Sara Corrizzato*

STRATEGIES OF *GLOCALIZATION* IN AUDIOVISUAL TRANSLATION: DUBBING AVA DUVERNAY'S *SELMA* INTO ITALIAN

First, language can be considered a vessel in which thoughts are encapsulated and transmitted from one mind to another. Second, language can be seen as a lens which focuses cognition on certain aspects of the world and away from others. Third, language can be seen as a barometer which reveals a communicator's cognition to the audience.
(Robbie Sutton, "The Creative Power of Language in Social Cognition and Intergroup Relations")

1. Introduction

Thirty years on from the exemplary three Selma to Montgomery marches led by Martin Luther King, Ava DuVernay directed the production of a featured movie, *Selma*, which portrays the complex events that persuasively contributed to the recognition of African Americans' right to vote. The aim of the film was to celebrate the enormous effort that Martin Luther King and his supporters made in the fight for getting the Civil Rights Acts passed that same year.
Released in the US cinemas in 2014, the Italian version of the movie was made available to the target audience in 2015, and received in both cases, positive reviews. Stephen Farber from *The Hollywood Reporter* suggests that

> Ava DuVernay's *Selma*, as the title suggests, tackles the subject head-on — and, more importantly, does it justice (…) In a season of so many bloated, overlong films, this two-hour recounting of a few crucial months in 1965 seems just the right length. Intelligently written, vividly shot, tightly edited and sharply acted, the film represents a rare example of craftsmanship working to produce a deeply moving piece of history[1].

In line with Farber's observations, A. O. Scott from *The New York Times* praises the work as highly original by claiming that

> Ms. DuVernay, working from a screenplay credited to Paul Webb, has stripped away layers of fond memory and retroactively imposed harmony to touch the raw, volatile political reality of the mid-1960s — the courage and the cravenness, the idealism and the calculation, the visible and invisible divisions and rivalries[2].

Besides worldwide reviewers' willingness to celebrate Ava DuVernay's skilful direction during the filming, the audiovisual product has been acclaimed for the explicit 'humanisation' process of the story's main character, Martin Luther King (played by David Oyelowo). Recognised as the most innovative and challenging aspect of the film, the Reverend's representation as a 'real' man, with limits, fears and sins, has been positively accepted by the audience: the African American icon, who deeply contributed to mould the future of his population, unveils his inner dimension, brimming with doubts and worries about the contemporary political

* *Sara Corrizzato (sara.corrizzato@univr.it) received a PhD in English Linguistics from the University of Verona (2012). She published* Spike Lee's Bamboozled: A Contrastive Analysis of Compliments and Insults from English into Italian *(Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2015). Her areas of research include pragmatics and translation theory, audiovisual language, ELT and teacher education. She is currently teaching English Language and Translation at the University of Verona and ESP at the University of Brescia.*
[1] http://www.hollywoodreporter.com/review/selma-afi-fest-review-748467. Last Visited June 18, 2016.
[2]http://www.nytimes.com/2014/12/25/arts/in-selma-king-is-just-one-of-the-heroes.html?ref=movies&_r=1. Last Visited June 18, 2016.

agenda. King's multifaceted reality is also summarised by Peter Traver from *Rolling Stone*, who brilliantly describes the character:

> There are no halos in DuVernay's film, and that extends to King. *Selma* isn't a biopic – it celebrates community action – but in seeing King through the prism of one crucial event, the film offers a rousing portrait of a born preacher not without sin. Oyelowo's stirring, soulful performance deserves superlatives. His delivery of King's speeches, especially "How Long, Not Long," rings with emotion. But it's in quiet moments of humor, heartbreak and stabbing self-doubt that we see a man in full[3].

Paolo Mereghelli, promoting the same message to Italian viewers, describes the iconic African American figure portrayed in the film by stating that

> *Selma* ricostruisce quei mesi tormentati, in cui la strategia pacifista di Luther King si confrontò con le opposizioni interne e la violentissima reazione delle forze dell'ordine. E lo fa con scrupolo puntiglioso e chiari intenti didattici, senza nascondere nemmeno la crisi coniugale, innescata dall'impegno totalizzante del leader nero. Ma senza mai trovare lo spunto per superare i limiti di un'ingombrante didascalicità[4].

Although recognising the undisputed value of the audiovisual product, supported by an excellent cast and a flawless balance between the account of what happened during that short period and an exploration of deeper issues connected to the black/white atavistic struggle in the USA, part of the film's success, as many reviews highlighted, is undoubtedly due to the unexpected representation of the black Reverend. The complexity of the character, whose public role is constantly intermixed with his most intimate sphere, is made even more captivating by his popular speeches and his excellent way of 'playing' with the language.
With the aim of analysing how, and to what extent, King's oratory skill to shaping and consequently introducing the iconic figure to the source as well as to the target audience, this essay focuses on Martin Luther King's linguistic choices both in public speeches and in more private communicative exchanges. The linguistic approach, including a comparative analysis of the two versions, will also shed light on the most relevant changes that the adaptation process for Italian viewers brought about. Such discrepancies (though apparently slight) will prove to be decisively influential in the construction of King's and other characters' identities to the point that target viewers can actually encounter 'different' characters than in the original version.

