

The Representation of *Camorra* Ladies in AVT: *Gomorrah – The Series* and the Negotiation of Interpersonal Meanings across Cultures

Giuseppe Balirano, Antonio Fruttaldo

Abstract

On the basis of Adler's (1975) concept of the 'dark side of emancipation' of women, the following study reflects on the ideological implications that the shifts of interpersonal meanings in translation may bear on the construction of televised '*Camorra* ladies'¹. Specific attention will be paid to the gender-related discourses of the source Neapolitan culture, and the way they are deliberately and often misleadingly re-crafted and re-stereotyped in AVT according to the target audience's pre-supposed cognitive models. The research uses data from the *Gomorrah* Project Corpus (GPC) comprising the Italian and English subtitles of the first 3 seasons of *Gomorrah – The Series*. The corpus, which is part of a larger research project, has been annotated to allow the identification of given linguistic traits that are peculiar to the female characters' idiolects in both the Italian subtitles and their English adaptation. Therefore, the analysis of such data will allow for a better understanding of the cultural repercussions in the translation of specific identity cues that are particularly related to the local criminal context represented in the TV series.

Key-words: AVT, Multimodality, Corpus Linguistics, *Gomorrah – The Series*, gender stereotypes in translation.

1. Introduction

Audiovisual translation (AVT) studies have abundantly demonstrated how traditional taxonomies seem to fail in categorising and rendering culturally specific elements due to the pragmatic

¹ The authors have jointly discussed and conceived this paper. Nevertheless, individual contributions in writing this research article are identified as follows: Giuseppe Balirano is responsible for Section 2, Section 4.2, and Conclusion; Antonio Fruttaldo is responsible for Introduction, Section 3, and Section 4.1.

complexity of such references in translation as in any other re-semiotising process (Kwiecinski 2001; Ramière 2006; Hashemian *et al.* 2014). In particular, this claim refers to Venuti's (1995, 1998) well-known foreignisation/domestication model which has been profusely applied as an effective tool to investigate the delicate relationship between a specific source culture (SC) (represented as the 'self', Venuti 1998: 50) and the target culture (TC) (represented as the 'other', Venuti 1998: 50). Such a conceptualisation of the translation process hails primarily from Venuti's political desire to discuss the so-called 'invisibility of the translator' and, therefore, it might be seen as problematic or, at least, sometimes inadequate in the analysis of culture-bound elements in translation. As Ramière (2006) demonstrates in her study based on the investigation of three French films dubbed and subtitled into English, it is possible to observe that the foreignisation/domestication model seems to be unsatisfactory when examining the consistency in the strategies used for the translation of culturally-bound references. What is more, she also finds some problems in the previously referred implications relating to the dialogic relationship between the 'self' and the 'other', and more broadly, in the overall representation of cultural alterity (see Ramière [2006] for a detailed discussion).

If language can be considered as the product and effective medium through which culture is expressed as a form of "socially acquired knowledge" (Yule 2010: 267), the translation process of cultural references plays a seminal role in re-creating (if possible) "certain synchronous aspects of the target culture at a given time" (Cadera 2017: 10) in another culture. Thus, as Venuti (1998: 67) himself claims, "[t]ranslation wields enormous power in constructing representations of foreign cultures" since it does not only mediate between cultures, languages and knowledge systems but also possesses the power to mould specific images of the source culture which is interpreted by individuals belonging to another cultural system (Chiaro 2019). Consequently, as Ramière (2006: 156) aptly observes, the foreignisation/domestication model seems to be problematic as it polarises the SC and the TC within each translation procedure presenting the 'other' and the 'self' as mutually exclusive.

Additionally, it must be noted that cultural differences across various societies have been largely observed and popularised by Edward Hall (1976) who pioneered the concepts of 'high context'

(HCC) and ‘low context’ communication (LCC). According to the anthropologist, in LCC, meanings are primarily expressed relying on explicit verbal messages, both in written and oral communications. In HCC, speakers’ intentions are conveyed through implicit forms of communications, such as gestures, social customs, silences, discursive nuances, or tone of voice (Nam 2015: 378). Therefore, in LCC cultures, the content of the exchange tends to assume primary importance, whereas in HCC cultures, the way the message and its content are delivered often matters more (Martin and Nakayama 2010; Ting-Toomey and Chung 2012). As Balirano (2017a) argues, all non-verbal intentions and non-explicit beliefs conveyed through other semiotic resources – such as physical distance and, more broadly, non-verbal semiotic elements co-occurring in the construction of HCC characters – must also be taken into account when dealing with AVT. This is particularly true, Balirano (2017a) maintains, when translating a multimodal text from an ST which might, on the one hand, depend on implicit and typical HCC forms of communication (such as the Neapolitan context) into an LCC TT that, on the other hand, relies on more explicit verbal messages in expressing interpersonal meanings (such as the British context), a typical feature of LCC cultures.

Against this backdrop, given the many multifaceted aspects that must be observed when dealing with multisemiotic translation, the hindrance of AVT should not be underestimated, even more so when it comes to its fictional products, where the linguistic construction of fictional characters who need to be rendered through a naturally occurring language is another constraint to bear in mind. As Pavesi (2018: 12) contends, a key element of audiovisual translation is the mimetic nature of displaying naturally occurring language, which must be in some way reproduced in translation from the ST to the TT language. Indeed, AVT must be regarded as the process of recreating “patterns of prefabricated orality drawing on the repetitive units typical of spontaneous conversation” (Pavesi 2018: 12), sometimes evoking the language of face-to-face language exchanges (Chaume 2001; Quaglio 2009; Bednarek 2011, 2018).

