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TRANSLATION AT WORK

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Identifying and Translating Irony across Cultures

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Abstract

Emerging as an approach to life, in which the ironist adopts an attitude of scepticism and mistrust in relation to everyday language (Colebrook 2004), irony can be considered a particular aspect of daily conversation and, as Gibbs and Colston (2001: 187-200) aptly remark, it "[…] is particularly useful in conveying both humorous and hostile attitudes in everyday communication" and it is elicited mostly via implicatures and inferences (Attardo 2001).

Much of the research on irony has focused on the rhetorical use of it in literature and poetry (Byron, 1972), written and spoken language (Anolli, Ciceri and Infantino: 2002) or in relation to humour (Chiaro, 2006). Since irony is subjective and pervasive in language, this work aims to build up an objective framework that can contribute to its identification in conversational settings in a more systematic way. Another research question concerns its usage across cultures, namely English and Italian.

In order to carry out this analysis 10 different American and British films have been chosen from different genres and some selected ironic exchanges have been investigated. The comparative analysis between the English and the Italian version has taken into account Pavesi's (2005) and Malone's (1988) strategies even though, translation strategies do not constitute one of the purposes of my research, but only a means which help the investigation of the transposition of the Language Devices which convey irony from a language to another. In other words, these strategies allow to shed light on the cultural factors which are behind the choices of the elements for translating irony. Contrastively speaking, in ironic contexts exaggeration seems to be more pervasive in Italian than in English in line with the cultural orientations outlined by Katan (2004).

1. Introduction

Taking its name from the Greek *eiroineia* (dissimulation), irony has been an object of study since ancient times and purports the meaning of an utterance or a situation that is different from the literal one. Today it emerges as an approach to life in which the ironist adopts an attitude of scepticism and mistrust in relation

to everyday language (Colebrook, 2004).

So far, irony has been analysed in literature and poetry (Byron, 1973), in written and spoken language (Anolli, Ciceri and Infantino, 2002) or as part of humour (Chiaro, 2006). These studies have pointed out that people commonly uses irony as a device "[…] conveying both humorous and hostile attitudes in everyday communication" (Gibbs and Colston 2001: 187-200), elicited by the hearer mostly via implicatures and inferences (Attardo, 2001). Furthermore, since irony is embedded in everyday conversation, it is difficult to separate it from naturally occurring language and for this reason this study presents and applies an objective 'Framework for Irony' to systematically identify it. This model has proved to be a valid support to 'dissect' communicative exchanges according to pre-constructed steps, by outlining the main phases on which irony is based. Although it is part of a wider research, this work aims to study the cross-cultural differences which may arouse in conversations where irony is the outcome of an intentional process, namely a relatively larger use of Overstatements in Italian than in English.

A selection of 81 film conversations in various contexts has been collected from different film genres[1]. A comparison between English (ST) and Italian (TT) version aims to highlight what language devices are used in both cultures. In particular, this qualitative method is based on an analytical pragmatic approach focused on the ironic mechanisms at work in the sequences singled out on the basis of extensive full-length viewings. In carrying out the comparative analysis between the English and the Italian version, Pavesi's (2005) and Malone's (1988) strategies have been taken into consideration.

However, translation strategies, in the context of this study, only constitute a means to help investigate the transposition of what has been called a "language device" which conveys irony from a language into another. In other words, these strategies have allowed me to shed light on the cultural factors which are behind the choices of the elements for translating irony.

This study is organised as follows: after an outline of the theoretical background to the study in the following section, an illustration of the criteria in collecting data will be provided in section 3 whereas section 4 will outline the methodological framework. Further section 5 will introduce those cultural aspects which might influence the translation of irony in film conversations and results are provided in section 6. Conclusions will follow.

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[1] Examples on how the Framework for Irony can be applied to conversations are provided in the Appendix of Terminiello's research (2008).

2. Irony in conversation: a combination of theoretical perspectives

Recent studies by psychologists, linguists, and philosophers have proposed different theories to explain how people use and understand irony. Owing to its pragmatic and linguistic complexity no single theory is capable of accounting for the diversity of ways in which ironic language can be understood (Gibbs, 2000) and produced. Therefore different theories have been elaborated to understand many deep aspects of ironic communication.