2. Are African American Vernacular English characteristics deliberately excluded?

King's oratory is extensively known and his rhetorical strategies have been widely studied (Miller, Sipra and Rashid; Selby; Vail; Wilson; Leff and Utley) with the aim of understanding the different ways in which he influenced and shaped African Americans' perception of the on-going socio-political issues (in)directly connected to the Civil Rights Movement. His narrative framework guides the audience through the complex circumstances that his black community had to face, summoning up the need for united and non-violent action.
From a closer linguistic perspective it is worth noting that the Reverend, being one of the pioneers of the modern persuasive political system, paid specific attention to the variety of English that the people in front of him expected him to use and was fully aware of the fact that violating audience expectations could have a negative impact on the effectiveness of his speeches. Interestingly, although this aspect is not so widely known, he skilfully shifted from African American Vernacular English (AAVE) to General American English (GAE) depending on who was attending the speech situation. As Wolfram, Myrick, Forrest and Fox clarify, in his speeches King "presents and represents his regional, ethnic and stylistic identity in different contexts,

[3] http://www.rollingstone.com/movies/reviews/selma-20141223#ixzz4CCY5Nm4w. Last Visited June 21, 2016.

[4] http://www.iodonna.it/viaggi/weekend/2015/cinema-14-febbraio-film-recensioni-50253300192.shtml?refresh_ce-cp. Last Visited June 23, 2016.

providing insight into his dynamic identity and his different stances in speech events that also involve diverse audiences and interlocutors" (7), exploiting different linguistic variables to take an audience-centred approach.
According to this observation, an analysis of the original movie script brings to light significant results, both from a linguistic and from a more general sociolinguistic perspective: not only is African American Vernacular English not chosen as the main language for film's characters, King never actually uses it at all. This choice is confirmed by the fact that no typical AAVE linguistic markers are present in any public communicative exchanges or private interactions (mainly with his wife). In order to detect any African American English linguistic traits, a multi-layered investigation was carried out.

- From a phonological point of view, King's system mirrors that of the standard variety, abandoning the most frequently recognised African American variables (for a detailed classification see Green 2002 and Tottie 2002) since:
    - short [e] before nasal sounds /n/, /m/ and /ŋ/ is not pronounced [ɪ];
    - diphthong [aɪ] before voiced consonants or at the end of the words is maintained;
    - the [ɛr] sound is not lowered;
    - vowels are not nasalized when a voiced nasal phoneme follows the vowel;
    - no word-final consonant cluster reduction;
    - word-initially voiceless [θ] and voiced [ð] are pronounced;
    - word-medially and word-finally sound [θ] and [ð] are pronounced;
    - liquid [l] at the end of the words is not vocalized;
    - no vocalization of post-vocalic /r/;
    - the word-ending nasal sound - ing [ŋ] is generally pronounced[5].

- Syntactic and morphological patterns also testify the absence of AAVE and confirm the use of the mainstream variety:
    - copula/auxiliary presence
    - traditional use of past tenses
    - absence of double negation
    - presence of the suffix '–s' in the case of present simple tenses, genitive and plural forms.

Contrary to expectations, Du Vernay's film presents a character who chooses to forego using specific and systematic features of his mother tongue in preference of standard American English[6]. As expected, both in public speeches and in private dialogues King's language does not contribute to establishing any kind of imbalance between white Americans and the black community through linguistic diversity. In this way, by strategically choosing not to use specific linguistic (and therefore cultural) markers, the African American character avoids discrimination: the Reverend's language contributes to categorically refusing to represent the traditional African American stereotype. As Labov (1972a) declares at the beginning of the seventies, African American English is socially perceived as linguistically deficient, confirming a "color-marking" American system[7]. He also points out (1972b) that mainstream white culture has always tended to see AAVE, as well as other non-standard varieties, as "accumulations of errors caused by the failure of their speakers to master standard English" (237). As an inevitable consequence, such a vision has unfortunately strengthened the portrayal of African American 'coon'[8] characters: depicted as mentally inferior, illiterate and