In his corpus-based investigation of the popular TV sitcom *Friends*, Quaglio (2009) compares and contrasts fictional and natural language, observing that screenwriters do recognise the importance of mimicking naturally-occurring conversations as a

model for good dialogue writing. Furthermore, Bednarek (2011, 2018), in her extensive research on the language of televised screenwriting, also underlines the importance that language plays in the construal of fictional TV characters. Language plays a crucial part in the characterisation of specific fictional personae in AVT products and, although there are no systematic guidelines for screenwriters explicating what kinds of linguistic features must be used in construing characters, Bednarek (2011) encourages them to 'eavesdrop' naturally occurring conversations for the creation of fictional dialogues and possibly to appeal to their imagination and intuition when the available resources fall short. In this sense, the original scripts of AVT fictional products seem to reproduce ritualised forms of verbal exchanges found in the ST context of culture, and translators must therefore mirror these formulas in the TT, adopting strategies so as to (re)produce and satisfy the typical social expectations that people might have in experiencing and interpreting the text. This is crucial also because such an imitation of naturally occurring language implies an additional consideration related to the representation of the characters' identities in the ST environment and the TT final reception.

According to Bednarek (2018), fictional dialogues in audiovisual products are able to evoke specific social types and personae. Characters' personality traits and attitude that are expressed linguistically (and multimodally) may be regarded as indicative of a well-recognisable sociolinguistic environment (Culpeper 2001). This consideration, thus, brings us back to the close relationship between language, identity and culture. If dialogues in audiovisual products construct and reflect given cultures – and their ideologies and world views – in the representation of characters, the linguistic analysis of the language, developed and created for the construction and construal of their identity, becomes an invaluable source of information about the language and society it represents. Subsequently, the translation of such identities in another target culture must not be seen as the mere adaptation of references from one source culture into another, but ideally as the process of transposing the ideologies and world views which are part of the ST into those of the TT.

Such a key understanding of the process of translation when it comes to audiovisual products is also demonstrated by global

media markets that are increasingly aware of the seminal role played by translation in the negotiation of meanings and identities across cultures (Chaume 2018). Global media markets tend to attribute utmost importance to the processes of localisation, internationalisation and, more recently, glocalisation. This means that when the identity building of a particularly culture-bound character in a given culture, i.e., one imbued in and representative of their own culture, needs to be linguistically exported into another language/culture, the translator needs to adapt that identity building process according to the requirements of the target market. This adaptation process also implies that new values and new world views may enrich or, sometimes, erase the ST particular traits in the AVT of given *personae*.

The present paper intends to investigate AVT from a cross-cultural, linguistic and multimodal perspective by looking at how specific HCC representations are re-semiotised across languages and cultures in a subtitled final product. In so doing, the investigation inevitably broaches questions concerning linguistic and cultural critical issues within and as part of practices in which the contemporary rapid and global availability of cultural products represents a vital necessity. In order to reflect on and provide given interpretative explanations and opportunities to question traditional concepts in AVT studies, our research uses data drawn from the *Gomorra* Project Corpus (GPC), which comprises the Italian and English subtitles of the first 3 seasons of *Gomorra – The Series*. The corpus – part of a larger research project (Balirano 2017a, 2020; Fruttaldo 2018) – has been annotated so as to enable the identification of given linguistic traits that are peculiar to each character in the TV series, thus permitting the investigation of phenomena of translations from the Italian subtitles to their English adaptation. The main interest of this investigation will be the study of the interpersonal metafunctions designating the area of the language in which specific translation choices are made. Such linguistic elements seem to assign certain communication roles to the fictional female characters in *Gomorra – The Series*. Such choices are fundamental since they are representative of the identity building process of construction of specific characters in the TV series. In particular, on the basis of Adler's (1975) concept of the 'dark side

of emancipation', the following study reflects on the ideological implications and constraints that the translational shifts of interpersonal meanings may bear on the construction of the female fictional *persona*. Specific attention will be paid to those translation strategies which tend to reinforce and reproduce the target audience's cognitive models, primarily when re-semiotising some gender-related features of the Neapolitan source culture.

2. Masculinity and the emancipation of women in criminal organisations

Over the last 15 years, TV series, the cinema and the new media have openly engaged with the representation of organised crime syndicates (Balirano 2017a: 61). In particular, TV crime series, *vis-à-vis* a general increase in criminal behaviour, have escalated to the point that the new TV heroes are social actors coming from unsavoury family backgrounds and engaging in heinous international crimes. As organised crime syndicates have diversified and gone global, reaching macro-economic proportions in the trafficking, for instance, of illicit goods, it is no wonder that such a phenomenon has attracted the attention of scholars from different fields of investigation (Allum and Gilmour 2012). Such a performative criminal role has indeed led scholars in the fields of criminology, anthropology, media, cultural and gender studies to focus on and connect the transnational power of criminal syndicates to the emerging phenomenon of the so-called 'criminal emancipation' of women (Longrigg 1998; Fiandaca 2007; Dino 2012).

Traditionally, organised crime has been regarded as a form of criminality that is discursively construed as being perpetrated solely by men (Arsovska and Allum 2014). Such a genderist misconception is related in particular to well-established hegemonic masculinity tropes: discursive mechanisms of domination in criminal organisations (Cayli 2016) played along hierarchical systems of exclusively male power. Women are often portrayed in the media and public discourses as the victims of organised crime or as the devoted wives, mothers or lovers of notorious gangsters and mobsters (Balirano 2019). These women dwelling in the discursive 'shadows' of media and judicial representations appear to be, for

all intents and purposes, living subordinated to the mandates of a highly-structured patriarchal world. Recent developments in the study of criminal organisations at the beginning of the 1990s have however brought quite a different image into focus.

