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FOREIGN LANGUAGE ACQUISITION IN THE CASE OF d/DEAF LEARNERS: CONCEPTUALISING COMPLIMENTS THROUGH ORIGINAL SUBTITLES.

The closer translators are to the reality of their addressees,
the more efficient their work is likely to be
(NEVES, 2008: 173)

The consistently increasing use of inter-lingual subtitles in audiovisual products has become an extraordinarily interesting area of research in many fields, such as the academic and the professional dimension. In fact, the discipline of translating audiovisual product dialogues from the original to the target language is now considered a common practice which has led to several investigations into face-to-face communicative exchanges.

Because of the frequent production of American and English TV series, cartoons, and films, the need for audiovisual translation has grown and, parallel to this, among its flexible and wide application, the practice of subtitling has gained both an inter- as well as an intra-linguistic perspective due to its increasing use for the deaf and hard-of-hearing.

To be more precise, subtitling refers to the option of maintaining the original sound track and adding the textual version of the dialogues, which is generally superimposed over the film using various contemporary techniques. Subtitles can be placed either at the bottom or the top of the screen depending on the producer's preference. Días Cintas and Remael (2007: 13) clarify that verbal versions of dialogues engulfing the inter-lingual function imply the translation from source to target language and clearly become enormously useful to listeners who cannot understand the original language of the audiovisual product or to deaf and hard-of-hearing participants who need the textual version to be part of the audience. To this regard, Szarkowska (2010: 142), citing Szcpankowski (1998), describes the people with hearing impairments by using the audiological parameters offered by the International Bureau for Audiophonology, thanks to which four wide types of hearing problems are schematically recognised: *mild*, *moderate*, *severe*, and *profound*. With the definition *mild*, experts are referring to people with a hearing impairment of between 20 and 40 dB;¹ the second *moderate* category consists of individuals who have a hearing loss of between 41 and 70 dB; the group referred to as *severe* represents that part of the deaf community whose hearing impairment is between 71 and 90 dB; while the term *profound* identifies those people with a hearing loss of over 90 dB. Therefore, a person is considered *deaf* when his/her hearing impairment is so profound that he/she is unable to understand and re-elaborate oral linguistic information through the sense of hearing.

As stated by Szarkowska (2010: 143), "all the groups have varying linguistic needs and abilities and, consequently, different expectations when it comes to their preferred type of audiovisual translation mode" and, an example of this great heterogeneity can be represented by d/Deaf² viewers with sign language as their first language, who generally read more slowly than those people whose mother tongue is the oral one they are finding on the screen (DE LINDE and KAY, 1999).

In fact, since audiovisual text is an elaborate product, the process of understanding and decoding it can be difficult. In this respect, Zabalbescoa (2008) demonstrates the complexity of the audiovisual product defining it as a text including an act of communication made up of images and sounds. The audiovisual architecture consists of two broader factors: verbal and non-verbal means. The former, divided into audio and visual components, encompasses dialogue and the sense of hearing on the one hand, and written words and the ability to read them while the film runs on the other. The latter, which also consists of audio and visual components, includes music, visual effects, the picture and photography. Therefore, according to this classification, the four types of signs (audio-verbal, audio-non-verbal, visual-verbal and visual-non-verbal constituents) combine to create the complex and multifaceted structure of audiovisual products, which have to be decoded, then understood and interiorised.

Having specified that audiovisual texts for d/Deaf and hard-of-hearing viewers do not share the same channel of communication as the traditional ones, the use of subtitling becomes essential for the comprehension of the film. Through written words on the screen, in fact, people with hearing impairments can follow the characters' verbal communicative exchanges, thus conceptualising all the meanings that the scene offers through the viewing of a series of consecutive images.

The automatic co-operation between written words and images in the semiotics of the audiovisual texts means that the two components work together in an indissoluble way to create meaning.

In the light of these observations, promoting an interdisciplinary approach, original subtitles can be considered and used as a

helpful means in teaching deaf and hard-of-hearing Italians the syntactic and pragmatic rules governing complimenting speech acts in the English language.