[5] A careful viewing of the film is strongly suggested for an in-depth examination of the phonological and prosodic characteristics, however, the following clip can be taken as an explanatory scene to focus on the aforementioned aspects: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zvYZoqFCX_8. Last Visited July 23, 2016.
[6]Such a preference is further supported by choosing a British actor for the part: David Oyelowo (born in Oxford in 1976 to Nigerian parents) began his career in 1999 with the Royal Shakespeare Company, acting in several Shakespearian plays as well as several British TV series. His origins and early career therefore confirm firstly, British English as his mother tongue and, secondly, his partial unfamiliarity with the African American heritage and history.
[7] http://www.theatlantic.com/past/docs/issues/95sep/ets/labo.htm. Last Visited July 25, 2016.
[8] As Green (1993) explains, "coon (c.1860) is an abbreviation of raccoon and 'the chocolate coloured coon' (usually a white person in black face) was for years a stable of mass entertainment (…). By the late 19C the meaning was unequivocally racist, and used as such in Australia too" (266).

morally primitive (Means Coleman), black individuals in white producers' twentieth-century audiovisual products were asked to speak AAVE to support these theories. Crucially, although AAVE carries positive connotations within its community of speakers, it has become a powerful vehicle for prejudice. Taking this aspect into consideration, Rahman explains that "the dilemma for many African Americans is that language that serves as a symbol of ethnic identity, may also serve as the focus for discrimination in mainstream society" (142). As Edwards (63) indeed clarifies,

> (…) the very essence and the use of such words illustrate, again, the potency of language-as-symbol, the degree to which deep psychological and social wells are being tapped, and the obvious conclusion that most discussions of what could be termed 'the social life of language' are, in their essence, not really about language at all. They are about identity.

In the film under scrutiny, this hegemonic perspective is taken into account and subverted by King's conscious choice to prefer a standard variety rather than his own ethnolect. The reconfiguration of himself and of the other African American characters can be thus interpreted as a 'form of cultural politics' in which "language is being used to make social inequality invisible" (Macedo in Freire 20). By representing themselves as 'bilingual' speakers, they tend to overcome "asymmetries of power relations along lines of language, race, ethnicity and class" (Macedo, Dendrinos, Gounary 19). As a consequence, the role of standard American English is modified: being the only language spoken by the entire cast, it can no longer be thought of as a symbol of cultural hegemony. Social identities are therefore negotiated through language, chosen as a vehicle to transmit content rather than to entrap individuals in pre-set roles.
This search for social equality, obtained by avoiding AAVE as a leading language in speech events, is once more confirmed by the very few cases in which some of the specific linguistic features of black English are used by secondary characters: only two short scenes contain syntactic characteristics of AAVE.

> 00.04.32
> Girl1: See, I asked my mama *if could she make* my hair like Coretta Scott King had hers at the Washington March.
> But she said that was too grown.
> Girl2: Oh, I love her hair.
> Girl3: I heard *she don't even put* rollers in it. It's just like that. But I studied it. I know how *she do it*[9].
>
> **Example 1**

> 00.51.50
> Speaker1: Yeah. Jimmie... *He born in* '38. *He a Army man*. I mean, he was... Was an Army man. In the Army a spell. *He say*, "Pa, you gonna vote before you done". That's what he said. *He tell me*[10].
>
> **Example 2**

Parallel to the almost absolute absence of morpho-syntactic features of AAVE is the limited use of AAVE slang. Specifically, culturally bound derogatory terms for addressing white people are not present except for one specific case:

[9] Included in the introductory part of the film, these lines are pronounced by three of the little girls that were killed in Birmingham by a Ku Klux Clan bomb in 1963.
[10] After Jimmie Lee Jackson's murder, King joins his relatives at the place where the corpse is kept. When he arrives, the only family member there is Lee Jackson's grandfather, who remembers his nephew with the aforementioned presentation. Along with the linguistic analysis carried out in the present essay, this scene is certainly worth reflecting on since, apart from the little girls in the previous examples, he is the only man who speaks AAVE. Being the oldest character of the African American community portrayed in the film, he has an intimate knowledge of black heritage and the history of slavery, and symbolises African American roots. The use of AAVE is therefore a means to maintain the African American lingua-cultural background and preserve its tradition.

01.18.54
Speaker1: I got enough to kill a couple of them, *crackers*[11], that's what I got!

Example 3

Moreover, only another example of AAVE slang can be found within the whole film:

01.09.40
Speaker1: For this march, you're on your own with *De Lawd*[12] and his disciples.

Example 4

The negation of a specific lingua-culture repertoire is also confirmed by the almost absolute absence of extra-linguistic cultural-bound references within the film. Except for places in Southern USA connected to racial segregation, only one scene includes micro-cultural allusions. Upset and disconcerted at realising that his political plans did not achieve fully positive results, King remembers some of the African American activists murdered between 1955 and 1963. Although almost unknown to the rest of the United States' population, Medgar Wiley Ever, Herbert Lee, George Lee and Lamar Smith[13], the only references to African American heritage and culture included in the film, are iconic figures within the black community.