As Adler (1975) argues, with the rise and progress of women's rights movements, and more specifically, the increasing ability of these to open paths of equality for women who were previously denied access to specific aspects of life, such a conquest of equal rights laid the groundwork for women to emerge as equal to men also in crime². Therefore, as women fight against the traditional societal view of being passive and subservient individuals, they have also proven capable of rising to the top of criminal organisations. This rise to the top went unnoticed for several years since, as Fiandaca (2007) argues, stereotypes significantly influenced judges' decisions in the courtroom and rendered women in organised crime as merely passive subjects dominated by their menfolk, immune to penalty. As Dino (2012: 323) contends, if on the one hand "women have always been present in Mafia contexts, whether carrying out explicitly criminal roles or providing indispensable daily support", on the other hand, they have played the role of 'submerged centrality' (Principato and Dino 1997), gaining sometimes what can be referred to as a temporary delegation of power, whereas the power and control over the decisions regarding the organisation's specific strategies

² Although their criminal role has always been deemed as secondary in the patriarchal criminal hierarchy, women have always played a fundamental role in organised crime syndicates. Among the many female mobsters, let us briefly recall some of the most powerful 'dark ladies' in the world: the female messengers in 19th-century Sicily; the mediating 'sisters' in Russia; the '*Ndrangheta* sisters of silence; Sonka Zolotaya Ruchka (Sonka, or the Golden arm); Donna Gemma of the Giuliano Clan; Assunta Maresca, alias 'Pupetta'; Rita Di Giovine of the Serraino-Di Giovine '*Ndrangheta* clan; Paola Altamura of *La Sacra Corona Unita* in Italy; Victoria Gotti, Lana Zanolchio and Dorothy Suffel from the New York City mafia; Brenda Colletti associated with the Philadelphia gangsters; the Australian Matilda (Tilly), nicknamed 'The Godmother'; Devine and their rival Catherine (Kate) Leigh, alias 'Queen of the Underworld'; Yoshika Matsuda in Tokyo and Nami Odagiri in Osaka; Agata Galiffi, the famous Argentinian boss also known as 'Mafia Flower' in Rosario, Buenos Aires; Lola La Chata and La Ma Baker in Mexico City; and the legendary Ignacia Jasso, nicknamed 'La Nacha' in Juarez.

still lie in the hands of men (Principato and Dino 1997; Siebert 2003). In other words, it could be argued that delegation of power is conceded when there is a void in the higher-ranking seats of criminal organisations (e.g., the imprisonment of the male head of the clan). When this occurs, women replace these figures by fostering and articulating power within the orbit of dominant masculinity performance (Cayli 2016). As Lewis (2007: 6) points out, masculinity regarded as a cultural pattern, “[...] has as much to do with seeking the approval of men, as it is to do with obtaining the approval of women”. Therefore, masculinity and its hegemonic performance encourage a specific articulation of power within and onto other dominant forms of masculinities, particularly in criminal organisations. Consequently, these articulations of power function “not only as constituting the identity of the actor, but as constituting that identity as a compelling illusion, an object of belief” (Butler 1988: 520) through which, in the specific case of organised crime, women can easily occupy roles that were typically prohibited to them. It must be underlined that such performances of dominant masculinities are culture-specific practices, meaning that their articulations depend on the contextual features that in a given societal framework are regarded as being constitutive of what is generally agreed to be masculinity. What is more, in becoming a global phenomenon, if organised crime syndicates demonstrate what Castells (2010: 213) argues is a decisive ability “[...] to combine cultural identity and global business”, this should also imply that features of the performance of masculinity are consistently globalised together with the multisemiotic devices allowing its articulation.

It is, however, surprising to notice that the recent televised representations of female criminal actors still tend to rely exclusively on stereotyped portrayals of such characters whose agency is often diminished and sometimes undermined by patriarchal models. This is particularly true when it comes to the translation of such portrayals into other cultural contexts. Indeed, while issues relating to gender seem to have gained “critical consistency and [are] experiencing a remarkable growth” (Castro 2013: 7) in recent decades, not much attention has been paid to the ideological constraints in the (re)translation of gender. Especially when gender issues are re-semiotised in other cultural discourses, typical

domestication strategies aiming at reinforcing and reproducing the audience's cognitive models tend to adapt the ST gender-related features to the TT audience's expected stereotypes and erroneous presuppositions about the ST culture.

It is against this background that the role of female criminal characters in audiovisual translation will be discussed in the following sections, with particular reference to the ideological implications and, sometimes, constraints that the shifts of meanings (be it purely linguistic or linked to other forms of semiosis) may bear on the construction of the female criminal persona. In particular, by focusing on the audiovisual translation of the female criminal individuals in *Gomorrah – The Series*, we will seek to bring to the fore the emerging persistent but inconsistent portrayal of weak Neapolitan female characters who, as if still framed from a totally male hegemonic perspective, seem to have lost their ST's criminal strength and cruelty in translation. Thus, the multisemiotic study provided in the next sections will scrutinise the misrepresentation of the female criminal characters in *Gomorrah – The Series* as a forced adaptation or mere reflection of the 'presupposed', and often incorrectly inferred Neapolitan source culture.

3. Methodology and data collection

The *Gomorrah – The Series* corpus (GTS) comprises 3 seasons of the Italian TV series *Gomorrah* (2014–present)³ and it is part of a larger research project that has been developed at the University of Naples “L'Orientale” (Italy) on the language of criminality (Balirano 2017a, 2020; Fruttaldo 2018).

³ *Gomorrah – The Series* is one of the most popular Italian crime drama series that was first aired on Sky Atlantic in 2014. The series is based on the homonymous book by the Neapolitan author Roberto Saviano (2006), who helped create the series. The series has run for four seasons and it focuses on some (fictional and sometimes real-life based) criminal events linked to the *Camorra* in Naples and Caserta.

