

**Does Bridget Jones watch *East Enders* or *The Love Boat?***  
**Cultural and linguistic issues**  
**in the translation of chick lit novels**

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***Abstract***

*Chick lit is a genre comprised of books that are mainly written by women for women (“chick” is an American slang term for a young woman and “lit” is short for “literature”). These books are mainly characterized by the tone, which is very confidential and personal, and often relies on the use of colloquial and slangy (and occasionally obscene) expressions, by the use of humour, and by the numerous references to popular culture. This paper aims at analysing the strategies used in the Italian translation of one of the best-known examples of the genre, Helen Fielding’s *Bridget Jones’s Diary*, taking two frames of reference. First of all, the analysis will try to identify in the target text the distinctive universal features observed in computer-based corpus translation (Baker 1996), namely explicitation, simplification and normalization. Secondly, it will consider the translation in terms of Venuti’s dichotomy of translation strategies into domestication and foreignization (1995).*

**1. Chick lit**

Chick lit is a genre which comprises novels that are mainly written by women for women. The name itself of the genre refers to this peculiarity: *chick* is an American slang term for a young woman, and *lit* is the abbreviation of *literature*. Originally an expression used by college students to informally refer to a Female Literary Tradition course at Princeton University in the 1980s, in 1995 Chris Mazza and Jeffrey DeShell used it as an ironic title for their anthology of 22 short fiction

pieces, *Chick Lit. Postfeminist Fiction*. The stories were written by unknown female writers, the protagonists were all female, and they all dealt with issues of modern women and were characterized by a humorous and light-hearted tone (Mazza, in Ferriss and Young 2006: 4; Harzewski 2011: introduction).

Chick lit became particularly popular in the late 1990s, with best-selling novels such as *Bridget Jones's Diary* by Helen Fielding (1996) and *Sex and the City* (1997) by Candace Bushnell, which were also adapted into films and television series (Harzewski 2011: introduction).

Several scholars who have studied the genre (Ferriss and Young 2006; Mazza and DeShell 1995) agree in stating that chick lit originated in the nineteenth century novels written by women, especially Jane Austen and Emily Brontë. The influence is particularly evident in the formula of the plots and in the female perspective of the stories. However, chick lit heroines most often differ from those of nineteenth-century women's novels in various ways.

As a matter of fact, the majority of chick lit novels are set in a contemporary world (though there is also historical chick lit) and one of the features that characterize the genre is that the main characters are embedded in pop culture. They are usually single women in their twenties or thirties, who mostly work in the publishing or the advertising sectors, and have an obsession with appearance and especially with their weight.

Since chick lit often includes romantic elements, it has sometimes been considered as a subcategory of the romance novel genre. However, regardless of its romantic features, it differs from the latter, mainly because the sentimental relationships of the protagonists are not the only important issue in the plot. Indeed, their friends (who are usually either female or gay) are very important in their lives, just as their career is.

Finally, chick lit distinguishes itself from romance novels and from regular women's fiction especially for its tone, which is very personal and confidential. Humour is another constant feature of the genre. Moreover, the language used is usually informal and colloquial, as it is rich in slang words and expressions, and occasionally in obscene terms. And, last but not least, chick lit novels are abundant in refer-

ences to contemporary popular culture (see Baratz-Logsted 2005; Ferriss and Young 2006; Harzewski 2011; Montoro 2012).

## **2. Translating chick lit. Case study: *Bridget Jones's Diary***

*Bridget Jones's Diary* is a novel written by Helen Fielding in 1996 and is considered one of the best-known examples of the genre, as it presents all the elements peculiar to chick lit (Ferriss 2011; Harzewski 2011: introduction). It is written in the form of a personal diary and narrates the life of the protagonist – Bridget Jones – throughout a whole year.

Bridget is a single woman in her early thirties who lives in London and, as the book begins, works in the advertising sector of a book publishing company, although she later resigns and finds a new job in a television channel. She is obsessed with her love life and is constantly looking for a stable relationship, also because she feels that is what is expected by her family and by society in general. Moreover, the diary is filled with notes on her weight, on her daily intake of calories, on the quantity of alcohol consumed and on the number of cigarettes smoked.

The tone of the book is very confidential - in line with what would be expected from a diary - humorous and light-hearted, and it often relies on the use of colloquial, slangy, and also taboo words and expressions.

Finally, the novel abounds in references to contemporary popular culture, especially British, as Bridget often mentions names of TV presenters and titles and names of characters of TV programs, as well as names of brands or shops.

This paper aims at analyzing the strategies used in the Italian translation of the book, *Il diario di Bridget Jones*, by Olivia Crosio (published by BUR Rizzoli in 1998), taking two frames of reference. First of all, the analysis will try to identify in the target text the distinctive universal features observed in computer-based corpus translation (Baker 1996; Laviosa 2002), namely *explication*, *simplification* and *normalization*. Secondly, it will consider the translation in terms of

Venuti's dichotomy of translation strategies into *domestication* and *foreignization* (1995).

