

## Chapter 7

### *It's a Free World...*

<b>Italian title:</b>	<i>In questo mondo libero...</i>
<b>Director:</b>	Ken Loach
<b>Actors:</b>	Kierston Wareing; Juliet Ellis; Leslaw Zurek
<b>Country:</b>	United Kingdom
<b>Year:</b>	2007
<b>Length</b>	96 minutes

Angie is an English woman that runs a recruitment agency in order to help migrants find a job. Yet, since she becomes eager to do whatever it takes to build the business, she gets involved in illegal affairs. Besides the common themes of homelessness, of the difficult aspects of integration, and of the sense of misplacement in a different cultural background, the film also explores the women's role in society. In fact, Angie decides to open her recruitment agency after quitting her job due to an episode of sexual harassment from a colleague. At the same time, even though *It's a Free World...* includes both symmetrical and asymmetrical interactions between native and non-native speakers, some lines by Karol, a Polish man who helps Angie, clarify that the level of socio-cultural separation is high (01:01:58 – 01:02:15):

- (27) KAROL: “England is hard place. It's in the...their eyes when they—when they hear my voice, when they look at us, when they give an order. I'm a man, I'm not a servant.”

#### **7.1 Linguistic Dimensions of the Movie**

The main kinds of social roles are actualised by the different variations of English uttered by the speakers. The migrant workers resort to scripted ELF variations, which display specific syntactic features and fulfil the communicative need of conveying cross-cultural exchanges from a multimodal perspective. By way of example, consider the dialogue (28) below, when a man protests over pay (00:36:44 – 00:37:07):

- (28) ANGIE: “That's your hours, that's your tot. If you don't like it, there's the guy, you can go.”  
 MAN: “Oh, no, no, no, no.”  
 ANGIE: “Look! Tax, national insurance, where do you reckon we get it from?”

- MAN: “Your tax isn’t my problem.”  
ANGIE: “What? Do you reckon we just pick it from a tree?”  
MAN: “I—er... I worked for you all week. You must pay me 200 pounds per week.”  
ANGIE: “We will sort it out later.”  
MAN: “...you asked me. Where is my money? Where is payslip?”  
ANGIE: “[to Karol] Can you tell him if—if—if he doesn’t go to work, he will have no job? Can you tell him?”

The representation of the non-native participant is multimodally rendered, since it is possible to listen to his Polish accent that integrates the verbal dimension of his scripted ELF variation. At the same time, the man speaks slower than Angie, and his lines contain repetitions, such as “no, no, no, no”, and hesitations, is “I—er... I worked”, which are connected to his attempts at communicating his illocutionary force by resorting to a foreign language.

The characteristics of the scripted ELF variation in (28) are also illustrated in (29) below, when another man describes the migrants’ conditions (01:00:31 – 01:00:46):

- (29) MAN: “This is the third time is happening. Liverpool, Birmingham and now. This is not good. We have families, we came here to work, we work very hard. You treat us like animals, we work very hard, we’re desperate. We need money now. We can’t wait anymore.

(29) displays some deviations from the standard norms in terms of sentence construction, like the omission of the subject in “the third time [it] is happening”. Furthermore, there are also repetitions of similar sentences, whereas the choice of the verb tenses underscores the preference for the present simple or past simple. The utterances of this man are composed by a succession of short sentences, whereas “You treat us like animals” and “we’re desperate” entail that he is aware of his low status (also cf. Section 7.2 below). Finally, as in the construction of (28), also in this case this man’s characterisation exploits the audiovisual channel, since it is possible to hear his accent and deviating phonetic realisations, like the voiced labial-velar approximant /w/, in “we”, for example, which tends to be pronounced as the fricative labiodental /v/.

As already said, the script also has symmetrical cross-cultural interactions, such as the one represented in extract (30) below. Angie and Karol are at a bar, and the woman wants to thank him for his help with some translations from Polish (01:02:23 – 01:02:42):

- (30)           ANGIE: “It’s for your help. You really, really helped me out, all right? All your translating?”  
                   KAROL: “Cash?”  
                   ANGIE: “Yeah.”  
                   KAROL: “And you know the old saying, ‘Never return a favour, pass it on’?”  
                   ANGIE: “You sound like my Dad. You should meet him, actually. There you go.”  
                   KAROL: “Pass it on. Not everything is money.”

