

VERONICA BONSIGNORI

## The transposition of cultural identity of Desi/Brit-Asian in Italian dubbing<sup>1</sup>

### 1. Introduction

Previous studies (Pernigoni 2005; Taylor 2006; Bonsignori and Bruti 2008; Bonsignori 2009a, 2009b; Federici 2011) have shown that the transposition of linguistic varieties in dubbing always raises several problems, which often lead to standardization in the target language. However, regional dialects and accents strongly contribute to the definition of the identity of characters in a film and, therefore, they should be taken into account in the translation/dubbing process. An interesting case is represented by Desi/Brit-Asian, a variety of English spoken by South Asian immigrants in the USA and in the UK respectively. More specifically, it is a hybrid variety born from the encounter between two different linguistic systems – i.e. English and non-English – as described by Balirano (2007) and Balirano and Vincent (2007). It is characterized by linguistic creativity at all levels and it is used as an expression of identity and sense of belonging to a certain socio-cultural and ethnic background. Carter (2004: 199) states that ‘creativity in language is not unconnected with the search for and expression of identities. [...] Identity is multiple and plural and is constructed through language in social, cultural and ethnic contexts of interaction’. Such a bond between language, creativity and identity is well represented by Desi/Brit-Asian. A parallel could be traced with Vernacular Indian English, the non-standard variety of English widely spoken in India, which reflects its own cultural ideologies and ‘represents the “Indianness” of English’ (Bhatt 2008: 546) and with which, as a matter of fact, Desi/Brit-Asian shares many features. The transposition of such sociolinguistic and cultural values in Italian dubbing represents an extremely challenging and difficult task at all levels.

This paper intends to identify the most characteristic linguistic traits of Desi/Brit-Asian represented by a small corpus of four films, namely *East is East* (Damien O’Donnell, 1999), *Bend it like Beckham* (Gurinder Chadha, 2002), *Ae Fond Kiss* (Ken Loach, 2004) and *The Namesake* (Mira Nair, 2006), which portray the multilingual and multicultural melting pot in today’s society of South Asian immigrant communities living in the UK and the USA, constituting the so-called ‘new diaspora’ of the twentieth century (Bhat 2000). The next step in this analysis is to verify whether or not these features have been rendered in the Italian dubbing and, if so, to pinpoint the most common strategies employed as well as the potential strategies used for compensation when the target language cannot find efficient translation solutions. Most importantly, particular attention will be paid to checking the success of the dubbed version in expressing a character identity that is congruent with the original. Finally, one further goal is to verify whether the same linguistic strategies are actually employed for the construction of Indian identity in an original Italian film, namely *Oggi Sposi* (Luca Lucini, 2009), thus comparing Italian dubbed language with original Italian filmic speech.

### 2. The corpus

---

<sup>1</sup> This paper stems from and develops the analysis carried out in Bonsignori (2011).

A few comments on the sociolinguistic variation that characterizes the corpus of films in this case study are in order, since it is important to bear in mind the multifaceted status of Desi/Brit-Asian, which renders the translator's task even more challenging.

As regards the three films set in the UK, in *Ae Fond Kiss* (FK), the Khans are a Pakistani family speaking Punjabi and living in Glasgow, Scotland. In *Bend it like Beckham* (BILB), on the other hand, the Bhamras are an Indian family also speaking Punjabi but living in London. Finally, in *East is East* (EE), the Khans are Pakistani, speak Urdu and live in Salford, Greater Manchester. In this last case, reference has been made to the syntax of Pakistani English (Mahboob 2008) and to Balirano (2007) in order to trace the most characteristic traits of Brit-Asian speech in this film, while for the other films under consideration, reference has been made to Bhatt (2008) and Balirano (2007). The only film set in the USA is *The Namesake* (N), which tells the story of a Bengali family, the Gangulis, who move from Calcutta to New York. This is the only case of adaptation from a novel – Jhumpa Lahiri's *The Namesake* (2003) – while the film directed by Ken Loach, *Ae Fond Kiss*, is not based on an original written script and the actors were free to improvise, so that the dialogues are even more realistic. This is a general trait in the films of Ken Loach, who also usually chooses non-professional and thus more 'genuine' actors (Taylor 2006: 37).

