, typical spoken language structures which can be used to evaluate the interaction in audiovisual translation between target language norms, source language transfer and film language specificities. From the investigation of both translated and original language corpora some translation tendencies will emerge whereby Italian dubbese overall aligns with target language norms but transfer from the original English films emphasizes choices related to the dynamics of audiovisual communication.

Keywords: film dubbing, orality, pronouns, language transfer, text type.

Riassunto

La ricerca sulla traduzione filmica ha di recente affrontato la questione di quanto la lingua del doppiaggio riproduca i tratti dell'oralità. Più in particolare, si è cercato di definire a quali strutture sia affidato il compito di simulare la lingua parlata nel doppiaggio e quali invece divergano dalla conversazione spontanea. In tale prospettiva, la lingua di partenza può rivelarsi una causa di discrepanze rispetto alle norme linguistiche della comunità di arrivo. In quest'articolo ci si concentrerà sulla frequenza dei pronomi soggetto, strutture ricorrenti nella lingua parlata e che possono servire per valutare l'interazione nella traduzione audiovisiva tra le norme della lingua di arrivo, il transfer dalla lingua di partenza e le specificità della lingua cinematografica. Dall'indagine, condotta sia su un corpus di lingua tradotta, sia su corpora di lingua originale (non tradotta), emergerà che l'italiano del doppiaggio nel complesso riflette le norme della lingua di arrivo; al contempo, tuttavia,

il transfer dai film inglesi originali intensifica le scelte legate alla dinamica della comunicazione audiovisiva.

Keywords: doppiaggio filmico, oralità, pronomi, transfer, tipo testuale.

1. Introduction

A crucial research question in audiovisual translation has recently been the degree of orality exhibited by the language of dubbing, with a good approximation to spoken language being regarded as essential both to involve the viewer into film narration and ensure the quality of the translation product (cf. Chaume 2004, Pavesi 2005, Romero Fresco 2008, Valdeón 2008). More specifically researchers have begun to look for the structures which are entrusted with the reproduction of orality in dubbing or which, on the other hand, set dubbese apart from spontaneous spoken language. In this perspective the source language (SL) may be considered one cause of possible divergences from the language norms of the target community. It is not surprising, therefore, that interference or transfer have attracted the attention of translation scholars (e.g. Toury 1995, Mauranen and Kujamäki 2004), some of whom have suggested that translation is a type of language contact situation. During the translation process, in fact, agents move backwards and forwards from the source text (ST) to the translated text, while in their mind simultaneously activating both language systems (cf. Mauranen 2004-5).

At the same time, audiovisual translation is subject to norms which operate in addition to or independently of the two language systems, thus making dubbed language a self-standing, autonomous product (Pavesi 2005). Such regularities may derive from the universals of translation (e.g. Mauranen and Kujamäki 2004), but, more to the point for the present investigation, from film language and cinematic conventions.

In this paper I will focus on the frequency of singular subject pronouns, hence adopting a mainly quantitative approach to the investigation of audiovisual translation (Valentini 2007). Subject pronouns are elements which can be used to evaluate the interaction in audiovisual translation between target language (TL) norms, SL influence and film language specificities. From this analysis, some translation tendencies will emerge which are believed to contribute to define Italian dubbed from English. First of all, as for the overall frequency of the structures investigated, Italian dubbese appears to align with the TL. At the same time the analysis will highlight some deviations from expected TL patterns which can be viewed as connected with the nature of audiovisual discourse. It will be shown that these patterns can also be found in the STs, so that instead of speaking of SL influence we may speak of ST or text type influence. That is, ST transfer does not impinge on the

language system in terms of syntactic-pragmatic structure but rather on the choices which are associated with the dynamics of audiovisual communication. This study expands on previous results on personal pronouns in dubbing (Pavesi 2007, 2008a, 2008b) by enlarging the empirical basis and complementing the data from dubbing with those coming from other corpora of both English and Italian original (i.e., non-translated) language.

