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FROM PAGE TO SCREEN: AUDIOVISUAL
TRANSLATION IN *THE HOBBIT, AN UNEXPECTED*
JOURNEY

Laureanda:

Federica Caputo

Relatore

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A mio padre, che mi ha aiutato a muovere i primi passi nel mondo del fantasy; a mio fratello, che ha viaggiato insieme a me nella Terra di Mezzo alla ricerca di tesori; e a mia madre, che ci ha sempre riportato a casa.

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Introduction

This work is focused on intersemiotic translation and audiovisual translation. As the field is a really complex and vast one, the third chapter will be about a case study that will be used as an example of what will be discussed in the first two chapters.

The first chapter deals with intersemiotic translation. Starting from Jakobson's categorisation (Jakobson, 1959), the concept is defined and further explained by taking into account Torop's classification (Torop, 2010), Eco's definition (Eco, 2013), and other studies about intersemiotic translation. The concept is a very wide one, and it is difficult, quite impossible, to give a general definition. It is a notion that encompasses the idea of the interpretation of a text by means of a transposition of that text, where some elements of the source text are totally changed in the target text (Nergaard, 2000). Intersemiotic translation is usually called also adaptation, or transmutation (Jakobson, 1959). The most common case of adaptation or transmutation is the transposition of a novel into film; and this is the particular case that will be further discussed in this work.

Later in the first chapter, a brief history of filmic adaptation is given to the reader. Then the major issues regarding intersemiotic translation are discussed in the third and fourth paragraphs: the problem of fidelity and the problem of authorship.

Fidelity criticism constitutes the largest segment of scholarship in adaptation studies. It starts from the point that the same story can be interpreted in many different ways. On one level, a translation is itself an interpretation, but when the story is put into another form, that is to say when it is 'translated' into a different sign system, new levels of

interpretation present themselves. When adapting a novel, a filmmaker can either attempt strict fidelity by following the novelist's direction, or she or he can be faithful to the 'spirit' of the novel by making changes in the course of events but still arriving at the same conclusion (Bane, 2006).

Hereto, the problem of fidelity is analysed with relation to a particular narrative genre: fantasy. Fantasy constitutes a whole new set of what we might call 'cult' popular classics – the classics of fantasy – that is now being made visible and audible in the movie theatre; and while our imaginative visualizations of literary worlds are always highly individual, the variance among readers is likely even greater in fantasy fiction than in realistic fiction (Hutcheon, 2003).

Then, the problem of authorship is analysed. Determining the authorship of a movie is a really hard task, especially when it comes to film adaptation. It seems to be a basic assumption in adaptation studies that the only relevant factors in film adaptation are the novelist and the director, but this assumption simplifies too much the issue of film adaptation. There are many different people that play a significant role in the production of a film: directors, actors, screenwriters, producers, etc.

The second chapter deals with audiovisual translation. The concept is defined starting from the *Routledge encyclopedia of translation studies*' definition (Pérez González, 2011, p. 13), and then further analysed by comparing audiovisual translation with literal translation. Then a brief analysis of the history of audiovisual translation is made. The main part of this chapter is about the audiovisual translation modes: after a brief paragraph about revoicing, subtitling and dubbing are defined, explained and analysed.

Subtitles are divided into two categories: *intralingual* and *interlingual* subtitles (Pérez González, 2011). Then the technical, textual and linguistic

constraints are listed and explained, with a particular focus on the diamesic variations of language.

Dubbing is the most important and widely used audiovisual translation mode. In the fifth paragraph, a list of the quality standards that dubbing translators have to respect is made. Then, the constraints of dubbing are explained and analysed. Particular attention is paid to the issue of translating songs in dubbed films, and to the translation strategies applied to language variations, with a particular focus on dialects and accents.

In closing, a comparison between dubbing and subtitling is made.

The third chapter, as already disclosed, is about a case study that will better explain the theoretical concepts discussed above. The case study is about the filmic adaptation of J.R.R.Tolkien's novel, *The Hobbit*, taking into account the first movie of the trilogy: *The Hobbit, an unexpected journey*. This chapter starts with a brief introduction about the author and his works; then Peter Jackson's filmic adaptation is analysed and compared to the original novel. The main part of this chapter is the analysis of the audiovisual translation into Italian, particularly focused on how dialects and idiolects in English have been transposed into Italian. The dialects of hobbits, dwarves and trolls are taken into account, and Gollum's idiolect and dual personality. An analysis of the audiovisual translation of the *Song of the misty mountain* is also made.

The aim of this work is to analyse how the dubbing translators of *The Hobbit: an unexpected journey* dealt with audiovisual translation problems – especially dialects and idiolects.

Chapter 1 – Intersemiotic translation, transmutation, adaptation

1. Definition(s)

According to Roman Jakobson, there are three ways of interpreting a verbal sign: it may be translated into other signs of the same language; it may be translated by using signs of another language; or it may be translated into another, nonverbal system of symbols. He called these three kinds of translation, respectively:

- i) Intralingual translation, or rewording; meaning the interpretation of a verbal sign by means of other signs of the same language;
- ii) Interlingual translation, or translation proper; that is the interpretation of a verbal sign by means of another language;
- iii) Intersemiotic translation, or transmutation; that is an interpretation of a verbal sign by means of signs of nonverbal sign system (Jakobson, 1959).

Peeter Torop expands Jakobson's definition, by adding:

- iv) Textual translation: the translation of a whole text in another whole text;
- v) Meta-textual translation: the translation of a whole text, not in another whole text, but in another culture as any product of meta-communication. Each text that help in knowing the

translated text without being a part of it are meta-texts, such as notes, introduction, critic reviews...

- vi) Intratextual and intertextual translation: the translation of external elements within a source text (quotations, paraphrase, hints), that is to say, every reference to the author's textual memory;
- vii) Extratextual translation: the transmutation of a text edited in a natural language by means of different codes, linguistic or non-linguistic (Torop, 2010).

Eco, by taking the cue from Jakobson, talks about interpretation, and categorises three kinds of interpretation: interpretation by transcript, intrasystemic interpretation, and intersystemic interpretation; and includes the intersemiotic translation in the latter group, distinguishing between intersemiotic translation (which implies considerable changes in the substance of the source text) and adaptation or transmutation (which implies a mutation of subject and substance). (Eco, 2013)

It is not easy to give a general and precise definition of intersemiotic translation. It is a notion that encompasses the idea of the interpretation of a text by means of a transposition of that text, where some elements of the source text are totally changed in the target text. But it would be better to define the concept time by time, according to the specific translation of a specific text (Nergaard, 2000). A general definition can only be given if we consider all the semiotic systems to be equivalents, to some extent, and so easily comparable. But that's hardly possible: at most it is possible to theorise it only locally, text by text, out of a given rule (Calabrese, 2000). Each passage between different sign systems – novel and film, poetry and music, picture and theatre... - entails a complete separation on the field of expression, while translatability is possible at the level of content. One of

the major problems regarding intersemiotic translation is that of the different subject and substances of expression: in translating a verbal sign in a musical one, for example, the two forms of expression are not precisely translatable, as they are not equivalent, as it would be in the case of the interlinguistic translation between two poems (Petillo M. C., 2008).

So translation is possible even between ‘linguistic’ and ‘non-linguistic’ semiotic systems: the translation of a novel into a film, or a poetry into a sculpture, for example. The translator re-codifies and re-imparts the message received by the source text; so intersemiotic translation leads to two equivalent messages, codified in two different codes. However, total equivalence is not possible: only a creative transposition is feasible (Jakobson, 1959). The most common case of adaptation or transmutation is the transposition of a novel into film, but there also exist theatrical versions of novels, transpositions of fairy tales into ballet, or even classical music into animated cartoon, as in Walt Disney’s *Fantasia*. There are different kinds of intersemiotic translation, but, in this case, it would be more appropriate to talk about transmutation or adaptation, rather than translation, in order to distinguish those interpretations from translation proper. (Eco, 2013).

Intersemiotic translation may involve the conversion of a literary text into an opera, a musical, a painting, or most commonly a film. Here, I will consider and analyse intersemiotic translation as film adaptation, when the source text is a novel.

A definite theory of adaptation still does not exist. There are many questions about this subject that still do not have an answer: how, if possible, does a film remain faithful to its source? Is a film a version of a story or is it an autonomous work of art? Who is the author of this work? Which text is given primacy: the novel or the film?

2. Brief history

The desire to transfer a story from one medium or one genre to another is neither new nor rare in Western culture. Used during the Middle Ages to define a specific practice of translation, adaptation was considered as a sub-genre of translation. The same term was later applied to cinema, at the beginning of the 20th century, to qualify the transfer from written material to visual images (Lhermitte, 2005). The first filmic adaptation was William Heise's *The Kiss*, projected onto the screen in Ottawa, Canada, on the 21st of July, 1896, in which Heise decided to re-play the final scene of John McNelly's stage musical comedy *The Widow Jones* (Heise, 1896).

One of the earliest instances of taking a popular literary character and transplanting him from the page to the screen is Arthur Conan Doyle's detective Sherlock Holmes, who first appeared on the screen in the 30-second short *Sherlock Holmes Baffled* (1900) (Marvin, 1900).

Over the next years, as the popularity of cinema grew, so did the production of films and adaptations. In 1909, the US studios produced the first film adaptation of *Les Misérables*. In 1911 (Capellani, 1911), in Italy was produced *L'inferno* (Bertolini, de Liguoro, & Padovan, 1911), from Dante's masterpiece (Bane, 2006). By 1930s, adaptations were very popular. And so they have been so far, since a third of all films ever made have been adapted from novels, and, if we include other literary forms, such as drama or short stories, that estimate might well be 65 percent or more. There are over 200 film versions of *Sherlock Holmes*, and nearly 50 film version of *Romeo and Juliet* (Harrington, 1977). After a century of cinema, movies have changed substantially, both technologically and stylistically, but after a hundred years, mainstream cinema is still telling and retelling stories, and most of those stories are still being (or have been) appropriated from literary or dramatic sources. Adaptation has always been

central to the process of filmmaking since almost the beginning and could well maintain its dominance into the cinema's second century (Welsh & Lev, 2007).

The great number of literary works adapted to the screen by international film directors is a testimony of the obvious link between literature and cinema, as well as the influence of literary works on narrative strategies of motion pictures. In fact, we should not overlook that, from its real beginning with the Lumière Brothers's films, cinema often borrowed its plots from literary sources in an attempt to translate and recreate them on the screen.

3. The problem of fidelity

«I think there have never been two identical staging in two different geographical places, and that seems absolutely reasonable to me: a line or a wordplay that proves to be comical in London can appear dull in Milan (or in New Orleans) and there's no credit at all to keep it at all costs just because it was in the original script»

Tom Stoppard

The issue of fidelity affects all kinds of translation. According to Eco, translation is based on processes of negotiation, negotiation being a process in which you give up something in order to obtain something else. In this process there are two participants: the source text, with its autonomous rights, and its author – when she or he is still alive, with her or his contingent claims for control, and the whole culture in which the text raises; on the other side, the target text, and the culture in which it appears, with the whole system of expectations from its possible readers (Eco, 2013). Of course, the problem of fidelity is particularly imperious in the field of adaptation.

Fidelity criticism constitutes the largest segment of scholarship in adaptation studies. It starts from the point that the same story can be interpreted in many different ways. On one level, a translation is itself an interpretation, but when the story is put into another form, that is to say when it is 'translated' into a different sign system, new levels of interpretation present themselves. When adapting a novel, a filmmaker can either attempt strict fidelity by following the novelist's direction, or she or he can be faithful to the 'spirit' of the novel by making changes in the course of events but still arriving at the same conclusion (Bane, 2006).

As the field developed, analysis of film adaptation came to acknowledge the interpretative value of the adaptation process. If a filmmaker wants to underline a particular aspect of the original that he or she considers important, he or she will be forced to overlook other aspects. This means that the filmmaker has to decide what to include and what to omit in his or her adaptation, according to his or her interpretation of the source text. By taking this decision, the filmmaker also decides whether his or her work will be source oriented, in which case it will lead the audience to enter and understand the linguistic and cultural setting of the source text, or target oriented, in which case it will transform the source text in order to make it accessible to the audience, according to the target linguistic and cultural setting. In the first case, it could lead to a feeling of estrangement or disorientation in the audience, while in the second, it could provoke the loss of important elements of the source text, as, for example, a particular local dialect that distinguishes a character.

If we consider the theory of reversibility according to which, by re-translating a translation we should obtain a sort of 'clone' of the original text, we find out that it is impossible to apply this theory to the passage from a semiotic system to another. A particular semiotic system can say

either more or less than another semiotic system, but certainly it is impossible to express exactly the same things in two different semiotic systems. Furthermore, while passing from a semiotic system to another, the adapter may be forced to show explicitly some things that are hidden in the source text; it may be necessary to make the text more comprehensible for the reader/viewer/listener. But it is unquestionable that, by showing something that was implicit in the original text, the adapter is interpreting that text, and by doing this, he or she is imposing his or her interpretation on the audience. It is possible that, by using its own means, the film could recover this ambiguity in another moment where the novel was more explicit. But this would still be a manipulation. There cannot be such thing as 'equivalence' in the passage from verbal to non-verbal language. Melville, in *Moby Dick*, for example, never says which leg captain Achab misses. John Huston, by 'translating' Melville's novel into film, could not avoid choosing, and he chose the left one. It may be an irrelevant detail, as it may be a fundamental aspect of the novel, maybe because it increases the mystery air that surrounds that character. Anyway, in this case, the film tells us more compared to the novel. On the contrary, it is also possible that, by adapting a novel for the screen, the filmmaker decides not to show something that is explicit in the novel (Huston, 1956).

Adaptation isolates only one level of meaning of the source text, considering that one level as the only one that can express the inner meaning of the whole text. In a filmic adaptation of a novel, for example, the filmmaker usually describes only the plot, ignoring all the other levels, considering them unessential or difficult to represent. That means that, by isolating and 'translating' only one or a few levels of meaning of the source text, the 'translator' imposes on the audience his or her own interpretation of the source text (Eco, 2013).

As it is easy to see, adaptations are not and cannot be filmic representations of the novelist's intentions. The act of adapting literature to film concerns interpretation more than reproduction. Bazin argues that a cinematic adaptation is a transformative process that should make no attempt to reproduce the original text's formal features. It is the duty of the filmmaker not to reproduce a literary text faithfully, but to create the cinematic equivalent of the style of the original (Bazin, 1997). Accordingly, Sinyard describes his critical approach as "Adaptation as Criticism", where successful adaptations are considered to be those that are not afraid to take liberties with character and structure when they feel they have more convincing readings to offer than the original, to emphasise some features and disregard others. Adaptations are best approached as an activity of literary criticism, not a representation of the complete novel, but a *critical essay* of the original text (Sinyard, 1986). Adaptation always entails a critical analysis of the original – even unconscious. Of course also translation proper involves a critical analysis by the translator, but in this case the criticism remains implicit, while in adaptation it is not only explicit, but also fundamental for the process of transmutation (Eco, 2013).

McFarlane too hints at the concept of interpretation by arguing that the problem of adapting a novel into film involves not merely a parallelism between novel and film but between two or more readings of a novel, since any given film version is able only to aim at reproducing the filmmaker's reading of the original and to hope that it will coincide with that of many other readers/viewers (McFarlane, 1996).

There are three different, if related, perspectives to be taken when theorizing adaptation. First, and more obviously, there is a formal dimension (the description of the product), but there are also traces of the processes of creation and reception.

As a formal phenomenon, adaptation is a combination of translation and usually distillation of the adapted work. Just as there is no such thing as a literal translation, there can be no literal adaptation. Transposition to another medium always means change; there are always going to be both gains and losses.

Moving to the perspective of the adapter, the creative work involved in adapting can be seen as a process of appropriation, of taking possession of another narrative, for one's own creative purposes. This is accomplished through what can only be called an act of re-interpretation.

The third point of view to consider is that of the receiver. If adaptation is a mode of interpretation for the adapter, it is a mode of what we call 'intertextuality' for the receiver who knows the adapted text; a dialogical process in which we compare the work we already know with the work we are now experiencing.

Each medium has its own specificity; that is to say, each medium has different means of expression and so can aim at – and achieve – certain things better than others. As a poet will be tempted to represent different aspects of a story (and in different ways) than will the creator of a musical show, in the same way the linear and single-track medium of language will produce a different version than the multi-track film, with its amalgam of music, sound, and moving visual images.

Even in today's globalized world, major shifts in context – that is, say, in national setting or time period – can change radically how the transposition of a narrative is interpreted, ideologically, as well as literally. In shifting cultures, and therefore sometimes languages, adaptation makes alterations that reveal much about the context of reception.

One of the major issues is whether the audience knows the adapted text or not. If not, there is obviously more creative freedom for the adapter.

There are clear advantages sometimes when the audience knows the adapted text: it can fill in the gaps necessitated by the adaptation of the plot. But it is probably easier for an adapter to forge a relationship with audience members if they are not aware of the adapted text. Without foreknowledge, the viewers are more likely to greet a film version simply as a new film, nor as an adaptation. The director, therefore, will have greater freedom, and control (Hutcheon, 2003).

Critics who adhere to the question of fidelity judge a film and measure its value against the novel on which it is based trying to determine the degree of ‘faithfulness’ to the source text and, therefore, the success of the film in question. This notion implies the idea that there is only a single, correct ‘meaning’ of a novel, which the filmmaker has either respected or violated. One of the major problems with this approach to adaptation studies is that it gives primary importance to the novel and considers the film as an inferior work.

The issue of ‘fidelity’, in fact, usually leads to the notion that ‘the book was better’. The medium of film has, of course, its limitations. There are narrative and novelistic techniques that could be considered ‘unfilmable’. Shades of nuance in ‘voice’ and tone, for example, could be difficult to ‘translate’.

One of the major problems about adaptation regarding fidelity is the narrator. Specific challenges for adaptive writers and filmmakers usually include ways to visualize the fiction narrator’s exposition, metaphors, and interior character observations and their thought processes, all of which help to convey story tone as well as character psychology. The determination of filmic equivalents for some or all of these fictional devices is part of the craft and art of the adaptation process.

Turning a novel into a screenplay is not just a matter of pulling dialogue from the pages of a book. In novels, we often come to know characters best not through what they say, but through what they are thinking or what is said about them in the narration. A narrator mediates the meaning of what we read through his or her point of view, and our comprehension and impressions of the story depends much on who is telling that story. But in film, the narrator largely disappears. Sometimes a narrator's perspective is kept through the use of a voice-over, but generally the filmmaker and actors must rely on the other means of film to reproduce what a character feels and what is described in the page.

Adaptation have limited options also in the casting of lead characters because of the expectations of audiences relative to the given character profiles in the source text. Close matching can bring success. Certain actors may have the look of a fictional character but lack the affect, while others may not look the part detailed in the source but may nevertheless succeed in capturing the inner life of the character in the film role. Whether an actor's performance is attuned to the adapted script or the script is adjusted to the actor depends finally on the director's intent in relation to the source text.