Furthermore, the most challenging speech situations in which linguistic variables play a crucial role in the construction of social identities and their mutual understanding, are those created by King and Johnson's interaction. Although similar in their aim to persuade the interlocutor to agree on the subjective point of view, the Reverend's and the President's manipulation of language seems to exploit very different strategies. As the following examples illustrate, King's categorical refusal of a linguistic canon associated to African Americans demonstrates his desire to impose himself and his community as American citizens (and not to represent black people as a stereotyped minority). On the other hand, Johnson's 'friendly' attitude towards the African American icon confirms his underlying intention to convince King to keep his 'harmless' attitude.

00.09.28
LBJ: Well, I'll tell you. I'm a tall son-of-a-bitch, but this close to the new Nobel laureate and with all those other trinkets you've been collecting lately, I feel tits-high to a puppy dog.

MLT: Well, thank you, Mr. President.

Example 5

In addition to the informal register that the President uses in his interaction with King, a hearer-oriented perspective is also guaranteed with the aim of ensuring King's approval:

00.10.11
LBJ: I feel damn fortunate to have someone as statesmanlike as you leading the movement. And I want you to go on leading it. No one else. Not one of these militant Malcolm X types.

[11] One of the most common derogatory terms used by African American English speakers when referring to those of European ancestry, especially white American citizens (see Green 1993: 272).
[12] 'De Lawd' is the equivalent of 'The Lord' in African American English. In this specific situational context, the expression is chosen to refer to Reverend King.
[13] An African American activist from Mississippi, Medgar Wiley Ever (1925 – 1963) was assassinated by a member of the White Citizens' Council, a group formed in 1954 to contest educational integration and civil rights activity. Herbert Lee, popular in his community for being one of the few African American men to own a Mississippi cotton farm, was shot dead in 1961, but the white murderer was never arrested. Reverend George Lee (1923 – 1955) is considered to be the first martyr in the fight for African American civil rights in the USA. He constantly urged black people to register and vote until he was shot and killed. Black farmer and civil rights figure, Lamar Smith (1892 – 1955) was also shot dead in broad daylight at close range on the lawn of the Lincoln County courthouse in Brookhaven (Mississippi).

Example 6

An explicit need to narrow the social distance between King and himself emerges from Johnson's words: both his linguistic and communicative behaviour moves away from 'standard' normative beliefs and ideologies that his role would usually require him to maintain, consciously avoiding any highlighting of "the social features on which national belonging will come to be based" (Joseph 2010,15).
Therefore, as the last example shows, the roles tend to be subverted: King's personal impact on the other character is far stronger than any viewer would expect. Using Gilroy's words, the slave presents "a consciousness that exists for itself", while the master becomes the representative of "a consciousness that is repressed in itself" (60).

00.12.04
LBJ: This voting thing is just gonna have to wait.
MLK: It can't wait, Mr. President.
(…)
LBJ: It's too damn far and too damn dangerous!
MLK: Then propose new legislation, Sir.

Example 7

The contrast between Johnson's and King's linguistic manipulative techniques can be summarised as follows:

Lyndon B. Johnson	Martin Luther King
1. Chooses an informal register	1. Chooses a formal register
2. Tends to maintain a hearer-oriented perspective	2. Tends to maintain a speaker-based condition
3. Tries to narrow the social distance	3. Restores formal circumstances
4. Opts for indirectness	4. Opts for directness

Table 1: Johnson's and King's linguistic manipulative techniques

As the examples demonstrate, opposition between the two public figures is not achieved by using vernacular markers, but through two other essential components: the content of utterances itself and the communicative behaviour each of them chooses to adopt. Every element in the speech event is carefully selected to the point that the atavistic struggle between black and white is forgotten. Indeed, both characters tend to floor the audience by offering a self-representation that does not mirror the traditional portrayal viewers might expect to witness: the President of the United States explicitly violates Western principles connected to "normative social distance" (Ludu 89) opting instead to go against the public's perception of the presidency. Abandoning the popular representation of the US president as a powerful, self-made and self-contained hero (Dallek), the character within the film tends to leave his self-imposed inflexibility "urging people (in this case Martin Luther King) of very different viewpoints "to come reason together", while still entrusting in the balm of friendly persuasion as a vital part of his own special "Johnson treatment" (Kotz 425). Analysing the aforementioned strategy from a pragmatic perspective, Johnson's image seems partially weakened and leaves enough room for the African American character to emerge. As mentioned above, the Reverend imposes himself, and his rights, by surmounting the barrier set by the world's monolingual system and promotes a new linguistic equilibrium according to which neither cultural nor ethnic imbalance can exist.