Karol’s English may be labelled as a scripted ELF variation, which has some deviating syntactic structures, for example in his last turn, where “Not everything is money” subverts the conventional order seeing a subject followed by verbs and objects. The formal and lexical characteristics integrate the acoustic dimension, and extract (30) is included in this section in order to illustrate the differences between the source and target versions in characterising the asymmetrical and symmetrical dialogues (see Section 7.3). At the same time, extracts (28) and (30) will be also the object of the conversation analysis, since they symbolise the main kinds of social interactions identified in *It’s a Free World....*

## **7.2 Conversation Analysis**

In the film, the interactions between native and non-native participants are mainly asymmetrical, except as far as Angie and Karol are concerned, since the two characters had an affair and are now friends. As for the asymmetrical exchanges, let us consider extract (28) again. It can be surmised that both speakers want to prevail over their interlocutor. In fact, Angie’s backchannel move after the man’s statement about taxes represents an attempt to explain and justify why the workers are not paid. Yet, since the man continues to complain, adding information about his life conditions, Angie decides to immediately end the conversation. This decision may also be connected to the non-native participant’s use of “must”, in “You must pay me 200 pounds per week”, which can be interpreted as a subversion of the status quo in terms of who leads the conversation. The man’s utterances are in fact also characterised by challenging moves, but it is Angie who eventually prevails, also by means of her action of turning to Karol using an eliciting move followed by a backing item, in order to illustrate that she does not care about what her interlocutor has to add.

As for Karol, instead, his role contributes to the exemplification of the different conversation structures. In dialogue (30) above, Angie acts more relaxed and willing to cooperate, in fact her repetition of “really” in “You

really, really helped me out” serves to avoid miscommunication, to better communicate her intentionality and her different attitude towards the man. At the same time, it can also be interpreted as a way to justify the fact that she is going to pay him for his translations. The differences in her approach are more evident if it is considered that she is not angry with him when he refuses her money posing first a further question, “Cash?”, and then repeating “Pass it on”, a sort of backchannel, when he mentions the old saying. The woman in fact does not end their conversation or adopts hostile moves such as challenging or raising ones, but she only makes a comparison between Karol and her dad.

The different conversation structures are also multimodally conveyed, and even though it is true that Karol and Angie are separated by a table in the bar, it is also true that they tend to get closer to each other, when the woman passes the money to him, or when she leans towards him while speaking. In opposition to (30), in extracts such as (28) and (29) the conflicting connotation is also actualised through the tones of voices, by the speakers’ faster rhythm and body movements, since they try to physically and verbally overcome each other.

The main types of interactions, and the various levels of asymmetries are generally respected in the Italian version, but a specific linguistic choice is used, as explained in the following section.

### 7.3 Target Script Analysis

The dubbing translation of *It’s a Free World...* follows a different path if compared to the movies examined so far, since it resorts to a scripted ILF variation, which is generally associated with the Polish accent. From a functional perspective, the strategy of producing a lingua-franca variation also for target receivers contributes to the conveyance of the participants’ different, lower-status positions from a multimodal perspective, as evident from the rendering of dialogue (28), when the worker protests over pay:

(31)	<b>English script</b>	<b>Italian script</b>
ANGIE:	“That’s your hours, that’s your tot. If you don’t like it, there’s the guy, you can go.”	“Queste sono le ore che hai fatto, questa è la paga. Se non ti sta bene, quella è l’uscita, puoi andartene.”
MAN:	“Oh, no, no, no, no.”	“No, no, no.”
ANGIE:	“Look! Tax, national insurance, where do you reckon we get it from?”	“Ci sono le tasse! Paghiamo l’assicurazione, per tutti voi. Questi soldi da dove li prendiamo?!”
MAN:	“Your tax isn’t my	“Le vostre tasse non sono

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|        | problem.”  | problema mio.”  |
| ANGIE: | “What? Do you reckon we just pick it from a tree?”   | “Credi che noi i soldi li troviamo sugli alberi?”   |
| MAN:   | “I—er... I worked for you all week. You must pay me 200 pounds per week.”                            | “Io ho lavorato per tutta la settimana. Voi dovete pagare 200 sterline a settimana. Tu mi hai chiamato...”                                  |
| ANGIE: | “We will sort it out later.”   | “—di questo ne parliamo dopo.”  |
| MAN:   | “...you asked me. Where is my money? Where is payslip?”  | “...dove sono i miei soldi?”  |
| ANGIE: | “[to Karol] Can you tell him if—if—if he doesn’t go to work, he will have no job? Can you tell him?” | “[a Karol] Gli vuoi dire che se ora non va a lavorare non avrà più un lavoro, che la faccenda la risolviamo dopo? Glielo dici, per favore?” |