The major difference between film and books is that visual images stimulate our perceptions directly, while written words can do this indirectly. Reading the word *chair* requires a kind of mental 'translation' that viewing a picture of a *chair* does not. Film is a more direct sensory experience than reading: besides verbal language, there is also colour, movement, and sound. Yet film is also limited: for one thing, there are no time constraints on a novel, while a film usually must compress events into two hours or so. For another, only one person, the author, controls the meaning of a novel, while the meaning we get from a film is the result of a

collaborative effort by many people. Film also does not allow us the same freedom a novel does, to interact with the plot or characters by imagining them in our minds (Schulten, 2011).

By taking literary works to the screen, film adaptations widen the scope of their readership, offering them greater visibility. Metaphors are changed into more comprehensible images, idiomatic expressions are replaced by explicit phrases and cultural rites are explained or transposed in an effort to make them more accessible to the reader. In the process, adapters cannot ignore the cultural background of the target culture and must ‘negotiate’ the interaction of the audience with the source text. The trade-off between two elements – two historical periods, two cultures, two media and/or two languages – is at the core of film adaptation.

Cultural references and metaphors are sometimes difficult to transfer to the screen, and they undergo significant changes during the conversion of a novel into a screenplay – the first transformational step leading to the production of a film. The linguistic transfer occurring during the rewriting phase is a critical step involving a number of arbitrary decisions.

Problems associated with the reception of a text by a foreign audience (interlingual translation) complicate the process of adaptation, as they relate to the transfer of cultural elements unknown to the target audience. Many questions arise and critical choices are made at this point. As I already noticed, the adapted work can be either source or target oriented. The first strategy focuses on the target audience and its ability to absorb a foreign culture keeping the story in its original context, while, in the second instance, the translator may transpose the story to a different time or culture to make it understandable for the audience. Just like ‘interlingual translation’ which, in the conventional sense, implies a transfer between two languages, adaptation resorts to finding equivalences in an effort to

accommodate the receiver. At this level, interlingual translation often becomes closely interwoven with intersemiotic translation through immediate visual signs such as dress and décor. These cultural transfers, often achieved through actor's costumes, tend to render the translation invisible and to 'domesticate' the source text in order to give the reader unobstructed access to what is represented in the original (Lhermitte, 2005).

So a novel can be considered 'unfilmable', in a way and to a degree. But it can always be transformed in an agreeable way so as to make it seem 'filmable'.

In fact, 'unfilmable' classics have been regularly filmed, sometimes with good results. Of course, in the case of massive novels, length will almost certainly be a problem. One solution here is to transpose it into television miniseries. Arguably, television might be the best medium for assuring the 'persistence of fidelity' in adapting 'classic' novels. Every facial tic and verbal nuance could be carefully captured in an eight-hour adaptation, every gasp, every sigh, every wink of the eye. But things change when we deal with a film that has to be captured in less than three hours.

By the turn of the twentieth century, movies were 'imitating' or 'replicating' historical events in documentary-styled 'actualities', then dramatizing stories from the Bible, or great scenes from Shakespeare, or remarkable moments in literature. All of a sudden, everything was adaptable, apparently, and audiences expected fidelity (in the case of literary or dramatic approaches) or authenticity (in the case of historical events). Perhaps it is pointless to demand historical, biographical, or even fictive 'truths', or to worry much about the issue of 'fidelity' when historical events or personages or fictional narratives are adapted to the

screen. Cinema inherently involves manipulation and illusion and is not really about ‘truth’ or ‘reality’. Literal translations cannot be faithful, and a character represented in a film cannot be identical to the same character as represented in the novel (Bazin, 1967). According to Bazin, there is a common and persistent trend among filmmakers to treat source text with an unconscious carelessness, as they simply take characters and events from the novel and treat them as independent from their literary framework. Every transposition from novel to film disrupts the equilibrium of the original work. But if the filmmaker is able to find a way to reconstruct a new equilibrium, basing on the original, than he would create a new work that obviously is not identical to the source text, but is at least equivalent (Bazin, 1997).

On the other hand, Bluestone observes that between the two media of novel and film adaptation there are too many crucial differences for perfect correlation to be possible. They are so fundamentally different that it would be impossible even to compare the two of them. Since a perfect adaptation is not possible, film adaptation can only provide a sort of ‘paraphrase’. It can be ‘faithful’ to the original only in the script phase – being the script a medium of words. As a result, the filmmaker does not translate the novel for the screen, rather becomes the author of a new work, and comparison with its source is no more necessary: if the film is well received and successful – either financially, critically, or both, than the question of fidelity disappears. The notions of ‘faithful’ and ‘unfaithful’ are not to be equated with those of ‘successful’ and ‘unsuccessful’; even if the film produces great changes to its source, it can still be a good film that manages to capture the ‘spirit’ of the book and is therefore a successful adaptation (Bluestone, 1968).

Many adaptations alter the original by distorting characters, twisting plots, changing endings, or carrying different messages. Furthermore, filmmakers have no choice but to eliminate descriptions, conflate minor episodes and characters, and minimize dialogue, relying on the visual aspect of the medium to fill in any gaps that may appear (Gilbert, 1963).

But why do motion picture producers make so many changes in filming a novel? There are three main reasons a filmmaker or screenwriter might make major changes on adapting a literary work to film. One is simply the changes demanded by a new medium. Film and literature each have their own tools for manipulating narrative structure: in a novel, a new chapter might take us back to a different time and place in the narrative; in a film, we might go back to that same time and place through the use of flashback, a crosscut, or a dissolve. Sometimes filmmakers make changes to highlight new themes, emphasize different traits in a character, or even try to solve problems they perceive in the original work. The third main reason for a filmmaker to make dramatic changes to an adaptation regards classic literature, and is the need to make a classic story fit for a contemporary audience. Sometimes this means subtle substitutions or additions of language or props that are more recognizable to a modern audience; at other times it means depicting events or characters in the novel in a way that better fits a modern sensibility (Schulten, 2011).

Furthermore, since screen narratives move at faster paces than most novels, any detail – implicit or explicit – extraneous to the plot has to be omitted, while on-screen events have to be either self-explanatory or clarified by information in adjoining scenes. These changes can be divided into three categories: condensation, incorporation and modification. Condensation is the act of choosing or discarding plot elements; incorporation is the act of adding scenes to fill in any gaps in the narrative

that may have been caused by condensation; modification is employed to help bring the ‘moral tone’ of the narrative into conformance with Production Code standards (Field, 1952).

The American novelist and screenwriter William Goldman suggests a series of questions that a screenwriter must be able to answer before writing the adaptation: what is the story about? On a deeper, more intimate level, what is the story really about? Who tells the story? Where does it take place? What adjustments must be made with respect to the characters? What must be preserved? If a screenwriter can correctly answer these questions, then he or she should be able to write a successful adaptation (Goldman, 1983).

There are three possible ways of adapting a novel: the adapter can closely follow the structure of the book; she or he can choose some ‘key scenes’ from the book that are indicative of the author’s concept; or can write an ‘original’ screenplay inspired by the book. All three methods have their advantages and shortcomings: following a text too closely is difficult since novels tend to feature more characters and episodes than a film can convey in an appropriate way; the second option requires the screenwriter to organise the chosen scenes into the most effective climactic order and then connect them with residual or completely new materials; while the third option allows the screenwriter to retain the novel’s underlying structure, plot, and themes, but freed him or her to abandon useless details (Swain & Swain, 1988). Similarly, Andrew establishes three types of relationships between the adapted film and its source text: borrowing, intersection, and fidelity of transformation. Borrowing is the most common relationship, and it consists simply in taking some material from a well-known text and presenting it to an audience so that they might easily recognize it. Intersection involves an attempt to entirely preserve the

integrity of the original, while fidelity of transformation consists in taking the ‘essence’ of the original text and carrying its ‘spirit’ into a new medium while remaining faithful to the original author’s intent (Andrew, 1984).

However, the bond between novel and film still remains: any adaptation will necessarily demonstrate what the medium of film can or cannot achieve in relation to literary sources depending upon the imagination of the director and screenwriter.

How was the story told? How is it retold? Is the story completely told? If not, was anything lost as a consequence? Do the characters appear much as most readers might expect? Has the story’s meaning been changed and, if so, in what way or ways and to what degree? Finally, has the film adaptation been true to the ‘spirit’ of the original? A good adaptation does not necessarily have to be exactly ‘by the book’, but many will expect it to be at least close to the book and not an utter betrayal. Fidelity, accuracy, and truth are all important measuring devices that should not be utterly ignored or neglected in evaluating a film adapted from a literary or dramatic source (Welsh & Lev, 2007).

Critical writing on film adaptation has frequently suggested that the screenplay and film should mainly seek to capture ‘the essence’ of the source text through audiovisual ‘equivalents’. Because exact iconic images of fiction in film are impossible (owing to the variations of each fiction reader’s particular imagination) and in any case are likely to fail dramatically (owing to film’s need to establish its own ‘live’ scenic rhythms as opposed to literary ones), it is essential to locate the goal that any particular adaptation sets for itself. Critics and theorists of adaptation have established three levels of a film’s distance from its source:

- i) a literal or close reading;
- ii) a general correspondence;

iii) a distant referencing.

In copyright law, an adaptation is defined as a “derivation that recasts, transforms or adapts a previous work”, which suggests the varied forms that adaptation may take (Boozer, 2012).

Of course, novels and films are diametrically opposed as ‘words’ and ‘images’, but at the same time they share formal techniques, audiences, values, sources, archetypes, narrative strategies, and contexts. Therefore, if we accept the notion that words and images are separate, untranslatable systems, then we should conclude that adaptation of literary works is theoretically impossible. But, in fact, adaptations do exist, by virtue of those shared fields I mentioned before. They are obviously different from their source text, but that does not mean that there cannot be a good adaptation, or that one form is better than the other. They are simply different.

3.1 Fidelity and fantasy

One of the central clichés of film adaptation theory is that audiences are more demanding of fidelity when dealing with the classics – with the work of Shakespeare or Dickens, for instance. But the adaptation of high-profile best sellers to screen can prove as controversial as the adaptation of literary classics, and a whole new set of what we might call ‘cult’ popular classics – the classics of fantasy – are now being made visible and audible in the movie theatre. And their readers are likely to be just as demanding of film adaptations as are the fans of the more traditional classics.

While our imaginative visualizations of literary worlds are always highly individual, the variance among readers is likely even greater in fantasy fiction than in realistic fiction. What does this mean when these readers see one particular version on the screen – that of the director’s

imagination? The answer, of course, can be found in the reviews of (and more generally, the audience reactions to) the adaptations of *The Lord of the Rings* and the *Harry Potter* novels. Now that the audience *knows* what an orc looks like (from the movie), it will never be able to recapture its first imagined version again (Hutcheon, 2003).

4. The problem of authorship

Evidently, there are obvious differences between the single-track translation of a novel, which only deals with words, and the multi-track medium of cinema, which not only combines words (written or spoken), but also actors' performance, music, sound effects and moving images.

Film adaptation should not be reduced to 'intersemiotic translation' but also ought to be assessed in terms of 'intralingual' and 'interlingual' transfer. In the case of film adaptation, there can be involved all of the three kinds of translation categorised by Jakobson: intralingual, interlingual, and intersemiotic translation. As a first step, the source text is translated into a target text, in the form of the screenplay. When the transposition takes place within the same culture of the source text, the process of transformation becomes equivalent to an 'intralingual translation' and assumes that the writing of a classic novel script is done in the language used in the source text. Even when the transposition takes place in a different historical period, geographical place or an imaginative world, this first step still remains a process of rewording, if it is edited in the same language of the source text. For instance, a French cinematic version of *Les Misérables* is considered as an 'intralingual translation' whereas a Japanese or Russian adaptation of the novel is considered as an 'interlingual translation'. During a second phase, the screenplay is later translated into visual images (intersemiotic translation).

The conceptualization of translation or film adaptation emphasizing their differences is a significant step towards acknowledging film adaptations as autonomous works of art, with an autonomous author, whose purpose is to communicate a message in a code understandable by the target audience (Lhermitte, 2005).

But who is the author of this new, autonomous work of art?

It seems to be a basic assumption in adaptation studies that the only relevant factors in film adaptation are the novelist and the director. The researchers systematically erase the screenwriter and the screenplay from the equation. This assumption simplifies too much the issue of film adaptation, especially when examining the dialogue: this leads to the view of film adaptation as simple ‘transposing of a novel on screen’. The most changes and reworkings to the story and its components are done in the scripting phase: what is highlighted, what aspects are downplayed, how the characters are presented and developed, what scenes are included and what excluded, what events and lines of dialogue are invented, the overall structure of the film. What the screenwriter works with is the novel, while the director works with the screenplay, rather than the novel. There are cases, of course, in which the screenwriter is *also* the director. In such cases, the chances for artistic dominance and expressive supremacy are much higher. As Stillinger points out, filmmaking is an extreme case of multiple authorship (Stillinger, 1991).

Directors play a significant role in ordinary thought and talk about film: we regularly identify films by reference to their director. As a consequence, it is also a commonplace that the director is typically the most important figure involved in the making of a film. It is quite natural, therefore, to think that film directors and literary authors are almost the same thing. However, although it is certainly true that directors figure

heavily in ordinary discourse about film, they are not the only ones who play a significant role in our talk and thought about cinema. The category of the ‘Johnny Depp movies’ seems just as influential and important to our thought as that of the ‘Tim Burton movies’ (*Charlie and the Chocolate Factory* is, for example, at the same time, a Johnny Depp and a Tim Burton movie (Burton, 2005), as it is, of course, a Roald Dahl novel). Leading actors may be sometimes considered to be the main authors of the film: without, say, Tom Cruise, *Mission: Impossible* (De Palma, 1996) would have been a totally different film. In other cases, screenwriters seem to be especially important. Moreover, screenwriters literally produce written texts, so their claims to be the authors of films seems – at least in one way – on firmer ground than those of directors. In still other cases, producers, as well as film companies, seem to be particularly significant (Meskin, 2009).

However, the closed fixation only on literary source and finished film both in journalistic reviews and scholarly study has often shown an indifference to the evolving intentions of producers, writers, and director and their shifting levels of input and authority. As I already noticed, even actors have a part in this process, as a particular way of acting and *interpreting* a character may affect the overall result of the work of adaptation.

It is the screenplay, not the source text, which is the most direct foundation and fulcrum for any adapted film. It guides the screen choices for story structure, characterization, motifs, themes, and genre. It indicates what will or will not be used from the source, including what is to be altered or invented. Unlike the original source text, which can be read at the reader’s rhythm, the screenplay is the directive for the film performance in a designated time frame. The basic format of narrative film scripts conveys their practical specificity. Their goal is to portray drama through

concrete descriptive passages and character dialogue within individual scenes, which are designated as either interior or exterior locations. Scenes form the building blocks of sequences and story of characters. Because Hollywood scripts are usually written to fit within exhibitors' preferred two-hour maximum running time, as well as to appeal to mass audiences, efficiency and clarity in story and characterization have been standard practice. The adapted screenplay usually pares down dialogue and avoids metaphorical style in description. All of this is intended to set a mood and tone, as well as tell a story in the eventual service of an audiovisual design. The expressive language of fiction in paragraph and chapter form describes circumstances, attitudes, and feelings that readers are left to imagine directly by themselves, while the screenplay is structured to work in the service of a narrative that is read in the moving scenic terms of imagining for the camera. There are at least two main versions of a script. In the preproduction stage, there is the first one that helps bring together budget resources and personnel – as a sort of 'canovaccio' -, and then the one that is coordinated by the director for production. Sometimes those two versions have very little to do with each other (Stempel, 2000).

Determining the authorship of a movie is a really hard task, especially when it comes to film adaptation. Besides, authorship usually concerns literature. Film is simply a very different sort of thing than literature. Even though texts go into the making of most films, films themselves are not linguistic texts. And films are typically – though not essentially – made collaboratively – in most cases by very large groups. Literature, on the other hand, is at least primarily a matter of texts, and is typically – though not essentially – produced by individuals. In addition, the term 'author' is not usually applied to the makers of films neither in colloquial English nor

in Italian. Perhaps, then, films have no authors at all or, at least, no authors in any literal sense of the word (Meskin, 2009).

Film adaptation should be studied as a hybrid product resulting from the blending of two or more authors, cultures and audience, since it is, by definition, a dynamic and interactive process. According to Millicent Marcus a successful adaptation performs the process of its transit, makes explicit the way in which the literary work is passed through the filmmaker's imagination, the new cultural context, and the technology of the medium, to emerge as a full-fledged, autonomous retelling of the tale.

Chapter 2 – Audiovisual translation

1. Definition

The *Routledge Encyclopedia of Translation Studies* defines Audiovisual Translation as:

“A branch of translation studies concerned with the transfer of *multimodal* and *multimedial* texts into another language and/or culture. Audiovisual texts are *multimodal* inasmuch as their production and interpretation relies on the combined deployment of a wide range of semiotic resources or ‘modes’ (Baldry and Thibault 2006). Major meaning-making modes in audiovisual texts include language, music, colour and perspective. Audiovisual texts are *multimedial* in so far as this panoply of semiotic modes is delivered to the viewer through various media in a synchronized manner, with the screen playing a coordinating role in the presentation process (Negroponte 1991).”

(Luis Pérez González 2011: 13, from *Routledge Encyclopedia of Translation Studies*, 2nd edition)

Audiovisual translation is the term used to refer to the transfer from one language to another of the verbal components contained in audiovisual works and products. Feature films, television programs, theatrical plays, musicals, opera, web pages, and video games are just some examples of the

vast array of audiovisual products available and that require translation. As the word suggests, audiovisuals are made to be both heard (*audio*) and seen (*visual*) simultaneously.

Precisely because audiovisual materials are meant to be seen and heard simultaneously, their translation is different from translating print. Written works are primarily meant to be read. Illustrations in books, newspapers, journals, and magazines such as photographs, diagrams, and graphs, are there to accompany and enhance the verbal content. On the other hand the verbal and visual contents of audiovisual products function inseparably to create a meaningful whole.

Audiovisuals are made up of numerous codes that interact to create a single effect. On one level, audiovisual products contain a series of verbal messages that will be perceived both acoustically and visually. In filmic products, as well as what actors say, audiences may also hear the lyrics of songs while simultaneously being exposed to a range of written information such as street signs, letters, notes, and so forth. Also, at the beginning and end of a program, substantial written information about it, such as the names of director, producers, the cast, and the production team will also be visible. On a different level, but together with such acoustic and visual verbal input, filmic products also contain nonverbal sound effects and background noises, body sounds (breathing, laughter, crying, etc.), and music. At the same time actors' facial expressions, gestures and movements, costumes, hairstyle, makeup, and so forth convey additional meaning. Furthermore, scenery, colours, special effects, and three-dimensionality are also part of the filmic whole. AVT needs to take all this diversified verbal and visual information into account (Chiaro, 2013).

Film industry is not the only field in which audiovisual translation is needed: there is also the theatre, the opera and other live events where translation may be required in the form of *surtitles*.