3. From the original to the dubbed version: the Italian process of 'glocalization'

As Jakobson points out, audiovisual translation as a subject of study can involve three approaches, known as 'intralingual', 'interlingual' and 'intersemiotic'. In order to make the classification clearer, he explains that the first method includes the translation of a verbal sign into a different one belonging to the same linguistic code, whereas the so-called interlingual technique includes the translation of the original text into another language. The third approach, called 'transmutation', refers to the translation of a verbal sign into a non-

verbal sign system. In fact, translating any kind of text implies transferring the multiple meanings of the source text to the recipient's language text. This process, however, involves a complex series of choices to be made by the translator because, as Venuti (1995) explains, "(he) negotiates the linguistic and cultural differences of the foreign text by reproducing them and supplying another set of differences, basically domestic, drawn from the receiving language and culture to enable the foreign to be received there" (482). Taking into consideration the architecture of audiovisual products, Ranzato (36) suggests that the texts are irreversibly cultural-embedded in the source environment and, therefore, the difficulty lies in adapting the original product to the target social system, whose cultural identity, codes and tastes are generally different.

Concerning this aspect, Delisle, Lee-Jahnke and Cormier explain that translated materials, including audiovisual productions, can be 'source-oriented' or 'target-oriented'. The first approach includes the strategy of 'foreignization', i.e. retaining information and references from the source culture without getting closer to the recipients' needs and tastes. On the contrary, with the term target-oriented, translators follow the method of 'localisation', defined by Venuti (1995) as 'domestification', with which they aim at adapting the original text and its contents to the target linguistic and cultural preferences.

In light of these considerations Eco (2003), assuming that the two approaches are complementary, clarifies that 'foreignization' and 'domestification' can coexist and be selected in relation to the text involved in the translation process.

Once the scientific and theoretic nature of these two approaches was clarified, the relevance of the term 'localisation' developed conjointly. According to Mazur (2007: 161), the concept of 'localisation' should "always be discussed in the context of globalisation". In fact, while the latter definition means "(cultural) homogeneity and impose[s] sameness" (ibid.), the former focuses more on target audiences' cultural and linguistic background. However, as mentioned in the previous paragraph, the two tendencies can co-exist, generating what the sociologist Robertson defines as 'glocalization', i.e. the breaking down of strict boundaries between the global and the local. Such definition aims at considering the importance of domestic heritage in a world where everything is internationally integrated.

More specifically, in the field of audiovisual translation, everything adapted to the target audience does not include linguistic translation only. It also implies a cultural process (Paolinelli and Di Fortunato 1) that is permanently tied to the complex intersemiotic system of which it is constructed. Everything the viewer watches or listens to is, in fact, part of a multi-system involving visual, non-visual, verbal and non-verbal elements which cannot be separated in any case. Indeed, every written or uttered word bears specific connotative traits that are irreversibly associated to the audience's socio-cultural background.

At this point, a successful 'glocalized-oriented' translation needs to take into account what Pedersen (41) theorises as Extra-linguistic Culture-bound References (ECRs), including every expression belonging to the source cultural dimension, which is not directly linked to the language system. They are generally divided in three categories, known as trans-cultural, mono-cultural and micro-cultural ECRs. The more the cultural allusion is linked to the socio-cultural background of the source language, the more it is considered a micro-cultural element. On the other hand, Pedersen categorises any reference not directly associated with the source culture as trans-cultural, and, therefore, easily understood by target viewers.

In the Italian dubbed version of the film, translation choices are mainly faithful to the source text, since Martin Luther King's linguistic traits are maintained. A comparative analysis of the two scripts, in fact, demonstrates that there are only a few cases of neutralisation, compensation and explicitation that, in general, are merely used to adapt English syntactic structures to the Italian language or to elicit specific terminology, which needs to be specified for the target viewers' comprehension. However, although the adaption can paradoxically be considered as linguistically faithful to the original version, the two end-products offer the audience two completely different interpretations of Martin Luther King's use of the linguistic vehicle. Unlike the original script, the target text inevitably tends to lose the clear and crucial opposition to the lingua-cultural hegemony of Standard American English described in the previous paragraph. In fact, the absence of African American English is unfortunately not so evident to the target audience. Since the Italian language lacks the specific idiolect spoken by African American people living in the peninsula, dubbed versions of African American characters cannot maintain the typical traits of AAVE, which inevitably become neutralised. In fact, the morpho-syntactic features and specific lexicon of black English have no equivalent in Italian, therefore the contraposition between such a variety of English and other varieties is mitigated or even totally

removed. The refusal of Standard American English as the symbol of intellectual and social power, as well as the rejection of a stereotypical representation of the African American through AAVE, are almost completely lost in the dubbed version.
It is also worth noting that the target version of the film differs from the source text in two specific cases:

a) white officials' derogatory terms are often stronger in the dubbed version
b) President Johnson's informal register is not faithfully reproduced in the Italian version.