Another important factor that characterizes the films analysed, and also reflects on the language used, is the generational and cultural gap between parents as first-generation immigrants, strongly tied to Indian/Pakistani traditions and cultural values, and their offspring, born in the USA or the UK, who conversely find themselves in between and strive to find and express their own identity. As a matter of fact, Lahiri (2002) uses the initialism 'ABCD', standing for 'American-born confused Desi', to describe the state of second generation Indians living in the USA, thus highlighting the cultural chaos they usually experience. Such differences are mirrored also in the languages chosen to communicate, that is English on the one hand and heritage languages on the other, which are transmitted and taught to younger generations by their parents, mainly to preserve their ties to their countries of origin. As is shown in the study carried out by Barn (2008: 200) in the UK, the transmission of heritage languages is related to the fact that language, ethnic identity and culture are strongly intertwined – see also Section 3.4. devoted to code switching as a faithful representation of real life scenarios.

Finally, as regards the Italian film *Oggi Sposi* (OS), it is set in Rome and tells the story of four weddings, one of which is between Alopa Prasad, the Indian Ambassador's daughter, and Nicola Impanato, a policeman of humble origins from the south of Italy. In this case, the ethnic and socio-cultural differences between the two protagonists are highlighted and mirrored also in their way of speaking: on the one hand, Nicola – interpreted by Luca Argentero, a famous Italian actor who comes from Turin, in the north of Italy – speaks with a marked regional accent from Puglia, while, on the other hand, Alopa and the Prasad family in general tend to use standard Italian, as foreign and educated people belonging to high society are expected to do. Of course, some specific linguistic features are traceable in the language of this Indian family, which contribute to the construction of their identity, even though, quite interestingly, non-Indian actors were chosen to interpret the roles of Alopa – interpreted by Moran Atias who comes from Israel – and her father the Ambassador, Jadip Prasad, – interpreted by Hassani Shapi, from Kenya. As regards Alopa's mother, Amira Prasad, no additional information could be found, except for the name of the actress in the film credits.

### 3. Analysis

In what follows, a general overview of the most distinctive features of Desi/Brit-Asian speech as used in the films under investigation is given at various linguistic levels – i.e. morphological, lexical and syntactic – analysing both the original soundtrack of the films and their dubbed version in Italian. Moreover, if the same linguistic feature appears in the Italian film also, it will be analysed in the appropriate section, in order to verify whether or not there is correspondence between original Italian filmic speech and Italian dubbing for the construction of Indian identity.

### 3.1. Morphology

In terms of morphology, the linguistic creativity of Desi/Brit-Asian is mainly represented by compounding, reduplication and conversion (Balirano 2007, Bhatt 2008, Mahboob 2008), namely the creation of new words by a change of word class without any alteration of the word itself. Generally, hyphenated compounds undergo explicitation in Italian dubbing, as shown in the following example, where the compound adjective is rendered with a noun phrase followed by a prepositional phrase:

- (1) ZAID: You *cow-worshipping* bastards! (EE) > Bastardi *adoratori di vacche!* [Bastard worshippers of cows!]

When it is not possible to find a suitable correspondent in the target language, a wide set of strategies for compensation is employed, ranging from the deletion of the determiner to variations in word order as happens in (2) with reference to the apophonic reduplicative with vowel gradation ‘tickle-tackle’:

- (2) MR KHAN: Is everything alright? *Tickle-tackle* all gone? (EE) > *Tutto è andato bene?* Ø *Prepuzio non c’è più?* [Everything has gone well? *Prepuce* isn’t there anymore?]

In this case, the standard construction of the first part of the utterance in the source text is rendered with a non-standard sentence affecting word order in the Italian dub, since the inversion of verb and subject would be required in this case, resulting with ‘*è andato tutto bene?*’.

Another interesting feature is the reduplication of adjectives, as ‘small small skirts’ and ‘juicy juicy mangos’ in BILB which are respectively translated as *quelle minigonne oscene* [those obscene mini-skirts] and *due bei manghi maturi* [two beautiful ripe mangos] in Italian dubbing. In this case, the reduplicative undergoes normalization and paraphrase, with the use of additional adjectival forms instead of employing a phenomenon that is actually available in the target language too (Bonsignori and Bruti 2008). As a matter of fact, in *Oggi Sposi* the reduplication of an adjective is used at least once and represents the only outstanding feature at morphological level:

- (3) INDIAN AMBASSADOR: Bè, forse come casta è un *poco poco* inferiore, no? (OS) [Well, maybe as caste, it is a little little inferior, right?]

