

## Chapter 8

### *Looking for Alibrandi*

<b>Italian title:</b>	<i>Terza generazione</i>
<b>Director:</b>	Kate Woods
<b>Actors:</b>	Greta Scacchi; Pia Miranda; Anthony La Paglia
<b>Country:</b>	Australia
<b>Year:</b>	2000
<b>Length</b>	103 minutes

Josie is an Australian girl with Italian origins in search of her personal identity, since she feels suspended between two worlds, the land where she was born and where she is growing up, and the world mainly represented by her grandmother, Katia. The woman, in fact, is reminiscent of her condition as a member of a family of immigrants. The film, based on a novel by Melina Marchetta, could be compared to *Bend It like Beckham* (Chapter 4) because both scripts are centred on the figure of a girl who tries to deal with different social dimensions and struggles against the traditional cultural habits.

The topic of homelessness, of searching a place where to live in and to feel at home is crucial in the movie and is one of the main concerns of Josie and her best friends. Yet, what the girl does not see is that the misplacement feeling is not just her own, but it is experienced by most migrants, like her relatives, as communicated by Katia when she recalls her experiences when she moved to Australia (00:31:45 – 00:31:47):

(34) KATIA: “I was in a place, Josie, where I did not belong.”

Katia’s and Josie’s feelings are therefore universal and in fact shared also by the younger generations, as explained by Sara, one of Josie’s friends, when she illustrates the supposed rules to form couples (01:16:07 – 01:16:13):

(35) SARA: “Listen: the poor marry the poor. The Wogs marry the Wogs. The Westies marry the Westies and the North shore marry the North shore.”

According to Sara, “wogs” (or, the Italians) can marry other wogs only, this claim representing a type of awareness that results from acknowledging that integration may actually be an achievement that is constantly pursued, but not constantly reached.

## 8.1 Linguistic Dimensions of the Movie

English is the main language in the movie, whereas the scripted ELF variations are included to mark the elderly people. This choice has a pragmatic connotation, for it characterises those who emigrated to Australia, whose language is still influenced by their Italian linguacultural background. At the same time, such linguistic dimension also activates the connection between the speakers' actions and their past, as for example in *Brick Lane* (Chapter 6), where Hasina's letters are opened in Bengali. The relation between the languages and the authors' illocutionary force is further exemplified when younger people's English is analysed, since the latter is closer to the standard rules. Also this approach has similar examples in the movies analysed so far, from *Bend It like Beckham* to *Brick Lane*, and supports the communicative and cognitive view of the inclusion of the scripted lingua-franca variations proposed by this book (see Sections 1.3 and 2.2 above).

Consider, for example, the following dialogue between Josie and Katia, when the girl claims she is not her grandmother's property (00:18:21 – 00:18:32):

- (36)           JOSIE: “Who do you think I belong to? Go on, who? Yeah, I bet you wish I did belong to you.”  
                  KATIA: “You misintrepid everything!”  
                  JOSIE: “Oh, it's ‘misinterpret’!”

Exchange (36) has similar features with (24) above, when Shahana corrects her father. Josie performs a similar action, in telling her grandmother how to pronounce the word “misinterpret”. It is interesting to note that differently from the previous extracts, in the case under analysis the mispronunciation could stem from Katia's L1 transfer, since by ending the word as “trepid”, she creates a sound association to the Sicilian dialect, which is the language she used to speak in Italy. In other situations, the variation of English uttered by the woman is in fact completely mixed by Italian words, as in (37) below (extract from 00:17:45 – 00:17:58):

- (37)           JOSIE: “*Nonna*, I'm not eating! Do you understand English?”  
                  KATIA: “I was taught to speak English before your mother was born, *maleducata*!”

Whereas Josie's “*Nonna*” is reminiscent of similar uses of foreign epithets, like “*Abba*” and “*Amma*”, and “*Massi Ji*”, respectively from *Brick Lane* and *Bend It like Beckham*, Katia's “*maleducata*” activates instead a clear reference to the woman's cognitive frame concerning how the relationships between parents, children and even grandparents are seen in Southern Italian

families. Similar examples are identified in the extract (38) below (00:26:48 – 00:26:55), when Katia tells how she learnt English, and in (39) (00:31:20 – 00:31:37), when Josie knows one of her grandmother’s experiences once she arrived in Australia:

- (38) KATIA: “*Signor* Sandifordi teach us the English.”  
PATRIZIA: “That’s why English we speak well.”