Promoting a constructive comparison between mother tongue and foreign language, the comparative analysis of compliments - selected from famous Anglophone films and TV series – helps the learners' process of linguistic acquisition and cross-cultural pragmatic awareness.

As a result, the use of authentic audiovisual material for didactic purposes narrows the distance between language and learners, promoting the conceptualisation of complimenting speech acts. Through films, in fact, words become images and images become concepts.

1. Compliments: syntactic and pragmatic features

Compliments, incorporated into expressive speech acts, represent expressions that include a positive evaluation by the speaker to the listener (BEHNAM and AMIZADEH, 2011) and they are generally used for several reasons, such as:

- showing approval to the interlocutor's way of behaving, physical appearance, qualities, or tastes;
- expressing admiration;
- manifesting praise;
- creating a sense of solidarity between the conversation participants.

In this regard, a general overview on the possible situations in which speakers more easily pay compliments is given by Ishihara (2001), who, summarizing the main theoretical positions, lists the main functions of complimenting speech acts in six points:

1. to express admiration or approval of someone's work/appearance/taste (MANES, 1983; HERBERT, 1990);
2. to establish/confirm/maintain solidarity (MANES and WOLFSON, 1981; WOLFSON, 1989);
3. to replace greetings/gratitude/apologies/congratulations (WOLFSON, 1983, 1989);
4. to soften face-threatening acts such as apologies, requests and criticism (BROWN & LEVINSON, 1987; WOLFSON, 1983);
5. to open and sustain conversation (conversation strategy) (WOLFSON, 1983; BILLMYER, 1990; DUNHAM, 1992);
6. to reinforce desired behaviour (MANES, 1993).

As Bruti highlights, citing among the others Wolfson (1981, 1984) and Holmes (1988), complimenting speech acts can be considered as *routine formulae* that depend on relatively few syntactic patterns, eleven of which are the more commonly chosen³:

Manes and Wolfson		Holmes	
NP is/looks (really) ADJ	<i>Your sweater is really nice</i>	NP be (INT) ADJ	<i>That coat is really great</i>
		NP be looking (INT) ADJ	<i>you're looking terrific!</i>
I (really) like/love NP	<i>I like your coat</i>	I (INT) like NP	<i>I simply love that shirt</i>
PRO is (really) (a) ADJ	<i>That's a good question!</i>	PRO be a (INT) ADJ NP	<i>That's a good question</i>
		Pro be (INT) (a) ADJ NP ⁴	<i>That's really a great juice</i>
You V (a) (really) ADJ NP	<i>You did a great job</i>		
You V NP (really) ADV	<i>You sang that song very well</i>		
You have (a) (really) ADJ NP	<i>You have a beautiful living room</i>		
What a ADJ NP!	<i>What a pretty shirt!</i>	What (a) (ADJ) NP!	<i>What lovely children!</i>

ADJ NP!	<i>Good shot!</i>	(INT) ADJ NP	<i>Really cool ear-rings!</i>
Isn't NP ADJ!	<i>Isn't that ring pretty!</i>	Isn't NP ADJ!	<i>Isn't this food wonderful!</i>

2. Conceptualising compliments through subtitles

In the light of these observations, d/Deaf and hard-of-hearing individuals' learning of compliments, both as examples of expressive speech acts and as syntactic specific formulae, can be encouraged and developed through audiovisual products where, as stated above, the characters' motions, the atmosphere and the environment included in the scene can be useful means for understanding and conceptualising them.