Finally, there are also cases of conversion. An example is the word *gora/goree*, which has the function of adjective in Indian/Urdu, while in Desi/Brit-Asian it is used as a noun to refer to fair-skinned western people. Generally, such a term is never maintained in the dubbed version, but is translated with substantive adjectives like *bianco/a* [white], *bionda* [blond], as in (4) and (5) below:

- (4) MR KHAN: Don't let a cheap *goree* come between us! (FK) > Non lasciare che *una bianca* si metta tra noi! [Don't let a white (woman) come between us!]
- (5) INDIAN GIRL: Hey! Who's that *goree* watching her? (BILB) > Ehi! Chi è *la bionda* che la sta guardando? [Hey! Who is the blond that is watching her?]

In BILB, there is a case in which a swearword is used instead – i.e. *stronza* [arsehole]. However, if on the one hand this translating option succeeds in expressing the belligerent attitude of the speaker, on the other it irreparably causes the loss of its racial connotation, which is fundamental in films which revolve around racial conflicts (Bonsignori and Bruti 2008).

### 3.2. *Lexicon*

On the lexical level, in the original English soundtrack we can observe cases of borrowing and appropriation, that is, the use of borrowed Indian/Urdu terms with English inflectional morphemes. For example, the plural of *chapatti* [unleavened flatbread from the Indian subcontinent] in (6) and of *dak name* ['call name' used by family members before choosing the official name used in legal documents] in (7) is constructed by the addition of the English inflectional suffix for the plural -s:

- (6) MRS BHAMRA: What family will want a daughter-in-law who can run around kicking football all day but can't make round *chapattis*? (BILB) > Quale famiglia vorrebbe una nuora che corre tutto il giorno appresso a un pallone ma che non è capace a cucinare *le chapatti*? [What family would want a daughter-in-law that runs after a ball all day long but that can't cook the *chapatti*?]
- (7) ASHIMA: Some of my cousins were not named until they were six years old. Until then they were called by their *dak names*. (NS) > A cugini miei hanno dato Ø nome a sei anni. Prima erano chiamati con Ø loro *dak name* e basta. [To my cousins they gave name at the age of six. Before, they were called with their *dak name* and that was it.]

As can be observed, in the Italian dubbed version, only the borrowing is maintained, with the use of the foreign word in its simplest and original form, thus producing the effect of code-mixing (see Section 3.4.). In such cases, when only a partial mapping is possible, compensation strategies may be used – i.e. the choice of the regional and colloquial word *appresso* [behind] in (6), and the deletion of the determiners and the use of non-standard word order in (7), instead of the correct *ai miei cugini*. The same trend is observable in the Italian film, as can be seen in the example below, where the name of the Indian dish *tandoori* is used, then followed by the mispronounced *orecchiette* [short, ear-shaped pasta from Puglia]:

- (8) INDIAN 1: Allora, io propongo una mediazione. Pollo *tandoori* come *entrata*, dopo, le 'ricchiette'. (OS) [Well, I suggest a mediation. Tandoori chicken as appetizer, then, ricchiette.]

In addition, we can also notice a case of calque. Here the word *entrata* actually stands for *antipasto* or *entrée* and is therefore a calque from French.

### 3.3. *Syntax*

On the level of syntax, Desi/Brit-Asian is characterized by the use of the tag 'innit', ellipsis, the elision of the article or other determiners, topicalization and other phenomena related to word order, such as the lack of inversion between subject and auxiliary in interrogatives (Balirano 2007, Bhatt 2008, Mahboob 2008).

The tag ‘innit’ is diatopically marked, in the sense that it is typically used in the London area (Andersen 2001) and, as a matter of fact, it is present only in BILB. Moreover, ‘innit’ has also strong socio-cultural meanings, since it is used only by Indian and black<sup>2</sup> characters, thus becoming a strong marker of ethnicity and posing several problems in dubbing. See the examples below:

- (9) PINKY: I want the choli more fitted! That’s the style, *innit!* (BILB) > Io il choli lo voglio attillato! Va così, *vero?* [I, the choli, want it fitted! That’s the fashion, true?]
- (10) PINKY: Jess, don’t you want all of this? I mean, this is the best of your life, *innit!* (BILB) > Jess, non la vuoi una festa così? Questo è il più bel giorno della vita, *no?* [Jess, don’t you want a party like this? This is the most beautiful day of your life, no?]
- (11) PINKY: Yeah, well, they look the bloody same to them, *innit!* (BILB) > Eh-- sì, *ma tanto* sembrano tutti uguali Ø! [Eh-- yeah, but they all look the same!]