Given the many ways in which viewers can access audiovisual material – DVD, television, cinema, Internet – it is difficult to quantify with precision the percentage of foreign-language programmes translated and screened in any given country. Statistics available tend to be concerned with the number of films exported and imported for cinema release only, forgetting crucially any other films or audiovisual products (sitcoms, documentaries, TV series, musical concerts, cartoons, etc.) that are broadcast by private and public television channels and distributed on DVD and the internet. Predictably, an extremely high percentage of audiovisual programmes originate in the USA: 80% in Italy, 95% in Spain and 88% in the United Kingdom (Díaz Cintas & Anderman, 2009).

There has been, however, a trend in the opposite direction. New low production cost audiovisual genres have emerged that, emulating the format of similar programmes designed in other countries and for other audiences, can be produced in the language of other communities without the need for translation (Díaz Cintas & Anderman, 2009). Examples are television quizzes like *Who wants to be a millionaire* (Briggs, Whitehill, & Knight, 1998-2007), soap operas like *Yo soy Betty, la fea* (Gaitán, 1999-2001) (*Ugly Betty* in English), talent shows like *America's got talent*, which became *Italia's got talent* in the Italian version. Generally, this process involves the appropriation of a programme format from a foreign country, and the adaptation of that format to the target language and culture. A particular example of this practise is the 2007 film by the Austrian filmmaker Michael Haneke, *Funny games*, a shot-for-shot remake of the homonymous 1997 film directed by Haneke himself. In this case, the

1997 original is faithfully reproduced, albeit in English and set in the United States with different actors. Haneke wanted to reproduce his own film for an American audience, not only translating its dialogue, but also setting it in the USA, thus making it more familiar to the audience. This is a hybrid case: it is neither an audiovisual translation nor an autonomous remake, as the director is the same for the two versions, and the two films are identical, with the exception of language, setting and actors (Haneke, 2007).

However, these developments do not necessarily mean that the overall need for translation is lower since there are many more television channels broadcasting many more hours. Nevertheless, despite the fact that the number of programmes produced in national languages would seem to be on the increase, the situation in countries where English is not the official language is such that a large volume of audiovisual programmes still needs to be translated (Díaz Cintas & Anderman, 2009).

2. Brief history

The leading forms of audiovisual translation are subtitling and dubbing. Since these two translation processes were born in the field of sound motion pictures, terms like ‘film dubbing’ and ‘film translation’ were forged to refer to them. The subsequent emergence of television as a mass medium of communication and entertainment provided new ways for the circulation of translated audiovisual texts, with definitions such as ‘film and TV translation’ and ‘media translation’.

The most recent development is related to the exponential growth in the production of audiovisual texts for electronic and digital media, where terms like ‘screen translation’ and ‘multimedial translation’ were born.

This large amount of definitions illustrate that audiovisual translation is a complex concept that encompasses many different fields and media. Even during the silent film era, exporting films to foreign markets involved some form of interlingual mediation (see chapter I). The turn of the twentieth century led to the incorporation of written language into the film semiotics in the form of intertitles. As the filmic narratives became more complex, the use of texts placed between film frames was needed.

Intertitles were useful to situate the action in a specific temporal and spatial setting and to help viewers to understand characters' actions and thoughts. Intertitles have been the first form of audiovisual translation. Exporting the movie in a foreign market was easy: removing the original intertitles and inserting a new set of texts into the film was the only thing that was needed.

By the early 1920s, American film industry was dominant throughout Europe, pushing some national film industries (e.g. British and Italian) close to the brink of collapse. The advent of sound in the late 1920s put a temporary end to the American domination of European film industries, as the big studios became suddenly unable to satisfy the demand of European audiences for films spoken in their native languages. Therefore, new forms of audiovisual translation were required to reassert its former dominance. During the second half of the 1920s, technological developments made it possible to 'revoice' fragments of dialogue or edit the sound of scenes through a process known as 'post-synchronization'. Post-synchronized revoicing was used to replace the source dialogue with a translated version, and is therefore acknowledged as the immediate forerunner of dubbing as we know it today.

Simultaneous advances in the manipulation of celluloid films during the same period allowed distributors to superimpose titles straight onto the

film strip images through optical and mechanical means. By the late 1920s it had become customary to use this technology to provide a translation of the source dialogue in synchrony with the relevant portion of dialogue, thus anticipating the development of modern subtitling (Pérez González, 2011).

The move from analogue to digital technology and the potential afforded by the digitalisation of images has also opened up new ways, radically changing the essence of the industry of audiovisual production – and thus audiovisual translation. Together with the ubiquitous presence of the computer and the Internet, the arrival of the DVD can be hailed as one of the most important and revolutionary developments in recent decades. In just a few years, the DVD has become the favoured mode for distribution and consumption of audiovisual products. This has, in turn, resulted in new working practices. Changes are happening at all levels – technological, working routines, audience reception, emergence of new translation modes and approaches. The rate at which some of these changes in working practice are taking place is perhaps most striking in the field of subtitling: the amount of translation required in the field of AVT is increasing, and subtitles are now always available. Films that have traditionally been dubbed for both cinema and VHS releases as well as television broadcasting are now also being subtitled for distribution on DVD; and classic movies that were only dubbed when first released are nowadays also available in subtitled versions on DVD. Moreover, TV series, sitcoms and cartoons that are normally dubbed when broadcast on television also end up on DVDs with subtitles.

More recently, audiovisual translation has evolved to the point where, as a discipline, it is now one of the most vibrant and vigorous fields within Translation Studies.

Although at present audiovisual translation is experiencing an unprecedented boom of interest and activity at all levels, a number of problematic issues remain to be addressed. The changes taking place in the profession are fast, not always allowing sufficient time for full adjustment. Old methods tend to compete with new techniques, and consistency is not always maintained. Subtitle styles tend to vary from country to country, even from company to company, to the point that, in recent years, calls for a 'Code of best practice in audiovisual translation' have been recurrent (Díaz Cintas & Anderman, 2009).

3. Revoicing

The term 'revoicing' designates a range of oral language transfer procedures: voice-over, narration, audio description, free commentary, and simultaneous interpreting.

Voice over, or 'half-dubbing' is a method that involves pre-recorded revoicing: after a few seconds in which the original sound is fully audible, the volume is lower and the voice reading the translation becomes prominent. This combination of realism (as the original sound remains available in the acoustic background throughout) and almost full translation of the original text makes voice-over particularly suitable for interviews, documentaries and other programmes which do not require lip synchronization. Voice-over is also used today to translate feature films for some small markets in Europe and Asia because it is substantially cheaper than dubbing. Luyken defined this process a 'voice-over isochrony', as the original audio is not completely removed, but it remains audible in the background. The voice of a speaker is superposed to the original sound, but the speaker only reads the strings of the translated dialogue, without interpreting it, or trying to imitate the voice of the characters, with

unavoidable consequences on the authenticity of the final result (Luyken, 1991).

Voice-over is used in Western Europe and America for all those programmes that can be defined as *non-fictional*, such as documentaries, news, and advertisement. Voice-over is the preferred mode of transfer for the non-fiction genre, along with subtitles, because its defining features contribute to the appeal of reality, truth and authenticity that factual programmes count on in order to prove that their arguments are right or believable (Franco, Matamala, & Orero, 2010).

This procedure is still not recognized at an academic level, unlike dubbing and subtitling. The lack of studies about this technique made it difficult to define voice-over as an autonomous audiovisual translation process.

In the beginning, the term was only used in the specialised language of film studios. Then it was integrated in the language of translation studies, and only recently it became a part of the language of audiovisual translation studies, which produced a series of tags that compared voice-over with other kinds of linguistic transfer – it is the case of ‘half-dubbing’, ‘non-synchronized dubbing’, ‘oral subtitling’ (Petillo M. , 2012).

Narration has been defined as ‘an extended voice-over’ (Luyken, 1991). This form of oral transfer aims to provide a summarized but faithful and carefully scripted rendition of the original speech, and its delivery is carefully timed to avoid any clash with the visual syntax of the programme. In recent years, a very specific form of pre-recorded, mostly interlingual narration has become increasingly important to ensure the accessibility of audiovisual products to the visually impaired: this is known as audio description. An audio description is a spoken account of those visual aspects of a film, which play a role in conveying its plot, rather than a

translation of linguistic content. The voice of an audio describer delivers this additional narrative between stretches of dialogue.

As opposed to these pre-recorded transfer methods, other forms of revoicing are performed on the spot by interpreters, presenters or commentators by superimposing their voices over the original sound.

Free commentary, for example, involves adapting the source speech to meet the needs of the target audience, rather than attempting to convey its content faithfully. Commentaries are commonly used to broadcast high-profile events with a spontaneous tone.

Simultaneous interpreting is typically carried out in the context of film festivals when time and budget constraints do not allow for a more elaborate form of oral or written language transfer. Interpreters may translate with or without scripts and dub the voices of the whole cast of characters featuring in the film (Pérez González, 2011).

4. Subtitling

Together with dubbing, subtitling is the most common method of language transfer for audiovisual products.

Quicker and a lot cheaper than dubbing, it has more recently become the favourite translation mode in the media world and comes hand in hand with globalisation.

Luyken describes subtitles as “condensed written translations of original dialogue, which appear as lines of text, usually positioned towards the foot of the screen”. Subtitles appear and disappear to coincide in time with the corresponding portion of the original dialogue and are almost always added to the screen image at the later date as a post-production activity (Luyken, 1991).

Subtitling consists of the production of fragments of written text (subtitles, or captions in American English) to be superimposed on visual footage – normally near the bottom of the frame – while an audiovisual text is projected, played or broadcast.

Interlingual subtitles provide viewers with a written transcript of the source text speech, whether dialogue or narration, in their own language. *Bilingual subtitles* deliver two language versions of the same source fragment, one in each of the two constitutive lines of the subtitle. Bilingual subtitles are used, for example, in countries where two languages are currently spoken: in Belgium, for example, films are subtitled in French and in Flemish at the same time.

Intralingual subtitles are composed in the same language as the source text speech, and started to proliferate since the 1970s. Intralingual subtitles were traditionally addressed at minority audience, such as immigrants wishing to develop their proficiency in the language of the host community, or viewers requiring written support to fully understand certain audiovisual texts shot in non-standard dialects of their native language, or again students willing to practice the foreign language they are studying. However, intralingual subtitling has now become almost synonymous with subtitling for the deaf in the audiovisual marketplace. Subtitles for the deaf provide a written version of the speech but also incorporate descriptions of sound features, which are not accessible to this audience.

Historically, the terms ‘interlingual’ and ‘intralingual subtitles’ were associated with *open* and *closed subtitles*, respectively. Interlingual subtitles have tended to be showed on the actual film, thus becoming part of the audiovisual text itself. As they are visually present throughout the screening and universally accessible to all viewers, interlingual subtitles are said to be open. Intralingual subtitles, on the contrary, are called ‘closed

subtitles' because they are accessible only to viewers whose television sets are equipped with the relevant decoder and who choose to display them on the screen while watching the programme. The advent of DVD and digital television erased this distinction as both media provide viewers with closed intralingual and interlingual subtitles, normally in more than one language (Pérez González, 2011).

Subtitles are said to be most successful when not noticed by the viewer. In order to achieve this, they need to comply with certain levels of readability and be as concise as necessary in order not to distract the viewer's attention from the programme (Georgakopoulou, 2009).

In the following paragraphs there will be an analysis of the issues that affect the subtitling process.

4.1 Technical, textual and linguistic constraints

The technical spatial and temporal constraints of audiovisual programmes relate directly to the format of subtitles.

The most evident problems about subtitles concern space and time. There is no space for long explanations in subtitles. As readability of the text is of primary importance, an ideal subtitle should be a sentence long, with the clauses of which it is constituted placed on separate lines (Díaz Cintas & Ramael, 2007). Furthermore, the length of a subtitle is directly related to its on-air time. It is very important for the text in the subtitles to be balanced with the appropriate reading time setting. If a subtitle is continued over a short change, for example, the viewer may think that it is a new subtitle and re-read it, thus losing precious viewing moments. Moreover, the temporal succession of subtitles is quite different from the linear succession of sentences in a novel: while reading the subtitles, the

viewer cannot move backward or forward to clarify misunderstandings, summarize the basic events or see what will happen next.

Closely linked to the issues of space and time is the problem of presentation. Subtitles can take up 20% of screen space. Hence, it is important that the size of the characters, their position on the screen and technology used for the projection of subtitles make them clear and easily legible.

In subtitling, language transfer operates across two modes, from speech to writing, and from the soundtrack to the written subtitles. This shift of mode creates different processing and cohesion issues at a textual level, that make it difficult to maintain the filmic illusion in the target product. As regards the grammar and the word order, the syntax has to be simple so to make it easy to the viewer to get the meaning of the subtitles. The main and subordinate clauses of a sentence, for example, may be placed in separate lines and syntax may be simplified through a re-ordering of the original sentence. In order to shorten the subtitle lines, redundant elements are usually omitted. However, this omission may generate misunderstanding in the viewer, as redundancy helps participants in a conversation grasp its intended meaning more easily. Characteristics of spontaneous speech, such as slip of tongue, pauses, false starts, unfinished sentences, ungrammatical constructions, etc., are difficult to reproduce in writing. The same goes for dialectal, idiolectal and pronunciation features that contribute to the moulding of screen characters. Certain spoken features may need to be rendered in the subtitles if their function is to develop the plot. But rather than reproducing mistakes in an uneducated character's speech, a subtitler can make use of appropriate, usually simpler, vocabulary in order to indicate education, regional dialect or social class of the character.

The space and time constraints inherent in the subtitling process usually enhance traditional translation challenges, such as grammar and word order, as well as problems related to cross-cultural shifts. With an average of 30% to 40% expansion rate when translating from English into most other European languages, reduction is obviously the most important strategy in subtitling (Georgakopoulou, 2009)

According to Kovačič, there is a three-level hierarchy of discourse elements in subtitling:

- The indispensable elements (that must be translated)
- The partly dispensable elements (that can be condensed)
- The dispensable elements (that can be omitted)

The indispensable elements are all the plot-carrying elements of a film; they carry experiential meaning without which the viewers would not be able to follow the action (Kovacic, 1991).

There are also a number of linguistic elements that many subtitlers would omit even if the spatio-temporal constraints of subtitling does not request such omission, such as repetitions, names in appellative constructions, false starts and ungrammatical constructions, internationally known words, such as ‘yes’, ‘no’, ‘ok’, exclamations, such as ‘oh’, ‘ah’, ‘wow’, etc. Many of these linguistic elements are commonly deleted because they can be recovered from the soundtrack. If they are transcribed or translated, we would have a case of duplication, as the same information would be found both in the subtitles and in the soundtrack (Georgakopoulou, 2009).

4.2 Diamesic variation

Diamesic variations produce some effects on subtitling. Subtitles have particular linguistic features different from the oral source text: on a

theoretical level, subtitles should reflect two different linguistic codes at the same time, the spoken and the written. As a matter of facts, however, the subtitling process tends to flatten the marks of orality to such an extent that it can omit them quite completely.

In order to get a sense of authenticity across to audience, subtitling should negotiate between the two codes. It should be found balance between form, grammatical and syntactic correctness – peculiar of written language – and the flexibility characteristic of the oral language.

It also has to be said that reading a subtitle has a very different effect compared to hearing a spoken dialogue. In the case of obscenity, for example, reading a vulgar, a profane or an obscene word has a really stronger emotional impact than hearing it from the voice of a fictional character. In effect, subtitling tends to dismiss such expressions in the final product, or at least to neutralise, as far as possible, their effect.

Another great difference that arises in the passage from spoken to written language is about the so-called subsegmental aspects of language, i.e. all those acoustic non-verbal elements that contribute to fulfil human communication. This secondary signification code – parallel to the verbal language proper – has its unquestionable importance, as it explains nuances of meaning and supplies interpretation keys that are not explicitly shown in the verbal code. An example of this is the intonation and inflection of voice in real dialogue: prosodic elements of speech have a primary role in fulfilling the correct transfer of meaning, as they add information that can hardly be reached otherwise.

One of the major constraints of subtitling is the omission of paralinguistic elements, to which the subtitler can compensate by the use of punctuation marks. By doing that, the subtitler tries to substitute dialectal

variations, prosodic elements, marks of emphasis and intonation that convey information about the emotional state of the speaker.

Punctuation marks cannot transfer the communicative strength of paralinguistic elements in a small string of written text – which is already limited by questions of time and space. Subtitle is a support text that helps the audience to comprehend what is being said, but it is not the only information channel available in an audiovisual product. Therefore, in order to fully understand a subtitled film it is necessary to blend all the different codes of which it is composed: the reading of subtitles must be associated with the listening of the original soundtrack, focusing the attention on the prosodic elements of speech in the source language (Petillo M. , 2012).

There are numerous constraints in subtitling, and there is no systematic formula to be followed. To decide on the best translation strategy, a detailed analysis of each translation issue has to be made, based on the function and relevance to the plot; the connotation, that is to say, the implied information; the target audience's assumed knowledge of the language and culture of the source language; and the media related constraints.

Reduction is the most important and frequently used strategy in subtitling. Whereas experiential meaning needs to be translated, aspects of interpersonal and textual meaning can be omitted especially when these may be regained directly from the representation or the original soundtrack (Georgakopoulou, 2009).

5. Lip-synchronized dubbing

Lip-synchronized (or lip-sync) dubbing (or simply dubbing) is one of the two dominant forms of film translation, the other being interlingual subtitling.

In the field of audiovisual translation, the term ‘dubbing’ denotes the re-recording of the original voice track in the target language using dubbing actors’ voices. The dubbed dialogue’s aim is to recreate the dynamics of the original, particularly in terms of pace and lip movements (Pérez González, 2011).

Dubbing needs to respect some quality standards that regard:

- An acceptable lip-synchronisation, that is to say the observance of the onscreen actors’ mouth articulation (*lip* or *phonetic synchrony*) and body movements (*kinesic synchrony*), and especially the duration of the original actor’s utterances (*isochrony*).
- Credible and realistic dialogue lines: a key to good dubbing quality is to ensure that the target language sounds realistic, credible, and plausible; i.e., it does not take us away from the storyline.
- Coherence between images and words.
- A loyal translation. The fourth standard is loyalty or fidelity to the source text, understood as fidelity to content, form, function.
- Clear sound quality: dialogues from the original version must never be heard, not even in the case of a specific paralinguistic feature, such as a cough; dialogues are recorded in soundproof studios, so their acoustic quality is extremely good; the volume

of the voices is higher than normal, in order to facilitate greater comprehension.

- Acting: the final standard includes the performance and dramatization of the dialogues: dubbing actors and actresses are required to perform in such a way that they sound neither fake (overacted) nor monotonous (underacted) (Chaume, 2012).