To make the analysis clearer, compliments will be categorised according to their syntactic patterns.⁵

2.1. NOUN PHRASE is/looks (really) ADJ

SONNY: Are you down here for some specific value to the taxpayers, or are you just workin' on your tan?	SONNY: Tu pensi che la tua missione sia utile ai nostri contribuenti e sei venuto per la tintarella?
RICO: Well, hush my mouth! He's so funny! ⁶	RICO: Per la miseria! E' anche spiritoso! <i>Miami Vice (S1E1)</i> ⁷

(1)

Example 1 shows an explicit compliment addressed to the interlocutor: even if the speaker chooses the third singular personal pronoun, he is directly referring to his listener. This statement aims at highlighting the protagonist's sense of irony, which appears throughout the production's whole season. The illocutionary force of the utterance is, indeed, overt and has been faithfully translated in the target version. Only the adverb *so*, which is generally used to indicate the large extent or degree of something, has been omitted leaving room to the coordinative conjunction *anche*, which is a word used by Italian speakers to add value to something said previously and sometimes, as is the case here, it can also express the speaker's amazement.

PATRICIA: You are Frank Navavsky, are you? Your last piece in the <i>Observer</i> about Anthony Powell was brilliant.	PATRICIA: Tu sei Frank Navavsky, vero? Il tuo ultimo pezzo sull' <i>Observer</i> quello su Anthony Powell era fantastico.
FRANK: Really?	FRANK: Davvero? <i>You've got mail</i>

(2)

In example 2, the speaker, Patricia Eden, gives vent to her appreciation of Frank Navasky's article in *The Observer*. In this case, source and target versions seem to coincide completely. However, on closer analysis, the choice of the qualifying adjective *fantastico* in the Italian text does not appropriately reflect the illocutionary force of the term *brilliant* used in the original utterance. While the former is chosen only to denote some positive property or quality of the noun, the latter indicates that the entity to which it is referred is extremely clever, witty, impressive, or outstanding. The argumentative path, therefore, partially differs and so, a closer analysis could help d/Deaf learners to recognize the different approaches offered by the lines.

2.2. NOUN PHRASE be looking ADJ

FRANNIE: Hey Papi.	FRANNIE: Ciao Papi.
PAPI:	PAPI:

Good to see you. Look at you. You are looking good	Che bello vederti, piccola. Sei uno splendore.
FRANNIE: Is Pauline home?	FRANNIE: Anche tu stai bene. Pauline è in casa?
	<i>In the cut</i>

(3)

Example 3 once again shows an instance of praise obtained by the second speaker's explicit compliment. The Italian translator has followed the original version preferring faithfulness to the pragmatic dimension rather than to the linguistic one: as the English words highlight, the *present progressive* tense indicates a specific action at the present time, while the use Italian *presente indicativo* has a more general meaning. Since Italian does not offer an equivalent translation of the *present progressive* tense, the translator chose the better solution. In the Italian version, the complementing speech act is reinforced through the inclusion of the noun phrase *splendore*, which aims at enriching the original connotative semantic value of the adjective *good*.

POLECAT: Beast? Hey, beast, I was just talking to you. You're looking beautiful tonight. There is another beast out there going. "Where is my baby?"	PUZZOLA: La bestia? Ciao bestia. Che piacere, stavo proprio parlando di te. Hai un aspetto strepitoso stasera. Chissà quante bestioline ti muoiono dietro, eh..
	<i>Stuart Little – Call of the Wild</i>

(4)

Example 4 once again shows an instance of praise obtained by the use of the *present progressive*. Unlike the Italian line, the English version is more anchored to the present in which the characters are living since the speaker interacts using the *-ing* form. Although the argumentative path is the same, the Italian version differs from the original. In fact, the grammatical class changes and the original syntactic pattern is substituted by the inclusion of the verb *to have* and the noun phrase *un aspetto strepitoso*. The complimenting expression is reinforced in this case too: the qualifying adjective beautiful is not faithfully translated in order to leave room to the term *strepitoso*, which gives the noun an added value since it generally refers to someone very attractive and charming. Beside comprehending the pragmatic rules governing expressive speech acts, the example allows learners to compare and interiorise the different grammatical tenses included.