In this section a brief overview of the main theories (Terminiello, 2008) on irony will be introduced in order to illustrate and explain the main phases of an ironic exchange. As a matter of fact by means of these theories The Framework for Irony has been assembled, as showed in Section 4. This Framework has allowed to schematise ironic conversations 'dissecting' them in their main elements both at a language level and at an interactive one.

The first theory taken into consideration in this study is the pragmatic proposal of Grice (1989) and Searle (1979). According to them the ironic utterance consists in "saying p intending not-p", and then it entails a "semantic gap between what is said and what is meant" (cf. Anolli, Infantino, and Ciceri 2001: 144). Likewise, a speaker's tone of voice allegedly provides an important cue for listeners to infer ironic meaning (cf. Attardo et al. 2003: 243-260).
A different theory considers irony a type of echoic mention, in which speakers echo, or repeat, a previous stated utterance or belief, which in context is recognised as conveying ironic meaning (cf. Sperber and Wilson 1995; Wilson and Sperber 1992: 53-76).

Another proposal suggests that pretence is the essence of irony (Clark, 1996; Clark and Gerrig, 1984) since ironists pretend to believe in what they say and at the same time signal such a pretence by means of paralinguistic markers to strategically create a sort of complicity with their addressee.

A fourth possibility considers irony as part of humour even though it is particularly used to convey a speaker's negative attitude towards a given situation (cf. Colson and O'Brien 2000: 1557-1583). The "discrepancy between reality and expectations" causes a contrast that triggers speakers' ironic remarks in order to express their positive or (mostly) negative attitude towards an event or a person. Studies reveal that speakers use more frequently a positive statement to sarcastically convey negative meanings (Gibbs and Colston 2001: 188-200).

Broadly speaking, irony is a strategy, adopted by the addresser, to conceal the hidden meaning behind the literal one. Speaking ironically enables speakers to deny their covert communicative intentions if questioned by someone else (Brown and Levinson, 1978).

An analysis reported by Gibbs (2000: 5-27) revealed that people tend to use different forms of irony in order to disclose either blatant or subtle interpersonal meanings. This study reveals that 50% of the time, students use irony for jocularity, 28% of the time they use sarcasm, 12% hyperbole, 8% rhetorical questions, and 2% understatements.

All the theoretical models illustrated so far, highlight the importance both of the inferential activation of scripts/frames that are affected by the contexts in which irony takes place (Attardo 2001: 166-185) and by the relationship between different actors in which "participants are raised to a higher level of knowledge, so as to generate an inner circle and banish people who cannot understand" (Attardo 2001: 166-185). In fact, it is worth pointing out that irony may easily be either not-understood, not-appreciated or misunderstood. This might be due to the lack of "counterfactual cue" namely those "irony cues (e.g., hyperbole and the ironic tone of voice) […] present at the same time" (Kreuz 1996: 23-38) which have to be inferred from the context.

3. Data

This work is based on a corpus of 10 films whose choice is governed by the following criteria:

> 1) As many genres as possible where irony has been found have been chosen;
> 2) all the sequences have been selected on the basis of the ironic Op position uttered by the speaker in the English version, who can be represented either by the main character of the film or by other characters;
> 3) differences in speakers' gender, age, social status have been neglected in this selection.

The versions of the films selected are those in their original and in their dubbed Italian versions and the analysis has been conducted on the basis of their verbal soundtrack. The films have been collected according to their year of release from 1991 to 2006. This wide period has been chosen in order to avoid to confine this study to a particular moment in film history.

It is worth highlighting that the context plays a crucial role in the extraction of the sequences. Thus, since irony develops according to different modalities, a fixed length was not considered a criterion for selection so as to avoid unnecessary information. Moreover, to help the reader to understand the environment of ironic utterances, the section related to "contextual" and

"textual assumption" in the framework adopted, has been filled with useful information.