2. Audiovisual translation and subject pronouns

Personal subject pronouns are an interesting area of study for contrastive as well as translation research since their frequency and usage constraints vary inter-linguistically. To start with, variation among languages obtains in terms of the obligatoriness of an explicit subject (pronoun), which distinguishes between so called *pro-drop* and *non-pro-drop* languages. As Italian is a language where the grammatical category of person is morphologically marked on the verb, overt subjects are generally non-obligatory and can be dropped. For this reason in Italian, like in other southern Romance languages, personal pronouns not only perform deictic and anaphoric functions but also express pragmatic values of emphasis and contrast, and are used for reference identification (e.g. Serianni 1991). That is, subject pronouns encode the discourse and communicative meanings summarized by Davidson (1996) under the label of "pragmatic weight", with reference to the different functions often simultaneously performed by personal pronouns in making utterances less abstract and more relevant on the plane of personal involvement (Steward 2003). In English, on the other hand, the subject – either as a full nominal phrase or a pronoun – is generally mandatory and cannot be dropped. Due to the reduced verbal morphology, English pronouns in English primarily perform a grammatical role and for this reason are much more frequent than in Italian.

Despite these structural differences, personal pronouns in both languages tend to occur more frequently in conversation than in other registers and genres for a number of reasons (e.g. Duranti 1984, Berruto 1985, Berretta 1994, Bazzanella 1994, Eggins and Slade 1997, Biber et al. 1999, Warren 2006). Conversation constantly points to the situational context and to the participants in the communicative exchange, with the use of personal pronouns reflecting its main centre of attention: people, emotions and personal events, unlike what happens in other registers and genres which focus on facts or abstract entities. Face-to-face spontaneous interaction, therefore, is the privileged locus to express involvement and participation, which, according to Biber (1992), are mainly conveyed through exophoric pronouns – and in particular first and second person pronouns. Conversation also relies on common knowledge and a shared situational context. In this respect, it has been noted that singular forms are more frequent in impromptu

speech, whereas plural pronominal forms are more frequent in formal situations, presumably due to the greater opportunity with which reference is made to individual – rather than collective – participants in face-to-face interactions (Fasulo and Zucchermaglio 2002: 1124). Finally, conversation favours economical forms of reference and pronouns qualify as such reduced forms. The avoidance of elaboration typical of this form of talk also contributes to politeness as the speaker does not over-specify references, thus allowing greater freedom of interpretation and greater co-operation on the part of the interlocutor. For all these reasons a critical question to ask in an account of audiovisual translation is whether these key features of spoken language are reproduced in dubbed language, to what extent and for what purposes.

2.1. Pronouns in the language of translation

The issue of subject pronouns has recently been tackled in the investigation of translated languages. Cardinaletti (2004, 2005) discusses cases of overextensions of personal pronouns in written translations from English into Italian, attributing them to SL interference. The conclusions she reaches are based on some "surprising cases" of pronominal usage in the translations she investigated through grammatical and pragmatic qualitative analyses. However, due to the fact that in most cases overt personal pronouns are possible in Italian and their use may be labelled as "marked" rather than ungrammatical, quantitative data are necessary to properly evaluate the actual impact of the ST/SL on the target text (TT).

In this respect, a few corpus-based investigations are available which offer quantitative support to the hypothesis that SL transfer affects personal subject pronoun use in translated languages. Mauranen (2004-5) reports that in corpora of written Finnish – a pro-drop language – translated from English and German – two non pro-drop languages – first person singular subject pronouns are more frequent than in a comparable corpus of original Finnish texts. Similar results were obtained by Maia (1998), who investigated the occurrence of pronouns in written translations from English into Portuguese, another pro-drop language. In both cases the higher frequency of subject pronouns in the translated corpora is attributed to the influence of the SL. It must be noticed, however, that the increase in subject pronouns is considerable in the case of Finnish translated from English, but less so for Portuguese translated from the same SL and rather limited in the case of Finnish translated from German. Moreover, these findings apply to corpora of written language only, thus needing to be checked against other types of data such as those coming from the language of dubbing, a language written to be spoken as if not written (Gregory 1967).