TABLE I

The *Gomorra* – *The Series* corpus (GTS): number of tokens and information extracted from the metadata semi-automatically encoded in the corpus

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

GTS was collected by extracting the original Italian and English subtitles from the DVD of the series and by semi-automatically annotating via XML encoding the corpus in order to include information such as utterance boundaries, speaker's identity, gender of the speaker, etc. The corpus thus annotated was then uploaded to Sketch Engine (Kilgarriff *et al.* 2004), the online corpus analysis platform that has enabled through the keyword function not only the analysis of the different 'voices' in the TV series and, consequently, the identification of given linguistic traits that were peculiar to them in comparison to the other characters in GTS (see Fruttaldo 2018), but also the investigation in the two subcorpora of phenomena of translations from the Italian subtitles (i.e., the Italian component: *GTS_it*) to the English adaptation (i.e., the English component: *GTS_en*). Therefore, in the following section, corpus-based methodologies (Baker 2006; McEnery and Hardie 2012) will be employed to study the way the major female characters in the TV series (i.e., Donna Imma, Scianel and Patrizia) have been audiovisually constructed in the Italian and English subtitles. The keyword analysis will highlight given features in the representation of female criminal characters that will be then further investigated by engaging with tools offered by the Multimodal Discourse Analysis approach. In order to corroborate some of the peculiarities emerging from the corpus-based analysis, a recently developed

methodological approach of multimodal investigation referred to as ‘multimodal prosody’ (Balirano 2017a, 2017b, 2017c) that aids the investigation of the co-deployment of several semiotic resources in discourse will be adopted.

4. *Gomorrah – The Series* and the construction of female criminal characters: translating the dark side of emancipation

4.1. A corpus-based analysis of female criminal characters in the GTS corpus

As previously illustrated in Section 3, in the following tables, the keyword analysis performed by comparing the subcorpus of specific female characters (i.e., Donna Imma, Scianel and Patrizia) against a subcorpus of all the other male characters is presented. However, it must be underlined that only the first 10 keywords are displayed as they hold the highest keyness score in the comparison between the target corpus and the reference corpus. Keywords have been computed by searching for lemmas (lowercase) so as to reduce examples of only single instances of specific terms⁴.

TABLE 2

Keyword analysis performed on Donna Imma’s English corpus (GTSenDonnaImma) contrasted against the corpus of only male characters’ utterances (GTSenM)

#	GTSenDonnaImma			GTSenM		Score
	lemma_lc	frequency	frequency/ mill	frequency	frequency/ mill	
1	couch	3	898.7	1	19	45.1
2	husband	3	898.7	2	37.9	23.1
3	lawyer	5	1,497.9	5	94.8	15.7
4	meeting	6	1,797.5	8	151.6	11.8

(continued on next page)

⁴ Even though the lemmas in the tables reported here might seem infrequently used, the keyword analysis performed employs the Average Reduced Frequency (ARF), a statistical measure that substantiates the keyness of the words under scrutiny by taking into consideration not only their relevance if compared to the frequency of the words in the reference corpus they are contrasted with but also their distribution and significance in statistical terms.

TABLE 2 (continued from previous page)

5	risk	3	898.7	4	75.8	11.7
6	idea	3	898.7	4	75.8	11.7
7	news	3	898.7	6	113.7	7.8
8	new	6	1,797.5	15	284.3	6.3
9	price	4	1,198.3	10	189.5	6.3
10	jail	4	1,198.3	11	208.5	5.7

TABLE 3

Keyword analysis performed on Patrizia's English corpus (GTSenPatrizia) contrasted against the corpus of only male characters' utterances (GTSenM)

GTSenPatrizia				GTSenM		Score
#	lemma_lc	frequency	frequency/ mill	frequency	frequency/ mill	
1	sister	3	1,619	2	37.9	41.6
2	messenger	5	2,698.3	6	113.7	23.5
3	marinella	4	2,158.7	8	151.6	14.2
4	child	4	2,158.7	9	170.6	12.6
5	myself	3	1,619	8	151.6	10.6
6	uncle	3	1,619	12	227.4	7.1
7	may	3	1,619	12	227.4	7.1
8	malamore	4	2,158.7	19	360.1	6
9	anything	7	3,777.7	37	701.2	5.4
10	dwarf	3	1,619	20	379	4.3

TABLE 4

Keyword analysis performed on Scianel's English corpus (GTSenScianel) contrasted against the corpus of only male characters' utterances (GTSenM)

GTSenScianel				GTSenM		Score
#	lemma_lc	frequency	frequency/ mill	frequency	frequency/ mill	
1	Lelluccio	11	5,538.8	4	75.8	72.1
2	building	4	2,014.1	3	56.9	34.8
3	learn	4	2,014.1	4	75.8	26.2
4	Marinella	5	2,517.6	8	151.6	16.5

(continued on next page)

TABLE 4 (continued from previous page)

5	seven	5	2,517.6	9	170.6	14.7
6	bitch	3	1,510.6	11	208.5	7.2
7	heart	3	1,510.6	13	246.4	6.1
8	boy	3	1,510.6	13	246.4	6.1
9	alley	3	1,510.6	16	303.2	5
10	true	3	1,510.6	17	322.2	4.7

Due to space constraints, only a brief comment on the patterns retrieved in the (sub)corpora under investigation will be provided in the following discussion. As can be seen from the tables reporting the data extracted from the English component of the corpus, an interesting aspect in the English subtitles of the TV series seems to be emerging, especially in the case of Donna Imma and Patrizia. These female criminal characters seem to travel uncomfortably in translation from one culture to another; in fact, in the English translation they are simply portrayed as being minor actors in their criminal families (i.e., ‘husband’, score: 23.1; ‘sister’, score 41.6). Their power and identities are thus discursively constructed in translation and, if compared to the male subcorpus, they are only shaped and legitimised by their family ties. Scianel, on the contrary, linguistically (re)presents herself as having other business-like types of preoccupation (i.e., ‘building’, score: 34.8; ‘seven’, score: 14.7; ‘alley’, score: 5). Her power is linked to the places she dominates, and, in a certain way, she seems to represent the epitome of how a male boss should behave⁵.