These films represent events primarily constructed upon conversation exchanges, where irony appears as a remark in its forms of sarcasm and kind irony. Furthermore, they are American and British films well-known on the American, British and Italian markets and played by famous actors. In particular, one of the films (Meet the Fockers) is a sequel to Meet the Parents as an example of ironic intertextuality where ironic utterances might be better understood if referred to the previous film. Likewise, the only thriller selected is "Saw", a well known film in Italy that is part of a sequel.

The films included in the corpus are:

1. *Analyze This - Terapia e Pallottole* (USA 1999, H. Ramis - Comedy, Crime)
2. *City Slickers - Scappo dalla città: La vita, l'amore e le vacche* (USA 1991, R. Underwood - Comedy, Adventure, Western)
3. *Four Weddings and a Funeral – Quattro Matrimoni e un Funerale* (UK 1994, M. Newell - Comedy, Romance, Drama)
4. *Meet the Parents – Ti presento i miei* (USA 2000, J. Roach - Comedy)
5. *Meet the Fockers – Mi presenti i tuoi* (USA 2004, J. Roach - Comedy)
6. *Pirates of the Caribbean: the Curse of the Black Pearl –Pirati dei Caraibi: la Maledizione della Prima Luna* (USA 2003, G. Verbinski Action, Adventure, Comedy, Fantasy)
7. *Prime* (USA 2005, B. Yonger - Comedy, Romance)
8. *Pulp Fiction* (USA 1994, Q. Tarantino - Crime, Drama)
9. *Saw – L'Enigmista* (USA 2004, J. Wan - Crime, Horror, Mystery, Thriller)
10. *Sliding Doors* (UK 1998, P. Howitt - Drama, Romance)

4. Methodology

Identifying irony is not an easy task above all when trying to define its borders. Starting from a model proposed by the psychologists Anolli, Ciceri and Infantino (2001) the framework explained in this section has been enlarged and adapted to investigate film conversations. As Figure 1 shows, the 'Framework for Irony' is constituted by three main phases and one filter.
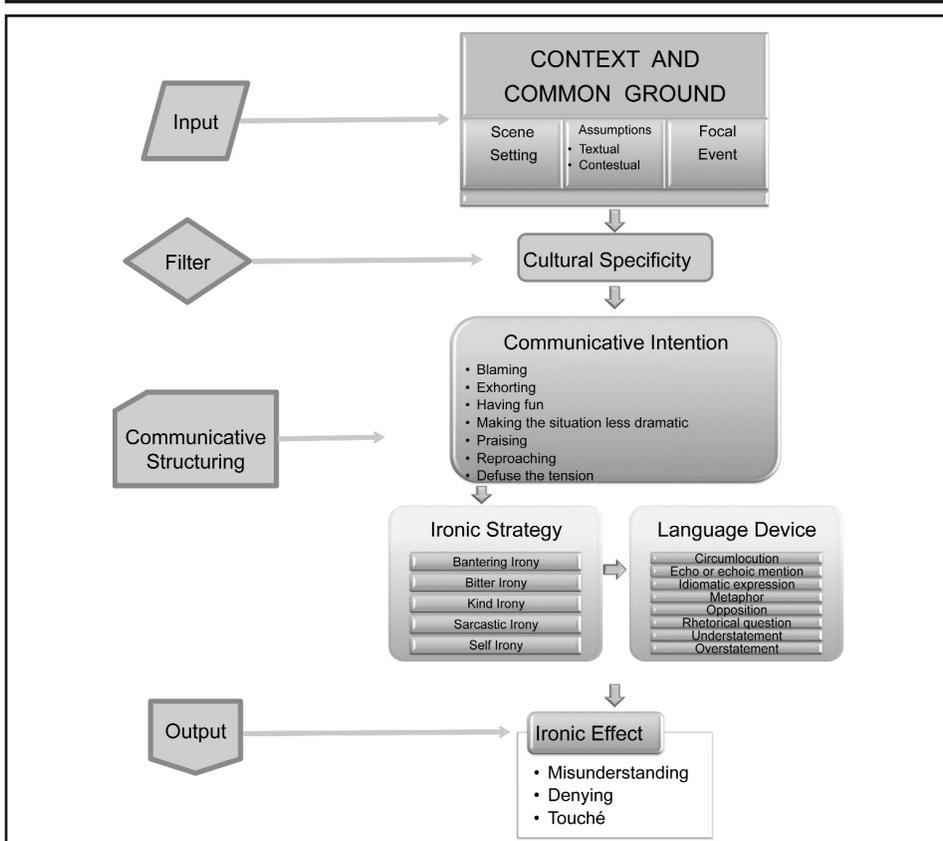
Figure 1 **The 'Framework for Irony' - articulation of the ironic script applied to film conversations**