According to Gregory and Carroll, the language of audiovisual texts is “written to be spoken as if not written” (Gregory & Carroll, 1978). The language of audiovisual texts is characterized by a combination of features deriving from both oral and written texts. *Prefabricated orality* is common to most original and dubbed audiovisual programmes based on a script that is to be interpreted as if it had not been written (Baños-Piñero & Chaume, 2009). Dubbing translators must be aware that the original script has been written to convey the impression of spontaneous speech, and that in their translation they must take into account the multiple signifying codes that operate simultaneously in audiovisual texts. Audiovisual translators must therefore be skilled at imitating spontaneous-sounding conversation in the target language (Chaume, 2012).

5.1 The constraints of dubbing and lip synchronisation

One important issue to be considered in lip-synchronised dubbing is the loss of authenticity. The voice of a character constitutes an essential part of his or her personality, and it is closely linked to facial expressions, gesture and body language. Therefore, authenticity is necessarily sacrificed when a character’s voice is substituted by the voice of somebody else.

When such linguistic replacement takes place, it is not only authenticity that is sacrificed but, in addition, credibility, which may be

particularly problematic in news and current-affairs programmes when voice-over is used. Voices reflect the mood and atmosphere of a situation. The effect of a persuasive speech during a presidential or parliamentary election campaign is probably significantly reduced in a voice-over. Since many politicians take advantage of their voices, sound is an important part of their public image.

Another factor that should be considered is the cost: dubbing is a lot more expensive than subtitling.

Furthermore, the dubbing process takes normally considerable time. In the case of news bulletins, for example, it is obviously not possible to dub interviewees (Tveit, 2009). This aspect is turning into a problem also in the film industry as the phenomenon of amateur subtitling on the Internet (the so called ‘fansub’) has been raised. Film or more usually TV series aficionados use to create subtitles for their favourite programmes and put them on the Internet in order to make them available for other fans. This is, of course, much faster than dubbing; as well as illegal.

5.2 Translating songs

As dialogues (linguistic code) and subsegmental features of speech (paralinguistic code) are important sources of meaning to help audience understanding the on-screen characters’ intentions, ideology and feelings, music too can convey substantial meaning and may be significant to the plot.

Songs in films or cartoons usually require an adaptation in the translation that matches the pace of the music. When a translator comes across a song, he or she has to decide whether or not to translate it. This decision depends on a series of factors regarding habits and culture of the target country: some dubbing countries are reluctant to translate songs and

generally leave them in the original version, maybe subtitling them. Translating songs also depend on the audiovisual genre: commercials use songs that are often subtitled in target languages, musicals are also often subtitled, and songs in the opening sequences of cartoons are translated or dubbed. However, the key factor in deciding whether a song should be translated or not is the function in the film: when the lyrics refer to the plot, the song should be translated in order to give the target audience the same access to the meaning of the lyrics as the original audience has.

In the case in which dubbing is chosen, particular attention must be paid to rhyme. Rhyme can reinforce meaning, invoke other texts (intertextuality), aid the text's flow and order, provide pleasure, etc. rhyme is also one of the most powerful resources to help successful memorization of a poem or song. The important issue here is not necessarily to copy the exact original rhyme pattern, but to invent a new rhyme for the target version, which may differ from the original (Chaume, 2012).

5.3 Translating language variation

Although language variation is not exclusive to audiovisual translation but is found in most genres and text types, it is more visible in oral discourse than in written discourses in literary texts, for example.

Here I will analyse stylistic and dialectal variation.

Style is the manner of speaking or writing, and is always intentional, since each speaker decides when to use an ornate style, a comic style, a monotonous style, etc. and why. Therefore, a particular style is constituted by certain linguistic and textual features. Ideally, dubbing translators are expected to respect and convey the way on-screen characters speak, their intentional choice of words, grammatical structures and literary resources (Chaume, 2012).

The term dialect is used in two distinct ways: one usage – the more common among linguistics – refers to a specific form of a language that is spoken by a particular group of the language's speakers (Hornby, 2005). The term is applied most often to regional speech patterns, but a dialect may also be defined by other factors, such as social class, or the historical period (Merriam-Webster). The other usage refers to a language that is socially subordinated to a regional or national standard language, often historically cognate to the standard, but not derived from it (Maiden & Parry, 1997).

A dialect is distinguished by its vocabulary, grammar, and pronunciation. Where a distinction can be made only in terms of pronunciation, the term *accent* is appropriate, rather than *dialect* (Merriam-Webster).

Other speech varieties include: jargons, which are characterised by differences in vocabulary; slang; pidgins.

The particular speech patterns used by an individual are called an idiolect.

Diatopic variation, that is to say the different forms of language according to geographical variation, constitutes geographical dialects. In principle, when a film is shot entirely in one dialect it is usually translated into standard language in the target culture. Since there is no language variation within the film, and language is consistent throughout, no language variation is shown in the translation. A different situation arises when two dialects of the same language are used in the same film. Most authors agree that dialects have no equivalents in other languages, and that equating the dialect of a source language in the source film to another dialect from the target language in the target version can be politically incorrect; but it is also apparent that translating a source language dialect

with the standard target language variety inevitably loses the particular effect evoked by the dialect in the original film.

Translating accents and pronunciation is another common difficulty in films. Again, the translator has to find out whether all the characters speak with an accent (and whether it is the same one), or only some of them do so. In the former case, translators tend to translate the film into the standard target language, since no variation is shown in the original. In the latter case, there are three possibilities: i) to imitate the same accent in the dubbing, since foreign characters will also have an accent when they speak the target language; ii) when the accent is that of the target language, translators may substitute it for another accent; or iii) to leave it in the standard target language, thus losing the connotations of the foreign accent in the original film (Chaume, 2012).

An interesting example of this is a scene from Tarantino's film *Inglourious Basterds*, in which Aldo Raine (Brad Pitt), Donnie Donowitz (Eli Roth) and Archie Hicox (Michael Fassbender) pretend to be Italians, while talking with the Colonel Hans Landa (Christoph Waltz). In the original soundtrack, Pitt, Roth and Fassbender *actually* pretend to speak Italian, thus gaining a unique comic effect, especially compared with the perfect Italian spoken by Landa/Waltz. In the Italian dubbed version, of course, this effect would be lost, as all characters usually speak Italian. For this reason, dubbing translators tried to recover the comic effect by making them pretend to be Sicilians, thus speaking an awkward dialect. This choice made the scene sound strange anyway, as everybody can speak Italian perfectly, except from that particular situation (Tarantino, 2009).

Temporal dialects show language variation through time and linguistic fashions from one period or another. Translators of historical text encounter serious problems when dealing with heritage films, or literary films,

involving morphological, syntactic or lexical features from an early period. Generally speaking, translators have three options or strategies to fall back on when dealing with historical films: i) look for literary translation; ii) render a touch of the literary style of the source text in the translation by means of syntactic and lexical embellishments; iii) compensation, that involves the use of archaic expressions or obsolete lexical terms (Chaume, 2012).

Social dialects or *sociolects* reflect social stratification in a particular linguistic community and are associated with socio-economic status (Wales, 1989). The challenge for the translator is to understand the political and ideological connotations of a particular social dialect. As already mentioned, the first step is to detect the dialectal feature and its function in the source text, and then to assess whether this feature or features are used throughout the film or audiovisual text, or only by particular characters in the film, and use one strategy or another accordingly.

Idiolects are the speech habits of an individual in a speech community, as distinct from those of a group of people (Wales, 1989); i.e. the set of favourite expressions, different pronunciations of particular words as well as the tendency to over-use particular syntactic structures (Hatim & Mason, 1990). Idiolects are a melting pot of all the other user-related varieties: they share features of geographical, temporal, social and standard/non-standard dialects, together with idiosyncratic features.

The translator could choose to construct a new idiolect in the target language, by taking geographical, temporal and social linguistic features that are coherent with the on-screen character and repeat these features in the character's target language dialogue lines throughout the film, so that the audience can eventually deduce that these features are part of his personality. These features do not have to mirror those of the source text,

since each language will have its own resources to convey humour, linguistic defects, level of education, or whatever the function of idiolect may be (García de Toro, 2009).

6. Dubbing or subtitling?

The AVT literature has established a rather simplistic distinction between dubbing and subtitling countries. The European subbing map is usually divided into four sections:

- i) Dubbing countries: Austria, France, Germany, Hungary, Italy, Czech Republic, Slovakia, Spain, Turkey, and Ukraine
- ii) Subtitling countries: Albania, Croatia, Cyprus, Denmark, Finland, Greece, Iceland, Ireland, the Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, Romania, Serbia, Slovenia, Sweden, United Kingdom
- iii) Voice-over countries: Poland, Russia, Bulgaria, Latvia, and Lithuania
- iv) Dubbing and subtitling countries: Belgium (dubbing in Wallonia and subtitling in Flanders), Bulgaria (TV series are dubbed, whereas films are usually subtitled, and some other programmes are voiced-over)

However, there are some exceptions: cartoons, for example, especially those for young children, are dubbed all over the world. In so-called dubbing countries, many cinema houses show subtitled films on a daily basis; in many large cities, the same film can be seen in both its subtitled and dubbed version. In Italy and other dubbing countries, an increasing number of programmes are being voiced-over, in order to significantly reduce the high costs involved in dubbing, especially for minor TV channels. In so-called voice-over countries, times are also

changing: whereas Russia seems to be turning to dubbing, Poland is giving way to subtitling. The advent of DVD has also notably changed this landscape: DVDs and Blu-rays offer audiences the possibility to choose how they watch a film. Options include dubbed and/or subtitled versions. Digital broadcasting also enables the spectator to choose from various linguistic options in both audio and subtitling menus. Thus, the distinction between dubbing and subtitling countries has become blurred (Chaume, 2012).

I already analysed the constraints of both subtitling and dubbing. However, stating that a method is better than the other is quite a hard task, which generally depends on the specific aims of each individual audiovisual product and the expectations of the audience about that product. For instance, in a school setting where foreign languages are taught, subtitling may be the right choice, as it allows students to listen to the original soundtrack while reading the translation in their native language, thus developing comprehension skills, vocabulary and pronunciation. On the other hand, watching a movie while being busy reading the subtitles could be difficult, annoying and distracting.

Despite the historically strong polarisation between advocates and detractors of the two different dominant forms of audiovisual translation, nowadays it is generally accepted that different translation approaches make their own individual demands while remaining equally acceptable. The choice of one method in preference to another will simply depend on factors such as habit and custom, financial constraints, programme genre, distribution format and audience profile – to mention just a few (Díaz Cintas & Anderman, 2009).

Chapter 3 - Case study: The Hobbit

1. J.R.R.Tolkien: biography

With the production of Peter Jackson's kolossal, *The Lord of the Rings* trilogy, the name of Tolkien became more and more famous. Despite the fame, the figure of the author of *The Hobbit* (1957), *The Lord of the Rings* (1954/55) and *The Silmarillion* (1977) is still not very well known to the general public, except from aficionados and fans of his novels and works.

John Ronald Reuel Tolkien was born on the 3rd of January of 1892 in Bloemfontein, South Africa, first born of Arthur Reuel Tolkien and his wife, Mabel Suffield. In 1895 Mabel went back to England with Ronald and his brother Hilary. Arthur Tolkien never joined them, as he died in the end of the same year.

In the region of Birmingham, Ronald lived together with his grandparents, from which he learned the love for his native country, which had a great impact on his later works.

Mabel Tolkien taught herself to her children: at the age of four, Ronald was able to read and write; and he wrote his first short story about a "great green dragon" at the age of seven (Carpenter, 2000). In his letter to W.H. Auden, Tolkien narrates his first steps in the field of literature: he talks about his first short story about the dragon. He said he remembered nothing except a philological fact: Tolkien's main reviewer was his mother who said nothing about the dragon, but pointed out that he could not say "a

green great dragon”, but had to say “a great green dragon”. At the time when he was writing that letter, he continued to wonder why (Carpenter & Tolkien, 1981).

In 1900 Mabel converted to Catholicism, despite the vehement protests by her family, which stopped all financial assistance to her. She died in 1904, when Ronald was 12. From his mother, he took a strong faith in Catholicism. Ronald and his brother were in the care of Fr. Francis Morgan. The two attended King Edward’s School in Birmingham, where in 1910 Tolkien met Edith Bratt, who later became his wife.

In 1911 Tolkien attended Exeter College in Oxford, where he got interested in Greek classics, and later in philology and foreign language, especially Finnish. In the same period, he started the creation of a fictional language, that he later called Quenya or Elfish.

Tolkien graduated in English language and literature in July 1915: he studied the Midland’s dialect, Middle English and Icelandic mythology.

Ronald married Edith Bratt in March 1916, and soon after he joined up the army and was sent to France. On the 27th of October, Tolkien came down with trench fever, and was invalided to England on 8th of November. During the recovery, he wrote *The fall of Gondolin*, first narrative of the *Book of lost tales*, later printed with the name of *The Silmarillon*.

In 1925 he returned to Oxford as Rawlinson and Bosworth Professor of Anglo-Saxon. In the same period he wrote *The Hobbit*, at the beginning only as a tale for his children, than got into print in 1937 for the Allen & Unwin. Due to the great success of the novel, the publisher pushed for a sequel, which saw the light only in 1952 with the name of *The Lord of the Rings*. Tolkien wanted to publish it together with *The Silmarillon*, but it was refused. It remained unfinished and was published posthumous in 1977.

Tolkien's wife died in 1971. He died two years after, on 2 September 1973 (Carpenter, 2000).

2. Tolkien mythology and the creation of *The Hobbit*

Tolkien mythology is the system of stories created by Tolkien about an invented world, the Middle-Earth. Actually, Tolkien claimed that the Middle-Earth tales are not completely fictional, but rather an ancient history of the Earth, particularly of Europe, from several thousand years before the modern era. The world Middle-Earth is actually supposed to be a fictional period in our Earth's own past 6000 to 7000 years ago (Carpenter & Tolkien, 1981).

Middle-Earth mythology has its roots in Tolkien's interest in the mythology and linguistics of Northern Europe, specifically that of the Germanic peoples, and Finnish mythology.

Tolkien started to write children stories in 1920, with *The Father Christmas letters* (published posthumous in 1976), a series of letters addressed to his sons, seemingly written by Father Christmas, telling stories about the North Pole, elves, gnomes, and polar bears.

Tolkien wrote a lot of stories for his children, and in the same period he started to write *The Hobbit* (Carpenter, 2000).

The Hobbit is the condensation of all the peculiar traits of Tolkien's literature so far – his poetics (there are sixteen poetries in the novel, plus eight riddles), his figurative art, people and places from his fantastic mythology, and the accessible style of children stories, together with a large use of Tolkien's culture about Medieval languages and literatures. Tolkien himself acknowledged that *The Hobbit* derived from epics, mythology and fantastic stories already “assimilated previously” (Carpenter & Tolkien, 1981). Tolkien introduced or mentioned characters and places

that figured prominently in his legendarium (the term used by Tolkien himself to refer to all of his writings about the Middle-Earth), specifically Elrond and Gondolin, along with elements from Germanic legend. But the decision that the events of *The Hobbit and The Lord of the Rings* could belong to the same universe as *The Silmarillion* was made only after his initial success and the request by his publisher for a sequel (Carpenter & Tolkien, 1981).

Although a fairy tale, the book is both complex and sophisticated: it contains many names and words derived from Norse mythology, and central plot elements from the *Beowulf* epic, it makes use of Anglo-Saxon runes, information on calendars and moon phases, and detailed geographical descriptions that fit well with the accompanying maps; even if the only influence Tolkien recognized was that of his own legends in *The Silmarillion*.

Tolkien often reminded how he started the story. It was a hot summer afternoon, and he was correcting some English literature exams. “A candidate pityingly left a blank page, which is the best thing that could happen to an examiner, and I wrote on that page: ‘in a hole in the ground there lived a Hobbit’. Names always give birth to a story in my mind: eventually I thought I had to discover how hobbits were made” (Tolkien, 2012).

Christopher Tolkien, his third son, remembered that in a Christmas letter of 1937, he suggested that *The Hobbit* could be a good Christmas present. In the letter, he wrote that Tolkien wrote the story years before, and that he read it to him and his brothers during the winter of 1930/1931; but the last chapters were not finished yet, and that Tolkien wrote the whole story in 1936 (Carpenter & Tolkien, 1981). The book was published on September 21st.

3. Peter Jackson's adaptation

The Hobbit: an unexpected journey is the first film of the movie trilogy *The Hobbit*, released on December 2012 and directed by Peter Jackson, who already directed the movie trilogy of *The Lord of the Rings* (released between 2001 and 2003).

The title refers to the first chapter of Tolkien's novel, *An unexpected party*.

3.1 What has remained the same

The director and writers of the motion picture faced some significant challenges in bringing Tolkien's world to the big screen; challenges that Jackson already faced in adapting *The Lord of the Rings*.

Some things just remained the same as in the novel. An example is Bilbo Baggins' house, known as Bag End. That is how Tolkien described it in the novel:

“In a hole in the ground there lived a hobbit. Not a nasty, dirty, wet hole, filled with the ends of worms and a oozy smell, nor yet a dry, bare, sandy hole with nothing in it to sit down on or to eat: it was a hobbit-hole, and that means comfort.

It had a perfectly round door like a porthole, painted green, with a shiny yellow brass knob in the exact middle. The door opened on to a tube shaped hall like a tunnel: a very comfortable tunnel without smoke, with panelled walls, and floors tiled and carpeted, provided with polished chairs, and lots and lots of pegs for hats and coats – the hobbit was fond of visitors. [...] No going upstairs for the hobbit: bedrooms, bathrooms, cellars, pantries (lots of these), wardrobes (he had whole rooms devoted to clothes), kitchens, dining rooms, all were on the same floor, and indeed on the same passage. The best rooms were all on the left-hand side (going in), for these were the only ones to have windows, deep-set round windows looking over his garden, and meadows beyond, sloping down to the river.” (Tolkien, 1937, p. 3)

That is how Peter Jackson portrayed Baggins house:



Illustration 1: Baggins house and Hobbiville

Peter Jackson already represented Bag End and Hobbiville in *The Lord of the Rings*, and was faithful to the novel.

Also in the representation of the hobbits, Jackson was very faithful to Tolkien's description:

“What is a hobbit? I suppose hobbits need some description nowadays, since they have become rare and shy of the Big People, as they call us. They are (or were) a little people, about half our height, and smaller than the bearded Dwarves. Hobbits have no beards. [...] They are inclined to be fat in the stomach; they dress in bright



Illustration 2: Bilbo Baggins

colours (chiefly green and yellow); wear no shoes, because their feet grow natural leathery soles and thick warm brown hair like the stuff on their heads (which is curly); have long clever brown fingers, good-natured faces, and laugh deep fruity laughs.” (Tolkien, 1937, p. 4)

Another character that is faithfully represented in *An unexpected journey* is Gandalf. Gandalf, interpreted by Sir Ian McKellen, already appeared in *The Lord of the Rings* movies, and he looks the same in the first *Hobbit* film, with a little difference: the silver scarf. It is a really important detail, which pleased that part of audience that read the book and expected to see Gandalf as he was described in it.

