ENGLISH-LANGUAGE FILM ADAPTATIONS AND LITERARY STYLE
Translation strategies at play in Italian dubbing and subtitling

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Abstract – The aim of the present article is to describe, both quantitatively and qualitatively, how features of (in)formal language style characterizing the dialogues of English films were handled in dubbing and subtitling translation into Italian. Three English films, together with their dubbing and subtitling translations into Italian, where analysed: *Enola Holmes* (2020), *Little Women* (2019) and *The Age of Innocence* (1993). Availing itself of corpus-bases quantitative and qualitative contrastive analyses of the three sub-corpora (English, dubbing and subtitling), the study revealed that dubbing and subtitling translators' approaches were quite dissimilar. If subtitlers, on the one hand, remained faithful to the source dialogues, thus preserving in the target text the same degree of (in)formality of the source test, dubbing translators showed a tendency towards maximization of formality in the Italian dialogues. The adoption of two different strategies, which points to the translators' minimum intervention in the case of subtitling, and to greater manipulation in the case of dubbing, was hypothesized to be due to the different features characterizing dubbing and subtitling translation.

Keywords: audiovisual translation, dubbing, subtitling, style, (in)formality.

1. Introduction

In the field of text linguistics, the domains of "style", "register" and "genre", although apparently similar, designate different concepts and have thus been approached from a plethora of different angles. Style, which represents the focus of the present inquiry, can be defined as "the way in which language is used in a given context, by a given person, for a given purpose" (Leech, Short 1981). If the notion of style is then conjugated with translation studies, we only find scattered studies (Borodo 2020, Lathey 2016, Looby 2015, Olohan 2004, Parks 2007) having accounted for how stylistic features of texts, including multimodal and audiovisual ones (Mailhac 2000, Petitt 2005, Vanderschelden 2001), are transposed from a given source language to a given target language. Precisely because of this, the interaction between stylistics and translation studies can easily be considered a largely unexplored area, especially in the subfield of audiovisual translation. The present article sets out to fill this gap, by describing how style, herein considered under the viewpoint of (in)formal stylistic features, is conveyed in English-Italian dubbing and subtitling translation.

Dubbing and subtitling are two types of constrained translation (Titford 1982), both for dubbing translators and for subtitlers. In producing the target-language script version of an audiovisual product, dubbing translators must attend to both lip-synch constraints (Whitman-Linsen 1992, p. 20), which pertain to lips movements, as well as to isochrony constraints (Chaume 2007, p. 76), which concern the duration of the on-screen actors' utterances. Subtitlers, for their part, must also obey isochrony constraints while concurrently attempting to condense the translation of the actors' cues so that they can fit in one-line or,

maximum, in two-line captions (Díaz-Cintas, Remael 2007). Besides these different types of constraints, the fact that in subtitling the original sound track is audible to the viewer, while in dubbing it is not, led to the speculation that stylistic features might be handled differently in the two translation modes.

The focus of this study is placed on a particular aspect of style, that is (in)formality, in its full scope: informal language, non-formal language (neutral) and formal language (Sanders 1996, p. 43; Borodo 2020, p. 32).

In addition to the aforementioned gap concerning the interaction between stylistics and audiovisual translation studies, another reason behind the study is that if the (in)formal style typifying the source-language film dialogues is subject to manipulation in translation, be it in dubbing, subtitling, or both, the target-language viewer of the translated film may gather an overall different feeling of the audiovisual experience itself, as well as of the characters. In other words, whether a character speaks informally or formally determines how that character comes to be construed by the viewer. If the same character is made to speak in a different style in the dubbed or subtitled version, the characterization will also be altered for the target-language viewer, together with the overall perception of the very ambience and tone of the scenes. A second, but not less important reason, is that scrutiny of style has thus far had a monolingual orientation, while neglecting how it travels in translation (Boase-Beier 2004, p. 9). This observation invites research into style in translation studies, so the present paper aimed to respond to such a call.

The present investigation analyses three English films: *Enola Holmes* (2020), *Little Women* (2019) and *The Age of Innocence* (1993) featuring dialogues highly dense in literary style, which is perceived to be formal in present-day conversations (van Cranenburgh *et al.* 2019, p. 642, 644; Borodo 2020, p. 196; Oktaviani, Purwarno 2021, p. 56). The massive presence of formal, literary style in the characters' discourse is due to the fact that the films analysed are inspired by the homonymous novels. Instances of informal, non-formal and formal language features were collected from the original films, as well as from their dubbed and subtitled Italian versions. A quantitative and qualitative corpus-based analysis was performed contrastively across the three film sub-corpora, to eventually reveal that the approach adopted by dubbing translators, in dealing with (in)formal style, differed markedly from the one adopted by subtitlers. More specifically, the analysis addressed the following research questions:

1) Is the level of style found in the original English dialogues equally mirrored in the Italian dubbed and subtitled film versions?

2) If there are differences, how is style in the source-text changed in dubbing and in subtitling translation?

The findings of the study showed a tendency towards preserving the same degree of style found in the source-language film in subtitling, and a tendency towards adding formal expedients in the Italian dialogues when these were absent in the source film, in dubbing. On the one hand, such observed difference was hypothesised to be tied to subtitlers' vulnerability, owing to their higher exposure to viewers' criticism, compared to dubbing translators. On the other hand, the addition of formality in dubbed dialogues was likely to be due to translators' willingness to obey the principle of functionalism in translation (Nord 1997). Both viewpoints may constitute interesting paths to explore in future research in audiovisual translation studies.

2. Theoretical framework

2.1. Style, register, genre and formality: a short overview

As will be shown in this section, the labels "style", "register" and "genre" are, epistemologically speaking, separate notions, albeit being seemingly overlapping.

The first time a thorough analysis of style was attempted was in Joos' seminal work (1958), where reference was also made to the "formal" dimension of style which, according to the scholar, entails reduction of variability and spontaneity of speech. In a subsequent publication, Joos (1967) further pinpointed the scope of style by proposing a division into: frozen, formal, consultative, casual, and intimate language styles. The "formal" category is particularly relevant to the present study because, in the scholar's view, it is particularly present in literary works. Later on, Labov (1972) treated style as a sociolinguistic phenomenon and explicitly harnessed it to the concept of "formality", defined as a social setting where speakers pay more attention to their speech (ibid 1972, p. 113). It was, however, only with Biber and Conrad's book (2009) that the afore-mentioned tripartite distinction between "register", as previously conceptualized by Halliday (1978), "style" and "genre" was first clearly established.