The first phase (the "input") sets up the 'foundation' of ironic exchanges. It is constituted by "context" and "common ground" based upon "situation", "assumption" and "focal event". They represent those inductor elements which indicate the contextual knowledge (the "common ground"), both the Speaker and the Hearer must share in order to activate irony with successful results "assumptions" are considered "contextual" when referring to a standard norm, common to every culture and "textual" when referring to a previous situation in the film, namely it relies only on the scenes which take place on the screen.

Besides, "focal event" represents the situation that triggers the speakers' ironic comment that might also be directed against themselves (cf. Terminiello 2008).

As mentioned in the introduction this study aims to verify whether in 'travelling' from one culture to another, irony undergoes a change in the syntacttic constructions adopted.

In order to identify cross-cultural differences and similarities between the two versions, the 'Framework for Irony' has been provided with a "filter". Hence, when investigating the cross-cultural discrepancies, this filter signals the presence of a "cultural specificity", a step that requires an adaptation to the TL Culture in order to be understood by non native speakers.

The second phase of the model subsumes the communicative acts as parts of the ironic speech act. As Berrendonner (1981: 183) argues, an utterance can be used ironically only if it has an 'argumentative value' (valeur argumentative), namely only if a speaker tries to do something such as blaming/criticizing, mocking or convincing someone. Accordingly the Communicative Structuring section includes the speaker's "communicative intention" and the "ironic strategy".

Moreover, another element has been added: the "language device" conceived as the "outcome of the simultaneous convergence of […] communicative signs" (Anolli, infantino and Ciceri 2001: 154). In fact the speaker has at his/her disposal verbal and non-verbal elements (tone of voice, gesture, face expression) to emphasise his/her words, substitute them completely or convey a different meaning. These traits may influence the meaning of a linguistic expression; for instance, in an utterance like "Oh, just fine"[2], where what is said is a positive assessment whereas what is meant is a negative one, there are several intonation patterns which signal the ironic intent. The synchronic combination of these sign systems generates irony.

Since this article is part of a more extensive study (cf. Terminiello 2008), the framework displayed in Figure 1 presents all the eight "language devices" taken into consideration and identified in the sequences selected. However this study only focuses on the Oppositions found in TT.

Oppositions are utterances whose surface literal meaning clashes with the actual situation speakers are experiencing and thus require a kind of 'corrective response' by the hearer. Particularly noteworthy is the use of the "thanking formula" aimed at conveying the opposite meaning, i.e. by thanking his interlocutor/'destroyer', the ironist blames him/her for what has been uttered or suggested inappropriately as in the following example taken from *Analyze This*:

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[2] From *Meet the Parents*: Pam: Greg, sweetie, how you doing? Greg: Oh, just fine, considering I desecrated your grandma's remains, found out you were engaged and had your father ask me to milk him (see [Ex7(MP)] in Terminiello 2007).

SITUATION	CHARACTERS	ST	
At a party organised to celebrate the publication of Ben's father book.	BEN'S FATHER	What's wrong?	
	BEN	Nothing. Everything's fine.	
	BEN'S FATHER	How's your practice?	
	BEN	Excellent. I have interesting patients very interesting very interesting, fascinating actually.	
	MICHAEL	Dad has a patient who dreams he shits trouts.	
	BEN	Thanks Mike.	

In this extract Ben is discussing his patients with his father (they share the same profession) and is inappropriately interrupted by his son. Emphasis on the ironic Opposition[3] is placed by the Speaker's facial expression.