2.3. I (really) like/love NOUN PHRASE

WOMACK: Big Dela! It's the Dela man! There you go with the suits. I like that.	WOMACK: Ehi, è il nostro vecchio amico Dela. Anche oggi un vestito nuovo. Mi piaci! Sempre elegante l'amico!
DELACROIX: Good morning, Womack.	DELACROIX: Buon giorno Womack.
WOMACK: Looks like you going to an exorcism, man. I like the suit, though. It's pretty nice.	WOMACK: Ti fai fare i vestiti su misura , non è vero amico? Stai Bene!
DELACROIX: Thank you.	DELACROIX: Grazie.
	<i>Bamboozled</i>

(5)

Unlike the previous cases, this example shows an evident discrepancy between source and target language.

Although the illocutionary force is the same, the Italian hyper-translation gives a more detailed description of the speaker's thought. The first speaker, in fact, praises his addressee's elegance by specifying the fact that he is wearing a new suit.

This statement, again supported by the addresser's supposition of tailor-made clothes, may hide an additional illocutionary force suggesting that his interlocutor has the economic means to spend a great amount of money on suits and, therefore, implicitly suggesting the different social status between the main character and the other two.

The original compliments do not add any additional information concerning the addressee, but their function is most typically face-enhancing, aiming at showing the speaker's appraisal.

<p>DELACROIX: Why are you here?</p> <p>MYRNA: <u>Good question.</u> <u>Straight to the point. I like your style.</u></p> <p>Because of the content of the show we're going to expect some very spirited reactions</p>	<p>DELACROIX: Per quale motivo si trova qui?</p> <p>MYRNA: <u>Ottima domanda. Lei va dritto al punto. Mi piace la schiettezza.</u></p> <p>Considerando tutti i contenuti del vostro show, ci dobbiamo aspettare anche reazioni ostili e negative.</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><i>Bamboozled</i></p>
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(6)

The two versions show no apparent discrepancy.

From a pragmatic point of view, in fact, the illocutionary force of the utterance is the same. The female speaker expresses her appreciation of her interlocutor's way of interacting.

As we can see, the overt compliment remains at the end of the line, but the first statements have the same purpose. From a more linguistic perspective, however, the positive adjective used in the source language *good* is replaced by the superlative form *ottima*, which makes the complimenting expression stronger.

2.4. PRONOUN is (really) (a) ADJECTIVE / PRONOUN be [a (INT) / (INT) (a)] ADJ NOUN PHRASE

<p>BLAIR: If he finds me before midnight when the mask comes off, he can claim his prize.</p> <p>SERENA: And what's that?... oh, yeah... right, sorry!</p> <p>BLAIR: I just figured that after everything that's happened, or hasn't happened, I should find some way to make it special.</p> <p>SERENA: Well, that's really romantic, Blair.</p>	<p>BLAIR: Se mi trova prima di mezzanotte, prima della fine del ballo avrà il suo premio.</p> <p>SERENA: E quale sarebbe?... oh, se... giusto, scusa!</p> <p>BLAIR: Ho pensato che, dopo tutto quello che è successo, o non è successo, dovesse essere speciale.</p> <p>SERENA: Beh, è molto romantico, Blair.</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><i>Gossip Girl, S1E6</i></p>
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(7)

This is another example where the Italian version mirrors the original, and both syntactically and pragmatically, the two lines are the same. The expression of appreciation is explicit as is its illocutionary force. As in the original version, the speaker's compliment is reinforced by the inclusion of the adverb *really*, which is commonly used by mother-tongue speakers to express honest interest and surprise, and has been substituted by the indefinite adjective *molto*, chosen, in this case, to reinforce the speaker's opinion.

<p>BLAIR: That's a nice bracelet. Vintage, right? The diamonds look real.</p> <p>JENNY: That's because they sort of are. The man at the store lent it to me.</p>	<p>BLAIR: E' un bel braccialetto. Vintage, giusto? I diamanti sembrano veri.</p> <p>JENNY: In un certo senso lo sono. Me lo ha prestato quello del negozio.</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><i>Gossip Girl, S1E6</i></p>
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Example 6 once again shows an instance of praise obtained by the first speaker's explicit compliment. Both from the syntactic and the pragmatic perspective, the Italian translator follows the original text. The translation of the qualifying adjective *nice* with the term *bel* respects the original meaning of the complimenting statement.