Besides introducing a scripted ILF variation marked by syntactic deviations from the standard norms, the dubbing translation tries to multimodally render the speaker’s non-native status, since a Polish accent is reproduced. As for the syntactic dimension, consider the omission of the non-definite article, “*un*”, in “*le vostre tasse non sono [un] problema mio*”. A similar strategy is also adopted for the translation of extract (29) above:

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| (32) | <b>English script</b>  | <b>Italian script</b>  |
|      | MAN: “This is the third time is happening. Liverpool, Birmingham and now. This is not good. We have families, we came here to work, we work very hard. You treat us like animals, we work very hard, we’re desperate. We need money now. We can’t wait anymore.” | “Questa è la terza volta che non ci pagano. Liverpool, Birmingham e ora qui. Questo non è buono. Abbiamo una famiglia e veniamo qui a lavorare. Lavoriamo tutto il giorno, ci trattate come animali, lavoriamo tutto il giorno e siamo disperat[e]. Vogliamo soldi ora. Noi non possiamo aspettare più.” |

The omission of the articles is one of the most common features of the scripted lingua-franca variations: this strategy is in fact shared by the original and target versions, and in the above extract it can be identified in “*Questa è [la] terza volta che non ci pagano*”, where the definite article is not included. At the same time, “*Questo non è buono*” can be marked as a non-conventional lexical choice for a native Italian speaker, since the latter would use a different adjective, for example “*bello*”, ‘nice’, or a different syntactic structure that would include a noun to accompany the adjective – as, for example, “*Questa situazione non è buona*”, ‘This is not a good situation’.

The production of the scripted ILF variations in (31) and (32) confirms that the translators draw upon their native linguacultural background for the identification of peculiar deviating features that could support the audience’s accessibility to the illocutionary level, consisting in marking the non-native status. It is nonetheless interesting to note that the inclusion of a scripted lingua-franca variation is not the only adaptation strategy adopted for the dubbing translation. In fact, a different language is given to Karol, whose Italian is only marked from a phonological perspective. As a result, he does have a different accent, but his utterances and lines are not lexically- and syntactically-marked, as illustrated in (33) below, when he and Angie are at the bar:

- (33)
- |        | <b>English script</b>  | <b>Italian script</b>  |
|--------|--|--|
| ANGIE: | “It’s for your help. You really, really helped me out, all right? All your translating?” | “Per l’aiuto che mi hai dato. Mi sono servite davvero moltissimo, sai, le tue traduzioni.” |
| KAROL: | “Cash?”  | “Contanti?”  |
| ANGIE: | “Yeah.”  | “Sì.”  |
| KAROL: | “And you know the old saying, ‘Never return a favour, pass it on’?”                      | “Lo conosci il detto: ‘Non pagare mai un favore, ricambialo’?”                             |
| ANGIE: | “You sound like my Dad. You should meet him, actually. There you go.”                    | “Mi sembri mio padre! Avrei dovuto fartelo conoscere. Tienili!”                            |
| KAROL: | “Pass it on. Not everything is money.”   | “Ricambialo: non tutto si può comprare.”   |

Karol’s last turn exemplifies the different aspects of his multimodal characterisation as a non-native speaker who does not play low status (at least when talking to Angie). “*Non tutto si può comprare*”, in fact, is not syntactically-marked as a deviating sentence like the original counterpart, in extract (30). On the contrary, it respects the standard norms of Italian, and

hence it may be inferred that the different characteristics actualise the translator's cognitive, top-down interpretation of the source script. The original semantic and communicative dimensions are therefore adapted from a multimodal perspective, to allow the Italian receivers easily deduce the different status of the non-native characters. It seems that according to the translators' interpretations, the focus is on the different structures of the exchanges between Angie and Karol, rather than on his non-native status. Actually, it is contended here that the scripted ILF variation should be preserved also for Karol, since the audiovisual features of the film could help the audience acknowledge the structural and pragmatic differences without modifying the original linguistic dimensions. In fact, by preserving a phonetically-, lexically- and syntactically-marked scripted lingua-franca variation, a more credible and equivalent rendering of the original characterisation could be provided.

Anyway, besides the differences in Karol's Italian, if the translations for the dubbing and the subtitles are compared, it is actually possible to consider the former as more appropriate to achieve pragmalinguistic equivalence. This is due to the fact that the subtitles are characterised by a style that is reminiscent of written discourse, also because of the inclusion of Standard Italian for all the characters. Even though this choice could be connected to the respect for the spatial and temporal limitations of this AVT mode (Neves 2009), it is claimed that a scripted ILF variation should be planned also for the subtitles, in order to account for and preserve the original characterisations.