In their monograph, Biber and Conrad referred to register as the ensemble of linguistic features of a text which are functional to the situational context of that text (Biber, Conrad 2009, p. 16). This means that a recipe will exhibit language patterns which greatly differ, say, from aviation manuals, since the two registers will have a different communicative purpose and are likely to be consumed by different types of readers, in different interactional contexts. Genre has more to do with how the text is constructed from a structural perspective, so it conforms to the norms of its variety. For instance, a business letter will have a date at the top, the main body and greeting politeness formulae at the end (e.g.: "Sincerely") (Biber, Conrad 2009, p. 17). To conclude, style was thought to be similar to register, in that it relates to the linguistic features typical of a text. However, it differs from register because, while the latter looks at the linguistic make-up of texts in a functional perspective, in style such features merely relate to aesthetic preferences, say, of particular authors (Biber, Conrad 2009, p. 18). The scholars also contended that style can also be peculiar to a given historical period, as well as to authors (Biber, Conrad 2009, p. 18), an argument which is relevant to the present study, since the object of analysis are films based on literary works. On this matter, Leech and Short (1981) had also previously defined style as comprising the features of a text proper to a given author or time period (ibid, p. 11).

While the meaning of "genre" is quite easy to pinpoint, the difference between register and style is not as easy to grasp. Figures 1 and 2 below, taken from Biber, Conrad (2009) illustrate, by means of linguistic features found in two different texts taken from the T2K-SWAL corpus, what comes under the purview of register analysis. Figures 3 and 4, on the other hand, contain two texts that can be analysed from the viewpoint of style.

Text Sample 1.3 Middle-Class Conversation (Devon, England)

PAULINE: See I was thinking this was gonna cost a lot – a lot of money to put the phones in, but it's not, because you just put one line in and then put different bits up the line, don't you?

BOB: No … no they come in, in separate lines

PAULINE: But you cut it

BOB: You charge per – you'll charge per … in here, it's not just one line with four connections, they charge you per phone

PAULINE: I was talking to Desmond about it and he reckons that once you've got your line you can muck about and put quite a few lines in there

BOB: No – no, doesn't work like that

PAULINE: oh …

BOB: You can use the same – you can use the same number – alright?

PAULINE: mm

BOB: eh, the same number on four lines, but if were want to go out … [if] four people were to phone in at the one time

PAULINE: oh, of course, yeah

BOB: Do you see what I mean?

PAULINE: I see what you mean

BOB: You've got to have four separate lines

Figure 1
Extract of a middle-class conversation, taken from Biber, Conrad (2009, p. 12).

In this oral, informal conversation, many features jump to the eye (Biber, Conrad 2009, p. 14): the use of reduced forms (e.g., *what's, she's, don't*, etc.); indefinite referents (e.g., *she* either gets on with *it* or gets rid of *them*, etc.); *I* and *you* pronouns, in view of the interactional nature of the exchange; and frequent questions (e.g., *Why?, What's the alternative?*).

Text Sample 1.4 Systems Analysis Textbook

The Method for Information Systems Enquiry, known colloquially as MINSE by the research project team, specifically addresses the problem of structuring the approach to information studies. It uses systems thinking to develop ideas about what information is needed to achieve a defined purpose, ideas that are independent in the first instance of how this information appears in practice. In the process an information model is built up on a computer database which is then used as a framework to explore the situation and identify problems at a number of levels (Fig 11.1).

Figure 2
Extract of a written passage, taken from Biber, Conrad (2009, p. 12).

As is evident, the language patterns observed in the textbook in Fig. 2 are markedly different from those typifying the conversation in Fig. 1. The textbook is produced in written form and is thus carefully planned and edited, while the conversational exchanges come about in an impromptu form. Also, the function of the written text is to inform of something and not of nourishing an interpersonal relationship, as is the case with the conversation (Biber, Conrad 2009, p. 14). For this reason, in the second text we find linguistic features different from the first text, such as: sentences which are grammatically complete, complex and long; no reduced forms; and passive forms (e.g., *known colloquially as, is built up*, etc.).

Moving on to style, Figures 3 and 4 below compare two texts from a stylistic viewpoint.

> **Text Sample 5.13 Fiction: Arthur Conan Doyle, *The Hound of The Baskervilles,* 1902**
>
> An instant afterwards he [Sherlock Holmes] gave a little cry of satisfaction, and, following the direction of his eager eyes, I saw that a hansom cab with a man inside which had halted on the other side of the street was now proceeding slowly onwards again.
>   "There's our man, Watson! Come along! We'll have a good look at him, if we can do no more."
>   At that instant I was aware of a bushy black beard and a pair of piercing eyes turned upon us through the side window of the cab.

Figure 3
Sherlock Holmes stories told from the first-person point of view of Dr. Watson, taken from Biber, Conrad (2009, p. 133).

In the text above, the use of the first-person narration technique entails that events are narrated subjectively and so sensual perceptions, thoughts and feelings (e.g., *I saw, I was aware of*, etc.) are replete (Biber, Conrad 2009, p. 133). On the contrary, the third-person narration technique adopted in the text of Fig. 4 below, does not leave room for such perceptual descriptions, since the point of view is not the narrator's, but the character's.

> **Text Sample 5.14 Fiction: Upton Sinclair, *The Jungle*, 1906**
>
> She stood in the doorway, shepherded by Cousin Marija, breathless from pushing through the crowd, and in her happiness painful to look upon. There was a light of wonder in her eyes and her lids trembled, and her otherwise wan little face was flushed. She wore a muslin dress, conspicuously white, and a stiff little veil coming to her shoulders. There were five pink paper roses twisted in the veil, and eleven bright green rose leaves. There were new white cotton gloves upon her hands, and as she stood staring about her she twisted them together feverishly. It was almost too much for her – you could see the pain of too great emotion in her face, and all the tremor of her form.

Figure 4
Passage from Upton Sinclair's *The Jungle,* narrated in third person and taken from Biber, Conrad (2009, p. 134).