DELACROIX: Thank you. Thank you. That was great. Please...	DELACROIX: Grazie grazie. Siediti per favore.
SLOAN: That was great. Fantastic.	SLOAN: Un'esibizione stupenda, fantastica!
HONEYCUTT: Thank you.	HONEYCUTT: Molte grazie.
DELACROIX: What is your background?	DELACROIX: Quali esperienza ha fatto?
HONEYCUTT: I'm a actor. You know, I act.	HONEYCUTT: Sono un attore, recito sempre, sono un attore.
	<i>Bamboozled</i>

(9)

As in the example above, the syntactic pattern of this form of complimenting is traditionally classified as one of the most common. Although the illocutionary force is the same, the Italian version offers a different syntactic structure. While the first speaker's remark of admiration is omitted in the Italian version, the female interlocutor's Italian compliment only counts one noun phrase. In both scripts the utterance is explicitly directed at the interlocutor who obeys the audience's expectation by saying thank you.

2.5. You VERB (a) (really) ADJECTIVE NOUN PHRASE

DUNWITTY: Listen, let's sit down. I know you're the most creative person I've got on staff. I mean, <u>you're hip</u> , you know what's happening.	DUNWITTY: Senta, io lo so che lei è la persona più creativa di tutto il miostaff di autori. <u>Lei è colto</u> , si tiene sempre informato.
	<i>Bamboozled</i>

(10)

These examples of compliments can be considered as one of the most typical options for this expressive speech act and the illocutionary force adaptation was probably not difficult for the Italian subtitling process. The examples show the speaker's overt will to demonstrate his honest appreciation of his interlocutor's qualities, which include artistic creativity and personal update.

According to a semantic analysis, however, the Italian version shows a more formal register than the original linguistic code: *hip* is, in fact, an American slang term generally depicting a person who knows and follows what is fashionable, for example in clothes and music.

Having to face the absence of a term that could convey the same cultural connotation, the Italian translators decided on a more common expression (super-ordinate term) with the aim of getting closer to the target audience.

ZACH: Hey, shut up! You gotta anticipate that rush.	ZACH: Stia zitto. Devi anticipare il lancio.
FRIEND: Cool, no, of course I do.	FRIEND: Certo che si. Certo che si
ZACH: You did a great job.	ZACH: Bella l'idea!
	<i>Wedding Crashers</i>

In this case the speaker refers to his interlocutor's ability to play rugby. The perlocutionary force of the man's line, whose meaning is changed consistently in the translated version, revolves around his will to remedy the earlier negative observation. Although a faithful translation would be acceptable, the Italian version offers a different compliment consisting only of one noun phrase. However, the choice of the word *idea* does not mirror the original illocutionary force conveyed by the term *job*: the former, indeed, generally refers to something abstract, while the second one, as in this specific case, indicates an action or something done well.

FATHER: Aye. You should have let us know, lad, not that we're not very pleased to see you again. All cured too, eh?	FATHER: Però avresti dovuto dircelo. Non che non ci faccia piacere rivederti... e poi, tutto guarito eh?
ALEX: That's right, Dad they did a great job on my gulliver , I'm completely reformed.	ALEX: Esatto. Hanno fatto un lavorone pa! M'hanno rimesso completamente a nuovo.
FATHER: Aye.	FATHER: si.
ALEX: Well, still the same old place then, eh?	ALEX: beh, qui è tutto come prima, eh?
	<i>A Clockwork Orange</i>

(12)

Example 12 is taken from the cult film *A Clockwork Orange*, whose plot and themes must be considered when analysing the complementing speech act. The protagonist of the story, Alex, has just come back home after being "cured" and, wanting to reassure his parents, he refers to the people who have been taking care of him. In doing this, he pays them a compliment by stating that they worked really well. The English version is enriched through the inclusion of the expression *on my gulliver*. This noun is a slang term which, in this specific case, means *head*, but it has been totally omitted in the Italian version. The noun phrase *a great job* changes in the Italian text too: instead of a faithful translation, experts chose *lavorone*, an altered augmentative noun. As a result, the use of this film for didactic purposes can also help learners to enter the world portrayed by the original version, promoting an even growing awareness of the socio-cultural differences between source and target versions.