3. The study

To ascertain both whether dubbed Italian is influenced by English as a SL and, conversely, its degree of alignment with spoken Italian, a quantitative investigation on the occurrence of personal pronouns has been carried out. More specifically, the frequencies of first, second and third person singular subject pronouns have been calculated in a corpus of films dubbed from English into Italian. In a previous study, I showed that for the five films investigated the frequency of subject pronouns was overall in line with that found in spontaneous spoken Italian (Pavesi 2008a, 2008b). The corpus used, however, was rather small and the empirical basis of investigation consequently needed to be expanded. The purpose of the present study is thus to test those frequency results on a larger sample, and in this way evaluate the robustness of the previous research findings. Dubbed Italian will be compared to spontaneous spoken Italian as well as original Italian filmic speech.

3.1. The corpus

The empirical basis for analysis is provided by a corpus of 12 successful American and British films dubbed into Italian. Seven films were added to the five films included in the corpus analysed in Pavesi (2008a; 2008b). All films were orthographically transcribed both in their original and translated versions. Table 1 below lists the films included in the corpus, the years when their Italian versions were released and the number of orthographic words in each subcomponent.

Table 1. The Pavia corpus of film dialogue

Film title	Year	Film director	Production	Words in Italian	Words in English
Ae Fond Kiss	2005	K. Loach	UK/Belgium/ Germany/Italy/Spain	8828	8624
Bend it like Beckham	2002	G. Chadha	UK/Germany/USA	9729	9582
Billy Elliot	2001	S. Daldry	UK/France	5354	5507
Crash	2005	P. Haggis	USA	8709	9639
Dead Man Walking	1996	T. Robbins	USA/Germany	11382	12447
Erin Brockovich	2000	S. Soderberg	USA	12842	13714
Finding Forrester	2001	G. Van Sant	USA	10591	10379
Notting Hill	1999	R. Mitchell	UK/USA	9661	10438
Ocean's 11	2001	S. Soderberg	USA/Australia	9273	9784
One Hour Photo	2002	M. Romanek	USA	5231	5731

Secrets and Lies	1996	M. Leigh	France/UK	11926	13229
Sliding Doors	1998	P. Howitt	UK/USA	8339	8882
Total				111865	117956

All 12 films had the following characteristics:

(i)   they were released in the period between 1995 and 2005, to which available descriptions of spoken Italian are still likely to apply

(ii)   they mostly portray situations typically associated with spontaneous spoken language (with the consequent exclusion of genres such as costume and science fiction films as well as westerns)

(iii)   they were greatly successful, as reported in one of the major Italian film guides: Morandini's annual *Dizionario del cinema*, Bologna: Zanichelli. (The success among public and critics was also taken as a guarantee of careful translation).

Summing up, the films in the corpus are believed to represent good exemplars of "conversational" films. Consequently, the sampling cuts across traditional film genres to include films which mainly portray spontaneous face-to-face interaction of different kinds, one major aim of the larger research project (Freddi and Pavesi, 2009) being to study patterns of spontaneous spoken language in audiovisual translation (Pavesi 2005, 2008a).

The *Pavia corpus of film dialogue* has been analyzed via concordance lists. The frequencies obtained will be compared first of all with those from a reference corpus of spoken Italian, *Lessico di frequenza dell'Italiano Parlato* (De Mauro et al. 1993) - LIP - to assess the degree of alignment with spontaneous spoken Italian. LIP consists of five subsections of 100,000 words each, for a total of about 500,000 words. Here are reported the frequencies in the first subsection, which includes face-to-face conversations in various settings (at home, at work, at school, etc.). Further comparisons will be drawn with the Italian films of the FORLIXT corpus (*Forlì Corpus of Screen Translation*), a multimedia database developed at the University of Bologna at Forlì comprising original and dubbed films indexed with predefined linguistic, pragmatic and cultural features (cf. Heiss and Soffritti 2008, Valentini 2007, 2008). Although not all the parameters match those of the *Pavia corpus of film dialogue*, the FORLIXT component of original Italian films provides a good basis for comparison with the *Pavia corpus* since — with few exceptions — it includes films mostly representing spontaneous conversation taking place in ordinary settings and in contemporary times. The Italian component of FORLIXT contains the following 12 films: *Caro Diario* (1994, N. Moretti), *Caruso Pascoski (di padre polac-*

co) (1984, F. Nuti), *Festa di laurea* (1985, P. Avati), *Il postino* (1994, M. Radford), *La messa è finita* (1985, N. Moretti), *La stazione* (1990, S. Rubini), *La vita è bella* (1997, R. Benigni), *Mimì metallurgico ferito nell'onore* (1972, L. Wertmüller), *Storia di ragazzi e di ragazze* (1989, P. Avati), *Pane e Tulipani* (2000, S. Soldini), *Malena* (2000, G. Tornatore), *L'ultimo bacio* (2001, G. Muccino).