3.2 What has changed

The really interesting thing about *The Hobbit* adaptation is to notice what Peter Jackson and the screenwriter Philippa Boyens changed, and how.

To transpose Tolkien’s narrative into screen is not an easy task. *The Hobbit* may seem a quite simple children story, but there is a full world behind it. An entirely original world generated by the author’s mind forms the background of a story which involves different intelligent races (elves, dwarves, hobbits, and men), their many languages and dialects, a highly developed historical narrative, and a carefully detailed geography of the world that had, itself, changed significantly over time. The result of all this is a level of complexity that is very difficult to transpose in a screenplay. The difficulties the writers faced were innumerable, and many compromises to the story were required to successfully adapt it to the medium of film.

One of the major difficulties was to split a quite short story into three films. *The Hobbit* is a 351 pages book, while *The Lord of the Rings* is a

trilogy of more than 1200 pages. It is easy to see that there is an enormous difference between the two, and while the adaptation of *The Lord of the Rings* was criticized for having omitted many significant parts of the novel, in order to transpose *The Hobbit* into three films it was necessary to add some elements to the story; elements which were taken from other Tolkien's works, primarily *The Silmarillion* and *The Lord of the Rings*.

One of these additions is the presence of Radagast (Sylvester McCoy). Radagast appears in the first *Hobbit* film, although none of the scenes involving Radagast in the film were ever mentioned in any of Tolkien's works; they are original to the movie. In the book, Radagast is mentioned only once in passing, as Gandalf's cousin (Tolkien, 1937, p. 139). Furthermore, Radagast investigates the darkness of Mirkwood, and at Dol Guldur encounters the Necromancer and the Witch-king of Angmar, with whom he briefly duels and from whom he takes the Morgul Blade. In contrast, Tolkien never wrote of any such incident.

Azog and the orcs army is another arbitrary addition in the film. Here, Azog has survived the war of the dwarves and orcs in which he was wounded by Thorin Oakenshield and hunts him and his followers. In contrast, in Tolkien's writings Azog was beheaded by Thorin's cousin Dàin Ironfoot in the battle of Azalnulbizar well before the events of *The Hobbit* (Tolkien, *The Lord of the Rings*, 1993, p. 1282-1285).

Another difference between the film and the novel is the brief appearance of Elijah Wood as Frodo Baggins at the beginning of the movie, whereas this character does not appear in the book. However, his appearance is only a cameo as the first scene refers to the beginning of *The fellowship of the Ring* (Jackson, *The Fellowship of the Ring*, 2001).

A significant change in the film is the appearance of the dwarves: in the novel, they have coloured beards and hoods. In the film they do not

own these peculiar characteristics at all. Even though this omission led to discontent among the fans of the novel, it is easy to see the reason why Peter Jackson and Philippa Boyens took this decision. Some dwarves appeared in *The Lord of the Rings* films. It has to be considered that the literary trilogy came after *The Hobbit* novel, and that Tolkien changed his mind about the appearance of some races, including dwarves. However, *The Lord of the Rings* movies came first, and Jackson and Boyens had to respect the physical features that the dwarves had in that first adaptation, in order not to confuse that part of audience that did not read the book, but only watched the films instead.



Illustration 3: the dwarves

The same thing happens with elves. In the novel, they are little merry creatures, inspired to the Northern European mythology, who use to sing all the time, while in the film they do not sing a single song, and have a more serious appearance. Here, again, the reason is the same as for the dwarves: the audience was already familiar with a figure of elves that would have hindered with a different representation, as much as faithful to the novel.

4. Audiovisual translation into Italian

As I already noticed, *The Hobbit* is a more complex work than it seems: the Middle-Earth is populated by different kinds of races: elves, dwarves, hobbits, men, orcs... and all of them have their particular culture and language or dialect. Tolkien rendered the language of humans in

English, of course, and the inflections or dialects of particular races or characters in different varieties of English. How did the dubbing translators convey these linguistic features in Italian? I will briefly analyse some peculiar characters and their dialects, and some specific scenes from the film.

4.1 The hobbits

It is fair to start from the little protagonists of this story: the hobbits.

Roisin Carty, supervising dialect coach for *The Hobbit: an unexpected journey*, said that the accent of hobbits had to sound familiar without being too recognizable in order not to distract the audience. The hobbits speak in the Gloucestershire dialect. It was the accent chosen by Andrew Jack, supervising dialect coach for *The Lord of the Rings*, and it remained the same in *The Hobbit*. They choose it because it was easy to learn and to imitate, easy to understand and sounded rustic and timeless. The linguistic component is a really important one, in order to make the Middle-Earth seem like a real place. It is important not to give the audience any contact with his or her everyday life, thus the accents have to be unrecognizable, both from a historical and from a geographical point of view.

For Martin Freeman, interpreter of Bilbo Baggins, it was not difficult to play it right, as it was similar to his natural accent (Falconer, 2013).

Furthermore, Bilbo has a nervous speech and sometimes he stutters.

In the Italian translation of *The Hobbit: an unexpected journey* (whose title was literally translated as *Lo Hobbit: un viaggio inaspettato*), this peculiarity was difficult to render, as Italian accents are easily recognizable and they would have an alienating effect on the audience. Instead Bilbo's nervous speech and his stutter were kept.

4.2 The dwarves

“Tolkien had such a great passion for fictional languages that he created the Middle-Earth as a medium to express them. As a consequence, we feel the strong desire to honour him by paying the most careful attention to the vocal intensity of the films.”

(Leith McPherson, Dialect coach for *The Hobbit: an unexpected journey*)

The vocal features and the linguistic choices of a character are decided by the direction, but then the character himself develops those characteristics in the film. For some characters, the linguistic features were already decided, as they already appeared in *The Lord of the Rings* or they had family connections with some character of that film, which suggested what kind of accent they should have. At the same time, the actors have their natural speech, thus sometimes they gave suggestions about the accent that his character should have.

There are thirteen dwarves in *The Hobbit*, each one with his own physical and linguistic features.

Unless they speak in Khuzdul, the secret language of dwarves, they express themselves in human beings' language, that is to say, in the original version of the film, English. Dwarves are a nomadic people of merchants, and they trade with many different races of the Middle-Earth. Consequently, it is easy for them to learn different languages and dialects from where they work and live.

The supervising dialect coach, Roisin Carty, decided to divide the dwarves into family groups, so that a group of three or four dwarves shared the same dialect or accent. However, the most important thing was to keep the dialogues clear and understandable. Especially for the American audience, a strong Scottish or Irish accent could have sounded strange and hard to understand, as they are not used to hear it. It would have been

senseless to adopt an accent so strong that made it difficult to understand what characters were saying, thus distracting the audience from the plot.

Most of the accents were chosen between different English regional varieties. Gloin, Oin, Balin and Dwalin, for example, speak in a Scottish accent; while Bifur, Bofur and Bombur show an Irish inflection. Each accent reveals to the British audience something about the character that uses it: his social rank, his provenance, and his family bonds (Falconer, 2013). In audiovisual translation, it is necessary to recognize what a particular accent says about a particular character, and find a way to convey the same features in the target language.

The most remarkable example is Thorin Oakenshield, leader of the whole group. The actor Richard Armitage, interpreter of Thorin, is from Northern England, so he has a strong Northern accent. The dialect coach thought that that dialect was particularly appropriate to represent the dwarvish royal dynasty: throughout English history, royal families all came from the North, and they spoke with a regional accent. At the same time, the features of Armitage's accent fitted well with the characteristics of Thorin: nobility, strength, solidity, honour, industriousness. Therefore, Armitage kept his accent while acting, but he had to make it less emphasized in order not to distract the audience from the imaginary setting of the film. Furthermore, Armitage had to teach Dean O'Gorman and Aidan Turner his accent, as the characters they interpret, Fili and Kili, are Thorin's cousins (Falconer, 2013).

In the Italian dubbed version of the film, Thorin does not have a strong accent, but, as in the original soundtrack, he has a profound and authoritative voice. Thorin's voice is indeed the most recognizable one, and easily identifies him as the leader of the fellowship. Kili and Fili share Thorin's tone of voice, but they sound younger.

In the subtitled version, the particular tone of Thorin's voice cannot be reproduced in written strings, as his specific accent. Of course, subtitles give the viewer the chance to listen to the original soundtrack, thus hearing Armitage's original voice. Anyway, an Italian spectator could neither recognize Thorin's accent nor associate it with the regal features that could be suggested by it to an English viewer.

4.2.1 *Song of the Misty Mountains*

There are two songs performed by Thorin and his company in the first chapter of Tolkien's novel. The second one is known as *Song of the Misty Mountains*, and its adaptation is the most famous of the whole film.

The song helps to explain the backstory of Thorin and his fellowship.

Often referred to by fans as simply "The dwarves' song", it appears on pages 18-19 of *The Hobbit* (Tolkien, 1937), and it is a lot longer in the novel than in the film. I will quote only the parts of Tolkien's version that were taken for the filmic adaptation in order to compare them. The differences between the original and the filmic version of the song are highlighted in *italics*.

The song was adapted for the film by Neil Finn.

Tolkien's version

Far over the misty mountains cold
In dungeons deep and caverns old
We must away ere break of day
To seek the pale enchanted gold.

[...]

The pines were roaring on the height,
The winds were moaning in the night.
The fire was red, it flaming spread;
The trees like torches blazed with light.

Film version

Far over the misty mountains cold
In dungeons deep and caverns old
We must away ere break of day
To find our long forgotten gold.

The pines were roaring on the height,
The winds were moaning in the night.
The fire was red, it flaming spread;
The trees like torches blazed with light.

As it is easy to see, the filmic adaptation of the lyrics is very faithful to the original version written by Tolkien; with only one exception: *To seek the pale enchanted gold / To find our long forgotten gold*.

Here are the original film version, the Italian literal translation and the Italian dubbing translation:

Film version	Italian (novel)	Italian (Film)
Far over the misty mountains cold	Lontan sui monti fumidi e gelati	Lontano su nebbiosi monti gelati,
In dungeons deep and caverns old	In antri fondi, oscuri e desolati	In antri oscuri e desolati
We must away ere break of day	Prima che sorga il sol dobbiam andare	Partir dobbiamo, l'alba scordiamo
To find our long forgotten gold.	I pallidi a cercar ori incantati.	Per ritrovare gli ori incantati.
The pines were roaring on the height,	I pini sulle alture eran ruggenti,	Ruggenti pini sulle vette,
The winds were moaning in the night.	Alti gemean nella notte i venti.	Dei venti il pianto nella notte.
The fire was red, it flaming spread;	Il rosso fuoco si spargeva parimenti,	Il fuoco ardeva, fiamme spargeva,
The trees like torches blazed with light.	Gli alberi come torce erano splendenti.	Alberi accesi, torce di luce.

The original film version reflects the rhyme scheme used by Tolkien: AABA CCDC, while the Italian translation for the novel is: AABA CCCC. The Italian dubbing translators had to take into account these two aspects: the rhyme scheme and the rhythm imposed by the filmic original adaptation. As a result, the rhyme scheme of the dubbed version is: AABA CCDE. The rhyme scheme of the original was not respected in the second

stanza. In order to avoid a cacophonous effect, the translator inserted an internal rhyme in lines 3 and 7.

In order to respect the rhythm, the audiovisual translation is quite different from both the novel translation and the English original. The verses are shorter in order to fit the pace, and some elements of the novel's Italian version are kept, even to the detriment of fidelity to the English version: *dungeons deep and caverns old / antri... oscuri e desolati; forgotten gold / ori incantati*.

In some Italian cinemas a version of the film has been screened where the song was subtitled, in order to let the audience listen to the original voices of the actors singing. The Italian translation for the subtitled version is again different:

Lontano
Sulle montagne brumose e gelate
In antri profondi
E caverne desolate
Dobbiamo andare
Prima che cominci a rischiarare
L'oro
Da tempo obliato a cercare
I pini sulle alture
Erano ruggenti
Alti nella notte
Gemevano
I venti
Rosso era il fuoco
E spargeva le sue fiamme
Gli alberi come torce
Eran splendenti.

This translation is more literal than the one realized for the dubbed version, and does not take the pace into account. In the second stanza it recalls the novel's version: *I pini sulle alture eran ruggenti; Alti nella notte gemevano i venti / Alti gemean nella notte I venti; Gli alberi come torce erano splendenti.*

4.3 The trolls

It is peculiar that the only characters who have a defined inflection in *The Hobbit* novel are the trolls. Tolkien's purpose was to obtain a comic effect, and in order to do that he chose the Cockney from London. It is, of course, not a modern Cockney: it is an ancient one, full of colour, energy and folklore (Falconer, 2013).

Translating Cockney is not an easy task. One solution could be the use of rhyming to translate the particular rhythm of Cockney slang; or to use other dialects in the target language (Ranzato, 2010).

In the audiovisual translation of *The Hobbit: an unexpected journey*, the literal translation comes to the aid of the dubbing translators:

English novel

"Mutton yesterday, mutton today, and blimey, if it don't look like mutton again tomorrer"

Italian novel

"Montone ieri, montone oggi e che mi caschi un occhio in mano se non c'avremo montone pure domani"

The speech impediment "*tomorrer*" is reported neither in the Italian literal translation nor in the audiovisual one, as this dialogue line shows.

In the dubbed Italian version, the trolls speak in an ungrammatical and rude way:

English version

“I hope yore gonna gut these nags”

“I’m starving! Are we ‘aving horse tonight or what?”

“Shut your cakehole. You’ll eat what I give ya”

Italian dubbed version

“Spero che li sbudelli bene ‘sti ronzini”

“Crepo di fame! Mangiamo cavallo stasera o no?”

“Chiudi quel buco dentato, mangerai quello che ti dò”

Furthermore, the comic effect is achieved thanks to the different voices of the trolls, which are particularly exaggerated in the Italian version: William (Guglielmo in the Italian translation) is the leader of the group, and has a deep and authoritative voice. Tom (Maso in Italian) is the youngest and the smallest, hence he is weak for a troll. He is the comic element of the group, and this feature is particularly underlined by his voice: piercing and nasal. Bert (Berto in Italian) is the ‘chef’ of the group, and he is obsessed with cooking. His voice is not particularly different from William’s. The interesting thing about Berto is that he lost an eye: maybe this is the reason why “blimey” has been translated in Italian “mi caschi un occhio” rather than simply “accidenti / cribbio”.

4.4 Gollum

Gollum is the most peculiar character of *The Hobbit*. He is afflicted with dual personality, and the conflict between Gollum – the evil and dark side of his personality – and Sméagol – the young and innocent part – is clearly shown in his voice. Actually, Tolkien invented Sméagol only in *The Lord of the Rings*. This means that in *The Hobbit*, Gollum was simply an evil and scary creature. Only years after he is exposed to an in-depth psychological analysis that made Sméagol and his background arise.

In *The Lord of the Rings* films, Gollum was deeply characterised with his psychological disorder, and his schizophrenia was shown in the form of

a dialogue between the two opposed parts of his personality. Andy Serkis, director of the second part of the film and interpreter of Gollum, stated that he did not want to lose this characterisation, as the audience was already familiar with the character and the way he was represented in the trilogy, so he represented Gollum as he was described in *The Lord of the Rings*, even if this choice was not faithful to Tolkien's idea in *The Hobbit* (Falconer, 2013).

Tolkien always described in details how his characters spoke. Gollum talks to himself using different voices in order to distinguish Gollum from Sméagol: Gollum has a crackly and hissing voice, and he makes horrible noises with his throat, while Sméagol speaks politely with a childlike and sweet voice.

This contrast is reflected in the dubbed version of the film: Francesco Vairano, voice-actor and dubbing director for *Lo Hobbit: un viaggio inaspettato*, said in an interview that he encountered some difficulties in dubbing Gollum as he is said to drawl, especially when he pronounces the word "precious" – that is how he refers to himself or to the Ring (Vairano, 2012). Indeed, in the book, his pronunciation is represented in the following way:

English novel

"Bless us and splash us, my precioussss!"

"What iss he, my precious?"

Italian novel

"Benedici e aspergici, mio tessoro!"

"Cosa sssarà, mio tessoro?"

Again, here the literal translation comes to the aid of the dubbing translators: the translation *precious* / *tesoro* could not be changed, so Vairano kept it and tried to pronounce "tesoro" as it was suggested by Tolkien. Of course, being the "s" in the middle of the word, it could not be

so long as in the English version “precioussss”; but Vairano’s interpretation was very successful, and it became very popular since *The Lord of the Rings* films.

In the subtitled version, the novel’s translation is respected, as the pronunciation of “tesoro” is reported as “tessoro”, but this one is the only case: all the other words are written normally.

Of course, the psychological contrast between Gollum and Sméagol is impossible to reflect in written subtitles. Even if the original soundtrack is available to the audience, it may be difficult to immediately understand that the same character is talking, as Gollum is not always on screen when he is speaking, and the names of the characters are not shown in the written subtitles. The “*Riddles in the dark*” scene is the one in which the war between Gollum and Sméagol starts, but this conflict cannot emerge from the subtitles.

Conclusion

The aim of this work is to analyse the way Tolkien's novel *The Hobbit* has been transposed onto the screen, and how Peter Jackson's adaptation has been translated into Italian.

Critics were divided in evaluating Jackson's adaptation. The film holds a 65% positive rate on *Rotten Tomatoes* (www.rottentomatoes.com); while on the review site *Metacritic*, the film has a score of 58 out of 100, indicating "mixed or average reviews" (www.metacritic.com). The main contention of debate was regarding the film's length and whether or not the film matched the level of expectation built from *The Lord of the Rings* film trilogy, while the film's visual style, special effects, music score and cast were praised.

Robbie Collin of *The Telegraph* said in a 2-star review "As a lover of cinema, Jackson's film bored me rigid; as a lover of Tolkien, it broke my heart". He felt the film was "so stuffed with extraneous faff and flummery that it often barely feels like Tolkien at all – more a dire, fan-written internet tribute." (Collin, 2012). Christopher Orr said in his review: "it frequently seems as though Jackson was less interested in making *The Hobbit* than in remaking his own fabulously successful *Lord of the Rings* series. A meeting with the elf lord Elrond (Hugo Weaving) is expanded to include *Rings* veterans Galadriel (Cate Blanchett) and Saruman (Christopher Lee) in order that all may discuss the dark tidings sweeping the land, including the discovery of an evil relic: a "Morgul-blade" forged for the Witch-King of Angmar. When Gandalf explains, "There is something at work beyond the evil of Smaug, something much more powerful", it's hard to shake the suspicion that Jackson is essentially cross-

promoting his earlier films. Once again, Gandalf will have a moth deliver a message to the Great Eagles (something he didn't do in *any* of the Tolkien books), and once again Orcish warg riders will blanket the plains. And while there may be no Balrog this time out, there is an awfully similar climactic confrontation on a narrow subterranean bridge. The irony of all this recycling is that Tolkien's *Lord of the Rings* was so rich an epic that Jackson could pick and choose what to keep and what to leave out: no Tom Bombadil, for instance, and no Radagast the Brown. Stretching *The Hobbit* out to eight or nine or 10 cinematic hours, by contrast, requires not concision but almost constant augmentation. So Radagast, omitted from Jackson's *Rings* trilogy, is awkwardly given a principal role in his *Hobbit*.” (Orr, 2012).