In (9) ‘innit’ is translated into Italian with the neutral expression *vero* [true], thus losing the sociolinguistic meaning implied, which is in some way compensated by the use of a left dislocation. An alternative translating option for ‘innit’ in this film is *no*, as seen in example (10). But, of the ten occurrences in the ST, in five cases this tag is totally omitted in the dubbed version, thus showing the extreme difficulty in finding a suitable correspondent in the TL and in rendering the diatopically marked linguistic and sociolinguistic meaning expressed by this tag (Bonsignori 2009a, 2009b). Finally, as shown in examples (9)-(11), Pinky’s frequent use of the non-standard tag ‘innit’, if compared to her younger sister Jess who never uses it, becomes indexical of her cultural identity and her attitude towards Indian traditions. More specifically, the contrast between Pinky and Jess, who conversely wants to become a professional footballer and is romantically involved with her Irish coach, thus going against her own parents’ wishes, is highlighted here by Pinky’s use of ‘innit’ which expresses the fact that her ties to family and traditional heritage are the stronger. Unfortunately, this difference cannot be identified in the Italian dubbed version.

Another characteristic feature of Desi/Brit-Asian is the use of elliptical constructions, and more specifically the use of the ellipsis of the subject and verb, which could be either the lexical verb or the auxiliary. Of course, the difficulty in rendering the ellipsis of the subject is quite clear, since Italian is a pro-drop language, so generally various compensation strategies are used when possible, such as other types of ellipsis, ungrammatical constructions or even the overt subject, which is a marked choice in the TL, as shown in the two examples below:

- (12) MR KHAN: Why Ø *you no listen?* Ø *You stupid?* (EE) > Tu non Ø *ascolti?* Tu Ø *stupido?* [You don’t listen? You stupid?]
- (13) MR KHAN: *His name* Ø *Mr Shah.* (...) Ø *Been* this country 25 years. (EE) > Si chiama Mr Shah. (...) Ø *Stato* in questo paese 25 anni. [His name is Mr Shah. (...) Been in this country 25 years.]

In OS we can find cases of ellipsis of the verb, as in (14), and of personal pronoun particles, as the proclitic particle *ci* and the second person singular *ti* with indirect object function, respectively in (15) and (16):

- (14) ALOPA: Papà! Nicola [Ø (è)] già un ispettore stimato! [Dad! Nicola already an esteemed police inspector!] (OS)

<sup>2</sup> ‘Innit’ is considered a characterizing feature of West-Indian English (Wright 1981) and of Jamaican Creole (Hewitt 1986) spoken in London, which has then influenced the speech of white adolescents in London.

- (15) AMIRA PRASSAD: Forse [Ø (ci)] *siamo visti* all'opera? [Maybe we have seen at the opera?]
- (16) INDIAN AMBASSADOR: [Ø (ti)] *Dispiace* se mi informo su questo ragazzo? [Mind if I inquire after this guy?]

The elision of determiners is generally maintained in Italian dubbing. Let us take EE as an example. Of the thirty-eight cases of deletion of the determiner in the original, twenty-nine are maintained in the translation, while in six cases we find unmarked solutions and in the remaining three cases the use of the determiner, as shown in the first and second part of the following example respectively:

- (17) MR KHAN: [...] Go change Ø *bloody clothes*! Leave Ø *pucking fish*! (EE) > [...] Va' a cambiarti e posa *il pesce*! [Go change and put down the fish!]

The deletion of the determiner also takes place at some other points in the dub as a compensation strategy, balancing the number of occurrences in the two versions. The elision of determiners, especially of the definite article, seems to be a widespread device also in OS:

- (18) INDIAN AMBASSADOR: (to ALOPA) Ø *Tuo cuore* vede più della mia mente. [...] (OS) [Your heart sees more than my mind.]

Topicalization is maintained in dubbing whenever possible. Here is an example where the adverbial of time is in the initial position:

- (19) TEETU'S MOTHER: Well, our Teetu also! *For days* he has eaten nothing and drunk nothing! (BILB) > Proprio come il nostro Teetu! Capisco. *Per giorni* non ha mangiato né bevuto niente!

Otherwise standard constructions or other compensation strategies are used, for instance direct questions with no subject-verb inversion, a syntactic construction which is not present in the TL. In the following example (20) the deletion of the definite article is used instead, while (21) displays a standard and unmarked construction:

- (20) ASHIMA: *You don't* have time for one cup of tea, Gogol? (N) > Non hai tempo per offrirla Ø *tazza di tè*? [Don't you have time to offer her cup of tea?]
- (21) MR KHAN: Listen, dear, there are four or five universities in this bloody city! *What the community is gonna say*? (FK) > Senti, tesoro, ci sono quattro università in questa benedetta città. *Che cosa dirà la comunità*? [Listen, dear, there are four universities in this blessed city! What is the community going to say?]