3.2. Frequencies of subject pronouns

The analysis of the data shows that the overall frequency of singular subject pronouns in the corpus of dubbed Italian is very close to that of the reference corpus of spoken Italian LIP and is also quite similar to that found in the original Italian films used for comparison. That is, personal pronouns occur in dubbing with a rate which falls within the range found in Italian conversation and original film dialogue. As shown in table 2, singular subject pronouns including *io, tu, lui, lei* and *Lei* (the formal second person pronoun) amount to 1609 in the corpus of dubbed films, whereas they come up to 1675 in the corpus of Italian conversation and slightly drop to 1420 in the corpus of Italian films.

Table 2. Cumulative frequencies of first, second and third person pronouns in the Italian of dubbed and original films and Italian conversation*

Pronoun forms	Dubbed films	LIP conversation	FORLIXT Italian films
io + tu+ lui+ lei + *Lei* of formal address	1608	1675	1420

*Frequencies per 100,000 words

This finding firstly suggests that the language of dubbing reproduces the same tendency found in spontaneous spoken language to rely on deixis and favour economical forms of reference over longer and more complex devices such as nouns and noun phrases. Moreover, through its dependence on personal pronouns, dubbing appears to replicate the context-embeddedness and "inexplicitness" of spontaneous interaction (cf. Warren 2006), which in turn implies co-participation as well as sharedness of world and background knowledge on the part of interlocutors.

More importantly, the potential impact of the SL/STs over the outcome of the translation process appears to be considerably belittled in this area. Interference or transfer from English should in fact have brought a dramatic increase in the occurrences of subject pronouns in dubbed Italian due to the structural contrast between the two languages in terms of the obligatoriness/non-obligatoriness of

overt subjects. Although it cannot be excluded that some usages may reflect SL patterns (as actually suggested in Pavesi 2007), the relatively low frequency of subject pronouns globally undermines the effect of interference on this structure.

Furthermore, a closer look at instances of pronominal use in the TTs generally confirms that pronouns occur in contexts where they would be expected in the TL, thus expressing typical values of contrast and emphasis (Serianni 1991). For example, in (1), taken from *Bend it like Beckham*, a contrast is set up between two conflicting behaviours: Joe's being actively engaged in playing in a team and Jules's complaining rather than playing. The two overt pronouns - *io* "I" and *lei* "she" - successfully underline the dissimilarity in the two characters' attitude:

(1)

| JOE pointing to JULES with his head | It's all her fault. I used to play for the men's club and she used to hang around whining that there was no team for her to play on. | *È tutta colpa sua.* **Io** *giocavo nella squadra maschile e* **lei** *stava sempre a lamentarsi che non c'era una squadra per lei.*
[It's all her fault. I played in the men's team and she was always whining that there was no team for her.] |

In the following dialogue from *Billy Elliot* between Billy, the boy protagonist and future ballet dancer, and his ballet teacher Debbie, only one subject pronoun occurs in the Italian translation.

(2)

DEBBIE	Plenty of boys do ballet, you know.	*Tanti ragazzi fanno danza classica.* [Many boys do ballet.]
BILLY	Do they now? What boys do ballet?	*Figurati! Conosci un uomo che balla?* [No way! Do you know any man who does ballet?]
DEBBIE	Nobody around here, but plenty of men do.	*Qui nessuno, ma lo fanno un sacco di uomini.* [Nobody here, but a lot of men do.]
BILLY	Poofs.	*Finocchi.* [Poofs.]
DEBBIE	Not necessarily poofs.	*Non è detto che siano finocchi.* [Not necessarily they are poofs.]
BILLY	Who, like?	*Dimmene uno.* [Tell me one.]
DEBBIE	What about that Wayne Sleep? He's not a poof.	*Per esempio, Wayne Sleep.* **Lui** *non è un finocchio.* [For example, Wayne Sleep. He's not a poof.]