On the other side, Dan Jolin wrote in a 4-star review on the *Empire*: “The Hobbit is a good story. And embellishment, controversially for some, has been the order of Peter Jackson, Fran Walsh, Philippa Boyens and Guillermo Del Toro’s adaptation — both narratively (*An Unexpected Journey* is now a trilogy opener rather than part one of two) and visually. [...] To begin with the first form of embellishment is to immediately address the concern that Jackson and co.’s *Hobbit* may be a painful inflation of a slim, bedtime storybook, as opposed to *The Lord Of The Rings*’ leaner interpretation of a vast fantasy-historical epic. Team Jackson looks outside the novel’s narrative (which, while quicker than *Rings*, is still rich in detail and packed with incident) to the Tolkienverse yonder, and unashamedly treats *The Hobbit* as a prequel in which the return of Sauron The Deceiver is foreshadowed ominously. [...] *The Hobbit* plays younger and lighter than *Fellowship* and its follow-ups, but does right by the faithful and has a strength in Martin Freeman’s Bilbo that may yet see this trilogy measure up to the last one. There is treasure here.”

It is true that Peter Jackson largely took into account his previous work, *The Lord of the Rings* movie trilogy, and he could not do differently, as the audience already met characters and places from the Middle Earth: he decided to be faithful to his films, rather than to Tolkien's novel.

As regards audiovisual translation, the major problem that has been analysed in this work is that of transposing idiolects and dialects in another language. Reduction is the most commonly used strategy in such cases: the dialectal elements are simply omitted in the target version, maybe regained in another moment in the text, in order to compensate the omission. Here, there is no compensation, only reduction: the peculiar accents of all the characters are simply omitted, and maybe substituted by a particular intonation of the voice. This may be not so evident with the dwarves – even though by comparing the original English soundtrack with the Italian dubbed one the loss is undeniable – but it is particularly clear with the trolls: trolls should speak in Cockney, but as there is no equivalent of this dialect in Italian, they simply speak in an ungrammatical and rude way, and the comic effect is committed to their voices, which are particularly exaggerated. The reason why dialects and idiolects were not transposed into Italian is simple: Italian dialects and accents are really strong and peculiar, hence easily recognizable. To find an equivalent into Italian would have distracted the audience from the plot and setting of the film.

By way of conclusion, I would like to stress that this work only deals with the first film of *The Hobbit* trilogy. It would be interesting to re-analyse these same aspects once the third film comes out (on December 2014).

Rielaborato in italiano

Capitolo 1 – La traduzione intersemiotica

Nel saggio *On linguistic aspects of translation (Aspetti linguistici della traduzione)* il linguista e semiologo russo Roman Jakobson affronta il problema dell'interpretazione di un segno linguistico ricorrendo alla nozione di traduzione.

Secondo Jakobson, esistono tre modi per interpretare un segno verbale:

- i) La traduzione intralinguistica, o riformulazione, ovvero l'interpretazione di segni verbali per mezzo di altri segni appartenenti allo stesso sistema linguistico;
- ii) La traduzione interlinguistica, o traduzione propriamente detta, ossia l'interpretazione di segni verbali per mezzo di un'altra lingua;
- iii) La traduzione intersemiotica, o trasmutazione, e cioè l'interpretazione di segni verbali per mezzo di segni appartenenti a sistemi non verbali (Jakobson, 1959).

Peter Torop ha ampliato la definizione data da Jakobson, aggiungendo altre quattro categorie traduttive:

- iv) Traduzione testuale: traduzione di un testo intero in un altro testo intero;
- v) Traduzione metatestuale: traduzione di un testo intero non in un altro testo intero, ma in un'altra cultura sotto forma di qualsiasi prodotto della metacomunicazione. Si definiscono metatesti tutti i testi che contribuiscono alla conoscenza del

testo tradotto senza farne parte, quali ad esempio note, introduzioni, prefazioni, postfazioni, recensioni, critiche.

- vi) Traduzione intratestuale ed intertestuale: traduzione di elementi esterni presenti all'interno di un testo fonte (citazioni, parafrasi, riferimenti ipertestuali, etc.); sarebbe a dire ogni riferimento alla memoria testuale dell'autore;
- vii) Traduzione extratestuale: trasmissione di un testo in lingua naturale mediante codici diversi, linguistici e non (Torop, 2010).

Eco, prendendo spunto da Jakobson, parla invece di interpretazione, piuttosto che di traduzione, e distinguendo tra traduzione intersemiotica (che implica cambiamenti nella sostanza del testo fonte) e adattamento o trasmutazione (che implicano un mutamento di materia e sostanza) (Eco, 2013).

È chiaro quindi che dare una definizione generale e univoca del concetto di traduzione intersemiotica è compito non da poco. Si tratta di un concetto che comprende l'idea dell'interpretazione di un testo per mezzo di una trasposizione del testo stesso, nella quale alcuni elementi del testo fonte sono radicalmente cambiati o addirittura omessi nel testo di arrivo. Proprio in virtù della complessità di questo concetto, sarebbe bene definirlo volta per volta, facendo riferimento alla specifica traduzione di uno specifico testo (Nergaard, 2000).

Qualsiasi forma di passaggio tra sistemi di segni differenti – tra testo letterario e testo audiovisivo, testo poetico e testo musicale, testo pittorico e testo teatrale – avviene tra sistemi semiotici quasi totalmente separati tra loro a livello del piano dell'espressione, mentre una quasi completa traducibilità può essere possibile sul piano del contenuto. Uno dei maggiori problemi con cui deve scontrarsi la traduzione intersemiotica è appunto

quello delle diverse materie e sostanze dell'espressione: nel passaggio da un linguaggio verbale a uno musicale, ad esempio, il confronto ha luogo tra due forme dell'espressione non precisamente traducibili, come avverrebbe invece nel caso della traduzione interlinguistica di due poesie (Petillo M. , 2012).

Il caso più comune di adattamento o trasmutazione è la trasposizione di un romanzo in forma filmica, ma si hanno casi di adattamento di una favola in balletto, o di musiche classiche in cartone animato, come accade per esempio nel classico Disney *Fantasia*. Esistono quindi diversi tipi di traduzione intersemiotica, ma sarebbe comunque più appropriato parlare sempre di adattamento o trasmutazione, proprio per distinguere queste interpretazioni dalla traduzione propriamente detta (Eco, 2013).

Nel presente lavoro di tesi sono state prese in considerazione le problematiche legate in particolar modo alla trasposizione filmica di un romanzo.

Il termine “*adattamento*” era già in uso nel Medioevo per denominare una specifica pratica di traduzione. Il termine fu poi applicato al mondo del cinema all'inizio del XX secolo, per designare il trasferimento da un testo scritto a un'immagine visiva (Lhermitte, 2005). Il primo adattamento cinematografico di un'opera letteraria si ha con *The Kiss*, di William Heise; proiettato il 21 luglio 1896 in Ottawa, Canada. In questa breve pellicola Heise aveva riproposto la scena finale del musical di John McNelly, *The Widow Jones* (Heise, *The kiss*, 1896). Col passare del tempo, la popolarità del cinema cresceva, e con essa anche il numero di trasposizioni di opere letterarie: ad oggi, circa il 65% della produzione cinematografica è composta da adattamenti; esistono più di 200 versioni filmiche di *Sherlock Holmes* e circa 50 film su *Romeo e Giulietta* (Harrington, 1977).

Il grande numero di adattamenti cinematografici di opere letterarie testimonia l'indiscusso legame che esiste tra letteratura e cinema, così come la grande influenza che la letteratura esercita sulle tecniche narrative cinematografiche.

La questione della *fedeltà* all'opera originale costituisce il principale problema con cui deve scontrarsi la traduzione intersemiotica, basato sul presupposto che la stessa storia può avere molteplici interpretazioni. Da un lato, una traduzione è essa stessa un'interpretazione; ma quando un testo è trasposto in un'altra forma, quando cioè è 'tradotto' in un diverso sistema di segni, nuovi livelli interpretativi possono presentarsi. Nell'adattare un romanzo, ad esempio, il regista, o lo sceneggiatore, può tentare di essere il più fedele possibile alla fonte, seguendo alla lettera le indicazioni dell'autore, o viceversa decidere di rimanere fedele allo 'spirito' dell'opera originale, pur concedendosi delle licenze e modificando alcuni elementi (Bane, 2006).

Nel caso in cui il regista o lo sceneggiatore voglia porre l'accento su un particolare aspetto del testo originale, sarà costretto – per questioni di tempo – a trascurarne altri, più o meno importanti. Questo significa che registi e/o sceneggiatori decidono cosa mostrare e cosa no nell'adattamento, secondo la loro interpretazione del testo fonte. Prendendo questa decisione, essi decidono anche se il nuovo testo di arrivo sarà '*source oriented*', orientato cioè alla fonte, permettendo allo spettatore di penetrare e comprendere l'ambiente linguistico e culturale del testo fonte; o '*target oriented*', orientato cioè alla cultura di arrivo, attraverso la trasformazione del testo fonte in modo da renderlo accessibile al sistema linguistico e culturale di arrivo. Nel primo caso, si potrebbe provocare nello spettatore un senso di straniamento o disorientamento, mentre nel secondo,

si correrebbe il rischio di perdere elementi importanti del testo fonte come, per esempio, un particolare dialetto che caratterizza un personaggio.

Se si accetta il principio di reversibilità, per cui, in condizioni ideali, ritraducendo una traduzione si dovrebbe ottenere una sorta di ‘clone’ dell’opera originale, questa possibilità pare irrealizzabile nel passaggio da un sistema di segni a un altro. Un dato sistema di segni può dire di più o di meno di un altro, ma è certamente impossibile esprimere esattamente la stessa cosa in due differenti sistemi semiotici. Inoltre, nel passaggio da materia a materia l’adattatore potrebbe trovarsi costretto a mostrare esplicitamente degli aspetti che sono invece nascosti nel testo di origine; potrebbe essere necessario per rendere il testo più comprensibile per lo spettatore. Ma nel rendere espliciti aspetti che nel testo fonte erano impliciti, si sta certamente interpretando quel testo. Inoltre, passando ad altra materia si è costretti a imporre allo spettatore del film un’interpretazione rispetto alla quale il lettore del romanzo era lasciato più libero. È pur sempre possibile che, usando i propri mezzi, il film recuperi l’ambiguità in un’altra scena, laddove il romanzo era invece più esplicito. Ma questo processo rimane una manipolazione. Nel passaggio da un linguaggio verbale a un linguaggio non-verbale, si confrontano due forme dell’espressione le cui ‘equivalenze’ non sono determinabili.

Molte trasmutazioni tendono ad isolare uno solo dei livelli di significato del testo fonte, considerandolo l’unico veramente importante per rendere il senso dell’opera originale. Nell’adattamento cinematografico di un romanzo, per esempio, il regista spesso isola solo il livello della trama, ignorando gli altri livelli, considerati poco importanti o di difficile rappresentazione. Questo significa che, isolando e ‘traducendo’ solo uno o alcuni livelli di significato del testo fonte, il ‘traduttore’ impone sullo spettatore la propria interpretazione di quel testo (Eco, 2013).

Gli adattamenti non sono, quindi e non devono essere, rappresentazioni filmiche delle intenzioni dell'autore del romanzo. L'adattamento cinematografico è un processo di trasformazione che non dovrebbe cercare di riprodurre fedelmente un testo letterario, ma di ricreare l'equivalente cinematografico dello stile dell'originale (Bazin, 1997). L'adattamento costituisce sempre una presa di posizione critica – anche se incosciente. Ovviamente anche una traduzione propriamente detta implica una posizione critica da parte del traduttore; ma in questo caso l'atteggiamento critico del traduttore rimane implicito, mentre nell'adattamento diventa non solo esplicito ma fondamentale per il processo di trasmutazione (Eco, 2013).

Ci sono tre prospettive da prendere in considerazione nell'analisi di un adattamento. Prima di tutto, vi è una dimensione formale (la descrizione del prodotto): l'adattamento è una combinazione di traduzione e distillazione dell'opera adattata. Così come non può esistere una traduzione letterale, non può esistere nemmeno un adattamento letterale.

Passando alla prospettiva dell'adattatore, l'operazione creativa implicata nell'adattamento può essere vista come un processo di appropriazione di un'altra opera, ai fini di soddisfare gli scopi creativi dell'adattatore. Ciò può accadere solo mediante un atto di re-interpretazione.

Il terzo punto di vista da considerare è quello del ricevente. Se l'adattamento è una modalità di interpretazione per l'adattatore, è una modalità di ciò che potremmo chiamare 'intertestualità' per lo spettatore che già conosce il testo adattato; un processo dialogico in cui lo spettatore confronta l'opera che già conosce con l'opera a cui sta assistendo.

Una delle questioni più rilevanti è se il pubblico conosce o meno il testo adattato. In caso negativo, il regista dispone chiaramente di una

maggiore libertà creativa. È probabilmente più semplice per un regista/sceneggiatore instaurare un rapporto con un pubblico che non conosca già il testo fonte: senza conoscenze precedenti, lo spettatore è più facilmente indotto a godere dell'adattamento semplicemente come di un nuovo film, piuttosto che di una trasposizione (Hutcheon, 2003).

Uno dei principali problemi nell'adattare un romanzo per lo schermo riguarda il narratore. Le difficoltà più comuni di registi e sceneggiatori riguardano l'esposizione narrativa, metafore, e pensieri dei personaggi che aiutano a descriverne la psicologia.

Trasporre un romanzo in una sceneggiatura cinematografica non è una questione che riguarda soltanto la trascrizione dei dialoghi. In un romanzo, spesso, il lettore conosce i personaggi non tanto attraverso ciò che fanno e dicono, ma tramite ciò che pensano o ciò che si dice di loro nella narrazione. La nostra comprensione ed interpretazione della storia dipendono largamente da chi la racconta. Nei film, tuttavia, la figura del narratore scompare. A volte la prospettiva del narratore può essere espressa tramite voice-over, ma generalmente il regista e gli attori devono rifarsi ai mezzi del film per riprodurre i sentimenti dei personaggi.

Il regista è limitato anche nella scelta degli attori, in quanto il pubblico avrà già delle aspettative sull'aspetto dei personaggi date dal romanzo.

La principale differenza tra film e libri è che l'immagine visiva stimola la percezione dello spettatore in maniera diretta, mentre la parola scritta lo fa in maniera indiretta. La lettura della parola *sedia*, ad esempio, richiede un processo di 'traduzione' mentale che vedere l'immagine di una *sedia* non comporta. Il mezzo filmico è un canale più diretto della lettura: oltre al linguaggio verbale ci sono colori, movimenti e suoni. Ma allo stesso tempo ha le sue limitazioni: in un romanzo non ci sono, per esempio,

limitazioni di tempo, mentre un film deve solitamente ‘comprimere’ la trama in una durata di circa due ore (Schulten, 2011).

Riferimenti culturali e metafore possono essere a volte difficili da trasporre sullo schermo, e sono spesso sottoposti a cambiamenti significativi. Le metafore sono semplificate, le espressioni idiomatiche trasformate in frasi esplicite e i riferimenti culturali sono esplicitati o trasposti in modo da renderli accessibili al pubblico (Lhermitte, 2005).

La traduzione letteraria non può – e non deve – essere fedele; un personaggio rappresentato in un film non potrà mai essere identico a quello stesso personaggio così come è rappresentato nel romanzo. Ogni trasposizione da romanzo a film comporta una rottura dell’equilibrio originale. Tuttavia, se il regista, o sceneggiatore, è in grado di costruire un nuovo equilibrio all’interno del testo di arrivo, allora avrà creato un nuovo lavoro, ovviamente non identico all’originale, ma perlomeno equivalente (Bazin, 1997).

Negli ultimi anni si è assistito alla diffusione di un nuovo genere – il fantasy -, che è diventato centrale anche nel campo dell’adattamento cinematografico.

Il tema della fedeltà nel campo del fantasy è particolarmente spinoso, in quanto l’interpretazione di un lavoro letterario di fantasia è altamente individuale, e la varietà di interpretazioni tra i diversi lettori è molto più ampia nell’ambito del romanzo fantasy che in quello realistico. L’imposizione di una sola interpretazione – quella del regista – limita enormemente la libertà immaginativa dello spettatore: adesso che il pubblico *sa* come è fatto un orco (cioè come è rappresentato nei film), non sarà mai più in grado di recuperare la sua personale visione originale (Hutcheon, 2003).

Determinare l'autorità di un adattamento cinematografico è il secondo problema principale con cui si scontra la traduzione intersemiotica.

Spesso gli unici fattori ritenuti rilevanti negli studi sull'adattamento sono l'autore del romanzo ed il regista del film. In questo modo si eliminano dall'analisi molti altri fattori importanti – sceneggiatori, attori, produttori – che pur partecipano alla creazione del film. Come a notare Stillinger, un film è un particolare caso di 'autorità multipla' (Stillinger, 1991).

Il regista ricopre certamente un ruolo di rilievo nella creazione di un film, ed è generalmente identificato con l'autore dello stesso. È un luogo comune molto diffuso quello di associare la figura del regista a quella dell'autore del romanzo. Tuttavia, mentre un romanzo è generalmente il frutto della mente creativa di una sola persona, un film nasce dal lavoro di più persone. Gli attori, ad esempio, possono ricoprire un ruolo importante nell'autorità di un film, in quanto il modo in cui un attore interpreta un particolare personaggio può diventare iconico ed indurre il pubblico ad identificare l'intero film con il suo attore principale. In altri casi sono gli sceneggiatori ad avere il ruolo principale nel processo di adattamento, in quanto la maggior parte dei cambiamenti avvengono proprio nella fase di scrittura. La sceneggiatura è il fulcro principale di qualsiasi adattamento cinematografico: guida le scelte sulla struttura della storia, la caratterizzazione dei personaggi, i temi e il genere; indica cosa verrà usato dell'opera originale e cosa invece verrà scartato, compresi gli elementi modificati o inventati. In altri casi ancora, i produttori potrebbero esercitare un'influenza significativa (Meskin, 2009).

Capitolo 2 – La traduzione audiovisiva

La traduzione audiovisiva è definita dalla *Routledge encyclopedia of translation studies* come una branca della traduzione riguardante il trasferimento di testi *multimodali* e *multimediali* in un'altra lingua e/o cultura (Pérez González, 2011).

