

**MINUTELLA, VINCENZA. (RE)CREATING LANGUAGE IDENTITIES IN ANIMATED FILMS. DUBBING LINGUISTIC VARIATION. SWITZERLAND, PALGRAVE MACMILLAN, 2021, 424 PP., ISBN 978-3-030-56637-1**

*(Re)Creating Language Identities in Animated Films* is a timely and outstanding contribution to a challenging area of study that has intrigued many researchers and scholars in translation over the years (see, for example, Chiaro, 2008; Corrius & Zabalbeascoa, 2011; Ranzato, 2018; Dore, 2019; Parini, 2019; Yau, 2019). The topic is meticulously and exhaustively discussed by the author, who provides the reader with deep insight into linguistic variation and language identities in dubbing. How do language varieties tend to be portrayed and recreated in Italian dubbed texts? How do accents contribute to stereotyping characters in animation? What strategies are commonly adopted by translators and dubbing practitioners to deal with linguistic identities? These are some of the key questions brought up and addressed by Minutella throughout the nine chapters that constitute the book. By means of personal communications with 16 dubbing professionals (mostly dubbing directors, dubbing actors and dialogue writers) and a corpus-based study consisting of 37 English-language animated films released between 2001 and 2017, the author presents a clear and detailed picture of the linguistic representation of foreign-accented characters in Italian dubbing.

After an introductory chapter (Chapter 1) on the methodology followed and the most important ideas awaiting the reader, Chapter 2 attempts to “shed light on the various people, factors and stages that impinge on the final dubbed product” (p. 375), especially within the context of the Italian language but extensible to other languages too. The chapter offers insights into the agents participating in the translation, adaptation and recording phases as well as into the multiple texts and documents accompanying the source video files. The author also devotes several pages to the essential role of voices and dubbing actors in (re)creating identities and engaging the target audience in the filmic experience.

The translation of language varieties and multilingualism is discussed in Chapter 3 of the monograph, which presents the reader with factual data obtained from previous scholarly research and expert testimonies. Minutella’s conversations with dubbing practitioners provide interesting food for thought, especially regarding the strategies to translate linguistic varieties in English-language animated films. Taking De Bonis’s (2014) classification as a starting point, the author proposes five strategies to deal with language variation: neutralisation, quantitative reduction, preservation, hypercharacterisation (Parini, 2009), and adaptation/localisation/domestication/transformation. She

also points out that the linguistic heterogeneity of the source version is very often minimised in dubbing because of the difficulty of finding similar connotations in different languages.

Chapter 4 introduces the corpus of animated films and describes the languages and the regional or social varieties spoken by the characters in the original English-language movies. The author gives a comprehensive account of the regularities identified in the corpus under analysis, classified by language groups: native varieties of English, non-native varieties of English, and foreign languages or languages other than English. As mentioned above, a total of 37 films meeting several selection criteria has been examined qualitatively in the monograph. To be included as part of the corpus, the films needed to be relatively recent, big budget, produced by US film studios, and relevant in terms of linguistic variation. The three research questions posited by the author are as follows: (i) which varieties and languages do the animated characters in the films speak; (ii) what are the most frequent language varieties spoken; and (iii) are specific accents and language varieties used systematically to create specific stereotypes?

The subsequent chapters (Chapter 5, 6, 7 and 8) focus on the target texts, namely the dubbed versions into Italian. Their aim is to ascertain how language variation is portrayed and recreated in Italian dubbings and how the characters' identities are successfully conveyed through the language varieties used in the dubbed versions of the animated films.

Chapter 5 deals with native varieties of English such as American, British, Australian, Scottish, among others, and how these are treated in the Italian text from a translational point of view. The key idea explored in this chapter is whether characterisation through regional or geographical variation in English is preserved in the Italian versions or, on the contrary, neutralised and levelled out. Geographical and social differences are also investigated in Chapter 6 but this time in languages other than English. After examining the 12 films in the corpus that include dialogues in foreign languages, Minutella arrives at interesting conclusions about the most frequent strategies in dubbing to represent foreign languages. Chapter 7 revolves around linguistic identities when characters speak non-native varieties of English (e.g. Spanish-accented English, French-accented English, Russian-accented English, German-accented English, etc.). Her study shows the most common strategies used in every one of these ethnolects and elaborates on the close relationship between foreign-accented English, stereotypes, and comedic purposes in dubbing. The examples provided illustrate how the characters' foreignness is recreated in the Italian dubbed versions and the reasons behind the decisions made by the dubbing team and/or the marketing department.

Chapter 8 is specifically devoted to the recreation of characters who speak Italian-accented English in the original version. In other words, the author attempts to explore “what happens when the third language in the original film (L3) coincides with the second language or the language of the dubbed version (L2)” (p. 351). A number of examples from the animated films under study are examined and illustrated in this chapter to show the apparent connection between regional accents, comedy and characterisation. As explained by Minutella, the stereotypes associated with the Italian language also play a part when deciding on the dialect or accent spoken by a certain character, although she acknowledges that the varieties from the South of Italy are selected more often than the Northern varieties.

The book ends with the conclusion in Chapter 9, where the author summarises the main patterns and regularities spotted in the use of language varieties in both the source (how identities are created) and target (how identities are recreated in dubbing) versions. Findings reveal that speaking English natively or non-natively tends to determine the strategies adopted in the dubbed version. For instance, characters speaking native English in the source dialogue are generally devoid of any regional accent when dubbed into Italian, whereas the presence of languages other than English in the original film is usually retained as a way of portraying a given character in dubbing. On the other hand, characters speaking foreign-accented English tend to speak foreign-accented Italian in the dubbed version, especially when it is important to represent the animated character both verbally and visually. Such findings successfully demonstrate, as observed by the author, that it is indeed possible to establish several patterns in the way characters’ identities are (re)created by means of linguistic variation and varieties in dubbing.

In sum, *(Re)Creating Language Identities in Animated Films* is an engaging reading not to be missed by anyone interested in the fascinating world of linguistic varieties and multilingualism in dubbing. The reader of this book will gain a deep and thorough understanding of the way English accents are represented in dubbed texts and the way characters are connoted in Italian dubbings. The eminently academic and practical perspective of the monograph will be especially attractive for researchers and scholars in the field of audiovisual translation and dubbing in particular, but it could also be relevant for translation students as well as practitioners. The expert testimonies compiled by the author together with the comprehensive corpus of animated movies analysed are the perfect addition to a well-researched and carefully crafted volume that contributes to enhancing the available literature in a flourishing area of research.

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