The same trend is observable in OS, with a marked positioning of adjectives in contrast with what standard Italian would actually require. This is the case of the adjective *sacri* [sacred] in the example below, which should actually follow the noun *animali*:

- (22) AMBASSADOR: Oh, ferma, ferma, ferma! Non voglio disturbare *questi sacri animali*. Continuo a piedi. (starts singing in Hindi) (OS) [Oh, stop, stop, stop! I don't want to disturb these sacred animals. I continue on foot.]

### 3.4. Code-mixing and code-switching

Code-mixing (Auer 2007) is very frequent in Desi/Brit-Asian and it entails the insertion of an Indian/Urdu word in a sentence in English. More specifically, these foreign words generally pertain to the semantic domains of food and terms of address – a trend also observable in the

Italian film OS. As regards their transposition in Italian dubbing, an interesting trend has been observed for names of Indian traditional dishes, such as *aloo gobi*, *achar*, *paneer tikka*, and spices, which are maintained in the dubbed version, since they contribute a great deal to the portrayal of South Asian culture and its traditional heritage (Bonsignori and Bruti 2008). On the contrary, in the case of vocatives, different solutions can be adopted: the term can be deleted, translated into Italian or maintained in its original form. For instance, the word *putar* is either translated into *figliolo/a* [son/daughter] or rendered with the same foreign term, though in the majority of cases it is totally omitted in the Italian dub. Deletion is also often employed with words formed by the proper name of the addressee to which the suffix *-ji* is added, an honorific in Indian culture to denote respect – i.e. *Massi-ji* in the following example:

- (23) PINKY: Yes, *Massi-ji*, mum's making the *samosas*! (BILB) > Sì, *ma certo!* Mamma prepara le *samosa*! [Yes, of course! Mum's making the samosa!]

Such a suffix is frequently used in the Italian film *Oggi Sposi*, either in isolation or attached to the colloquial term for 'father', *baba*, with which Alopa usually addresses her father:

- (24) ALOPA: *Ji?* Cosa vuoi dire? (OS) [Ji? What do you mean?]
- (25) ALOPA: *Babaji.. Babaji*, per rispetto alle tue tradizioni, Nicola mi ha chiesto di sposarlo con rito indù. (OS) [Babaji.. babaji, to respect your traditions, Nicola asked me to marry him with Hindu rite.]

On the other hand, the Indian ambassador generally uses the vocative and hypocoristic *beti* to address his daughter Alopa.

Desi/Brit-Asian is also characterized by code-switching, in this case between English and Indian/Urdu, respectively associated with the 'they-code', the majority language, and the 'we-code', the ethnic specific and minority languages (Gumperz 1982: 95). The problem of code-switching is tackled in different ways in the four films analysed. In EE, utterances in Urdu, which is the language mainly used by Mr Khan and by first generation immigrants, are left unchanged in the dubbed version of the film, without any kind of translation. In BILB, the use of Punjabi seems to be gender-related, since the principal users are Mrs Bhamra and Indian immigrants – especially women – of the first generation. In this film, Punjabi in the original soundtrack is either maintained in the dubbed version or dubbed into Italian, as in the two examples below:

- (26) MRS BHAMRA: You've ruined your sister's life! [Punjabi]! Happy now? > Hai rovinato la vita a tua sorella! [Punjabi]! Sei contenta ora?
- (27) MR BHAMRA: The dinner's ready? > La cena è pronta? [The dinner's ready?]  
MRS BHAMRA: [Punjabi] > *Quasi*. [Almost.]

In FK, on the other hand, Punjabi is always translated into Italian, either with subtitles or dubbing. As seen in the example below, the Italian version is usually characterized by standard and unmarked constructions, because the lines are translated from the English subtitles that appear on the screen and show a standard variety. The only exception is the first line uttered by Mrs Khan with the use of a double indirect object and the wrong pronoun – i.e. *gli* for the masculine instead of *le* for the feminine:

- (28) CASIM: [Punjabi: I can't get married]. > Io non posso sposarmi. [I can't get married.]  
MRS KHAN: [Punjabi: How can I tell your aunt?]. > Eh? *Che gli dico a tua zia* adesso? Sembravi così contento... [Eh? What shall I tell your aunt now? You seemed so happy...]