When referring to the degree of language (in)formality, there seems to be a preference, among several authors, to associate it to the label "style", instead of "register" and "genre". Consequently, the phrase "formal style" is most often employed (House 1977; Trudgill 1999, p. 119; Lee 2001, p. 45; Labov 2006, p. 167 in Coupland 2007, p. 36; Biber, Conrad 2009, pp. 234-235; Wardhaugh, Fuller 2015, p. 52). This is not surprising, if we consider that, as argued above, style refers to the aesthetic preferences of a single speaker or author, rather than the functional features of a text (Biber, Conrad 2009, p. 18). In particular, and more importantly for the present investigation, as regards literary language, Lee (2001) contends that one cannot speak about "literary register" but should speak about "literary style", insofar as "the very essence of imaginative writing is idiosyncrasy or creativity and originality" (ibid, p. 46). Lee's contention is, as a matter of fact, confirmed by many authors' preference for the label "literary style", rather than "literary register" (Holmes 1985; Thornborrow, Wareing 1998; Biber, Conrad 2009). In this article, "literary style" and "formal style" will be employed interchangeably, since they have been repeatedly conflated by several academics (van Cranenburgh *et al.* 2019, p. 642, 644; Borodo 2020, p. 196; Oktaviani, Purwarno 2021, p. 56). This should not come as a surprise, because the language

of ancient times (as concerns the choice of words or grammatical structures) necessarily carries a formal flavour in present-day conversation.

Formality, in itself, is also very difficult to pinpoint, both epistemologically and methodologically, since what counts as formal, non-formal and informal, in terms of textual features, is open to subjectivity. Leech and Short (1981, p. 314), for example, see formality as the language "on its best behaviour"; Gossen (1974, p. 412) says that formal speech is typified by redundancy and syntactic parallelism; while Rubin (1968) argues that formality reduces the variability and acceptability of one's speech. Labov (1972, p. 113), as also argued above, correlates formality with the amount of attention one pays to speech. Irvine (1979, p. 776) adopts a more linguistic view and contends that formality entails the use of certain syntactic constructions or lexical items, that is word choice.

Irvine's linguistic perspective on (in)formality, which is the one that is most relevant to the present investigation from a theoretical point of view, has also been the object of many studies in manifold language systems, in particular concerning lexicon (Leech, Short 1981, pp. 75-76; Ordonez *et al.* 2002; Mihatsch 2006; Killie 2015), syntax (Collins 1991; Roggia 2008; De Cesare 2014; Frazier 2015) and grammar (Leech, Short 1981, pp. 76-78; X Liu 2010).

2.2. Style in Translation Studies and Audiovisual Translation Studies

How the style of a source text is rendered in the target is not a new research avenue in translation studies both theoretically speaking and, with the advent of corpora after the descriptive translation studies turn (Laviosa 2013), also empirical-wise. Concerning studies conducted on style in translation, Goris (1993, p. 175) focused on dialects and idiolects in dubbing translation and argued that translators sometimes struggle to reproduce the social differentiation of the source-dialogues vocabulary. A similar standpoint was also taken by Fawcett (2003, p. 157), according to whom phraseology of a source language marking informality and colloquialism poses problems for translators since, being tightly tied to culture, it hardly ever finds appropriate and connotatively equivalent counterparts in a target language.

From a purely theoretical perspective, numerous translation studies academics have embraced a prescriptive approach, arguing that being faithful to the source-text and to the author's style is paramount in a good translation. As a matter of fact, stylistic faithfulness is the only way to ensure that the same effect brought about in the source-language reader, is attained on the target-language reader (Shiyab, Lynch 2006, p. 262; Tytler 2007). This stance started to circulate even before the very discipline of "Translation Studies" came into being. In fact, the first time style was thoroughly discussed in a translational perspective, or rather, from a comparative linguistics perspective, was in Vinay and Darbelnet's seminal work (1958). Later on, the inception of the discipline of translation studies was typified by an extensive interest in what could count as "equivalence" (Bassnet 2007, p. 37), including stylistic equivalence.

Mentioning dynamic equivalence, for example, Nida and Taber (1969, p. 12) contended that a target text should be reproduced following both the meaning and the *style* [my emphasis] of the source text. This concept would also be fully embraced by Newmark (1987), where focus was placed on "naturalness" of style, a notion encompassing text features ranging from metaphors (ibid, p. 112) to phraseology (ibid, p. 29). Koller (1979, pp. 187-191) mentioned "connotative equivalence" to refer to the need of reproducing both style and register in the target text. Another author who significantly contributed to the epistemological definition of style, from a translational perspective, was House who, in her

Model for Translation Quality Assessment (1997), distinguished between style *of* translation and style *in* translation. The former refers to the translator's own style that he/she employs as his/her imprint on the translated text, and so comes under the purview of translation *as a process*. The style that the translator decides to adopt, in this case, "very much depends on his/her response to the source-language norms and on the subconscious use of the target-language norms (Huang 2015, p. 21). Style *in* translation, on the other hand, indicates the stylistic strategies as they come about in the source text and how they have been faithfully rendered or modified in the target text. For this reason, it comes rather under the scope of translation *as a product*.

Moving on to empirical research on style in translation, only a few investigations have explicitly addressed the matter. Borodo (2020), for instance, analysed the stylistic choices of three Polish-English translators of the children's novel *Król Maciuś Pierwszy* by *Korkzak*: *Adam Czasak* (1990 edition), on the one hand, and *Adam Fisher* and *Ben Torrent,* for a more recent joint translation edition of the novel (2014), on the other hand. The investigation revealed that while the first edition prioritized element of the source-language culture and employed informal style, the second edition was written in a more formal style, which contributes to presenting Korkzak's fictional world as more dignified and refined. This latter tendency was also found in Lathey (2016, p. 75) and in Looby (2015, pp. 174–175) who, always focusing on children's literature, found that translators usually embellish target texts and imbue them with a language which is more sophisticated than the source text. Olohan (2004) also adopted a contrastive approach and, comparing the style of two translators (Peter Bush and Dorothy S. Blair), found that while in Bush's translations the frequency of contracted forms of English aligned more with the frequency of non-translated comparable texts from the British National corpus, in Blair's translations their use was more similar to that of a corpus of translated English texts. To conclude, Parks (2007) critically analysed the translation style of a number of extracts from manifold literary works, in the form of personal remarks.

Zooming on style in audiovisual translation, Vanderschelden (2001, p. 365) explored orality, so informal register, in subtiling translation, and observed a shift towards more informality in captions, compared to the original dialogues, with an ensuing loss of formality. Mailhac (2000, p. 137) analysed the dubbing and subtitling translations into English of the French film *Gazon Maudit* and found that both versions toned down and neutralised sociolinguistic and stylistic variation strategies present in the original, through using standard forms. Petitt (2005) conducted a contrastive analysis between the French dubbed and subtitled versions of the English films *Smoke* and *Blue in the Face* which showed that, while subtitling tended to level out informal and vulgar expressions, dubbing maintained informality and, when lip sync required it, even employed informal features when these were absent from the original version.