The third phase (the "ironic effect") is constituted by the result of the speaker's ironic comment on the hearers. Irony needs to be inferred to be understood. Inferring is a mental activity ascribable to interlocutors whose competence allow them to draw conclusions on what is not explicitly said.

5. Translation and Culture

In order to shed light on differences and similarities in the comparative analysis between the English and the Italian version, culture appears to be the pivotal element to consider. From the translation perspective this analysis (Terminiello, 2008) has highlighted that there is a general tendency to add extra information adopting the strategy of amplification, substitution or explicitation[4] so that irony appears clarified above all when culture-bound terms are employed.

In the light of this, one of the critical points in conveying and translating irony is represented by the viewer's pragmatic ability (namely the audience's cultural and intellectual background) to give sense to a stretch of language.

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[3] For more examples see Terminiello 2008.

[4] "La strategia o norma traduttiva dell'esplicitazione è stata descritta, per il doppiaggio da vari studiosi. Essa opera nonostante i limiti imposti dal sincronismo quantitativo […]" (Pavesi 1994: 26). "Explicitation has been described as a translational process or norm for dubbing. It is adopted despite the limits due to synch needs" [my translation].

Indeed different cultures and societies may have "[…] different experiences of the world and different views on the way events and situations are organized or related to each other" (Baker 1992: 219). Therefore "if the viewer has no access to the cultural presuppositions behind the irony, despite a straightforward translation which apparently presents no particular culture-specific or linguistic difficulties, the humour involved may well be lost" (Zabalbeascoa 2002).

Accordingly, the reality of British and American societies, showed in films, needs adjustments to the Italian audience and culture becomes the obvious filter to take into consideration when dealing with dubbing.

From a comparative perspective, as far as communication is concerned cultures are distinguished according to the High Context Culture (HCC) and the Low Context Culture (LCC) taxonomy with the former being more expressive-oriented (e.g. Italian) and the latter being more instrumental-oriented (e.g. English) (cf. Katan 2004: 289). This difference comes to the fore in this study because "contexting", namely cultural orientation, may influence the translation mechanisms used to address the Italian audience. Orientation can affect communication in every aspect. What is relevant for our discussion is that expressive cultures are more sensitive to communication whereas instrumental cultures tend to be more self-controlled (cf. Katan 2004: 289).

At a broader level of differences in communication and in line with Katan's typical Italian/UK clusters of orientation (1999; 2006), British society perceives the verbalization of emotions negatively as "a sign of communication breakdown" (Katan 2004: 291). Conversely, Italian speakers are more inclined to immediately express personal feelings aiming to influence the reader or the hearer on a personal level. Although still considered instrumental, as LCC, American culture which assumes that everything should be communicated, is more expressive than the British.

Differences may arise in cross-cultural communication since Italian culture tends to adopt more expressive modifiers than English whereas British are oriented to use Understatements in interactional situations (Katan, 1999). From a cultural standpoint, thus, the increase or the decrease of the expressivity appear to be the crucial aspect to consider in the following analysis. Hence dubbing-scriptwriters have at their disposal different "language devices" to translate ironic utterances. This choice can create cross-cultural misunderstanding and therefore impact on the way irony is perceived (or not perceived) by the Italian audience.

The following example provided by Katan (2004) highlights how a word for word translation would have influenced the success of an ironic remark, thus

the adaptation to the TC and a consequent adoption of a different "language device" in TT has been required. In Walt Disney *Robin Hood* the narrator says that "The Sheriff of Nottingham is an honourable Man". As expected, the Anglo-American audience easily recognise this remark as an ironic Opposition. According to Katan in this instance a word for word "[…] translation into Italian *l'onorevole sceriffo* di Nottingham loses the irony totally". Therefore, the approach chosen has been that of letting "the listener understand the basic character of the sheriff" with "il poco onorevole sceriffo di Nottingham" (the not very honourable…") (2004: 305). If we interpret this strategy following the 'Framework for Irony', in Italian the translator has turned Opposition into Understatement in order to convey the same ironic effect of the ST. Indeed, this strategy has allowed the translator to convert the ironic remark into a more explicit statement.