BILLY	Ah!	Ah!
		[Ah!]
DEBBIE	He's as fit as an athlete.	*Ed ha il fisico di un atleta.*
		[And he has an athlete's body.]
BILLY	Bet he couldn't beat Daley Thompson.	*Ah! Non batterebbe Daley Thompson.*
		[Ah! He couldn't beat Daley Thompson.]

In *Lui non è un finocchio* ("He's not a poof"), the pronoun *lui* ("he") is used to stress and single out the referent that has just been introduced with a proper name. Through the pronoun, the referent Wayne Sleep, a very famous British male ballet dancer, is compared and contrasted with other male dancers to point out that, whereas they may be gay, he is not. The overt pronoun thus effectively contributes to the assertiveness of Debbie's response to the verbal challenge *Dimmene uno*, "Who, like?" posed by Billie in the previous turn.

Postverbal placement of the subject pronoun in declarative sentences is another pronominal use which reflects TL norms exploited in dubbing. Through this structure, dubbed texts clearly depart from the STs - where postverbal placement of the subject is restricted to questions and few other marked structures -, at the same time reproducing a frequent feature of spoken Italian, where subjects are placed after the verb when they are in focus or perform a rhematic function. Examples (3) and (4) from *Notting Hill* exhibit postverbal placement of the subject pronoun, which in both cases is much more natural in the TL than the canonical SV word order would be:

(3)

| LAWRENCE | I don't really care what the film's like. Any film with her in, it's fine by me, yeah. | *A me non interessa affatto il film. Basta che ci sia **lei**, per me va benissimo.* [I'm not at all interested in the film. As long as she's there, it's great by me.] |

(4)

| HONEY | I'll show you. I'll show you. | *L'accompagno **io**. Ti accompagno **io**.* [I'll show her. I'll show you.] |

In line with what happens in Italian spontaneous spoken language, subject pronouns in dubbese also occur in marked word orders (cf. Pavesi, 2005). Extract (5) from *Erin Brockovich* shows the personal pronoun *lei* in a cleft - *È lei che si occupa della paga e della cassa* ("It is she who handles the payroll and the petty cash") - which represents a naturally-sounding reply to the previous request for information. Notice also that the cleft does not translate an equivalent structure but has been added to the Italian translation (Pavesi 2008a).

(5)

| ERIN | [...] can you tell me who I talk to about maybe getting an advance on my paycheck? Just for the weekend. | *[...] mi può dire con chi devo parlare per avere tipo.. un anticipo sul mio stipendio? Solo per il weekend.* [Can you tell me who I should talk to to have, like, an advance on my paycheck? Just for the weekend.] |
| ED | Uh, Rosalind's the office manager. She handles the payroll and petty cash. [...]. | *Ah, Rosalind è l'amministratrice. È **lei** che si occupa della paga e della cassa. [...].* [Oh, Rosalind is the manager. It's her who handles the payroll and petty cash. [...].] |

On the basis of these quantitative findings and general inspection of pronominal functions, it can be claimed that, as for Italian, subject pronouns are good candidates for naturalness in translation for dubbing. Personal pronouns, in other words, emerge as privileged carriers of orality, i.e. those structures which in the language of dubbing are mainly responsible for the impression of authenticity, or closeness of translated film dialogue to spontaneous spoken language (Pavesi 2008a).

3.3. Transfer and text type

By confirming the alignment of dubbed Italian with both spontaneous spoken Italian and the language of original Italian films, the overall frequencies of singular subject pronouns in the *Pavia corpus* seriously restrict the effect of the SL over the language of translation. However, a closer look at the frequencies of the individual subject pronouns suggests some discrepancies between dubbed Italian and spontaneous spoken language in the distribution of these features (tab. 3). As for the two major pronouns - *io* and *tu* -, the first person pronoun appears to occur less frequently whereas the second person pronoun is found distinctly more frequently in dubbing than in impromptu speech, with *tu* being almost twice as frequent in the translational corpus as it is in the corpus of spontaneous Italian. This pattern also implies that *io* and *tu* come closer in the language of dubbing as *tu* is 68.3% of *io* in the 12 films, whereas it is only 26.8% of the first person pronoun in the corpus of spontaneous spoken language.