3. Data collection and research methodology

3.1. Corpus

Two American films and one British film, all three based on literary novels bearing the same name, were chosen for data collection: *The Age of Innocence* (1993), adapted from Edith Wharton's novel (1920); *Little Women* (2019), adapted from Louisa May Alcott's novel (1868); and *Enola Holmes* (2020), inspired by Nancy Springer's *The Enola Holmes Mysteries* (2006-2021). The respective titles for the Italian versions are: *L'età dell'innocenza, Piccole donne*, and *Enola Holmes*. *Enola Holmes* was shot in the UK and

written by British scriptwriters, while the other two were produced and written in the US. What the three films have in common, which is the reason why they were selected as a source for the compilation of the three sub-corpora, is their abundance in literary language features in their dialogues, due to their being inspired from novels. At the moment of data collection, they were available in the "Netflix Italia" catalogue, which was the streaming platform utilized to watch them. Each film was watched three times: in its English original version, in its dubbed Italian version and in its subtitled Italian version. Three sub-corpora were created with the utterances having been collected from each viewing: the English sub-corpus (henceforth "Eng"), the dubbing sub-corpus (henceforth "Dub") and the subtitling sub-corpus (henceforth "Sub"). At the end of the data collection, 344 English utterances were collected overall, each of them having their translation counterpart in Dub and Sub.

3.2. Data annotation criteria

As the aim of the analysis was to show how dubbing and subtitling go about the translation of formal stye, the main criterion for data annotation was that formal linguistic expedients were to be featured in at least one of the three sub-corpora. This means that utterances were annotated only if the English version, the dubbed version, the subtitled version, two of them or all three, contained formal words and/or formal grammatical constructions. In other words, cases of non-formal or informal utterance features across the three sub-corpora were excluded from the annotation.

The utterances annotated were divided into three categories of formality: (a) formal, (b) non-formal, and (c) informal. Table 1 below shows all twelve possible annotation scenarios originating from the combinations of formal, non-formal and informal utterances across the three sub-corpora, where at least one sub-corpus contains the "formal" category.

	ENG	DUB	SUB
1.	Formal	Formal	Formal
2.	Formal	Non-formal	Non-formal
3.	Formal	Formal	Non-formal
4.	Formal	Non-formal	Formal
5.	Non-formal	Non-formal	Formal
6.	Non-formal	Formal	Non-formal
7.	Non-formal	Informal	Informal
8.	Formal	Formal	Informal
9.	Formal	Informal	Formal
10.	Formal	Formal	Formal
11.	Informal	Informal	Formal
12.	Informal	Non-formal	Formal

Table 1
Scenarios of (in)formality and non-formality distributions across the three sub-corpora.

For the sake of clarity, the explanatory examples in (1) and (2) in Table 2 below refer, respectively, to scenarios (6) and (8) of Table 1 above and specify the film titles from which they were taken:

	ENG	DUB	SUB
1.	"You'll need to marry well" (Little Women)	"Ti dovrai *maritare* bene" [You'll have to wed well] (Piccole donne)	"Dovrai sposarti bene" [You'll have to marry well] (Piccole donne)
2.	"He sent a widow to fleece his path?" (Enola Holmes)	"Ha mandato una vedova a fare le sue veci?" [Did he send a widow on his behalf?] (Enola Holmes)	"Ha inviato una vedova a *sondare il terreno?"* [Did he send a widow to test ground?] (Enola Holmes)

Table 2
Examples of scenarios (6) and (8) from Table 1.

In example (1), the non-formal English verb "marry" has been rendered in Dub as "maritare" (italics), which is a literary, formal word in Italian and whose non-formal counterpart, which in fact we find in Sub, is "sposare". We can thus observe that the shift was: non-formal > formal > non-formal.

In example (2), the original utterance contains the formal phrase "fleece his path" that has been rendered as "fare le sue veci" in Dub, which is a rather formal phrase in Italian ("al posto suo" having been the non-formal equivalent) and thus maintains the formality of the original utterance. In Sub, on the contrary, it was rendered as the informal idiom "sondare il terreno". In this second case, the shift was: formal > formal > informal.

As concerns the operationalization of non-formality and (in)formality, in other words how it was decided that utterances should be annotated as non-formal (neutral), formal or informal, previous models of analysis were taken as a reference and a categorization based on: (a) lexicon, (b) syntax and (c) grammar was established, as points a., b. and c. below exemplify. Examples in English and Italian are reported.

a. Lexical items (Leech, Short 1981)
   Ex: "ella" vs. "lei" (she), "lesto" vs. "veloce" (quick), "pleased to meet you" vs. "nice to meet you"
b. Syntactic structures (Roggia 2008)
   Ex: "l'amico *cui* scrivi" vs. "l'amico *a cui* scrivi" [the friend to whom you write], "He *thinks her* the handsomest woman in the room" vs. "He thinks *she is* the handsomest woman in the room"
c. Grammatical features (Leech, Short 1981)
   Ex: "che l'anello non s'impigli" [that the ring not be caught] (subjunctive tense) vs. "non fare impigliare l'anello" [don't let the ring be caught], "il ramo si spezzò" [the branch broke off] vs. "il ramo si è spezzato" [the branch has broken off].

As for (a), the annotation process considered the degree of (in)formality of one single word (or more than one) in an utterance. For example, the Italian adjective "lesto" is more formal than its neutral counterpart "veloce", while the same is true in English for the fixed routine formula "pleased to meet you", which is more formal than "nice to meet you".

As regards (b), Italian has two ways to render the dative construction of the relative pronoun "who" (to whom): one formal and the other non-formal. The formal one consists in omitting the dative preposition "a" (to), so the sentence would be: "l'amico Ø cui scrivi", while the neutral one includes it (l'amico a cui scrivi). In English, objective propositions with perception verbs of the kind: [Subject 1 + Perc. V. + that + Subject 2 + V.] is more common and neutral than the construction entailing the transformation of Subject 2 into an object followed by an infinitive, of the kind: [Subject + Perc. V. + Object + Infinitive V.]. In fact, the latter construction is more formal.

As regards (c), in the corpus compiled for the present investigation, the grammar category was only made up of verb tenses, in particular constructions with subjunctives (che l'anello non s'impigli) and with the "passato remoto" tense (the branch broke off) which in Italian can, in some contexts, be more formal than the "passato prossimo" (the branch has

broken off). Of the three categories, it was the first one, namely the lexical category, which had the lion share over the other two in data annotation.