Another interesting feature associated with the character of Scianel is that she does not hesitate to refer to other women by using swearwords (i.e., ‘bitch’, score: 7.2). This element is particularly interesting because, going back to the operation performed on the data, the keyword analysis allows her linguistic peculiarities to be compared to the subcorpus of only male speakers. She, therefore, may be perceived as the very negation of traditional femininity, ready to challenge the role of the ‘good clan wife’ to reproduce hegemonic male ideologies through a non-traditional representation of women.

⁵ Her idiolect from the corpus investigation is quite similar to the male character known in the TV series as Don Pietro (see Fruttaldo 2018).

Another important aspect emerging from the keyword analysis performed on Scianel's subcorpus of English subtitles is linked to the fact that one of the very first keywords with the highest keyness score is her son's name, Lelluccio (score: 72.1). This is particularly interesting because, if compared to the other two criminal female characters who do not hesitate to construct themselves as wives or sisters, Scianel even in the case of her own son prefers to abdicate her role of mother, presenting her son as nothing but another member of her clan.

TABLE 5
Keyword analysis performed on Donna Imma's Italian corpus (GTSitDonnaImma) contrasted against the corpus of only male characters' utterances (GTSitM)

#	GTSitDonnaImma			GTSitM		Score
	<i>lemma_lc</i>	<i>frequency</i>	<i>frequency/ mill</i>	<i>frequency</i>	<i>frequency/ mill</i>	
1	marito (husband)	3	795.5	1	19.3	39.3
2	galera (jail)	4	1060.7	2	38.6	26.8
3	divano (sofa)	4	1060.7	2	38.6	26.8
4	solamente (only)	3	795.5	2	38.6	20.1
5	idea (idea)	3	795.5	2	38.6	20.1
6	soltanto (only)	3	795.5	3	57.8	13.5
7	franco (frank)	3	795.5	3	57.8	13.5
8	colloquio (speech)	3	795.5	3	57.8	13.5
9	dottore (physi- cian)	8	2121.5	9	173.5	12.2
10	avvocato (lawyer)	7	1856.3	9	173.5	10.6

TABLE 6

Keyword analysis performed on Patrizia's Italian corpus (GTSitPatrizia) contrasted against the corpus of only male characters' utterances (GTSitM)

GTSitPatrizia				GTSitM		Score
#	lemma_lc	frequency	frequency/ mill	frequency	frequency/ mill	
1	parere (view-point)	3	3036.4	10	192.8	15.7
2	qualcosa (something)	7	7085	29	559.1	12.7
3	bisogno (need)	3	3036.4	17	327.8	9.2
4	zio (uncle)	3	3036.4	21	404.9	7.5
5	succedere (happen)	7	7085	62	1195.4	5.9
6	vostro (your)	4	4048.6	40	771.2	5.2
7	padre (father)	5	5060.7	52	1002.6	5
8	sicuro (certain)	3	3036.4	32	617	4.9
9	figlio (son)	4	4048.6	56	1079.7	3.7
10	loro (their/ them)	3	3036.4	47	906.2	3.3

TABLE 7

Keyword analysis performed on Scianel's Italian corpus (GTSitScianel) contrasted against the corpus of only male characters' utterances (GTSitM)

GTSitScianel				GTSitM		Score
#	lemma_lc	frequency	frequency/ mill	frequency	frequency/ mill	
1	Marinella	4	5082.6	1	19.3	250.7
2	imparare (learn)	3	3811.9	3	57.8	64.8
3	faccia (face)	4	5082.6	27	520.6	9.7

(continued on next page)

TABLE 7 (continued from previous page)

4	comprare (buy)	3	3811.9	31	597.7	6.4
5	sapere (know)	4	5082.6	45	867.6	5.9
6	adesso (now)	5	6353.2	79	1523.1	4.2
7	po' (a little)	3	3811.9	51	983.3	3.9
8	pensare (think)	7	8894.5	123	2371.5	3.7
9	così (so)	6	7623.9	106	2043.7	3.7
10	Ciro	7	8894.5	142	2737.8	3.2

However, as can be inferred from the Italian subtitles, the female characters of Donna Imma and Patrizia, in contrast with the patterns emerging from the English component of the GTS corpus, do not seem to be discursively constructed as linked to their family connections. Donna Imma, for instance, only refers to her husband in order to assert her power, while Patrizia uses the words 'zio' (trans.: 'uncle', score 7.5), 'padre' (trans.: 'father', score 5), and 'figlio' (trans.: 'son', score 3.7) because she plays the role of the *Camorra* messenger, thus reporting the words that the members of the Savastano clan have uttered. Scianel, on the other hand, in the Italian subtitles, emerges as a figure that wants to direct and manage the criminal organisation she leads. In this way, the features that were highlighted in the English translation might be seen as actually enhancing some of the key elements that are part of this character, while in the case of Donna Imma and Patrizia, they seem to be stereotyped and almost adapted to the typical role of subservient female members of criminal organisations in the target culture.

4.2. A multimodal proxemic analysis of criminal female characters in the GTS corpus

Given the observations provided in Section 4.1, in the following paragraphs, particular attention will be paid to the character of Scianel, whose linguistic 'thumbprint' (Culpeper 2001) has

demonstrated some peculiarities in the representation of female criminal characters in translation.

As can be seen in example (1), Scianel does not shy away in the original Neapolitan script and the Italian subtitles from using insults and forms of denigration to assert her power over people, especially in the relationship she establishes with her daughter-in-law, Marinella. Nonetheless, in the specific case of the example reported here, there is no attempt in the English translation to adapt the illocutionary force lying behind the linguistic choice of referring to Marinella as a ‘waitress’ (orig. script: ‘cammarera’; Italian subs.: ‘cameriera’). In the Neapolitan context, such a form of address usually refers to someone who belongs to a lower class, but also identifies a simpleton⁶. Such a connotative value that discursively constructs the character of Marinella is first lost in the Italian adaptation, and then completely erased in the English target culture, where only the lower-class aspect of the meaning of the original word is preserved.