Film, programmi televisivi, rappresentazioni teatrali, musical, opera, pagine web e videogames sono solo alcuni esempi della vasta gamma di prodotti audiovisivi che richiedono di essere tradotti al pubblico di altri paesi. Come la parola stessa suggerisce, i prodotti audiovisivi constano di una componente sonora (*audio*) e di una componente, appunto *visiva*. Proprio in virtù del fatto che i prodotti audiovisivi sono concepiti allo scopo di essere ascoltati e visti allo stesso tempo, la loro traduzione è necessariamente diversa da quella dei testi scritti. I prodotti audiovisivi sono costituiti da diversi codici che interagiscono tra di loro per creare un'unica opera. In un film, ad esempio, oltre a ciò che gli attori dicono, lo spettatore è sottoposto all'ascolto della colonna sonora, e allo stesso tempo alla visione di informazioni scritte come segnali stradali, lettere, annotazioni e così via. Allo stesso tempo, ricoprono un ruolo importante anche le componenti non verbali come espressioni facciali, movimenti, costumi, scenografie, effetti speciali, etc. Il traduttore audiovisivo deve tenere in considerazione tutti questi elementi, prima di procedere alla traduzione dell'opera (Chiari, 2013).

Già a partire dagli albori del cinema, col film muto, l'esportazione di prodotti filmici sui mercati stranieri richiedeva una qualche forma di mediazione interlinguistica. All'inizio del XX secolo, brevi frasi scritte vennero inserite nei film nella forma di intertitoli. Gli intertitoli erano utili per localizzare l'azione in una specifica ambientazione storico-geografica e per aiutare gli spettatori a comprendere le azioni ed i pensieri dei

personaggi. L'esportazione di prodotti audiovisivi era semplice: bastava rimpiazzare gli intertitoli originali con la relativa traduzione.

Nei primi anni '20, l'industria cinematografica Americana dominava il mercato europeo. L'avvento del suono alla fine del decennio, però, comportò una serie di difficoltà nel fornire al pubblico straniero film tradotti nella loro lingua. Pertanto, nuove forme di traduzione audiovisiva iniziarono a svilupparsi a partire dalla metà degli anni Venti. In questo periodo assistiamo alla nascita delle prime forme di re-voicing che porteranno poi allo sviluppo del doppiaggio, e al progresso della tecnologia che permetterà di imporre stringhe di testo direttamente sull'immagine filmica in movimento, anticipando la tecnica della moderna sottotitolazione (Pérez González, 2011).

Lo sviluppo della tecnologia digitale ha portato a radicali cambiamenti nella produzione di audiovisivi, e di conseguenza anche nella traduzione audiovisiva. Con l'avvento del DVD, sono state sviluppate anche nuove tecniche traduttive, soprattutto nel campo dei sottotitoli (Díaz Cintas & Anderman, 2009).

Ad oggi, esistono diverse modalità di traduzione audiovisiva. Una di queste è il revoicing. Il termine 'revoicing' si riferisce ad una serie di diverse procedure di trasferimento linguistico: voice-over, narrazione, audio descrizione per non vedenti, e interpretazione simultanea.

Il voice-over è un metodo che prevede la sovrapposizione di una voce fuori campo sull'audio originale. Il voice-over è usato principalmente per tradurre interviste, documentari ed altri programmi che non richiedono la sincronizzazione labiale (Luyken, 1991).

La narrazione è una specie di 'voice-over esteso', in quanto fornisce al pubblico non solo la traduzione dei dialoghi, ma anche una descrizione di quanto sta accadendo sullo schermo. Questa forma di traduzione

audiovisiva è stata usata in particolare per rendere accessibili i programmi al pubblico di non vedenti, prendendo il nome di audio descrizione.

L'interpretazione simultanea è solitamente usata nell'ambito di film festival in cui limitazioni di tempo e di budget non permettono di ricorrere a forme più elaborate di trasferimento linguistico orale o scritto (Pérez González, 2011).

La sottotitolazione è, insieme al doppiaggio, il metodo più comune di trasferimento linguistico per i prodotti audiovisivi. Consiste nell'inserimento in sovrainpressione della traduzione scritta dei dialoghi originali, che solitamente appare nella parte inferiore dello schermo. Esistono tre tipi di sottotitoli: *sottotitoli interlinguistici*, che forniscono una traduzione del dialogo originale in un'altra lingua; *sottotitoli bilingue*, in cui la stessa frase è scritta due volte in due lingue diverse (questo tipo di sottotitoli è usato in paesi, come il Belgio ad esempio, in cui due lingue diverse sono correntemente parlate – nel caso specifico francese e fiammingo.); *sottotitoli intralinguistici*, redatti nella stessa lingua dell'originale. I sottotitoli interlinguistici e intralinguistici sono stati definiti, rispettivamente, sottotitoli *aperti* e *chiusi*. I sottotitoli interlinguistici sono parte integrante del testo audiovisivo, e sono quindi accessibili a tutti gli spettatori. I sottotitoli intralinguistici, invece, sono definiti sottotitoli 'chiusi' in quanto sono accessibili solo agli spettatori i cui televisori sono equipaggiati col relativo decoder, e che decidono di selezionare l'opzione che li rende visibili. Con l'avvento del DVD e della televisione digitale questa distinzione è sparita, in quanto entrambe le tipologie di sottotitoli sono diventate universalmente accessibili al pubblico (Pérez González, 2011).

I problemi più evidenti con cui deve scontrarsi la sottotitolazione riguardano lo spazio e il tempo. Lo spazio limitato dello schermo non

permette di inserire lunghe spiegazioni, e poiché la leggibilità dei sottotitoli è di primaria importanza, un sottotitolo ideale non dovrebbe essere più lungo di una frase, e le proposizioni di cui è composta dovrebbero essere disposte su una riga diversa ciascuna. (Díaz Cintas & Ramael, 2007). La lunghezza dei sottotitoli dipende anche dal tempo disponibile in onda. È molto importante che la lunghezza del testo nei sottotitoli corrisponda con il necessario tempo di lettura. Inoltre, la successione temporale dei sottotitoli è ben diversa dalla successione lineare delle frasi in un romanzo: nel leggere i sottotitoli, lo spettatore non può tornare indietro o andare avanti con lo sguardo per chiarire malintesi, riassumere gli eventi o scoprire cosa verrà dopo. Strettamente legato alle questioni di spazio e tempo è il problema della presentazione dei sottotitoli: i sottotitoli possono occupare fino al 20% dello spazio sullo schermo. È importante quindi che la dimensione del carattere, la posizione sullo schermo e la tecnologia usata per la proiezione li rendano chiari e facilmente leggibili.

Il cambiamento di modalità linguistica (dal parlato allo scritto) nella sottotitolazione, genera altri problemi legati alla coesione testuale dei sottotitoli. Su un livello grammaticale e sintattico, la sintassi è il più possibile semplice in modo da rendere immediata la comprensione allo spettatore. La proposizione principale e le relative subordinate, per esempio, sono disposte su linee diverse, e la sintassi è semplificata tramite una re-disposizione degli elementi della frase originale. Spesso, per abbreviare il testo dei sottotitoli, gli elementi ridondanti del discorso vengono omessi. Questo tuttavia può creare incomprensioni nello spettatore, in quanto le ripetizioni in un discorso orale aiutano a veicolare il messaggio profondo. Le caratteristiche peculiari del discorso orale, come pause, false partenze, frasi incomplete, costruzioni sgrammaticate, etc. sono difficili da riprodurre nel linguaggio scritto. Lo stesso vale per le

espressioni dialettali ed idioletali, come per gli accenti e le inflessioni; tutti elementi che contribuiscono a costruire il personaggio. Alcune caratteristiche del linguaggio orale necessitano di essere trasposte nei sottotitoli in quanto costituiscono una parte importante per la comprensione della trama. Spesso queste caratteristiche vengono riproposte in forma di espressioni e lessico che siano in grado di rivelare il grado di istruzione, il dialetto regionale o la classe sociale del personaggio. In ogni caso, la riduzione è la strategia traduttiva più largamente usata in queste situazioni (Georgakopoulou, 2009).

Secondo Kovačič, esistono tre livelli gerarchici tra gli elementi del discorso nei sottotitoli:

- Gli elementi indispensabili (che devono essere tradotti)
- Gli elementi parzialmente dispensabili (che possono essere ridotti)
- Gli elementi dispensabili (che possono essere omessi) (Kovacic, 1991).

Il doppiaggio è uno dei metodi dominanti, insieme alla sottotitolazione, di traduzione audiovisiva.

Il termine ‘doppiaggio’ si riferisce alla re-registrazione della traccia audio originale nella lingua di arrivo mediante l’uso della voce dei doppiatori. Lo scopo del dialogo doppiato è quello di ricreare la dinamica dell’originale, in particolare in termini di ritmo e movimento labiale (Pérez González, 2011).

Un buon doppiaggio deve rispettare la sincronizzazione labiale, avere un buon equilibrio con la gestualità dell’attore e rispettare la durata del dialogo originale. La traduzione deve essere quanto possibile fedele, le voci ed i dialoghi credibili, ed il suono chiaro e udibile. La buona riuscita del doppiaggio, infine, dipende in buona parte anche dall’interpretazione dei

doppiatori, che non deve suonare né troppo esagerata, risultando così falsa, né monotona o piatta. (Chaume, 2012).

Uno dei principali problemi riguardanti il doppiaggio è la perdita di autenticità. La voce di un personaggio costituisce una parte importante della sua personalità, ed è strettamente legata alle espressioni facciali, alla gestualità e al linguaggio del corpo. Pertanto, quando la voce originale di un attore viene sostituita da quella di un doppiatore si ha un'inevitabile perdita di autenticità.

Un'altra caratteristica che si rischia di perdere nel passaggio dalla voce originale alla voce doppiata è la credibilità del parlante. Questo fattore è particolarmente rilevante nei discorsi politici, in cui la forza persuasiva del parlante risulta nettamente ridotta dalla sovrapposizione di un'altra voce.

Altri due fattori rilevanti sono il costo e i tempi: il doppiaggio ha un costo nettamente maggiore rispetto alla sottotitolazione o ad altre forme di traduzione audiovisiva, e richiede generalmente più tempo.

La musica, così come i dialoghi, è un importante fonte di significato e può avere un ruolo importante nella trama (basti pensare ai musical, o ai film Disney).

Le canzoni nei film e nei cartoni animati generalmente richiedono un adattamento che rispecchi il ritmo della musica. Il primo passo per il traduttore è decidere se tradurre o meno la canzone. Questa decisione dipende da una serie di fattori legati alla cultura e le abitudini del paese di arrivo: in alcuni paesi in cui il doppiaggio è il mezzo più usato per tradurre gli audiovisivi vi è tuttavia riluttanza nel tradurre le canzoni, che spesso vengono semplicemente lasciate nella versione originale. La decisione di tradurre o meno una canzone dipende anche dal genere audiovisivo: nella pubblicità, per esempio, spesso le canzoni vengono sottotitolate, come

anche nei musical, mentre le sigle dei cartoni animati sono nella maggior parte dei casi doppiate. Comunque, il fattore predominante in questa scelta è la funzione della canzone nel film: se il testo ha rilevanza per la trama, ad esempio, sarà necessario tradurlo per renderne il significato accessibile al pubblico.

Nel caso del doppiaggio, bisogna prestare particolare attenzione alla rima: essa può rafforzare il significato, evocare riferimenti intertestuali, oltre che procurare piacere nell'ascoltatore. La rima, inoltre, è uno degli strumenti più efficaci per garantire la memorizzazione di una poesia o di una canzone. Pertanto è importante non tanto riprodurre fedelmente lo schema originale, quando inventare nuove rime per la versione doppiata.

Altra questione legata al doppiaggio è la traduzione delle variazioni linguistiche, in particolare quelle relative allo stile e ai dialetti.

Lo stile è il modo in cui qualcuno parla o scrive, sempre intenzionalmente, ed è costituito da particolari caratteristiche linguistiche e testuali. Idealmente, nel doppiaggio, il traduttore dovrebbe rispettare e rispecchiare il modo in cui i personaggi parlano, le loro scelte linguistiche, le strutture grammaticali scelte e così via (Chaume, 2012).

Il termine 'dialetto' può riferirsi a: i) una particolare forma linguistica usata da uno specifico gruppo di parlanti di quella lingua (generalmente dialetti regionali, sociali, o storici) (Hornby, 2005); ii) una lingua socialmente subordinata alla lingua standard di una nazione o di una regione, generalmente coniata da essa (Maiden & Parry, 1997). Un dialetto si distingue per il suo lessico, la grammatica e la pronuncia. Le particolarità linguistiche legate all'uso dei singoli individui prendono il nome di idioletti.

Le variazioni diatopiche della lingua, ovvero quelle legate al luogo geografico, costituiscono i dialetti geografici. Per quanto riguarda la

traduzione audiovisiva, nel caso in cui un film sia interamente girato in dialetto, spesso si usa tradurlo nella lingua standard di arrivo, in quanto non vi sono variazioni linguistiche all'interno del film, e pertanto nessuna variazione è mostrata nella traduzione. Diverso è il caso in cui due dialetti della stessa lingua sono usati nello stesso film. Molti autori concordano sul fatto che non esistano equivalenze di dialetti da un paese all'altro, e che tradurre le variazioni diatopiche di una lingua ricorrendo a forme dialettali della cultura di arrivo sia scorretto. È evidente però che tradurre un dialetto facendo ricorso semplicemente alla lingua standard provoca la perdita di quelle peculiarità evocate dal dialetto nel testo originale.

Lo stesso discorso vale per gli accenti. Qui, le possibilità sono tre: i) imitare lo stesso accento nella versione doppiata, giacché un personaggio straniero avrà lo stesso accento anche nella lingua di arrivo; ii) se l'accento è quello della lingua di arrivo, sostituirlo con un altro accento; iii) tradurlo nella lingua standard, perdendo così la connotazione di accento straniero data nella versione originale.

Le variazioni diacroniche della lingua, quelle cioè legate al periodo storico, possono essere tradotte nel doppiaggio ricorrendo a tre strategie: i) ricercare una traduzione letteraria del testo di origine (nel caso in cui si tratti di un adattamento da un romanzo, per esempio); ii) rendere lo stile letterario del testo inserendo fregi sintattici e lessicali; iii) ricorrere alla compensazione, per mezzo di termini arcaici od obsoleti (Chaume, 2012).

Le variazioni diastatiche, o *socioletti*, riflettono la stratificazione sociale di una specifica comunità linguistica e sono associate ad un particolare status socio-economico (Wales, 1989). La sfida qui per il traduttore è quella di cogliere le connotazioni politiche ed ideologiche che l'uso di un particolare socioletto vuole trasmettere, e successivamente

capirne la funzione nel testo fonte, ed usare una strategia conseguentemente adeguata.

Un idioletto è il congiunto di abitudini linguistiche di un singolo individuo all'interno di una comunità, che lo distingue dagli altri parlanti (Wales, 1989): espressioni preferite, pronunce particolari, tendenza ad abusare di determinate strutture sintattiche, etc.

In questi casi il traduttore può decidere di costruire un nuovo idioletto, prendendo tratti caratteristici delle variazioni diatopiche, diacroniche e diastratiche della lingua di arrivo che siano coerenti con il carattere e l'idioletto del personaggio originale, di modo che lo spettatore possa comprendere gli aspetti della personalità che quel particolare modo di parlare vuole trasmettere (García de Toro, 2009).

I paesi del centro Europa (Italia, Austria, Germania, Francia, etc.) tendono a prediligere il doppiaggio alla sottotitolazione; mentre i paesi del Nord Europa come Olanda, Danimarca, Finlandia, Svezia, Norvegia, Irlanda e Regno Unito, usano molto di più i sottotitoli. Altri paesi ancora, come il Belgio, utilizzano entrambe le modalità (doppiaggio in Vallonia e sottotitolazione nelle Fiandre). Il voice-over invece è più utilizzato in paesi come la Polonia, la Bulgaria e la Lituania.

Esistono ovviamente alcune eccezioni a questo schema: i cartoni animati, ad esempio, specialmente quelli indirizzati ai bambini piccoli, sono doppiati in tutto il mondo. Anche nelle nazioni che tendenzialmente prediligono il doppiaggio, alcuni cinema proiettano film sottotitolati, o due versioni dello stesso film. In Italia un sempre maggior numero di programmi sono tradotti tramite voice-over, specialmente sui canali minori, allo scopo di ridurre significativamente i costi. L'avvento del DVD ha ulteriormente cambiato la situazione: i DVD e i Blu-ray offrono al pubblico la possibilità di scegliere quale versione del film guardare. Pertanto, la

distinzione tra doppiaggio e sottotitolazione diventa sempre meno netta (Chaume, 2012).

Affermare quindi che un metodo sia migliore dell'altro è quantomeno difficile, e le variabili sono diverse, a partire dallo scopo di ciascun prodotto audiovisivo e dalle aspettative del pubblico su quel prodotto. Per esempio, in un ambiente scolastico in cui sono insegnate le lingue straniere, la sottotitolazione potrebbe risultare la scelta migliore, in quanto permette agli studenti di ascoltare l'audio originale, avendo al contempo a disposizione la traduzione nella loro lingua nativa, e sviluppando così capacità di comprensione, lessico e pronuncia. Al contrario, guardare un film essendo allo stesso tempo impegnati a leggere i sottotitoli può risultare difficile, noioso e distrarre lo spettatore.

La scelta di un metodo piuttosto che un altro, quindi, dipende da diversi fattori, quali le abitudini e la cultura di arrivo, le condizioni economiche, il genere del programma, il canale di distribuzione, etc. (Díaz Cintas & Anderman, 2009).

Capitolo 3 – Case study: Lo Hobbit

John Ronald Reuel Tolkien nacque il 3 gennaio del 1892 a Bloemfontein, Sud Africa; primogenito di Arthur Reuel Tolkien e sua moglie Mabel Suffield. Nel 1895 Mabel tornò in Inghilterra con Ronald e suo fratello Hilary. Arthur Tolkien morì alla fine dello stesso anno in Sud Africa.

A Birmingham, Ronald visse insieme ai suoi nonni, i quali gli trasmisero un forte attaccamento per il suo paese, che avrebbe avuto un forte impatto sui suoi lavori.

Mabel Tolkien istruì in casa i suoi figli: a quattro anni, Ronald sapeva già leggere e scrivere, e scrisse la sua prima storia all'età di sette anni.

Nel 1900 Mabel si convertì al Cattolicesimo, contro il volere della sua famiglia, che le negò da quel momento in poi assistenza economica. Morì nel 1904, quando Ronald aveva 12 anni. Da sua madre, ereditò una profonda fede cattolica. Ronald e suo fratello furono affidati alle cure di Padre Francis Morgan. I due frequentarono la King Edward's School a Birmingham, dove nel 1910 Tolkien incontrò Edith Bratt, che sarebbe poi diventata sua moglie.

Nel 1911 Tolkien frequentò l'Exeter College ad Oxford, dove si interessò ai classici greci, e più tardi alla filologia e alle lingue straniere, specialmente il finlandese. Nello stesso periodo, iniziò a lavorare alla creazione di una lingua fittizia, che avrebbe più tardi battezzato Quenya, o elfico.

Tolkien si laureò in lingua e letteratura inglese nel luglio del 1915: studiò il dialetto delle Midlands, il Middle English e la mitologia islandese.