Looking at Table 1 above, it can be noticed that all style shift combinations can be grouped into three scenarios: (1) maintenance of the same degree of (in)formality/non-formality; (2) shift towards more formality, in particular from non-formal to formal, from informal to non-formal and from informal to formal; (3) shift towards less formality, in particular from formal to non-formal, from formal to informal and from non-formal to informal. These three scenarios were taken into account when conducting quantitative comparison between Dub and Sub.

Having clarified the criteria for annotating data, a caveat is needed, which lies at the very base of the study: the parameters for determining the level of (in)formality and non-formality are inherently subjective and cannot escape the researcher's personal perceptions. It is for this reason that, in order to add to the robustness of the investigation, an inter-rater agreement analysis with intra-class correlation coefficients (henceforth ICC) (Kottner *et al.* 2011) was performed, whereby an agreement rate between the researcher and a recruited external analyst on the annotated instances of formality was computed statistically, in each of the three sub-corpora. In particular, for the English sub-corpus two native speakers of British and American English were recruited, owing to the fact that *Enola Holmes* is of British production, while *The Age of Innocence* and *Little Women* are American. For the Italian translated versions, two native speakers of Italian were selected: one for the Dub sub-corpus and one for the Sub sub-corpus.

Each annotator was presented with a set of 30 utterances, extracted from the 344 annotated overall. To avoid the researcher's bias in selecting which utterances to submit to the external analyst's opinion, the random pick function formula provided by Excel was used. The annotators were then presented with formal, informal and non-formal utterances in which the word, syntactic structure or grammar structure (verb tense) contributing (in)formality or non-formality to the utterance was marked in bald. The annotators were asked to indicate whether they believed that the given word, syntactic structure or grammar category were formal, non-formal or informal, according to their personal feeling.

At the end of the process, the raters' annotation scheme was compared with the one performed by the researcher and, based on the value of the ICC calculated, it was possible to statistically determine whether the researcher agreed "enough extensively" with the annotators or not. In particular, the inter-rater agreement analysis scheme provides that if the ICC is higher than 0.7, meaning that the researcher and the external rater agreed on 70 % of the cases in the sample, the researcher's annotation scheme can be considered valid (Kottner *et al.* 2011), while an ICC < 0.70 suggests that the annotation criteria were quite subjective. In addition to the coefficient value, statistical significance should also be reached to claim that the agreement rate higher than 0.70 concerns the entire sample (in this case the whole corpus) and is not limited to the sub-sample selected (in this case thirty utterances).

SPSS was used to conduct the inter-rater agreement analysis. For the American sub-corpus (*The Age of Innocence* and *Little Women*), a high degree of agreement was found between the researcher and the external rater and statistical significance was reached. The average measure ICC was .851 with a 95 % confidence interval from .684 to .929 ($F_{(29,29)}$= 6.500, p<.001). For the British sub-corpus (*Enola Holmes*), quite a high level of agreement was also found and statistical significance was also attained. The average measure ICC was .933 with a 95 % confidence interval from .859 to .968 ($F_{(29,29)}$= 14.929, p<.001). A high level of agreement was also observed both in Dub and Sub, where statistical significance was likewise attained. In Dub, the average measure ICC was .867 with a 95 % confidence interval from .720 to .937 ($F_{(29,29)}$= 7.500, p<.001), while in Sub, the average measure ICC was .925 with a 95 % confidence interval from .840 to .965 ($F_{(29,29)}$= 13.345, p<.001).

As the ICC's were in all four sub-corpora well above the 0.70 acceptance threshold, the researcher's annotation scheme was considered to be reliable across the three samples and could thus be considered fairly objective. For the single instances where agreement was not reached, the researcher and the rater discussed the cases in hand and a new annotation was performed.

The last step, before proceeding to the quantitative analysis of the data, was to balance the number of utterances across the three English (and thus translation) sub-corpora. This was done since if the distribution across films had not been equal, the final outcomes of the study might have been skewed. Let's consider, for instance, a scenario in which a particular dubbing translator or subtitler of one of the three films had an idiosyncratic tendency towards formality or informality. If the majority of utterances in the English sub-corpus (and so the majority of utterances in the translation sub-corpora) had come from that film, this might have led to a warped outcome. To avoid this issue, the three film sub-corpora were brought to the same size. Equating the sub-corpora in size was done by taking as the benchmark the number of utterances contained in the film with the lowest occurrences, which was *Enola Holmes,* with 76 annotated instances. The sub-corpora of *The Age of Innocence* and of *Little Women* were thus also scaled down to 76 instances, so the final corpus contained 228 utterances (76X3) as opposed to the initial 344. The Excel random pick function was again used to extract which utterances to include in the re-sized sub-corpora, to avoid that the researcher might prefer, for selection, certain utterances over others.

4. Results

Considering the 288 utterances collected in the Eng, Dub and Sub sub-corpora, as well as the tripartite categorization into: non-formal, formal and informal, Fig. 5 below shows the distribution patterns of the categories across the samples.
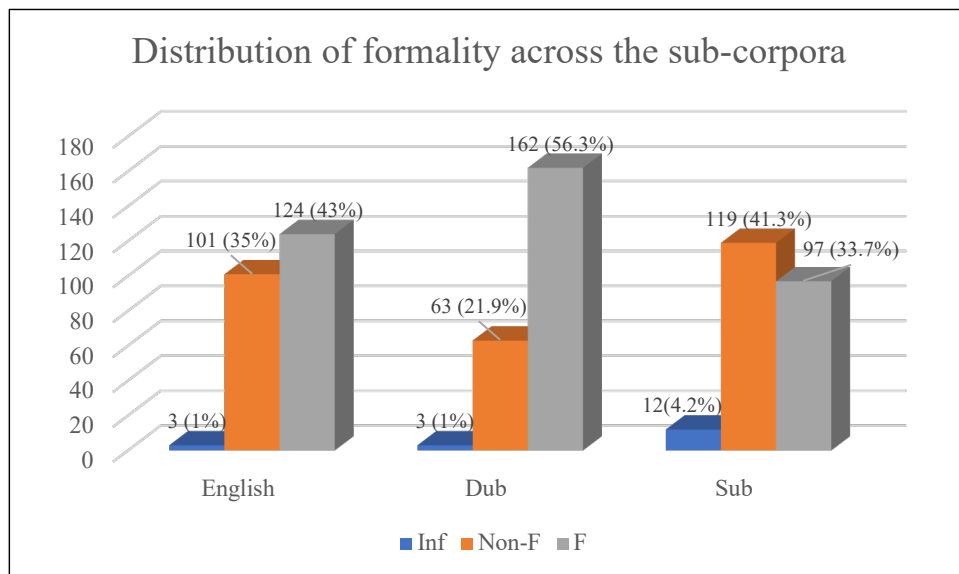

Figure 5
Raw frequencies and percentages (in brackets) of non-formal, formal and informal utterances collected in Eng, Dub and Sub.