Table 3. Individual frequencies of first, second and third person singular subject pronouns in dubbed Italian and in Italian conversation*

Pronouns	Forms	Dubbed films	LIP conversation
1st pers.	io	722	977
Informal 2nd pers.	tu	493	262
Formal 2nd pers.	Lei	201	91
3rd pers. masc.	lui	106	167
3rd pers. femm.	lei	86	178

*Frequencies per 100,000 words

This is not the only discrepancy between the two language productions. Both third person singular pronouns are conspicuously less frequent in the translated films than they are in the Italian corpus. In particular in film translation the masculine pronoun *lui* occurs only 63.47% and the feminine pronoun *lei* half the times they do in impromptu speech. Finally the occurrences of the second person pronouns of respect in the films more than double those in spontaneous Italian. It is important to underline that the distribution of pronouns emerging from the enlarged corpus of dubbed films closely mirrors that which came out of the five films previously investigated (Pavesi 2008a, 2008b). It appears that formal and informal second person pronouns acquire greater weight in the films dubbed from English into Italian, with first person pronouns receiving a reduced emphasis in this type of simulated dialogic interaction. Also, third person pronouns are altogether marginal in relation both to the other pronouns in the films and in comparison to what happens in spontaneous conversation.

With the aim of accounting for these results, two questions can be raised which are related to two main forces of attraction in audiovisual translation: STs, on the one hand, audiovisual conventions and constraints, on the other. That is, firstly we may ask what the role of the STs is in shaping the observed pronominal pattern in the translated texts and secondly whether a similar pattern can be detected in original texts which could encourage the language choices observed in translation.

As for the role of the SL, it was preliminarily necessary to establish whether the original films as well revealed the same deviant pattern of pronoun frequency as that exhibited in the dubbed versions of the same films. A comparison was hence drawn between the original films in the *Pavia corpus* and the data on Eng-

lish conversation reported and discussed in Biber et al. (1999). Since only the overall frequencies of each pronoun forms are available with no distinction being made between grammatical class, the counting of *you* pronouns includes both subjects and objects. For this reason, in the comparison with English conversation, all occurrences of *you* were extracted from the film corpus with no further distinction for grammatical class. The results of this comparison show a remarkable inversion of frequencies in the corpus of original English films as opposed to English conversation, with *you* pronouns greatly outnumbering *I* pronouns in audiovisual dialogue, whereas the latter outnumber the former in spontaneous conversation (table 4).

Table 4. Frequencies of I, you, he and she in original English films and in English conversation (Biber et al. 1999: 334) *

	Original films	Conversation
I	3,108	3,800
you	4,288	3,000
he	440	1100
she	374	800

*Frequencies per 100,000 words

In films *you* pronouns represent 138% of *I* pronouns and are 42% more frequent than in conversation. Although the increase in second person pronouns is emphasized in the comparison with Biber et al.'s data due to the collapse of grammatical distinctions, the distribution of the two deictic pronouns in English films is clearly mirrored by the distribution of the corresponding pronouns in the translated texts, even more so if we group together the two Italian pronouns of informal and formal address, *tu* and *Lei*. The reproduction of the same distribution pattern in the Italian translations as in the English originals is confirmed by the frequencies of third person singular subject pronouns in English. Original films under-represent both *he* and *she* in comparison to spontaneous conversation, where the frequencies of both pronouns more than double those found in the film corpus. In sum, it appears that Italian translations diagrammatically reproduce the pattern distribution of pronouns found in the original English film corpus, with transfer therefore occurring at the level of text type rather than language system.

However, a full assessment of text-type bound transfer also requires a comparison with the distribution of pronouns in original Italian film language, since if exactly the same patterns were revealed in both original and translated Italian,

it could not be excluded that translations actually align with TL rather than SL norms; or, at least, a double motivation would have to be postulated, with inter-linguistic transfer interacting with SL norms, both reinforcing each other.