CASIM: I can't go ahead with it, mom. > Non posso farlo. [I can't do it.]

MRS KHAN: [Punjabi: This is not good. What will Jasmine do? This will shame us]. > Non ci si comporta così. E Jasmine, che cosa farà? La vergogna cadrà su di noi! [You can't behave like this. And Jasmine, what will she do? Shame is going to fall on us!]

CASIM: I'll sell the car. I'll give you all the money back for the extension. I can't go ahead with it. > Venderò la macchina, vi ridarò tutti i soldi che avete speso per la casa, ma non ce la faccio. [I'll sell the car. I'll give you the money back you spent for the house, but I can't do it. ]

As noted by Monti (2009), the use of code-switching in this film is more related to ethnicity than to gender. As a matter of fact, Punjabi is always used by Mrs Khan, a Pakistani woman firmly attached to her traditions and cultural background, but in the first part of this exchange her son Casim also uses Punjabi to talk about his feelings about the decision imposed by his parents concerning an arranged marriage with his cousin Jasmine. Then, when Casim has to talk about his own choice, which is in opposition to traditions, he switches to English. Unfortunately, the function performed by code-switching is completely lost in the dubbed version, since the translation into Italian 'neutralises the socio-cultural implications conveyed in the original version' (ibid.: 171).

Finally, in NS Hindi/Bengali speech is translated with subtitles both in the original soundtrack and in the Italian dubbed version. In this way, the content of the dialogue exchanges are accessible to the audience, without losing realism or credibility, as characters express themselves fully. At a given moment, Ashoke uses code-switching to talk to his wife Ashima, as they have recently moved to America, and mentions that:

(29) ASHOKE: Once you are settled, I will take you to my department and introduce you to my professor here. You won't believe it. [Bengali: In comparison to the professors here, even our *street vendors* dress well.]

> Appena te la senti, ti porto in facoltà e ti presento il mio professore qui. Non ci crederai! [Bengali: I nostri *conducenti di risciò* vestono meglio dei professori di qui.] [As soon as you feel up to it, I'll take you to faculty and introduce you to my professor here. You won't believe it! Our rickshaw drivers are better dressed than professors here.]

The translation of 'street vendors' in the subtitle as *conducenti di risciò* [rickshaw drivers] is quite interesting, since apparently the only reason for such a change in the Italian version is that this is a more stereotypical image of Indian people for the Italian audience.

Interestingly, in OS there are only two scenes where code-switching is used and both refer to situations of intimacy: one is the wedding itself, where the dialogue is not even subtitled, and the other is when Alope cries in her bedroom because she has broken up with Nicola as a consequence of continuous fighting over the organization of the wedding ceremony – mainly caused by their parents, who seem incapable of facing the cultural clash:

(30) AMBASSADOR: Vai, vai! Dille del gemellaggio, mi raccomando! [Go, go! Do tell her about the twinning!]

MRS PRASSAD: È la terza volta, piantala! [It's the third time, stop it!]

ALOPA: (crying) [Hindi: Non dire niente, mamma--] [Don't say anything, mom--]

MRS PRASSAD: [Hindi: Chi dice niente?! Alope, tuo nonno, il padre di tuo padre, mi era antipatico e *pure* lo zio Kapali e quella pettegola di zia Archita. Io *la famiglia di tuo padre* non la sopporto. Per questo l'ho convinto a fare il diplomatico, per stare lontano da quelli!] [Who's gonna say anything?! Alope, I didn't like your granddad, the father of your father, and even Uncle Kapali and that gossip aunt Archita. I can't stand your father's family! This is why I convinced him to be a diplomat, to stay away from them!]

ALOPA: [Hindi: *Pure* nonna Dhara?] [Even granny Dhara?]

MRS PRASSAD: [Hindi: Uff! Non me ne parlare...! Una turchia prepotente--] [Uff! Don't tell me about it! So stingy and overbearing!]

AMBASSADOR: Prepotente è tuo padre, che mi diceva: "Tu non farai mai strada!" [Overbearing is your father, who always told me: "You won't make your way!"]

In this example, Hindi is subtitled and interestingly the use of colloquial and regional terms like *pure* [anche] and syntactic constructions, such as dislocations, are meant to reproduce an intimate and ordinary talk between mother and daughter.