If we rule out "informal", which exhibits the same frequency in Eng and Dub and whose presence is negligible in the three sub-corpora, the percentages of the categories "non-

formal" and "formal" vary greatly, not only between the original English sub-corpus and either dubbing or subtitling, but even between dubbing and subtitling. The graph in Fig. 5 reveals that the original English sub-corpus contains more non-formal utterances (35 %) than dubbing (21.9 %) but less than subtitling (41.3 %). Quite on the contrary, formal utterances in the original English films (43 %) are less frequent than in their dubbed counterparts (56.3 %) but more frequent than in their subtitled counterparts (33.7 %). The overall picture indicates that, compared to the original English dialogues, dubbed dialogues favour formality, while subtitled dialogues favour non-formality.

A Chi-square Goodness-of-fit test was run on the sample data to determine if the difference in the distribution pattern of the three categories in the two translation sub-corpora was statistically significant from the distribution pattern of the English original sub-corpus, which was shown to be the case. Both the distributions in Dub ($\chi2=265$; df=2; p<.01) and Sub ($\chi2=35.5$; df=2; p<.01) showed statistical significance, which suggests that the categories distributions in Dub and Sub deviated from the distribution in Eng in a statistically relevant way.

The fact that the two translated sub-corpora exhibit patterns of (in)formal and non-formal style that differ from the original English sub-corpus can only be explained by the translators' changes to the degree of non-formality and (in)formality of the source-language utterances. As explained in Section. 3.2, the three possible translation strategies were: (1) maintenance of the same (in)formality and non-formality level, (2) upgrading, and (3) downgrading. Percentages and raw frequencies for each strategy are shown in Table 2 below.

	MAINTENANCE	DOWNGRADING	UPGRADING
DUB	43.4 % (99)	19.7 % (45)	36.8 % (84)
SUB	55.3 % (126)	28.9 % (66)	28.1 % (36)

Table 2
Occurrences of maintenance, downgrading and upgrading strategies of style in Dub and Sub.

As can be noticed, while upgrading style is a strategy which typifies dubbed dialogues, both maintenance and downgrading are more frequent in subtitling. A 2x3 Chi-square for independence contingency table was built to determine whether this difference reached statistical significance and, if so, which categories contributed to the significance of the omnibus model.

The Chi-square for independence test revealed statistical significance (X^2 (3, N = 228) = 26.4, p<.01), with a medium effect size (V= .024). A post-hoc analysis with Bonferroni correction, performed on the z-values of the standardized adjusted residuals from the 3x2 table, revealed that only maintenance in Sub (p<.05) and upgrading in Dub (p<.01) contributed to the overall statistical significance, while downgrading in Sub (p<.05) did not. Put it more simply, translating for dubbing or for subtitling significantly affected whether the same degree of the source-dialogue style was maintained in subtitling translation or upgraded in dubbing translation, but not downgraded in subtitling translation. This means that translators for dubbing tended to upgrade the style of the original utterances towards more formality, rather than maintaining it or downgrading it, whereas subtitlers preferred to faithfully reproduce the same style level, rather than downgrading it or upgrading it.

The first research question of the study ("Is the level of style found in the original English dialogues equally mirrored in the Italian dubbed and subtitled film versions?") was

answered negatively, since differences were indeed observed. As for the second question ("If there are differences, how is style in the source-text changed in dubbing and in subtitling translation?"), it was found that the two translation modes followed different patterns, with maintenance being the most preferred choice by subtitlers and upgrading towards more formality being the approach most frequently adopted by dubbing translators.

For the sake of clarity, Table 3 below contains two examples of maintenance strategy involving Eng and Sub and of upgrading strategy involving Eng and Dub. The films from which the instances were taken are reported in brackets, while the last column indicates the type of translation strategy adopted.

ENG	(1) You *blast in* without a care (Enola Holmes)		(2) You'll need to *marry* well (Little Women)	
DUB	Ti presenti da me con *noncuranza* [You appear in front of me nonchalantly]	Inf. > for.	Ti dovrai *maritare* bene [You'll need to wed well]	Non-for. > for.
SUB	*Spunti* all'improvviso [You show up out of the blue]	Inf. > Inf.	Dovrai *sposarti* bene [You'll need to marry well]	Non-for. > non-for.

Table 3
Examples of maintenance and upgrading strategies at play in subtitling and dubbing translation.

As can be seen, in example (1), the informal phrasal verb "blast in", meaning "to appear suddenly" was kept informal in subtitled Italian, thanks to the use of the verb "spunti", which can be considered as colloquial compared to many other verbs having the same meaning (i.e. "compari", "appari", "ti presenti", etc.). On the contrary, in the dubbed utterance, there was the addition of the formal adverbial phrase "con noncuranza" which affords the whole utterance a more literary style. At the same time, the verb used ("ti presenti") does not carry the informality of the verb "blast in", since it is quite neutral in Italian. In example (2), the non-formal verb "to marry" in English was maintained as non-formal in subtitling ("sposarti"), while in dubbing its formal, literary counterpart ("maritarti") was used, thus again adding a formal layer absent in the original utterance.

Together with these quantitative findings, a qualitative analysis on the translation of utterances was also performed which revealed a second interesting aspect of the study. What emerged both in the dubbing and in the subtitling sub-corpus, was the sporadic adoption of compensatory strategies by translators in the "maintenance" category. In other words, when dubbing translators and subtitlers encountered a formal term or construction in the English dialogues and wished to maintain their formality in the Italian dialogues, but the target language did not offer any strategy which was equivalent in stylistic terms, compensatory strategies were sought. Examples (3) and (4) below exemplify this both in dubbing and subtitling, and highlight the formal terms and constructions in English and Italian through italics.