2.6. You VERB NOUN PHRASE (really) ADVERB

MAX: Gretl, why don't you sing?	MAX: Gretl, perchè non canti?
GRETLE: I can't. I've got a sore finger.	GRETA: Non posso. Mi fa male un dito.
MAX: But you sang so beautifully the night of the party! Come on, all of you! Try something you know.	MAX: Ma hai cantato tanto bene la sera della festa. Andiamo, tutti insieme. Provatene una che conoscete.
	<i>The Sound of Music</i>

(13)

Although there is no noun phrase after the verb, this statement can be included in this category because it mirrors the syntactic pattern mentioned above. The translators, in this case, opted to follow the original text, offering a faithful adaptation of the original line. What makes the Italian expression of approval partially different from the English one - but surely closer to the target audience - is the use of the Italian *present perfect* tense form *hai cantato* enriched by the adverb of manner *bene* instead of the use of the *past historic* tense form. The illocutionary force of the original utterance is still maintained by the addition of the modifier *tanto* which aims at reproducing the value of the adverb *beautifully*, used to describe something excellent, aesthetically pleasing.

JOE: What happened?	JOE: Cos'è successo?
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NELSON: Eh. JOE: Oh, hell! NELSON: How are you? JOE: Dad, you did pretty well. At least you didn't marry her. NELSON: Welcome aboard.	NELSON: Eh. JOE: Ahh. NELSON: Come stai? JOE: Eh, dai papa, sei stato bravo. NELSON: Benvenuto a bordo.
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You've got mail

(14)

As in example 13, the line has no noun phrase but it can still be grouped in this syntactic pattern. Although the illocutionary force of the compliment is the same, the argumentative path used in the translation differs completely from the original text. In the English version, the expression of approbation is obtained by focusing on the listener's action: the speaker explains the reasons for his compliment by specifying that he approves the fact that his father did not marry the woman with whom he has just broken up. The Italian version does not provide any explanation and the speaker's personal appreciation of his father's behaviour remains more general and unclear.

2.7. You have (a) (really) ADJECTIVE NOUN PHRASE

NUN: Maria, the love of a man and a woman is holy. You have a great capacity to love. You must find out how God wants to spend your love. MARIA: But I pledged my life to God. I pledged my life to his service. NUN: My daughter if you love this man, it doesn't mean you love God less.	SUORA: Maria, l'amore tra uomo e donna è sacro. Tu hai una gran capacità di amare. Devi scoprire come il Signore vuole che tu la impieghi. MARIA: Ma ho votato la vita a Dio, al suo servizio. SUORA: Figlia mia, se ami quest'uomo, non significa che ami meno Dio.
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The Sound of Music

(15)

The two versions show no discrepancy. Both from a pragmatic point of view and from a syntactic perspective, the two lines are the same. The speaker expresses her appreciation for the interlocutor's inner sphere, referring to her way of taking care of people and loving them. In this case the illocutionary force of the original version is clear and can be easily reported in the Italian translation.

GRANDFATHER: Cecilia's store. JOE: Who's that? GRANDFATHER: Cecilia Kelly. <u>Lovely woman.</u> I think we might have had a date once. Or maybe we just exchanged letters. JOE:	NONNO: Il negozio di Cecilia. JOE: Chi è? NONNO: Cecilia Kelly. <u>Una donna meravigliosa.</u> Credo di esserci uscito insieme, una volta. O forse ci siamo solo scritti lettere. JOE:
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You wrote her letters?	Le scrivevi lettere?
GRANDFATHER:	NONNO:
Mail. It was called mail. Cecilia had beautiful penmanship. She was too young for me but <u>she was enchanting.</u>	Per posta. Allora esisteva la posta. Cecilia aveva una bellissima calligrafia. Era troppo giovane per me ma <u>era incantevole.</u>
	<i>You've got mail</i>