In reference to the first point, in some scenes, specifically those connected to circumstances of rivalry among black and white individuals, the Italian dubbed version includes some cases of free translation, as the following example shows:

Source text	**Target text**
White Official: What's going on here, boy? What we got here? What we got here? Speaker 1: Jimmie! Sit down! Speaker 2: No, Mama, I'm sick of this. S1: Jimmie! Don't do it. WO: Do you have a problem, boy? S2: I'm sick of this! I just told you... WO: What'd you think, boy? What'd you think?	WO: Oh, ma sentitelo! Il ragazzino! Oh, oh, oh! Cosa hai da dire, *scarafaggio*? S1: Jimmie! Siediti! // S1: Siediti! Jimmie! WO: Hai qualche problema, *scimmia*? S2: Sono stufo! Le avevo detto... WO: Che vuoi fare, *sporco negro*? Che *cazzo* vuoi fare?

Example 8

The translation choices of the aforementioned examples overtly aim at guaranteeing a 'glocalized-oriented' adaptation: the free translation strategy is indeed a precious method both for remaining faithful to the original audiovisual product and to preserve a target-oriented perspective. The addition of derogatory terms in the Italian version can be a means for guiding viewers towards a better understanding of the even more aggravating and exasperating circumstances that led African Americans to march from Selma to Montgomery, under the charismatic guidance of Martin Luther King. Indeed, the majority of the target audience is not completely aware of the violent and bloody conflicts between white and black Americans that occurred during the Civil Rights Movement and, above all, of the several cases in which black people were offended, humiliated and beaten by white extremists. Therefore, although the adaption is not faithful from a linguistic point of view, the translators' solutions can provide precious ingredients for depicting the very complex American social context of the 50s and 60s. Moreover, the Italian expressions chosen to aggravate the situation are clear evidence of the 'glocalization' process: 'scimmia' and 'sporco negro' are Italian derogatory terms commonly associated to individuals belonging to black ethnic groups. In this specific situation they are useful for explaining to Italian viewers the white extremists' violent and racist attitude towards African Americans' attempts at integration.
The image of the President of the United States is also modified: the informal register that categorises Martin Luther King's counterpart is almost totally neutralised in the Italian version. As the following examples show, the well-known "Johnson treatment", otherwise defined as his set of irresistible persuasion tactics, is replaced by a more formal register, which contributes to depicting a 'different' character from the original script.

Source Text	**Target Text**
LBJ: Well, I'll tell you. I'm a tall *son-of-a-bitch*, but this close to the new Nobel laureate and with all those other *trinkets* you've been collecting lately, I feel *tits-high* to a *puppy dog*.	LBJ: Beh, sarò sincero. Sono alto, per la miseria, ma essere vicino al vincitore del Premio Nobèl e di tutte le onorificenze che ha collezionato, mi fa sentire un maledetto nano.

Example 9

Source Text	**Target Text**

LBJ: Now, seeing as I can't convince you to work with *my* administration in an official capacity inside the White House, I feel *damn* fortunate to have someone as statesmanlike as you leading the movement. And I want you to go on leading it. *No one else*. Not one of these militant Malcolm X types.	LBJ: E visto che non riesco a convincerla a lavorare per il governo e ad accettare un incarico ufficiale alla Casa Bianca, mi sento fortunato che sia uno statista come lei a guidare il movimento e voglio che continui a farlo. Non voglio uno di quei militanti alla Malcolm X, tanto per capirci.

Example 10

In both cases, the adaptation of the aforementioned examples includes a more formal register: in the first line, the Italian version substitutes all the terms that Johnson uses in the original dialogue (highlighted in italics) with more general expressions, which contribute to making the character lose his intellectual incisiveness. The second example, although less explicit, suggests the same strategy: the illocutionary force is recognized as the same in both versions, but the locutionary choices partially differ; in the original version, Johnson's hearer-orientated approach is stronger than in the Italian translation.
Such a manipulation of the US President's public image is also confirmed by the translation of vulgar expressions, for example, the weaker 'damn' and some stronger ones deriving from the word 'fuck':

Source Text	**Target Text**
(00.58.51) LBJ: It's too *damn* far and too *damn* dangerous! MLK: Then, propose a new legislation, Sir. (01.47.17) LBJ: George, you seen all those demonstrators out front of the White House keeping my Lady Bird awake the whole *damn* night?	 LBJ: E' troppo lontano e troppo pericoloso! MLK: Allora, proponga una nuova legge, signore. LBJ: George, hai visto quei dimostranti davanti la Casa Bianca che tengono la mia Lady Bird sveglia tutta notte?

Example 11

Source Text	**Target Text**
(01.48.07) LBJ (to George Wallace): Are you trying to shit me, George Wallace? Are you trying to fuck over your President?	 LBJ (a George Wallace): Mi prendi per il culo, George Wallace? Stai cercando di fregare il tuo Presidente?