Table 5. Frequencies of subject pronouns in the FORLIXT corpus of original Italian films*

io	tu	formal *Lei*	lui	lei
754	310	147	118	91

*Frequencies per 100,000 words

A closer look at the corpus of original Italian films actually shows that singular personal subject pronouns exhibit the same trends which emerge in dubbing (cf. table 5): first and third person pronouns are relatively less frequent than they are in spontaneous conversation, whereas second person pronouns occur more often both in formal and in informal address. Figure 1 graphically represents the comparison between dubbed language, original film language and spontaneous spoken Italian, showing that both film languages depart from spontaneous spoken language along the same lines, but not to same extent. In particular, both informal *tu* and formal *Lei* appear to be more frequent in dubbing than they are in original Italian films, with the latter variety of the TL falling in between spontaneous conversation and dubbed Italian.

Figure 1. Comparison between dubbed films,
original Italian films and Italian conversation.
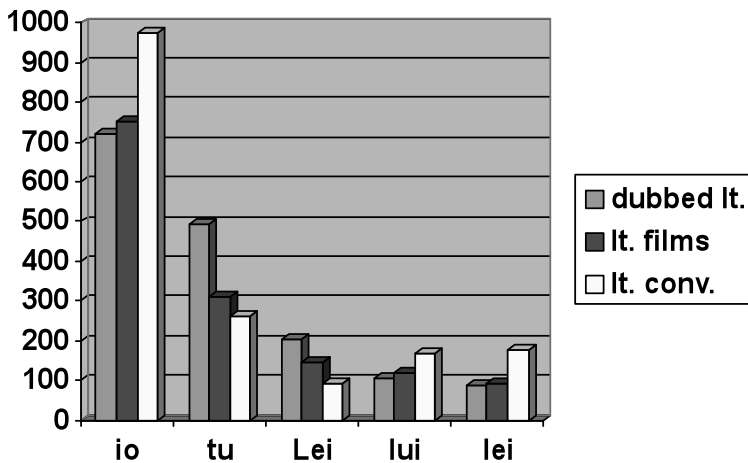
From these results it can be argued that Italian dubbing exhibits some tendencies also found in Italian film language; at the same time, the gap between the two

varieties of audiovisual Italian in the frequency of second person pronouns confirms the permeability of dubbing to the structure of the STs. It is clear, in fact, that the remarkable frequency of *tu* (and *Lei*) pronouns in the dubbed films does not just reflect the model provided by original Italian films but can be fully accounted only with the transfer of the same frequency pattern from the English texts.

3.3.1. The dynamics of audiovisual communication

Looking at the communication effects of the observed pronoun distribution, the frequency of second person pronouns highlights addressees in both original and dubbed dialogues, thus emphasizing the interactiveness and the listener-orientedness of filmic speech. The central position of second person pronouns together with the resulting increased dialogicity is consistent with other characteristics of fictive speech. In films, turns are quite short and the floor is frequently handed over by one speaker to the next, with the monologic dimension thus being significantly reduced (Rossi, 2002). In this context, the explicit use of the second person pronoun may be interpreted as an invitation to the interlocutor to take over in the dialogic exchange. In films, moreover, questions are very frequent (Rossi, 2002) and since questions are among the structures which mostly promote the use of the grammatical subjects in pro-drop languages (Paradis and Navarro 2003), the "overuse" of *tu* pronouns in the films dubbed into Italian is congruent with this further characteristic of audiovisual dialogue. Questions are in fact protypically addressed to the interlocutor rather than to oneself.

The following extract (6) from the birthday party scene in *Secrets and lies* provides a good example of how explicit *tu* pronouns and questions may co-occur and intertwine in film dialogue, thus shifting the focus of attention from the speaker to the interlocutor.

(6)

MONICA	Oh? You having a steak, are you, Cynthia?	*Oh, **tu** la prendi la bistecca, vero Cynthia?* [Oh, you're having a steak, right, Cynthia?]
[...]		
MAURICE	Right . . . you're sure no one else wants a steak?	Allora, nessun altro vuole una bistecca? [So, nobody else wants a steak?]
CYNTHIA	Well, ain't you having one?	*E **tu** non ne mangi?* [And you're not having some?]