1) Extract taken from Season 2, Episode 9 (T.12:20) of *Gomorra* – *The Series*.

Neapolitan (original script)	Italian subtitles	English subtitles
Scianel: O’ saje c’agge pensat’ ’a primma vote ca’ t’agge viste? Chesta è propiye ’na cammare-ra.	Scianel: Lo sai cosa ho pensato la prima volta che ti ho visto? Questa è proprio una cameriera.	Scianel: You know what I thought the first time I saw you? “A waitress is all she is!”

In the Italian version, Scianel’s attitude shows a prevailing dominant personality: her actions lead to extreme consequences due to her

⁶ Such a connotative value might be linked to the Neapolitan theatre tradition (which of course has its origins in the ancient Greek and Latin theatre) where the ‘cammarera’ is typified as a dumb woman. Therefore, a more suitable adaptation in English of this Neapolitan word might have been the term ‘maid’, which is usually used in literary works to refer to such a fictional persona.

anger at a male-dominated society against which she strongly dissents while, at the same time, reproducing the same toxic hegemonic male ideologies (Bourdieu 1991). From a visual viewpoint, it is quite clear she is a real ‘guappa’, a Neapolitan word possibly derived from the Spanish *guapo*, denoting a key figure in the hierarchical order of the *Camorra*. In his seminal *See Naples and Die*, Behan (2002: 291, emphasis in the original) explains in simple terms what defines a ‘guappo’: “A *guappo* is a Neapolitan word generally used to denote a senior member of a criminal gang, often prepared to use violence”. Scianel speaks, moves and ‘dresses’ as a ‘guappa’, since she is the senior and most violent member of her clan. This is not only evident from the way she speaks (at least, in the original Neapolitan ‘high context’ communication version) but also from the multimodal cues which are scattered all over the series and which are meant to construe the character of a strong and independent dark lady. Scianel fights against the typical *machismo* that exists in the society she lives in. In a conversation with Marinella, she says (see example (2)):



2) Extract taken from Season 2, Episode 9 (T.25:52) of *Gomorrah – The Series*.

Neapolitan (original script)	Italian subtitles	English subtitles
Scianel: A vuò sape’ a verità, nennè? ’E femmene nun so fatt p’ fa ’e muglier’. È un mestiere difficile assaje, ma c’ho fanne ’mparà. [...] Marinè, c’è soltanto ’na manera pe ’na femmena si vo’ essere libera: nun adda tenere nisciun’ marit’.	Scianel: La vuoi sapere la verità, piccoli? Le donne non sono fatte per fare le mogli. È un mestiere molto difficile. Ma ce lo fanno imparare. [...] Marine’... c’è soltanto un modo per una donna, se davvero vuole essere libera. Non deve avere nessun marito.	Scianel: Want the truth? Women aren’t made to be wives. It’s a tough job, but they make us learn. [...] Marinella, a woman has just one way to be really free, she mustn’t have a husband [...].

As we can infer from the previous example, Scianel does not need a man in her life: she is a free, independent woman. An independent woman in a man's world can be intimidating though; Scianel is confident and self-minded, and she can often come across as inaccessible by construing a semiotic prosody which transforms her character into a fully-fledged female criminal boss. In one of the last and most memorable scenes in Season 2, she is alone at home where she freely exercises her power over representations of hegemonic masculinity by mocking a phallic symbol: she sings at the top of her voice in front of her bathroom mirror while holding a golden vibrator as a microphone.

From a multimodal perspective, Figure 1 shows another example of the way Scianel typically interacts with other participants in the space she occupies. The scene is the one that was previously analysed from a textual perspective (i.e., example (1) and example (2)).

FIGURE 1
Multimodal grid for the analysis of the proxemic representation of Scianel.

	Frame	Scene	Multimodal prosody
1		Inside, dark. Scianel discovers that Marinella is cheating on her son and reveals what she has always thought about her. Frame I.1 [Season 2, Episode 9 T. 12:20]	Haptics: Close proximity, establishing: - power relationship; - authoritativeness; - superiority.
2		As above. Frame I.2 [Season 2, Episode 9 T.12:46]	Haptics: Strong proximity, establishing: - challenging; - defiance.

As can be easily inferred, Scianel seems to be using specific proxemic cues in order to assert her power. In particular, the female boss is

probably adopting the very same face-threatening strategies embraced by her male counterparts in the TV series: the invasion of personal space and the overwhelming imposition of physical contact (see Balirano 2017a). In Figure 1 [2], she grasps Marinella's face in her hands as a sign of subjugation and holds her tight, inviting (or, rather, forcing) her to interact with her gaze. Scianel, therefore, is visually depicted while openly embracing those very same dominant hegemonic masculinity traits that are found in the representation of male characters in the control and exercise of power. She is constructing herself as the head of the family clan. Thus, the multimodal cues in the representation of such a character confirm what was previously argued: Scianel challenges the role of the 'good clan wife' to discursively reproduce hegemonic male ideologies (Bourdieu 1991). Such aspects, however, seem to be sometimes 'downplayed' in the Italian adaptation of the original script. In the English subtitles, instead, while some of the aspects relating to the multimodal construction of the character are necessarily retained, some other linguistic features accompanying the powerful dominant semiotic representation of the dark lady's invasion of personal space to assert her power while denigrating her addressee are totally absent. Deleting from the English dialogues some expressions of affection such as 'nennè' and 'Marinè' (see example (2)) – which have the potential of threatening the receivers' face needs, especially in non-romantic relationships (Baldwin 1992; Baldwin *et al.* 1993) – may weaken the representation of power and clash with Scianel's semiotic portrayal. Such elements may be indexed in the original version as realisations of interpersonal troping (Agha 2007; Pavesi 2014-2015), where the incongruity of a specific sign clashes with another segment. Such non-congruent aspects of the meaning-making process are therefore disregarded in the adaptation process, thus introducing incoherence in the translation of the TV series' complex semiotic landscape.