#### 4. Conclusions

The present paper has focussed on the linguistic creativity of Desi/Brit-Asian speech and the difficulty it presents when translating into Italian. Various choices have been made according to the linguistic phenomenon to be transposed in the TL. On the morphological level, explicitation with a certain amount of creative license seems to be the preferred option, although there are cases of levelled solutions – see the conversion of the term *gora/goree* in examples (4) and (5) – which also apply on the lexical level, sometimes producing the effect of code-mixing.

As for syntax, the tag ‘*innit*’ undergoes total normalization, while verbal ellipsis is generally reproduced in the same way, as well as the elision of determiners. On the contrary, due to the impossibility of reproducing the ellipsis of the subject in Italian, other linguistic items may be deleted or the subject personal pronoun is explicitated, a marked case in the Italian language.

Finally, different strategies can be adopted to deal with code-mixing and code-switching. In the first case, the solutions consist in translating or omitting foreign words, or maintaining them in the dubbed version. In the second case, the options range from leaving South Asian speech untranslated, to subtitling or dubbing it.

At this point, it is important to evaluate the effects of such choices in Italian dubbing, and more specifically to verify whether or not they succeed in expressing the socio-cultural values implied. The use of strategies aimed at levelling out causes the loss of diatopic variation, but these are counterbalanced with the use of compensation strategies by morphosyntactic and lexical means, particularly when a certain linguistic phenomenon cannot be reproduced in the same way in the TL. Another approach is the attempt at reproducing ethnic variation by making South Asian characters speak Italian with an Indian/Pakistani accent, a strategy that was not actually tackled in the present paper since the phonological level was not taken into account, but which is worth mentioning. Finally, as regards code-switching, subtitling has proved to be the most efficient strategy, allowing South Asian characters to express their identity, thus avoiding the risk of stereotyping and the ridiculous effects generated by dubbing. Table 1 provides a schematic representation of how the various characterizing features of Desi/Brit-Asian are rendered in the Italian dub in comparison with how they are presented in films originally shot in Italian:

Table 1: The Representation of Desi/Brit-Asian in Italian Dubbing and Original Italian Filmic Speech

<i>Linguistic Levels</i>	<i>Features in Desi/Brit-Asian</i>	<i>Italian Dubbing</i>	<i>Original Italian</i>
Morphology	Compounding		
	Reduplication		✓
	Conversion		
Lexicon	Borrowing and Appropriation		
	Calques		✓
Syntax	Tag Questions ( <i>innit</i> )		
	Ellipsis	✓	✓

	Elision of determiners	✓	✓
	Word order	✓	✓
	Code-mixing	✓	✓
	Code-switching	✓	✓

As far as the construction of Indian identity in original Italian filmic speech is concerned, this case study has shown that the linguistic strategies used by South-Asian characters are just the same as those employed in Italian dubbing at all levels. As pointed out in the analysis of OS, the only difference is in the use of calques, but other strategies are adopted too, such as the mispronunciation of certain words or the use of non-standard syntactic constructions. Indeed, the present analysis cannot lead to definitive conclusions, because of the limited set of available data: the few films of Italian production with Indians as protagonists demonstrate an undeniable difficulty in the study of this topic. This is probably due to the fact that the immigration of Indians to Italy is relatively recent and, in comparison with other foreign communities in this country, not relevant enough to affect film production.<sup>3</sup> On the other hand, the creativity of Desi/Brit-Asian and the various strategies both for representing it in film scenarios and translating it in dubbing have clearly emerged.