Example 12

As the lines included in example 11 clearly show, the popular swear word 'damn' is always neutralised in the dubbed version, which takes on a more formal register. Furthermore, in this translation approach the adaptation of the expression 'fuck over' (in example 12) is not faithfully reproduced.
As the examples demonstrate, Johnson's formality of language is reconfigured in the Italian version. Such a choice, apparently irrelevant to the untrained eye, inevitably causes a cogent change in the audience's perception of the character's communicative behaviour. His speeches, in fact, tend to mirror the linguistic choices Italian viewers would expect from the world's most powerful figure, the President of the United States of America. In doing this Johnson's social identity is reconfigured, and the ideological symbol of white supremacy partially reproduced.

4. Conclusions

Despite its apparently faithful translation into Italian from a linguistic angle, the dubbed version of Ava DuVernay's *Selma* presents extremely significant discrepancies in the depiction of the film's two leading figures. As can be seen in the original audiovisual product, Martin Luther King's communicative behaviour gives the source audience anything but a stereotypical representation of an African American character (Guerrero, Means Coleman, Boogle, Greco Larson, Moody), refusing the pre-set canon according to which

black individuals are oppressed by white participants. A closer look at the Reverend's linguistic choices shows that no opposition through usage of the vernacular language – which viewers would perhaps expect to find – is exploited. Instead, a clear and determined social position is established through the actual contents of the words uttered. In doing this, the black character's identification is not limited to the controversial socio-cultural context in which he fought, but is extended so that he comes to represent an international icon who imposes his social identity using discourse as a "powerful mechanism for sustaining power" (Fairclough 61). To this regard, the representation of President Lyndon B. Johnson is certainly also worth reflecting on: his strategy of violating the formal conversational principles, generally expected of such an important public figure, contributes to restoring an interpersonal balance, which helps mask their different ethnic background. In fact, the original film brilliantly confirms Kotz's investigation, which clarifies that:

> The alliance between Johnson and King was critical in turning opportunity into a realised American dream. They played their roles brilliantly. The dynamic interaction between the two men was remarkable, as well as their willingness and their ability to overcome differences, accommodate each other's political needs and work in complementary ways (xii).

By failing to recognise the great impact that the characters' linguistic identity has on how the audience shapes the two men's individuality, the dubbed version of the film is not able to model them. Johnson's and King's original linguistic identities, which should "come into operation *before* the functioning of language as a tool for representation and communication, and *determine* that functioning" (Joseph 2006, 83), are reconfigured to offer a more target-oriented translation.

Works Cited

Boogle, Donald. *Toms, Coons, Mulattoes, Mammies, and Bucks: An Interpretive History of Blacks in American Film*, London/ Oxford /New York: Bloomsbury Publishing, 2001.

Dallek, Robert. *Lyndon B. Johnson: Portrait of a President*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005

Delisle, Jean, Lee Jahnke, Hannelore and Monique C. Cormier. *Terminologie de la Traduction. Translation Terminology. Terminología de la Traducción. Terminologie der Übersetzung*. Amsterdam: John Benjamins, 1999.

Eco, Umberto. *Dire quasi la stessa cosa. Esperienze di traduzione*. Milano: Bompiani, 2003.

Edwards, John. *Language and Identity*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009.

Fairclough, Norman. *Language and Power*. London: Routledge, 2013.

Farber, Stephen. "'Selma': AFI Fest Review." The Hollywood Reporter. http://www.hollywoodreporter.com/review/selma-afi-fest-review-748467. Last Visited June 18, 2016.

Freire, Paul. *Pedagogy of the Oppressed***:** *30th Anniversary Edition*. New York: Bloomsbury Academic, 2014.

Gilroy, Paul. *The Black Atlantic: Modernity and Double Consciousness*. London: Verso, 1993.

Greco Larson, Stefanie. *Media & Minorities: The Politics of Race in News and Entertainment*. Washington DC: Rowman & Littlefield, 2006.

Green, Jonathon. *Slang down the Ages. The Historical Development of Slang*. London: Kyle Cathie Limited, 1993.

Green, Lisa. *African American English. A Linguistics Introduction*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002.

Guerrero, Ed. *Framing Blackness: The African American Image in Film (Culture and The Moving Image*). Philadelphia: Temple University, 1993

Jacobson, Roman. "On Linguistic Aspect of Translation." *On Translation*. Ed. A. Reuben Brower. Harvard Studies in Comparative Literature. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1959. 232 – 239.

---. "Identity." *Language and Identities*. Eds. Carmen Llamas and Dominic Watt. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press. 2010. 9-17.

Joseph, John E. *Language and Politics*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2006.

Kotz, Nick. *Judgment Days: Lyndon Baines Johnson, Martin Luther King, Jr., and the Laws that changed America*. Boston: Mariner Books, 2006.