(3) "Larry starts making some *diversionary fuss* to show how moral he is" (The Age of Innocence)
     Sub: "Larry crea qualche diversivo per convincerla della sua rettitudine" [Larry creates some diversion to convince her of his rectitude]

(4) "The duke *thinks her* the handsomest woman in the room" (The Age of Innocence)
     Dub: "Il duca pensa sia la donna più avvenente della sala" [The duke thinks that she is the most comely woman in the room]

In (3), the English cue contains the formal phrase "diversionary fuss" which does not have a natural equivalent in Italian but which would have maintained the same level of formality of the original utterance. In order to preserve the literariness of the cue, the subtitler might have deliberately compensated for such loss by intervening elsewhere, namely by translating "moral" with "rettitudine", when the less formal term "moralità" (morality) existing in Italian would not have posed issues relative to lip-synch constraints. Simialrly, in (4), the dubbing translator may have wished to compensate for the loss of formality yielded by the special English syntactic construction [Subject + Verb + Object + Comp.], non-existent in Italian, where the obligatory construction for object clauses is: [Subject + Verb + *That*-clause], through translating "handsome" with "avvenente", instead of its closest non-formal equivalent "bella". In this case, a syntactic expedient was changed into a lexical expedient and, in both cases, formality was maintained through recurrence to compensatory strategies.

5. Discussion

The findings of the present research can be interpreted under two different views which would explain, respectively, the prevalence of the maintenance strategy in subtitling and the prevalence of the upgrading strategy in dubbing.

The preference for subtitlers to remain faithful to the (in)formality and non-formality degree of the source-language dialogues, can be explained through their vulnerability, in that subtitlers are continuously exposed to viewers' criticism. In fact, subtitlers tend to be more vulnerable (Díaz-Cintas 1998), compared to dubbing translators, because subtitling is a type of "overt translation" (House 2010) or "additive translation", to use Gottlieb's (1997, p. 141) terminology specific to audiovisual translation. Both concepts mean that source and target texts are available at the same time and viewers, especially those who have knowledge of the source language, can continually compare translation with original. This condition pressures subtitlers to provide translations which are as similar as possible to the source-text, in order to shun criticism (Díaz-Cintas, Remael 2007, p. 57).

Dubbing, on the contrary, is a kind of "covert translation" (House 2010) where only the target text is accessible, so translators can feel free to make changes to the source text, thus actively intervening in it and ultimately acting as visible translators (Venuti 1995). This research shows that the afore-mentioned translator's liberty afforded by dubbing, a phenomenon investigated from different angles and which has focused on the manipulation of manifold linguistic and cultural aspects (Ariza 2011; Ranzato 2012; Zanotti 2012; Keating 2016), also affects style and, more specifically, the degree of text formality.

The results from the analyses of dubbing and subtitling translation taken together, on the other hand, contradict findings from studies which have revealed an outright flattening-out effect of language variation-related phenomena, such as: colloquialisms and taboo language, culture-bound items and multilingualism both in dubbing and subtitling (Chiaro 2008; Mohamed Abdelaal, Puşnei 2014; Ávila-Cabrera 2016a; Ulrych 2020). Differently from such studies, the addition of formal utterances in the Italian dubbed cues, where in the original film there were none, brings the present study in line with other investigations suggesting, on the contrary, that language variation phenomena can also be preserved, especially in dubbing (Minutella 2016; Di Nuovo *et al.* 2018), to the point of being even exaggerated (Petitt 2005; Dore 2019).

One aspect which sets this investigation apart from past investigations of style and register in audiovisual translation, is that while previous inquiries have mainly focused on colloquial, informal style and oral language traits (Baños Piñero, Chaume 2009; Marchand 2012; Ávila-Cabrera 2016a; Ávila-Cabrera 2016b), with very few exceptions where formal

style entered the scene (Vanderschelden 2002; Petitt 2005), the present inquiry addresses formal, literary style. In addition, differently from most of these studies which have mainly revealed a general downgrading of informal style as the main translation strategy (Díaz-Cintas, Remael 2007; Marchand 2012; Ávila-Cabrera 2016b), this study accounts for all three possible strategies, namely downgrading, maintenance and upgrading of style, thus accounting for the whole formality spectrum (informal, non-formal and formal). A third novelty also lies in the fact that, differently from what has been shown in previous investigations, the downgrading strategy was only marginally present in subtitling translation (it did not reach statistical relevance), while maintenance and upgrading were the predominant strategies, in subtitling and dubbing respectively.

One previous investigation that, similarly to the present one, revealed the addition in the translated text of forms marked stylistically in terms if (in)formality, and which were not present in the original version, is Petitt's study (2015). The analysis compared the dubbed and the subtitled versions into French of three English films: *Smoke*, *Blue in the Face* and *The Piano* and showed that, although both translations overall became stylistically more neutral than the original, both dubbed dialogues and subtitled dialogues added informal words which were not there in the original versions. On this matter, the two studies point to the same outcome, with the difference that here also the translation of formality, and not only of informality and non-formality as described by Petitt (2015), was accounted for.

The present findings and Petitt's findings both show that target-language texts can be made even more functional and brought more in line with the norms of the genre at hand, compared to their source texts. In the case of Petitt's study (2015), informality was added when this was warranted by certain film scenes typified by informal exchanges, while in the case of this investigation the same was true but as concerns formality. In fact, ample use of formality in dubbing translation was warranted by the marked literary expedients permeating English dialogues. Dubbing translators thus departed from the source-text style patterns, thus resisting shining through (Teich 2003), and made the target text more formal, probably to bring it more in line with the norms of literary works (on which the films are based). This phenomenon was also observed in Borodo (2020). The scholar investigated translations of children's literature and argued that the addition of formal style features might be due to translators' willingness to make the text functional for the relevant audience, in the sense that present-day conventions of the children's literature genre (veering towards formality) are accentuated, compared to the source language.

In view of this, the results observed for dubbing can be explained through the functionalist approach in Translation Studies (Nord 1997), in turn stemming from the *Skopos Theory* (Reiss, Vermeer 1984). One of the leading principles of the *Skopos Theory* was the importance afforded to the target-language audience's *expectations* [my emphasis] (Reiss, Vermeer 1984, p. 92) which ultimately determined how a text should be re-constructed, in the translation process, in the new lingua-culture. In the case of the present investigation, dubbing translators, operating in a type of covert translation (House 2010) and thus having more freedom to manipulate the source text, might have considered that the target-language viewers watching a literary film, expect to find formal style in dialogues. By so doing, viewers would be able to feel more immersed in the old days, while experiencing the flavour of a past-time society, through listening to dialogues interspersed with formal, literary speech. This aspect arguably makes the viewing experience of this genre of films fully enjoyable, while it lends itself to being considered as a possible "skopos" of dubbing translation. As a matter of fact, *Skopos* also refers to the effect that the text has on the reader, and not only to its function in the target-language setting (Nord 1997, p. 82).