## References

- Andersen, Gisle, *Pragmatic Markers and Sociolinguistic Variation: A Relevance-theoretic Approach to the Language of Adolescents* (Amsterdam: John Benjamins, 2001).
- Auer, Peter, 'Mobility, Contact and Accommodation', in Carmen Llamas, Louise Mullany, and Peter Stockwell, eds, *The Routledge Companion to Sociolinguistics* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2007), 109–15.
- Balirano, Giuseppe, *The Perception of Diasporic Humour. Indian English on TV* (Loreto: Tecnostampa, 2007).
- and Jocelyn Vincent, 'Migrating English in Postcolonial Trans-lation: Brit-Asian/Desi as the Source/target of Diasporic Representations', *Paper presented at the XXIII AIA Conference 'Migration of Forms – Forms of Migration'*, Bari, 20-22 September 2007.
- Barn, Ravinder, 'Indian Diaspora in the United Kingdom: Second-Generation Parents' Views and Experiences on Heritage Language Transmission', in Parvati Raghuram, Ajaya Kumar Sahoo, Brij Maharaj, and Dave Sangha, eds, *Tracing an Indian Diaspora. Contexts, Memories and Representations* (New Delhi/London: SAGE, 2008), 191–209.
- Bhat, Chandrashekhar, *Contexts of Intra and Inter Ethnic Conflict among the Indian Diaspora Communities*. Occasional Paper, University of Hyderabad: Centre of Study of Indian Diaspora, 2000.
- Bhatt, Rakesh M., 'Indian English: Syntax', in Rajend Mesthrie, ed., *Varieties of English. Africa, South and Southeast Asia* (Berlin: Mouton de Gruyter, 2008), 546–62.
- Bonsignori, Veronica, 'Invariant Tags Migrating from the UK to Italy and Back', in Domenico Torretta, Marina Dossena, and Anna Maria Sportelli, eds, *Forms of Migration, Migration of Forms (Vol. 3, Language Studies), Proceedings of the 23<sup>rd</sup> AIA Conference* (Bari: Progedit, 2009a) 305–21.
- 'Translating English Non-standard Tags in Italian Dubbing', in Michela Giorgio Marrano, Giovanni Nadiani, and Chris Rundle, eds, Special Issue: *The Translation of Dialects in Multimedia*, *InTRAlinea*, (2009b), <<http://www.intralinea.org/specials/article/1709>> accessed 15 February 2011.
- 'Desi/Brit-Asian in Italian Dubbing', in Gabriella Di Martino, Linda Lombardo, and Stefania Nuccorini, eds, *Papers from the 24<sup>th</sup> AIA Conference. Challenges for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century: Dilemmas, Ambiguities, Directions*, Vol. 2. Language Studies, Proceedings of the 24<sup>th</sup> AIA Conference, Rome, 01-03 October 2009 (Rome: Edizioni Q, 2011) 141–49.
- and Silvia Bruti, 'A Linguistic Analysis of Dubbing: the Case of *Bend It Like Beckham*', in Marcella Bertuccelli Papi, Antonio Bertacca, and Silvia Bruti, eds, *Threads in the Complex Fabric of Language. Linguistic and Literary Studies in Honour of Lavinia Merlini Barbaresi* (Pisa: Felici Editore, 2008), 509–21.
- Carter, Ronald, *Language and Creativity. The Art of Common Talk* (London: Routledge, 2004).

<sup>3</sup> According to the last ISTAT report (2009), Indians are ranked tenth among the other foreign communities living in Italy.

- Federici, Federico M. (ed.) *Translating Dialects and Language Minorities. Challenges and Solutions* (Oxford: Peter Lang, 2011).
- Gumperz, John, *Discourse Strategies* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982).
- Hewitt, Roger, *White Talk Black Talk* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986).
- Lahiri, Jhumpa, 'Intimate Alienation: Immigrant Fiction and Translation', in Rukmini Bhaya Nair, ed., *Translation, Text and Theory. The Paradigm of India* (New Delhi/London: SAGE, 2002), 113–20.
- Mahboob, Ahmar, 'Pakistani English: Syntax', in Rejend Mesthrie, ed., *Varieties of English. Africa, South and Southeast Asia* (Berlin: Mouton de Gruyter, 2008), 578–92.
- Monti, Silvia, 'Codeswitching and Multicultural Identity in Screen Translation', in Maria Freddi, and Maria Pavese, eds, *Analysing Audio-visual Dialogue. Linguistic and Translational Insights* (Bologna: CLUEB, 2009), 165–83.
- Pernigoni, Arianna, 'Varietà Substandard e Doppiaggio: il caso di *East Is East, Bend It Like Beckham e Monsoon Wedding*', in Giuliana Garzone, ed., *Esperienze del Tradurre. Aspetti Teorici e Applicativi* (Milan: Franco Angeli, 2005), 157–75.
- Taylor, Christopher, 'The Translation of Regional Variety in the Films of Ken Loach', in Nigel Armstrong, and Federico M. Federici, eds, *Translating Voices, Translating Regions* (Rome: Aracne, 2006), 37–52.
- Wright, Peter, *Cockney Dialect and Slang* (London: Batsford, 1981).

### **Filmography**

- Ae Fond Kiss* (2004), Ken Loach, UK, Belgium, Germany, Italy and Spain
- Bend it like Beckham* (2002), Gurinder Chadha, UK and Germany
- East is East* (1999), Damien O'Donnell, UK
- Oggi Sposi* (2009), Luca Lucini, Italy
- The Namesake* (2006), Mira Nair, USA and India