Labov, William. "Academic Ignorance and Black Intelligence". *The Atlantic* 72 (1972a): 59-67.

---. *Language in the Inner City: Studies of Black English Vernacular*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania, 1972b.

Leff, Michael, Utley, Ebony. A. "Instrumental and Constitutive Rhetoric in Martin Luther King Jr.'s 'Letter from Birmingham jail'." *Rhetoric and Public Affairs* 7.1 (2004): 37-51.

Ludu, Andrei. *Boundaries of a Complex World*. Berlin: Springer, 2016.

Macedo, Donaldo, Bessie Dendrinos, and Gounary Panayota. *The Hegemony of English*. London: Routledge, 2003.

Macedo, Donaldo. *Literacies of Power: What Americans Are Not Allowed to Know*. New York: Westview Press, 1994.

Mazur, Iwona. "The Metalanguage of Localization: Theory and Practice." *The Metalanguage of Translation*. Eds. Gambier Yves and Luc van Doorslaer. Amsterdam: John Benjamins, 2007. 145-166.

Means Coleman, Robin. *African American Viewers and the Black Situation Comedy. Situating Racial Humor*, New York: Garland, 1998.

Mereghelli, Paolo. "Selma - La strada per la libertà". Corriere della Sera- Iodonna. http://www.iodonna.it/viaggi/weekend/2015/cinema-14-febbraio-film-recensioni-50253300192.shtml?refresh_ce-cp. Last Visited June 23, 2016.

Miller, W. Jason. "Don't turn back': Langston Hughes, Barack Obama, and Martin Luther King, Jr." *African American Review* 46.2-3 (2013): 425-438.

Moody, David L. *The Complexity and Progression of Black Representation in Film and Television*. Lanham: Lexington Books, 2016.

Paolinelli, Mario, Di Fortunato Eleonora. *Tradurre per il doppiaggio. La trasposizione linguistica dell'audiovisivo: teoria e pratica di un'arte imperfetta*. Milan: Hoepli, 2005.

Pedersen, Jan, "How is Culture Rendered in Subtitles?" MuTra 2005-Challenges of Multidimensional Translation: Conference Proceedings. http://euroconferences.info/proceedings/2005_Proceedings/2005_Pedersen_Jan.pdf. Last Visited July 22, 2016.

Rahman, Jacquelyn. "Middle Class African Americans: Reactions and Attitudes Toward African American English." *American Speech* 83.2 (2008):141-176.

Ranzato, Irene. *La traduzione audiovisiva*. Rome: Bulzoni, 2010.

Robertson, Roland. *Globalization: Social Theory and Global Culture*. London: SAGE, 1992.

Scott, Anthony O. "A 50-Mile March, Nearly 50 Years Later: In 'Selma,' King Is Just One of Many Heroes." The New York Times. http://www.nytimes.com/2014/12/25/arts/in-selma-king-is-just-one-of-the-heroes.html?ref=movies&_r=3. Last Visited June 18, 2016.

Selby, Gary S. *Martin Luther King and the Rhetoric of Freedom: The Exodus Narrative in America's Struggle for Civil Rights*. Waco: Baylor University Press, 2008.

Sipra, Muhammad Aslam, Rashid, Athar. "Critical Discourse Analysis of Martin Luther King's Speech in Socio-Political Perspective". *Advances in Language and Literary Studies 4/1* (2013): 20-26.

Sutton, Robbie M. "The Creative Power of Language in Social Cognition and Intergroup Relations." *The Dynamics of Intergroup Communication*. Eds. Giles, Howard, Reid, Scott and Jake Harwood. Bern: Peter Lang, 2010. VIII, 331. 105-128.

Tottie, Gunnel. *An Introduction to American English*. Oxford: Blackwell, 2002.

Traver, Peter. "Selma: Ava DuVernay's look at MLK's March Against Racial Injustice Stings with Relevance to the Here and Now." *The Rolling Stone*. http://www.rollingstone.com/movies/reviews/selma-20141223#ixzz4CCY5Nm4w. Last Visited June 21, 2016.

Vail, Mark. "The 'Integrative' Rhetoric of Martin Luther King Jr.'s 'I Have a Dream' Speech". *Rhetoric and Public Affairs* 9.1 (2006): 51-78.

Venuti, Laurence. *The Translation Studies Reader*. New York: Routledge, 2004.

---. *The Translator's Invisibility: A History of Translation*. London: Routledge, 1995.

Wilson, Kirt. H. "Interpreting the Discursive Field of the Montgomery Bus Boycott: Martin Luther King Jr.'s Holt Street Address." *Rhetoric and Public Affairs* 8.2 (2005): 299-326.

Wolfram Walt, Caroline Myrick, Jon Forrest, and Michael J. Fox, "The Sociolinguistic Significance of Martin Luther King Jr." submitted to *American Speech*, 2015.