Sposò Edith Bratt nel marzo 1916, e poco dopo si arruolò nell'esercito e fu spedito in Francia, da cui tornò nel novembre dello stesso anno per problemi di salute.

Durante la convalescenza scrisse *La caduta di Gondolin*, primo racconto del *Libro delle storie perdute*, che sarebbe stato poi dato alle stampe col titolo di *Silmarillion*.

Nel 1925 tornò ad Oxford come professore di anglo-sassone. Nello stesso periodo scrisse *Lo Hobbit*, inizialmente solo come storia da raccontare ai suoi figli, poi pubblicato nel 1937 dalla Allen & Unwin. A causa del grande successo del romanzo, la casa editrice ne chiese un seguito, che vide la luce solo nel 1952 col titolo di *Il signore degli anelli*. Tolkien avrebbe voluto pubblicarlo insieme al *Silmarillion*, ma l'editore rifiutò. Il lavoro rimase incompleto e fu pubblicato postumo nel 1977.

Edith Bratt morì nel 1971. Tolkien morì due anni dopo, il 2 settembre del 1973 (Carpenter, 2000).

Secondo quanto dichiarato da Tolkien stesso, la Terra di Mezzo non sarebbe un mondo del tutto fantastico, bensì il pianeta Terra stesso – in particolare l'Europa – in un passato fittizio di circa 6000 o 7000 anni fa (Carpenter & Tolkien, 1981). La mitologia della Terra di Mezzo ha le sue radici nell'interesse di Tolkien per la mitologia e la linguistica dell'Europa del nord, nello specifico quelle dei popoli germanici.

Tolkien iniziò a scrivere storie per bambini nel 1920, con *Lettere da Babbo Natale* (pubblicato postumo nel 1976), una serie di lettere indirizzate ai suoi figli e apparentemente scritte da Babbo Natale, in cui sono narrate storie riguardo il Polo Nord, elfi, gnomi, e orsi polari.

Scrisse molte storie per i propri figli, e nello stesso periodo iniziò a lavorare a *Lo Hobbit* (Carpenter, 2000). *Lo Hobbit* è un'opera che condensa tutti i tratti peculiari della letteratura tolkeniana fino a quel momento – la sua poetica (ci sono sedici poesie nel romanzo, e otto indovinelli), la sua arte figurativa, o popoli e i luoghi della sua mitologia fantastica, e lo stile accessibile delle storie per bambini, insieme ad un largo uso della cultura di Tolkien sulle lingue e le letterature medievali. Tolkien stesso affermò che *Lo Hobbit* deriva da epiche, mitologie e storie fantastiche “assimilate in precedenza” (Carpenter & Tolkien, 1981).

Nonostante possa sembrare una semplice fiaba per bambini, il libro è invece complesso e sofisticato: contiene diversi nomi e parole derivati dalla mitologia norrena, elementi centrali della trama presi dall'epica del *Beowulf*, fa uso delle rune anglosassoni, etc., anche se l'unica influenza che Tolkien riconoscerà mai sarà quella delle sue stesse storie contenute nel *Silmarillon*.

Christopher Tolkien, il suo terzo figlio, ricorda che in una lettera di Natale del 1937, suggeriva *Lo Hobbit* come regalo di Natale. Nella lettera, scriveva che suo padre aveva scritto la storia anni prima, e che l'aveva letta a lui e ai suoi fratelli durante l'inverno 1930/1931; ma che gli ultimi capitoli non erano ancora terminati, e che Tolkien scrisse l'intera storia solo nel 1936 (Carpenter & Tolkien, 1981). Il romanzo fu pubblicato il 21 settembre del 1937.

Lo Hobbit: un viaggio inaspettato (originale *The Hobbit: an unexpected journey*) è il primo film della trilogia de *Lo Hobbit*, realizzato nel dicembre del 2012 e diretto da Peter Jackson, già regista della trilogia de *Il signore degli anelli* (2001-2003). Il titolo richiama il primo capitolo del romanzo di Tolkien: *una festa inaspettata*.

Il regista e gli sceneggiatori hanno affrontato alcune sfide significative nel trasporre cinematograficamente l'opera di Tolkien. Alcuni aspetti sono semplicemente rimasti uguali, come ad esempio la casa di Bilbo Baggins, descritta nel romanzo a pagina 3. Bag End ed Hobbiville erano già apparse nei film de *Il signore degli anelli*, ed il loro aspetto era già fedele alla descrizione che ne dava Tolkien nei romanzi. Anche nella rappresentazione degli hobbit, i piccoli uomini dai piedi pelosi protagonisti di questa storia, Peter Jackson è rimasto molto fedele al romanzo.

Un altro personaggio il cui aspetto è rimasto fedele alla descrizione letteraria è Gandalf, interpretato da Sir Ian McKellen. Già apparso ne *Il signore degli anelli*, il suo aspetto è identico anche ne *Lo Hobbit: un viaggio inaspettato*, salvo una piccola differenza: la sciarpa argentata. Si tratta di un dettaglio molto importante, che ha compiaciuto quella parte di pubblico che aveva già letto il libro e che si aspettava di vedere Gandalf così come vi è descritto.

Ciò che è realmente interessante notare è cosa invece è cambiato nell'adattamento cinematografico rispetto al romanzo.

Una delle maggiori difficoltà è stata sicuramente quella di diluire una storia relativamente corta in tre film. *Lo Hobbit* è un libro di circa 350 pagine, mentre *Il signore degli anelli* ne conta più di 1200. È evidente che vi è un'enorme differenza tra i due, e mentre l'adattamento de *Il signore degli anelli* è stato criticato per aver omesso molti passaggi significativi del romanzo, per trasporre *Lo Hobbit* in tre film è stato necessario aggiungere degli elementi alla storia; elementi che sono stati presi da altri lavori tolkeniani, primi fra tutti *Il Silmarillon* e *Il signore degli anelli*.

Uno di questi elementi è la presenza di Radagast (Sylvester McCoy). Radagast appare nel primo film de *Lo Hobbit*, ma nessuna delle scene che lo coinvolgono sono mai state scritte da Tolkien, in nessuno dei suoi lavori; si tratta di invenzioni originali degli sceneggiatori. Nel libro, Radagast è menzionato da Gandalf, che lo definisce suo cugino (Tolkien, 1937, p. 139).

Azog ed il suo esercito di orchi sono un altro degli elementi arbitrariamente aggiunti nell'adattamento di Jackson. Qui, Azog è sopravvissuto alla guerra tra i nani e gli orchi, in cui è invece stato ferito da Thorin Scudodiquercia, ed ora dà la caccia a lui e ai suoi compagni in cerca di vendetta. Nei racconti di Tolkien invece Azog è stato ucciso dal cugino di Thorin, Dàin Pièdiferro nella battaglia di Azalnubizar ben prima degli eventi narrati ne *Lo Hobbit* (Tolkien, *Il Signore degli Anelli*, 1993, p. 1282-1285).

Un'altra differenza tra il libro e il film è la breve apparizione di Elijah Wood come Frodo Baggins all'inizio del film, mentre questo personaggio non compare mai nel libro. In ogni caso, si tratta solo di un cameo in

quanto la prima scena si riferisce all'inizio de *La compagnia dell'anello* (Jackson, *The Fellowship of the Ring*, 2001).

Un cambiamento significativo nel film è l'aspetto dei nani: nel romanzo, sono descritti come piccoli ometti con barbe e capelli colorati. Nel film non presentano affatto queste peculiari caratteristiche. Anche se questa omissione ha scatenato critiche e malumori tra i fan del romanzo, è evidente il motivo per cui Peter Jackson e la sceneggiatrice Philippa Boyens hanno preso questa decisione. Alcuni nani erano già apparsi nei film de *Il signore degli anelli*. È necessario ricordare che la trilogia letteraria è venuta dopo il romanzo de *Lo Hobbit*, e che Tolkien all'epoca aveva cambiato idea su come rappresentare alcune razze, compresi i nani. In ogni caso, i film de *Il signore degli anelli* sono precedenti, e Jackson e Boyens hanno dovuto rispettare le caratteristiche fisiche che i nani presentavano in questo primo adattamento, per evitare di confondere quella parte di pubblico che non conosceva il libro.

La stessa cosa accade con gli elfi. Nel romanzo, sono descritti come piccole creature giocose, ispirate alla mitologia nord-europea, che amano cantare e ballare, mentre nel film non cantano e hanno un aspetto molto più serio. Qui, ancora una volta, la ragione è la stessa che per i nani: il pubblico aveva già familiarità con un'immagine degli elfi che sarebbe stata in contrasto con una diversa rappresentazione, per quanto fedele al romanzo.

Come già detto, *Lo Hobbit* è un lavoro ben più complesso di quel che sembra. La Terra di Mezzo è popolata da diverse razze: elfi, nani, hobbit, uomini, orchi, etc. e ognuno di questi ha la sua particolare cultura e parla la sua particolare lingua o dialetto. Tolkien ha reso il linguaggio degli umani in inglese, ovviamente, e le inflessioni o i dialetti di particolari razze o personaggi in diverse varietà di inglese.

Secondo quanto detto da Rosin Carty, supervising dialect coach de *Lo Hobbit: un viaggio inaspettato*, l'accento degli hobbit doveva suonare familiare senza essere troppo facilmente riconoscibile, in modo da evitare di distrarre il pubblico. Gli hobbit della Contea hanno l'accento del Gloucestershire. È l'accento che era stato scelto da Andrew Jack, supervising dialect coach de *Il signore degli anelli*, ed è rimasto lo stesso ne *Lo Hobbit*. È un accento facile da imitare, facile da capire ed ha un suono rustico e senza tempo. La componente linguistica è molto importante per rendere la Terra di Mezzo un luogo verosimile. Non bisogna fornire allo spettatore alcun aggancio al suo mondo quotidiano e perciò gli accenti non devono essere riconoscibili, né dal punto di vista temporale né geografico (Falconer, 2013). Inoltre, Bilbo ha un modo di parlare nervoso e a tratti balbettante.

Nella traduzione italiana di *The Hobbit: an unexpected journey* (tradotto letteralmente *Lo Hobbit: un viaggio inaspettato*), la peculiarità dell'accento era difficile da rendere, in quanto gli accenti italiani sono facilmente riconoscibili, ed una strategia di compensazione simile avrebbe avuto un effetto straniante sul pubblico. Invece il tono nervoso e la voce balbettante di Bilbo sono stati mantenuti.

La collocazione vocale e le scelte linguistiche di un personaggio sono fissate dalla regia, ma poi è il personaggio a svilupparle nel corso del film. Per alcuni dei personaggi de *Lo Hobbit*, le caratteristiche erano già fissate perché erano apparsi ne *Il signore degli anelli* o avevano legami di famiglia con qualche personaggio dei film che suggerivano che tipo di accento avrebbero dovuto avere. Allo stesso modo, anche l'attore ha il suo modo di parlare, e per alcuni dei nani il suggerimento è venuto dal modo di parlare dell'attore o dalle sue opinioni.

Ci sono tredici nani ne *Lo Hobbit*, ciascuno con le proprie caratteristiche fisiche e linguistiche.

Il supervising dialect coach, Roisin Carty, ha deciso di suddividere i nani in gruppi familiari, di modo che un gruppo di tre o quattro nani condividessero lo stesso dialetto o accento. Il solo particolare da tenere a mente era la chiarezza, che era necessaria a tutti i dialoghi del film, qualunque fosse l'accento.

La maggior parte degli accenti è stata scelta tra le varietà regionali di inglese. Gloin, Oin, Balin e Dwalin, per esempio, parlano con un accento scozzese; mentre Bifur, Bofur e Bombur hanno un'inflessione irlandese. Ciascun accento rivela al pubblico britannico qualcosa riguardo il personaggio che lo usa: il suo rango sociale, la sua provenienza, i suoi legami familiari (Falconer, 2013). In una traduzione audiovisiva, è necessario cogliere cosa un particolare accento rivela di un personaggio, e cercare di trasmettere le stesse caratteristiche nella lingua di arrivo.

L'attore Richard Armitage, interprete di Thorin Scudodiquercia, è originario del nord dell'Inghilterra, e quindi il suo accento naturale è un inglese del nord. Il dialect coach ha ritenuto che questo dialetto fosse particolarmente adatto a rappresentare la dinastia reale nanica: riferendosi alla storia inglese, le famiglie reali erano del nord e parlavano con accento regionale. Allo stesso tempo, le caratteristiche dell'accento di Armitage corrispondono alle caratteristiche del personaggio Thorin: nobiltà, forza, solidità, onore, industriosità. Così Armitage ha conservato il suo accento per interpretare Thorin, ma ha dovuto lavorare per renderlo meno calcato (Falconer, 2013).

Nella versione italiana doppiata, Thorin non ha un forte accento, ma, come nella versione originale, ha una voce profonda ed autorevole, che lo identifica immediatamente come il capo della compagnia.

Nella versione sottotitolata, il particolare tono di voce di Thorin non poteva essere riprodotto nella traduzione scritta, così come il suo specifico accento. Certo, i sottotitoli danno la possibilità allo spettatore di avere accesso all'audio originale, e quindi di ascoltare la voce originale di Armitage; tuttavia uno spettatore italiano non potrebbe riconoscere l'accento di Thorin, né tantomeno associarlo con le caratteristiche che invece esso suggerisce al pubblico inglese.

È molto interessante notare che gli unici personaggi del libro le cui parole siano scritte in dialetto sono i troll. Lo scopo di Tolkien era di ottenere un effetto comico, e per fare ciò si è avvalso del Cockney londinese. Si tratta, ovviamente, non di un Cockney moderno, ma di una sua variante antica, piena di energia, colore e folklore (Falconer, 2013).

Tradurre il Cockney non è facile. Una soluzione potrebbe essere l'utilizzo della rima per trasmettere il ritmo particolare dello slang Cockney; o il ricorso ad un altro dialetto della lingua di arrivo (Ranzato, 2010).

Nella traduzione audiovisiva de *Lo Hobbit: un viaggio inaspettato*, la traduzione letteraria viene in aiuto dei doppiatori:

Romanzo inglese

“Mutton yesterday, mutton today, and blimey, if it don't look like mutton again tomorrer”

Romanzo italiano

“Montone ieri, montone oggi e che mi caschi un occhio in mano se non c'avremo montone pure domani”

Il difetto di pronuncia “*tomorrer*” non è riportato né nella traduzione letteraria italiana né in quella audiovisiva.

Nella versione del film doppiata in italiano, i troll parlano in maniera sgrammaticata e maleducata:

Versione doppiata in inglese

“I hope yore gonna gut these nags”

“I’m starving! Are we ‘aving horse tonight or what?”

“Shut your cakehole. You’ll eat what I give ya”

Versione doppiata in italiano

“Spero che li sbudelli bene ‘sti ronzini”

“Crepo di fame! Mangiamo cavallo stasera o no?”

“Chiudi quel buco dentato, mangerai quello che ti dò”

Inoltre, l’effetto comico è ottenuto tramite l’uso di timbri di voce diversi, particolarmente esagerati nella versione italiana: William (Guglielmo nella versione italiana) è il capo del gruppo, ed ha una voce profonda ed autorevole. Tom (Maso in italiano) è il più giovane ed il più piccolo fisicamente, e quindi piuttosto debole per essere un troll. È l’elemento comico del gruppo, e la sua voce è stridula e nasale. Bert (Berto in italiano) è il ‘cuoco’ del gruppo. La sua voce non è particolarmente differente da quella di Guglielmo. L’aspetto interessante riguardo Berto è che ha perso un occhio: forse è questa la ragione per cui “blimey” è stato tradotto in italiano “mi caschi un occhio” piuttosto che semplicemente “accidenti” o “cribbio”.

Gollum, infine, è il personaggio più particolare de *Lo Hobbit*. Soffre di personalità multipla, ed il conflitto tra Gollum – la sua parte malvagia e oscura – e Sméagol – la parte giovane e innocente – è chiaramente mostrato nella sua voce. In realtà, Tolkien ha ‘creato’ Sméagol solo ne *Il signore degli anelli*. Questo significa che ne *Lo Hobbit*, Gollum era semplicemente una creatura malvagia e spaventosa. Solo anni più tardi è stato sottoposto ad una profonda analisi psicologica che ha fatto emergere Sméagol e tutta la sua storia.

Ne *Il signore degli anelli*, Gollum era fortemente caratterizzato dal suo disturbo psichico, e la sua schizofrenia era mostrata nella forma di un

dialogo tra le due parti opposte della sua personalità. Andy Serkis, regista della seconda parte del film ed interprete di Gollum, ha affermato che non voleva perdere questa caratterizzazione, in quanto il pubblico era già familiare con il personaggio così come era stato rappresentato nella trilogia, ed ha quindi riproposto Gollum alla stessa maniera, pur non essendo fedele all'idea di Tolkien ne *Lo Hobbit* (Falconer, 2013).

Tolkien ha sempre descritto dettagliatamente il modo in cui i suoi personaggi parlavano. Gollum parla tra sé e sé usando voci diverse a seconda che sia Gollum o Sméagol a parlare: Gollum ha una voce gracchiante e sibilante, e fa orribili rumori con la gola; mentre Sméagol parla in maniera gentile con una voce dolce e infantile.

Questo contrasto si riflette nella versione doppiata del film: Francesco Vairano, doppiatore e direttore del doppiaggio per *Lo Hobbit: un viaggio inaspettato*, ha dichiarato in un'intervista di aver incontrato alcune difficoltà nel doppiare Gollum, in quanto nel libro Tolkien scrive che strascica le 's', specialmente quando pronuncia la parola – in inglese – 'precious' (Vairano, 2012). Infatti, nel libro, la sua pronuncia è indicata come segue:

Romanzo in inglese

"Bless us and splash us, my precioussss!"

"What iss he, my precious?"

Romanzo in italiano

"Benedici e aspergici, mio tessoro!"

"Cosa sssarà, mio tessoro?"

Qui, un'altra volta, la traduzione letteraria viene in aiuto dei doppiatori: la traduzione *precious* / *tesoro* non poteva essere cambiata, pertanto Vairano l'ha mantenuta ed ha cercato di pronunciare la parola 'tesoro' così come era indicato da Tolkien. Ovviamente, essendo la 's' al centro della parola, non poteva essere strascicata così a lungo come è

invece possibile fare con la parola inglese ‘precious’; tuttavia l’interpretazione di Vairano è stata un successo, ed è diventata molto popolare già dai film de *Il signore degli anelli*.

Al contrario, il conflitto psicologico tra Gollum e Sméagol è impossibile da riprodurre nei sottotitoli scritti. Anche se in questo caso lo spettatore ha a disposizione l’audio originale, potrebbe risultare difficile comprendere che è lo stesso personaggio a parlare, giacché Gollum non è sempre nell’inquadratura quando parla, e i nomi dei personaggi non sono riportati nei sottotitoli. La scena degli “indovinelli nell’oscurità” è quella in cui ha inizio il conflitto tra Gollum e Sméagol, ma questo conflitto non riesce ad emergere dai sottotitoli.

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