MONICA	No, he's not, Cynthia!	No, non la mangia, Cynthia. [No, he's not having any, Cynthia.]
[...]		
MONICA	Do you live in a flat, then, Hortense?	**Tu** vivi in un appartamento, Hortense? [You live in a flat, Hortense.]
HORTENSE	Yeah.	Sì. [Yes.]
CYNTHIA	Yeah, it's her own – she's got a mortgage, and everything.	*Sì è tutto suo, ha il mutuo e tutto il resto.* [Yes, it's all hers, she has a mortgage and every thing.]
[...]		
CYNTHIA	You've got a bed-sit, ain't you, Paul?	**Tu** *hai una monocamera, vero Paul?* [You have a studio flat, right Paul?]
PAUL	Yeah, that's right.	Sì, giusto. [Yes, right.]
[...]		
MAURICE	So, do you two work on the same machine?	Allora, voi due lavorate alla stessa macchina? [So, you two work on the same machine?]
CYNTHIA	No! I'm the only one on slits!	*No, sono l'unica al taglio!* [No, I'm the only one on slits!]
HORTENSE	Do you choose your own working hours, then, Roxanne?	*Mhh. Lo decidi* **tu** *l'orario di lavoro Roxanne?* [Mhm, you choose your own working hours, Roxane?]

In the extract the series of questions are repeatedly marked by the overt subject *tu*, as for example *Tu la prendi la bistecca, vero Cynthia?*, rendering "You having a steak, are you, Cynthia?" or *Tu vivi in un appartamento, Hortense?* translating "Do you live in a flat, then, Hortense?". Although both speakers and addresses change in this communal scene, the different speakers' turns are always projected onto an addressee so that strong dynamism is impressed to the communicative exchanges. In the dialogue, the often concomitant vocatives in final position are also to be noticed. By summoning the interlocutor, these expressions reinforce the interactiveness of the original film dialogue, which is then carried over and emphasized in the dubbed version, that is, in a language where vocatives acquire greater communicative relevance as they are not necessary to encode the social and personal relationships between interlocutors (Pavesi 2005).

It can be further suggested that the appeal to the addressee expressed through second person pronouns finds its ultimate motivation in the multilayered semiotic structure of filmic dialogue (cf. Bubel 2008), where interaction fictively takes place between characters on the screen, with viewers being simultaneously addressed by the various agents involved in film production. In support of such semiotic polisemy, second person pronouns have been noted for their potentially extensive reference and referential ambiguity as they can both operate as generic-meaning expressions - like people or audience - and refer to specific groups or individuals. In the latter case, however, their meaning is still polyvalent and their exact domain of reference must be extracted from context or through other linguistic devices (Bull, Fetzer 2006: 4). *You* and *tu/Lei* can hence be interpreted as dilating reference to the addressee in the audiovisual context and act as summons to grasp viewers' attention as well as provoke greater involvement and participation on their part. In the English film dialogues, the overuse of second person pronouns is balanced by the reduction of explicit reference to people outside the *I-you* deictic core. Again, the Italian translations diagrammatically reproduce the pronoun patterns found in the original version by marginalizing the role of third persons, secondary entities more rarely evoked on the screen.

4. Conclusions

In this quantitative study I have examined the frequency patterns of singular subject pronouns in a corpus of films dubbed from English into Italian with the aim of investigating the impact of TL norms and SL transfer on the occurrence of these important features of spoken language. Firstly, the results suggest that dubbed Italian aligns with the TL in the cumulative frequency of the structures investigated. At the same time some deviations from the patterns found in Italian conversations have emerged which may be connected with the nature of audiovisual discourse. The same patterns have also been found in original Italian films and to a greater extent in the original English films, where second person pronouns play a more significant role than they do in spontaneous conversation, with first persons being partially de-emphasized and third persons marginalized.

In the area of personal pronouns, therefore, SL transfer does not appear to act on the language system, or the syntactic structure of the TL, but rather on the choices associated with the audiovisual text. These are carried through the language divide within the same text type, thus confirming the specificity of film dialogue, which has been revealed to exploit the communication resources of spontaneous conversation to reach out to its wider audience.

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