(16)

The case above also offers an example of explicit compliment, even if not directly addressed to the woman. In the actual conversation, the protagonist of the story, Joe, and his grandfather are talking about a woman who had been part of the old man's life for a short time: the expressions of appreciation throughout the lines demonstrate the speaker's positive opinion about her. As in cases 14 and 15, the target version faithfully follows the source text. The only discrepancy can be found in the choice of the hyper-translation of the adjective *beautiful*. In fact, the translators decided to reinforce the speaker's complementary behaviour by choosing the same qualifying adjective as the original version, using, however, the superlative degree.

2.8. What a ADJECTIVE NOUN PHRASE!

MAX:	MAX:
A singing group all in one family. You'll never guess Georg!	Un'intera famiglia di cantanti. Non indovinerai mai, Georg.
CAPTAIN VON TRAPP:	CAPTAIN VON TRAPP:
What a charming idea! Whose family?	Che incantevole idea! Di chi è la famiglia?
MAX:	MAX:
Yours.	E' la tua.
	<i>The Sound of Music</i>

(17)

This is another example in which the Italian version completely mirrors the English one: both syntactically and pragmatically the two compliments are the same.

MARIA:	MARIA:
I don't remember anymore.	Non ne ricordo più.
BRIGITTA:	BRIGITTA:
Your face is all red.	Ha il viso tutto rosso.
MARIA:	MARIA:
Is it? I don't supposed I'm used to dancing.	Davvero? Non sono abituata a ballare.
BARONESS:	BARONESS:
Why that was beautifully done. What a lovely couple you make.	E' stato incantevole. Siete una bellissima coppia.
	<i>The Sound of Music</i>

(18)

Unlike the previous case, in example 18 source and target texts differ. The syntactic pattern is not reported in the Italian version, where the complimenting utterance has been simplified by choosing a more common syntactic structure of the Italian language.

2.9. ADJECTIVE NOUN PHRASE!

SONNY:	SONNY:
Hospitable gesture , Mr. Calderone.	Ho apprezzato il suo gesto , signor Calderone.
CALDERONE:	CALDERONE:
Thank you.	Grazie.

SONNY: I look forward to doing business with you.	SONNY: Sarà un vero piacere lavorare con lei. <i>Miami Vice (S1E1)</i>
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(19)

Syntactically, this compliment is considered as one of the more traditional forms. The speaker directly addresses the interlocutor expressing his positive comment through a simple noun phrase including a qualifying adjective and a noun. Preferring to make the expression of approbation clearer, the compliment changes in the Italian version: the speaker specifies his positive thought with a complete sentence.

DUNWITTY: I'm about to go run upstairs with this. If CNS doesn't have the balls, somebody else will. My beautiful black princess. Delacroix!	DUNWITTY: Adesso io vado ai piani superiori e se quegli stronzi non avranno le palle di produrre questo show mi rivolgerò alla concorrenza. La mia bellissima principessa nera. Delacroix! <i>Bamboozled</i>
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(20)

A brief description of the scene will help to understand and analyse example 20. After having expressed his enthusiasm for the project that his two interlocutors have just presented, the speaker, one of the bosses of the independent television network the other two characters work for, decides to leave the room to share the new proposal with his superiors. He says goodbye to the female character celebrating her beauty. The expressive speech act aims at verbally admiring her physical aspect by metaphorically defining her as a princess.

2.10. Isn't NOUN PHRASE ADJECTIVE

BARONESS: Maria, you've returned! Isn't it wonderful , Georg?	BARONESSA: Maria, è tornata! Non è meraviglioso , Georg? <i>The Sound of Music</i>
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(21)

In the example above, source and target versions present, both pragmatically and syntactically, the same complimenting expression. What differs from the original text is the translation of the first line in which the speaker's register is more formal. Considering the absence of any traditional conventional formula and the constraint form *you've*, the English version shortens the social distance between the two characters, which is not respected in the subtitles of the Italian text.