6. Analysis

Needless to say, instances containing Oppositions are quite common when dealing with irony (cf. Terminiello 2008). What is particularly noteworthy is the fact that Oppositions are usually dubbed as Overstatements in which intensifiers exaggerate a compliment, consequently conveying a critical remark as in the following extract from *City Slickers*:

	Wait a minute. Shouldn't somebody say something? Like a eulogy. Yeah.	Aspettate un momento non ci vorrebbero due parole? Non so un elogio funebre. Già
MITCH	Cookie, you knew him best.	Cookie tu lo conoscevi meglio.
COOKIE	Lord, we give you Curly. Try not to piss him off.	Signore ti affidiamo Curly. Cerca di non farlo incazzare.
MITCH	That's it?	Tutto qui?
COOKIE	What else is there? I got chicken burning.	Che altro vuoi ho la cena sul fuoco.
MITCH	You're a warm man, Cookie.	Troppo buono Cookie.

In this example, the Opposition "you're a warm man" becomes an Overstatement in the TT given by: "troppo buono, Cookie" ("you are too kind Cookie") where the intensifier 'too kind' overemphasises the compliment and in doing so underlines the negativity of the ironic comment.

Sarcasm is also communicated by the following extract from *Meet the Fockers* through which the speaker intends to blame his interlocutor:

GREG	Hey Jack. Oh, she wants you to honk the horn.	Hey Jack vuole che lei suoni il clacson.
JACK	Not interested.	Non mi interessa.
GREG	Rules of the road. She honks, you honk. Come on, Jack. Come on. Give her a honk. There you go. It's like a team or something. "Honk if your are horny."	Regola della strada, lei suona tu suoni. Coraggio Jack glielo faccia sentire. Che bravo, wow. Hey, sembra una squadra di qualcosa, "suona se sei arrapato".
JACK	Thanks for that, Greg	Grazie tante Greg

In the translation "grazie tante Greg" ("thank you very much Greg"), the element "very much" has been added, giving more emphasis to the feeling of disappointment expressed. In the following extract from *City Slickers* Phil conveys his frustration and blames his friends by saying something in sharp contrast with the reality "We're lost, but we're making good time".

ED	We're doing great, guys. We're driving 'em.	Andiamo alla grande ragazzi ci danno retta
PHIL	That's perfect. We're lost, but we're making good time.	Oh si è una meraviglia, ci siamo persi ma ci ammazziamo di risate.
MITCH	This is the way, guys. I can feel it.	La strada è questa ragazzi me lo sento

In Italian the Overstatement has been used to replace the Opposition. As a matter of fact the statement "ci ammazziamo di risate" ("we are laughing to death") is hyperbolic language that the speaker adopts to sarcastically heighten his feelings.

Employing a positive remark to convey negative feelings is the goal of Greg's comment in the following extract from *Meet the Parents*:

PAM	Greg, sweetie, how you doing?	Greg amore, come va?
GREG	<u>Oh, just fine,</u> considering I desecrated your grandma's remains, found out you were engaged and had your father ask me to milk him.	<u>Oh benissimo,</u> considerando che ho dissacrato i resti di tua nonna, ho scoperto che sei stata fidanzata e che tuo padre mi ha chiesto di mungerlo

In TT the ironic Opposition is conveyed through the use of an Overstatement "Oh benissimo" ("Oh, very well") in which the superlative "very well" ove-remphasises the speaker's sarcasm.

The emotive function of irony is also underlined in the following sequence selected from the thriller *Saw*. In this context the speaker gives vent to his anger for being trapped adopting a blending of Opposition and Overstatement:

KIDNAPPER	I can see you.	Vi vedo.
PRISONER	So that's what this is. Reality TV.	Ma dove diavolo siamo? In un realtà show?
KIDNAPPER	Don't look at me. I can't help you.	Non guardate me non posso aiutarvi.
PRISONER	Can you hear me in there? <u>I'm having a blast. This is the most fun I've had without lubricant.</u> Make sure you're getting everything.	Hey tu mi senti he? <u>Sei davvero simpatico non mi sono mai divertito così tanto.</u> Te la rompo quella telecamera.