In (38) two examples of language authentication (Widdowson 1979: 159-167) can be identified, besides the inclusion of “*Signor*”: the presence of the definite article in “the English” as well as the syntactic structure of Patrizia’s lines. As for the former, the expression respects the Italian structure “*l’inglese*”, which is not correct in English, whereas the second woman’s utterances are a word-to-word rendering of the Italian sentence structure. In fact, it does not follow the typical English syntactic structure with the subject followed by the verb and then by the direct object. “That’s why English we speak well” can be considered instead as a reproduction of the Italian conventional sentence “*È per questo che l’inglese lo parliamo bene*”, where the direct object (“English”) is put before the subject (“we”) and the verb.

- (39) KATIA: “And the men... Uh! The way they look at me! I was most beautiful than all! Some of the men even said, ‘Forget Francesco *e* run away with me’.”

In (39), the scripted ELF variation illustrates specific features, like the prevalence of the present simple (“look” instead of “looked”), which respects one of the characteristics of actual ELF variations (cf. MacKenzie 2013) and which is also included in (38), when the grandmother uses “teach” instead of “taught”. Due to the multimodal construction of films, the verbal, syntactic and lexical features integrate the audiovisual dimension, as exemplified by the way Katia pronounces her utterances with some phonetic deviations. For example, the dental sound replaces the interdental one in the definite article and in “with”, which is pronounced [wit], whereas the form “ranwei” originates from merging “run” and “away”. Katia’s pronunciation is displayed in (40) below:

- (40) KATIA: “And **de** men... Uh! **De** way they look at me! I was most beautiful than all! **Som** of the men even said, ‘Forget Francesco *e* **ranwei wit** me’.”

## 8.2 Conversation Analysis

The dialogues from *Looking for Alibrandi* can be divided into a number of macro-groups. In fact, there are mainly cultural and social reasons behind the

relations between the participants who have different opinions in terms of the integration between Australians and migrants. Furthermore, from a social perspective, the language of the dialogues may also change depending on the speakers' age, gender and nationality, along with the level of asymmetry between the interlocutors.

Interaction (41) will be now analysed, which is the complete exchange between Katia and Josie, partially analysed in (37) above (00:17:45 – 00:17:58):

- (41)            JOSIE: “No hungry—It’s too hot.”  
                  KATIA: “For the McDonald’s you’re always hungry!”  
                  JOSIE: “*Nonna*, I’m not eating! Do you understand English?”  
                  KATIA: “I was taught to speak English before your mother was born, *maleducata!*”

Josie’s opening and informing moves in the first turn actually provide a justification to the girl’s behaviour, since she does not want to spend time with her grandmother. The latter, though, uses a cross-cultural challenging move, since she mentions a specific brand, just like Commander Zero does when he refers to “*Baywatch*” in dialogue (16) from *Blood Diamond* (see Chapter 5). Both examples confirm the importance of the proposal of this new move, and in particular of its characterisation as a “cross-cultural” one. Its inclusion in fact allows analysts to infer the culture-bound construction of the selected films, whose semantic dimensions, illocutionary force and perlocutionary effects are conveyed by means of the interaction between the authors’ and viewers’ linguacultural backgrounds. From a denotative perspective, the inclusion of specific brands or entertainment shows the cultural and ethnic clashes that may be activated when involved in intercultural exchanges. From the connotative, communicative perspective, the same elements may contribute to increase the receivers’ accessibility to the intended messages, by resorting to their implied knowledge (cf. Section 1.3 above).

Near the end of the movie, the relationship between the two female protagonists changes, once the girl knows her grandmother’s story, marked by the attempts at integrating in the Australian society and by secrets from her past such as Katia’s secret liaison, or her husband’s violent temper. The shift is reflected by the different structure of the following interaction (42), when an eliciting move is followed by an answering one—which Katia says in Italian, since she is remembering an intimate event from her past (01:28:16 – 01:28:48):

- (42)            JOSIE: “Why didn’t you stay with him forever?”  
                  KATIA: “*Mi pregava. Ma io... io non volevo buttare vergogna*”

*a mia famigghia. Che ci succedeva a mi' figghia? Pensi che gli Italiani la lassavano giocare co' suoi figghi o l'Australiani l'accettavano? You must believe me, Josie, everything, everything, all thing I did, was for Christina."*

### 8.3 Target Script Analysis

The dubbing translation of *Looking for Alibrandi* neutralises the linguistic variations of the original script, adding only a Sicilian diatopic/diastratic variety that replaces the parts that in the source version are uttered in Italian. The original “English-Italian” switching thus becomes a “Standard Italian-Diatopically marked Italian” switching. Even though similar strategies are generally employed in the dubbing translations of film, due to the influence of Italian regionalisms (Rossi 2007) on the adaptation of source scripts, the omission of the scripted lingua-franca variation does not allow the target audience to get acquainted with the different semantic and functional dimensions that the alternation between different linguistic situations activates. By way of example, consider the Italian translation of interaction (36) (00:06:09 – 00:06:16):