KATHLEEN: Good Morning, Christina. CHRISTINA: Morning Kathleen. KATHLEEN: Isn't it just the most beautiful day? CHRISTINA: I guess. Yeah, sure.	KATHLEEN: Buon giorno, Christina. CHRISTINA: Buon giorno, Kathleen. KATHLEEN: Non è una giornata semplicemente meravigliosa? CHRISTINA: Immagino di sì. Sì, certo. <i>You've got mail</i>
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(22)

This line has been included because it is an ambiguous example of a complementing speech act. In fact, the speaker is not actually referring to a person but about the day on which they are living. What is relevant to know, however, is that the protagonist of the story is happy because she is falling in love with the man she has met on the Internet and so everything she sees around her is marvellous. She therefore expresses a positive comment on the reality that surrounds her.

3. Conclusions

As explained above, the teaching of compliments and their syntactic structure to d/Deaf learners can be carried out through the use of original subtitles. The nature of the dialogues used in audiovisual products, in fact, can generally be compared to every-day communicative exchanges because fictional characters' lines aim at simulating real face-to-face conversation (FREDDI and PAVESI, 2005). Moving from this presupposition, the comparative analysis of source and target language can be a useful means towards understanding and interiorising new linguistic patterns and pragmatic principles with the help of our mother tongue.

From a grammatical perspective, every compliment categorised offers a clear and simple way to explain how syntax works in the English language and what the most common expressions of praise and approbation in English are. The Italian translation can thus help learners with hearing impairments to approach a second language because their comparative analysis can foster people's ability to decode and classify every utterance according to its syntactic and even morphological features.

Moreover, a pragmatic approach focusing on complementing speech acts could aim at promoting learners' understanding of the main maxims governing face-to-face conversations. The ability to recognise and analyse compliments in the foreign or second language, as well as other expressive speech acts, can help users to understand the pragmatic principles guiding the English speakers.

Furthermore, acknowledging the pragmatic rules of the source language of audiovisual products can be useful in narrowing down any cultural differences that are typical of heterogeneous linguistic environments. Many mono-cultural references, often not reported in the target version, can be recognised and understood through a more accurate reading of the original text.

Furthermore, as Neves (2009: 154) explains, "interlingual subtitles usually bridge the gap between the SL [sign language] and the language of the target audience" allowing people with hearing impairment to be fully integrated in the process of "watching" a movie. In fact, as the author points out (p. 155), watching any kind of image alone does not allow viewers to grip the whole; therefore, the inclusion of subtitles becomes essential for the comprehension of the plot.

Therefore, using original subtitles for didactical purposes is a precious means for helping d/Deaf learners to approach the English world, both linguistically and culturally.

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1 Decibels.

2 The term *deaf* (in this uncapitalized form) simply means unable to hear: generally, those individuals partially lacking in the sense of hearing are considered *deaf*. They have Italian (or any other language) as their first language and they may lipread or use hearing aids. The use of the capitalized consonant *d* refers to sign language users, who may attend schools for deaf and tend to identify themselves as culturally deaf.

3 Bruti gives the syntactic patterns in "Translating compliments and insults in the Pavia Corpus of Film Dialogue: two sides of the same coin?" included in *Analysing Audiovisual Dialogue. Linguistic and Translational Insights* edited by Freddi and Pavese (2005: 145).

4 Considering the relatively small difference between this syntactic pattern and the other two above it, in the following chapter the three structure have been grouped together.

5 The argumentative path fosters a broad-spectrum analysis, whose approach is based on a syntactic and pragmatic study. However, in consideration of the aim of the project, a careful viewing of every scene selected is highly suggested in order to make students with hearing impairments achieve a deeper understanding of what is reported through words. As stated in the

previous chapter, in fact, images in this case become an essential means for giving a sense to every line written of the pages.

6 Every compliment analysed has been made more evident through the use of bold. Moreover, every compliment not belonging to the syntactic category taken into consideration in the section has been emphasised through underlining.

7 In the case of TV series the consonant *S* refers to the production's season and *E* stands for the episode taken into consideration.

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