5. Conclusion

This paper has drawn attention to the fact that adaptation of complex multimodal products can only be tackled by taking into consideration the many multisemiotic cues that are disseminated in these texts. Such a practice would probably facilitate understanding of how different semiotic elements and resources may interact

and influence one another in the meaning construction of specific *personae*. In particular, in line with Agha's (2007) and Pavesi's (2014-2015) works on cross-linguistic adaptation, we posit that more creative solutions should be adopted when dealing with the translation of specific cultural elements travelling between high and low context cultures, as the case study investigated here has demonstrated. The cross-cultural differences may be due, therefore, to the fact that most of the time the AVT final product does not match all the discursive and multimodal implications that given semiotic elements may convey, leading to the previously underlined incongruities in the negotiation of interpersonal meanings when rendering specific characters across cultures.

Such differences, as argued, originate from the different 'contexts' (HCC vs. LCC) in which communication takes place; high and low context culture theory, in fact, may be used to describe cultural clashes occurring between distant societies (Nam 2015) which is exactly the translating conflict that has been highlighted between *Gomorrah – The Series* as an ST and a TT. The English AVT of the criminal female actors in *Gomorrah – The Series* has often tended to neutralise the source text interpersonal meanings in translation, deactivating important semiotically-expressed messages of power and leadership typically represented by *Camorra's* ladies. This neutralisation has therefore contributed to diminishing the role of female criminals bringing back to the fore the typical stereotyped representation of Neapolitan women.

Acknowledgements

All the images in this paper are reproduced according to the copyright fair dealing for didactic and scientific research purposes (see Italian Law: comma 1-bis, art. 70).

The authors would like to thank the two anonymous reviewers for their suggestions, comments, and guidance on early drafts of this contribution.

References

- ADLER, FRED, 1975, *Sisters in Crime: The Rise of the New Female Criminal*, McGraw-Hill, New York, NY.

- AGHA, ASIF, 2007, *Language and Social Relations*, C.U.P., Cambridge.
- ALLUM, FELIA and GILMOUR, STAN (eds), 2012, *Routledge Handbook of Transnational Organized Crime*, Routledge, London-New York.
- ARSOVSKA, JANA and ALLUM, FELIA, 2014, "Women and Transnational Organized Crime", *Trends in Organized Crime* 17, pp. 1–15.
- BAKER, PAUL, 2006, *Using Corpora in Discourse Analysis*, Continuum, London-New York.
- BALDWIN, MARK W., 1992, "Relational Schemas and the Processing of Social Information", *Psychological Bulletin* 112 (3), pp. 461–484.
- BALDWIN, MARK W., FEHR, BEVERLEY, KEEDIAN, ERIN, SEIDEL, MARIENA, THOMSON, DAVID W., 1993, "An Exploration of the Relational Schemata Underlying Attachment Styles: Self-Report and Lexical Decision Approaches", *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin* 19 (6), pp. 746–754.
- BALIRANO, GIUSEPPE, 2017a, "De-Queering Proxemics in the Screen Adaptation of Camorra Male Dyads: A Multimodal Prosody Analysis", *I-LanD International Journal* 1 (1), pp. 60–85. DOI:10.26379/1006.
- BALIRANO, GIUSEPPE, 2017b, *Gardaí & Badfellas: The Discursive Construction of Organised Crime in the Irish Media*, Editoriale Scientifica, Naples.
- BALIRANO, GIUSEPPE, 2017c, "Who's Afraid of Conchita Wurst? Drag Performers and the Construction of Multimodal Prosody", in M.G. Sindoni, J. Wildfeuer, K. O'Halloran (eds), *Mapping Multimodal Performance Studies*, Routledge, London-New York, pp. 154–179.
- BALIRANO, GIUSEPPE, 2019, "Sisters in Crime: Translating the 'Dark Side of Emancipation' on the Small Screen", invited keynote address to the *Valencia/Napoli Colloquium on Gender & Translation (3rd edition) – Feminism(s) and/in Translation*, University of Valencia, Valencia, Spain, October 24–25.
- BALIRANO, GIUSEPPE, 2020, "Traduire la Proxémie Masculine dans la Représentation du Crime Organisé Napolitain: Le 'Rendu' Audiovisuel dans *Gomorra* – *The Series*", in G. Caliendo and C. Oster (eds), *Traduire la Criminalité: Perspectives Traductologiques et Discursives*, Presses Universitaires du Septentrion, Lille, pp. 127–151.
- BEDNAREK, MONIKA, 2011, "Expressivity and Televisual Characterization", *Language and Literature* 20 (1), pp. 3–21.
- BEDNAREK, MONIKA, 2018, *Language and Television Series: A Linguistic Approach to TV Dialogue*, C.U.P., Cambridge.
- BEHAN, TOM, 2002, *See Naples and Die: The Camorra and Organised Crime*, I.B. Tauris Publishers, London-New York.
- BOURDIEU, PIERRE, 1991, *Language and Symbolic Power*, Polity Press, Cambridge.
- BUTLER, JUDITH, 1988, "Performative Acts and Gender Constitution: An Essay in Phenomenology and Feminist Theory", *Theatre Journal* 40 (4), pp. 519–531.
- CADERA, SUSANNE M., 2017, "Literary Retranslation in Context: A Historical,