Under this view which considers the target-language system, rather than the source-language system, as would also be later done in Descriptive Translation Studies (Toury 2012), the norms of the source-language text (in this case regulating style) are relegated to a marginal position. On the contrary, the target-language norms are followed and given prominence in the translation process (ibid, p. 79). Using Toury's terminology (2012), the present study indicates that dubbing translation turns out to be acceptable, rather than adequate, while the opposite is true for subtitling translation.

Functionalism in audiovisual translation is not new in the literature. Minutella, for example, investigated verbally expressed humour in English-Italian translation for dubbing and subtitling of *Shrek* and noticed that while literalness and omission strategies prevailed in subtitling, more creativity, compensation strategies and even accentuation of certain ethnolects of the source dialogues were rendered in dubbing. A more marked tendence of dubbing, as opposed to subtitling, towards domestication and attentiveness to the target-language context, was also observed by Jankowska (2009), always in the translation of humour.

To summarize, it can be argued that, from the point of view of the target-language viewer, watching the dubbed versions of films whose dialogues are marked by literary style and which are set in older times, may result in a higher appreciation of literary traits, compared to watching the same films in their subtitled versions.

In conclusion, a further aspect that has emerged from a qualitative analysis of the translation sub-corpora, is the successful application of compensation strategies by both dubbing and subtitling translators. The strategy of compensation in audiovisual translation (Díaz-Cintaz 2007, p. 206), whereby translators add some elements in the target text to compensate for the untranslatability of other terms found elsewhere in the source text, has drawn extensive attention in the past from manifold angles, including cultural phenomena (Ranzato 2015, p. 93), dialects (Dore 2016) and puns (Hervey, Higgins 1992, p. 47). This investigation confirmed this trend also in the area of (in)formal style, by showing that both dubbing and subtitling translators, possibly aware of the impossibility to translate certain formal terms or phrases in the source text, found successful alternative solutions and added formality elsewhere in the target text, to maintain the same effect on the viewer. In particular, this was made evident in examples (3) and (4) of Section. 4, in which translators rendered the neutral English term "moral" with "rettitudine" and "handsome" as "avvenente" in Italian, respectively, when non-formal terms in Italian would have been available, namely: "moralità" and "bella". Translators may have made these changes to compensate for the absence of an equivalent formal phrase for "diversionary fuss" in (3) and for the untranslatable English formal construction in object clauses in (4). It is not possible to argue with certainty that the reasons for the change relate to compensation strategies without interviewing the translators themselves. However, this is thought to be likely, since the two alternative non-formal equivalents ("moralità" and "bella") would have even been more literal and would not have posed any issue for brevity constraints in captions, in the case of subtitling, or in lip-synch and isochrony constraints, in the case of dubbing.

6. Conclusions

In audiovisual translation studies, quantitative investigations availing themselves of statistic methods, which compare the strategies of dubbing and subtitling translators of the same audiovisual product with respect to a given linguistic phenomenon, are still relatively scant. The present study set out to fill this gap, by contrastively analyzing how formal and literary

style expedients characterizing the dialogues of three English films based on literary novels (*Enola Holmes*, *The Age of Innocence* and *Little Women*) were handled in Italian dubbed and subtitled dialogues. The translation strategies identified were: (a) maintenance of the same style level, (b) change into more formality, and (c) change into more informality.

The originality of this study lies in the fact that while past inquires focused on how colloquial register, including swearwords, was rendered in the two translation modes (Baños Piñero, Chaume 2009; Marchand 2012; Ávila-Cabrera 2016a; Ávila-Cabrera 2016b), this study was centered on formality. The investigation revealed four interesting results.

The first one is that the subtitled versions the three films were shown to keep the style of the source dialogues (be it informal, non-formal or formal) unchanged in translation.

The second finding is that the dubbed versions, quite differently, were observed to be more prone to altering the original style, changing it from informal or neutral to formal.

A third aspect which emerged is that, differently from previous arguments that both dubbing and subtitling translations flatten out or omit elements of linguistic variation (of which style is part, as argued in Coupland 2007) present in the source dialogues (Chiaro 2008; Puşnei 2014; Ávila-Cabrera 2016a; Ulrych 2020), this research revealed that instances of omissions or toning-down by translators were not present in a statistically significant way. On the contrary, the two major strategies identified were: (a) maintenance of the same (in)formality and non-formality level, observed in subtitling, and (b) exaggeration of formality in the target dialogues. The latter aspect corroborates previous investigations in audiovisual translation research that have shown how exaggeration of source language features in the target text is sometimes observed (Petitt 2005; Dore 2019).

The fourth finding is that when both dubbing and subtitling translators encountered a formal construction in the source dialogues and wished to preserve formality in the translated dialogues, they resorted to successful compensatory strategies when such formal expedients lacked equivalents in the Italian language. This means that formal terms or structures were chosen in Italian to translate terms or structures elsewhere in the same utterance, even though the closest equivalents existing in Italian were neutral in terms of formality. This was done to balance off the lack of equivalent formal terms or structures in the target language which, without intervening elsewhere in the text, would have led to the loss of formality in the target-language dialogues.

The first three findings emerged from quantitative, statistics-based analyses, while the fourth finding was more qualitative and grew out of the focus on a few utterances in the sub-corpus.

As concerns the explanation of the observed phenomena, the tendence of maintaining the same level of style of the original dialogues in subtitling translation was analyzed through the lens of subtitling translators' vulnerability (Díaz-Cintas 1998). On the other hand, the change towards greater formality in the target language observed in dubbing translation was interpreted under the framework of *Skopos Theory*. In this view, translators were likely to opt for the exaggeration of formality in the Italian translation to allow the viewer to better appreciate the language of old times and, possibly, to feel better immersed in ancient settings. Following this rationale, viewers' appreciation of literary style and old ambience would represent the *skopos* of dubbing translations.

As regards the adoption of compensatory strategies, the present investigation tallies with previous analyses having pointed to the existence of such phenomenon in translation studies (Hervey and Higgins 1992, p. 47; Heiss 2004; Bonsignori 2009; Dore 2016) and suggests that this trend also applies to stylistic features.

The main limitation of the study rests in its sole focus on one film genre, namely drama. As a matter of fact, *The Age of Innocence* and *Little Women* are both dramas, while *Enola Holmes* is both a drama and a crime. Future studies should hopefully: (1) analyze a

larger corpus, possibly containing more than three films; (2) investigate style contrastively in dubbing and subtitling for language pairs other than English-Italian; and (3) considering the impact of film genre on the translation of style, both inter and intra-linguistically.

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