It may be worth mentioning that in ST the vulgar expression "<u>I'm having a blast. This is the most fun I've had without lubricant</u>"[5] has such a strong 'context-specific' meaning that it does not apply even to the British context, where it takes on a 'less impolite' connotation. Although in the TT the "language device", namely Overstatement, has not been changed: <u>"Sei davvero simpatico non mi sono mai divertito così tanto"</u> ("you are so nice I have never had so much fun") a procedure of softening of the coarse language[6] has been applied. This is a case of an evident procedure employed in the American film industry, where harsh expressions appear systematically softened or abandoned in the translated versions [my translation] (Pavesi 2005 :47).

7. Results

Although the general tendency towards the adoption of the same syntactic construct in both languages is predominant (Terminiello, 2008), shifts of ironic "language devices" have been found from ST to TT. The most significant mismatch concerns the Overstatement which is used more frequently in Italian (12.4%) than in English (6.8%) (Terminiello, 2008). This quantitative finding is significantly relevant in particular in those extracts where Overstatements in Italian are employed in place of Oppositions.

In line with Katan's "cultural orientations" (2004), emotivity appears to be the crucial point of irony in Italian culture. In fact, occurrences of Overstatements entail a hyperbolic language in which exaggeration heightens the Speaker's feeling, for example in "ci ammazziamo di risate" ("we are laughing to death"), or amplifies a *thank you* "Grazie tante Greg" ("Thank you very much Greg"), or overemphasises a praise i.e. "troppo buono Cookie" ("you are too kind Cookie") or a comment i.e. "oh benissimo" ("Oh very well").

Even though the two texts share the same communicative aim, they differ in terms of the syntactic device adopted. At a broader level of differences in communication it seems that in Italian irony is based more on emotional

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[5] This is the case in which there is a cultural difference between British and American English. The expression used by the prisoner can be intended in two ways: in British English blasts could refer to a party and *lubricant* to drinking because the British enjoy themselves more when drinking, whereas in American English it might have a sexual connotation since blast means ejaculation and lubricant refers to a sexual aid.

[6] See Pavesi, 2005: 47 on the use of coarse language.

language conveyed through the use of Overstatements through which speakers express their 'unenthusiastic' feelings.

In American English emotivity appears attained more through the adoption of coarse language that in dubbing is softened or abandoned.

Conclusions

The literature on irony, on its interpretation and its recovery presents a vast number of theories and approaches. Each theory sheds light on the different aspects of this phenomenon and each approach aims to explore it from a specific standpoint.

Section two has highlighted those theoretical aspects which better fit the scope of this study, namely to investigate how irony "travels" from one culture to another in conversations through the identification of irony in film communicative exchanges.

In the light of this, the methodology adopted is based on a pragmatic approach that considers irony as an intentional speech act which aims to obtain an effect.

The 'Framework for Irony' applied to film conversations has been developed by providing it with extra elements considered relevant to the analyses carried out in this study. As far as the cultural aspect is concerned, this model has been provided with a filter, labelled "cultural specificity", which allows to signal those language peculiarities which in cross-cultural communication might occur and therefore, might influence the understanding of irony. Consequently, this filter allows us to better understand the reasons for shifts of language devices which occur in the passage from English into Italian.

By means of this framework ironic exchanges have been dissected into their constituent parts separating those "language devices" to be analysed and compared.

In most of the instances investigated, English and Italian adopt the same syntactic construct whereas shifts of irony occur particularly where culture-bound terms are employed (Terminiello, 2008). However, an aspect worth noticing is the frequency of Overstatements in Italian in place of Oppositions in English.

This result appears significant in the light of the cultural orientations since it highlights how, when dealing with irony, the Italian version of the films tends to adopt a more hyperbolic language. Consequently exaggeration, expressed by the employment of "expressive modifiers" (Katan 2004: 293) or absolute superlative, has the effect of producing a sharper contrast with reality and consequently to appear more negatively ironic.

Although no difference was made between British English and American English in the corpus, it has been noticed that emotivity in ironic utterances of American films is attained through the adoption of coarse language, a tendency softened in English as well as in Italian. This highlights different cultural attitudes to life.

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