- Social and Cultural Perspective”, in S.M. Cadera and A.S. Walsh (eds), *Literary Retranslation in Context*, Peter Lang, Bern, pp. 5–18.
- CASTELLS, MANUEL, 2010, “The Perverse Connection: The Global Criminal Economy”, in M. Castells (ed.), *End of Millennium* (2nd edn.), Blackwell, Oxford, pp. 171–214.
- CASTRO, OLGA, 2013, “Introduction: Gender, Language and Translation at the Crossroads of Disciplines”, *Gender and Language* 7 (1), pp. 5–12. DOI: 10.1558/genl.v7i1.5.
- CAYLI, BARIS, 2016, “Performance Matters More Than Masculinity: Violence, Gender Dynamics and Mafia Women”, *Aggression and Violent Behavior* 29, pp. 36–42.
- CHAUME, FREDERIC, 2001, “La Pretendida Oralidad de los Textos Audiovisuales y Sus Implicaciones en Traducción”, in F. Chaume and R. Agost (eds), *La Traducción en los Medios Audiovisuales*, Publicacions de la Universitat Jaume, Castelló, pp. 77–87.
- CHAUME, FREDERIC, 2018, “An Overview of Audiovisual Translation: Four Methodological Turns in a Mature Discipline”, *Journal of Audiovisual Translation* 1 (1), pp. 40–63.
- CHIARO, DELIA, 2019, “Cross-Languaging Romance on Screen”, in D. Abend-David (ed.), *Representing Translation: The Representation of Translation and Translators in Contemporary Media*, Bloomsbury, New York, NY, pp. 98–118.
- CULPEPER, JONATHAN, 2001, *Language and Characterisation: People in Plays and Other Texts*, Longman, Harlow.
- DINO, ALESSANDRA, 2012, “Women and Transnational Organized Crime: The Ambiguous Case of the Italian Mafias”, in F. Allum and S. Gilmour (eds), *Routledge Handbook of Transnational Organized Crime*, Routledge, London-New York, pp. 321–334.
- FIANDACA, GIOVANNI (ed.), 2007, *Women and the Mafia: Female Roles in Organized Crime Structures*. New York, NY: Springer.
- FRUTTALDO, ANTONIO, 2018, “(Re)Translating Culture-Bound Elements in *Gomorra* – The Series: A Corpus-Based Investigation into Relocated Identities”, *Status Quaestionis* 15, pp. 135–160.
- HALL, EDWARD T., 1976, *Beyond Culture*, Anchor Press/Doubleday, New York, NY.
- HASHEMIAN, MAHMOOD, MIRZAEI, AZIZULLAH, HOSSEINI, MARYAM, 2014, “Rendering Strategies in Culture-Specific Items: Taboo Expressions in IRIB’s Dubbed Hollywood Movies”, *International Journal of Foreign Language Teaching and Research* 2 (7), pp. 23–29.
- KILGARRIFF, ADAM, RYCHLÝ, PAVEL, SMRZ, PAVEL, TUGWELL, DAVID, 2004, “The Sketch Engine”, in G. Williams and S. Vessier (eds), *Proceedings of the Eleventh EURALEX International Congress: EURALEX 2004*, Université de Bretagne-Sud, Lorient, pp. 105–116.

- KWIECINSKI, PIOTR, 2001, *Disturbing Strangeness: Foreignisation and Domestication in Translation Procedures in the Context of Cultural Asymmetry*, Wydawnictwo, Torun.
- LEWIS, LINDEN, 2007, "Man Talk, Masculinity and a Changing Social Environment", *Caribbean Review of Gender Studies* 1, pp. 1–20.
- LONGRIGG, CLARE, 1998, *Mafia Women*, Vintage, London.
- MARTIN, JUDITH N. and NAKAYAMA, THOMAS K. 2010, *Intercultural Communication in Contexts*, McGraw Hill, New York, NY.
- MCENERY, TONY and HARDIE, ANDREW, 2012, *Corpus Linguistics: Method, Theory and Practice*, C.U.P., Cambridge.
- NAM, KYOUNG-AH, 2015, "High-Context and Low-Context Communication", in J.M. Bennett (ed.), *The SAGE Encyclopedia of Intercultural Competence*, SAGE, Thousand Oaks, CA, pp. 377–381.
- PAVESI, MARIA, 2014–2015, "From *Lei* to *Tu* and Back Again: A Case Study of Creativity in Audiovisual Translation", *Prosopopeya: Revista de Crítica Contemporánea* 9, pp. 111–134.
- PAVESI, MARIA, 2018, "Translational Routines in Dubbing: Taking Stock and Moving Forwards", in I. Ranzato and S. Zanotti (eds), *Linguistic and Cultural Representation in Audiovisual Translation*, Routledge, New York-London, pp. 11–30.
- PRINCIPATO, TERESA and DINO, ALESSANDRA, 1997, *Mafia Donna: Le Vestali del Sacro e dell'Onore*, Flaccovio Editore, Palermo.
- QUAGLIO, PAULO, 2009, *Television Dialogue: The Sitcom Friends vs. Natural Conversation*, John Benjamins Publishing Company, Amsterdam-Philadelphia.
- RAMIÈRE, NATHALIE, 2006, "Reaching a Foreign Audience: Cultural Transfers in Audiovisual Translation", *The Journal of Specialised Translation* 6, pp. 152–166.
- SAVIANO, ROBERTO, 2006, *Gomorra: Viaggio nell'Impero Economico e nel Sogno di Dominio della Camorra*, Mondadori, Milan.
- SIEBERT, RENATE, 2003, "Mafia and Anti-Mafia: The Implications for Everyday Life", in F. Allum and R. Siebert (eds), *Organised Crime and the Challenge to Democracy*, Routledge, London-New York, pp. 36–49.
- TING-TOOMEY, STELLA and CHUNG, LEEVA C., 2012, *Understanding Intercultural Communication*, O.U.P., New York, NY.
- VENUTI, LAWRENCE, 1995, *The Translator's Invisibility: A History of Translation*, Routledge, London-New York.
- VENUTI, LAWRENCE, 1998, *The Scandals of Translation: Towards an Ethics of Difference*, Routledge, London-New York.
- YULE, GEORGE, 2010, *The Study of Language* (4th edn.), C.U.P., Cambridge.