(43)	<b>English script</b>	<b>Italian script</b>
	JOSIE: “Who do you think I belong to? Go on, who? Yeah, I bet you wish I did belong to you.”	“Non sono mica nata sotto un cavolo! Ti piacerebbe? Già, ma sono sangue del tuo sangue, che tu lo voglia o no!”
	KATIA: “You misintrepid everything!”	“Tu male intrepidi tutto!”
	JOSIE: “Oh, it’s ‘misinterpret’!”	“Oh, ‘male interpreti’, casomai!”

Besides including some typical features of Italian dubbese, such as the use of “*Già*” as a synonym of “Yes” (cf. Guido 2012: 70-71), the target script is not focused on Josie’s origins or on the semantic dimension of the girl’s life as an object that belongs to someone. Such notions are indeed mentioned only when the first turn ends. This shift has consequences on the illocutionary force of the girl’s utterances, since Katia is no longer challenged by the girl’s refusal of her Italian ancestry. As for the original “misintrepid”, it is rendered as “*male intrepidi*”, with a non-standard pronunciation of the verb “*interpreti*” that reflects the features of the Sicilian dialect the woman uses in alternation to English.

The second adaptation strategy of the target script, namely the replacement of Italian with the Sicilian dialect, is illustrated in (44) below, from a scene set in the “Tomato Day”, when Katia predicts Josie’s destiny (00:02:57 – 00:03:02):

- |      |  |  |
|------|--|--|
| (44) | <b>English script</b>  | <b>Italian script</b>  |
|      | KATIA: “ <i>Questa si sposa un Australiano e i figli li cresce a fish and chips.</i> ” | “Sposa n’Australiano e pe’ mangiari ci duna <i>fish and chips.</i> ” |

The use of the Sicilian dialect is exemplified by typical phonetic variations, such as “*figghi*”, instead of the standard “*figli*”, or the final vowel of the verb “*mangiare*”, which is uttered as “*mangiari*”. Finally, the dubbed script also exemplifies specific retextualisations of the label “Wogs”, which is given to non-Australian people, with disparaging connotations. Since an equivalent term does not exist in Italy, some alternative translations are selected, which are nonetheless meant to preserve the racist and disparaging shades, thus adapting the original message in a way that would activate equivalent effects in target receivers. Scene (45) below, when Josie comments on the tradition of the “Tomato Day”, represents a case in point (00:01:59 – 00:02:05):

- |      |  |   |
|------|--|---|
| (45) | <b>English script</b>  | <b>Italian script</b>   |
|      | JOSIE: “Oh, in case you’re wondering, this is ‘Tomato Day’, or as I prefer [...] ‘The National Wogs Day’.” | “Oh, nel caso non l’aveste capito, questa è ‘La giornata della conserva’, o come prefisco chiamarla, ‘La festa nazionale dei pastasciuttai’.” |

“Wogs” is rendered in (45) as “*pastasciuttai*”, a term that conveys a culture-bound, disparaging representation of Italians, since it is focused on “pasta”, one of the distinguishing elements of their culture. The solution is appropriate, since it reproduces Josie’s will to distance herself from her origins—indeed one of her objectives, at least at the beginning of the movie. Similar strategies are activated when “Wogs” is used in other contexts. When the word is uttered by Carly, a racist Australian girl, it is rendered as “*zotici con la coppola*” (00:09:22 – 00:09:25). In this case, the reference is to the stereotypical association between Italians and Mafia, due to the presence of “*coppola*”, the flat cap associated to Sicilian people and to the conventional representations of the figure of “Mafioso”. The girl’s illocutionary force is preserved for target receivers, but it is interesting here to note that the analysis of the two ways of rendering the same expression foregrounds the mental processes of interpretation and retextualisation of source texts: after

identifying the speaker's intentionality (bottom-up mechanism), translators come up with different solutions to compensate for the lack of exact lexical equivalence between source and target scripts, while accounting for the conveyance of the disparaging, native-culture-bound representations of lower-status participants (top-down processes).

In the next – and last – analysis of a migration movie, a different path will be followed. The film is in fact produced in Italy, and for this reason the analysis will first focus on the scripted ILF variation, eventually enquiring into the scripted ELF variation included in the English translation for the subtitles.