### 3. Universal features of translation

In the late 1980s and early 1990s, several translation scholars noted some specific recurrent features "which typically occur in translated texts rather than original utterances and are not the result of interference from specific linguistic systems" (Baker 1993: 243). According to Baker (*ibidem*: 246), such features can be considered as "a product of constraints which are inherent in the translation process itself, and this accounts for the fact that they are universal" and "they do not vary across cultures".

Indeed, more recent research in corpus based translation research (see Baker 1996) has confirmed the recurrence of three specific features in translated texts, namely the features of *explication*, *simplification*, and *normalization*.

The following section will analyze the three universal features of translation mentioned above in the Italian translation of *Brigit Jones's Diary* by Olivia Crosio, showing that such features can be observed also in studies based on manual analysis of parallel texts, and not necessarily through the aid of corpus linguistic tools.

#### 3.1. *Explication*

According to Baker (1996: 180), the translators' inclination towards explication can be seen in the fact that "there is an overall tendency to spell things out rather than leave them implicit in translation". This statement is supported by the fact that translations are usually longer than original texts, regardless of the languages concerned. In translations, indeed, it is common to observe the use of "explanatory vocabulary" and conjunctions which are added to the text (*ibidem*: 181). Addition, in fact, is the strategy through which the tendency to explicitate is accomplished. According to Delabastita (1993: 36), the insertion in the translated text of information that is absent in the original text can be due to the translators' "concern for clarity and coherence, which

prompts them to disentangle complicated passages, provide missing links, lay bare unspoken assumptions, and generally give the text a fuller wording”.

In the Italian translation of Fielding’s *Bridget Jones’s Diary*, it is possible to observe various cases when the translator has opted for the strategy of amplification with the aim of making the text more explicit.

In some cases, it seems that the translator has chosen this strategy in order to make the text easier to understand by the Italian reader, as she has explicated some references which were implicit in the source text.

Table 1. Explication of the title of a novel

| Source text  | Target text   | Back translation  |
|--|---|---|
| (p. 13) It struck me as pretty ridiculous to be called Mr Darcy and to stand on your own looking snooty at a party. It’s like being called Heathcliff and insisting on spending the entire evening in the garden, shouting ‘Cathy’ and banging your head against a tree. | (p. 21) Chiamarsi Darcy e starsene tutto solo con aria sdegnosa a una festa mi ha subito colpita come una cosa abbastanza ridicola, un po’ come se, in <i>Cime tempestose</i> , Heathcliff passasse tutta la serata in giardino a gridare ‘Cathy’ e a sbattere la testa contro un tronco. | Being called Darcy and standing on your own looking snobbish at a party immediately struck me as a pretty ridiculous thing, as if in <i>Wuthering Heights</i> , Heathcliff would spend the night in the garden shouting ‘Cathy’ and banging his head against a trunk. |

In Table 1 it is possible to note that in the source text there is an implicit reference to two of the most popular novels in British literature. In fact, Mr Darcy is the name of the male protagonist of *Pride and Prejudice* (by Jane Austen), who is a rather antisocial and snobbish person. This is why Bridget thinks that it is quite bizarre for someone called Darcy (one of the two male protagonists in *Bridget Jones’s Diary*) to stand on his own looking aloof at a party. Then Bridget compares such a situation (being called Darcy and behaving exactly like *Pride and Prejudice*’s Mr Darcy) to another very well-known and recognizable literary context, namely Heathcliff’s behaviour in *Wuthering Heights* (by Emily Brontë), calling for his love

Cathy. We can notice that in the target text the translator has opted for a strategy of amplification (adding the Italian title of the novel, *Cime tempestose*), making the second reference explicit. Presumably, she assumed that the Italian lay reader would not catch the reference.. However, the translation does not maintain the original comparison that Bridget makes between being called Darcy and being called Heathcliff. Therefore, the target text not only explicates the reference to the novel, but it also changes the meaning of the original, saying that Heathcliff would be quite ridiculous doing what he actually does in the book<sup>1</sup>.

In Table 2 we can observe another example of explicitation of an implicit reference:

Table 2. Explicitation of a singer's typical feature

| Source text                   | Target text                                       | Back translation   |
|-------------------------------|---|--|
| (p. 19) Alice Cooper eyes ... | (p. 27) occhi cerchiati peggio di Alice Cooper... | <i>circled eyes which were worse than Alice Cooper's ...</i> |

In this case it is possible to note that the translator has explicitated the reference to Alice Cooper's eyes, by adding information explaining the singer's trademark eye makeup.

Other examples of explicitation found in the text will be listed the table below with the corresponding back translation:

Table 3: Various instances of explicitation

| Source text            | Target text  | Back translation  |
|------------------------|--|---|
| (p. 16) I said.        | (p. 24) ho ironizzato.   | I said <i>ironically</i> .  |
| (p. 20) "Shhh, shhh"   | (p. 28) "Zitta! Abbassa la voce!"                                      | " <i>Shut up! Speak in a lower voice!</i> "   |
| (p. 70) a nurse        | (p. 76) infermiera in un reparto maternità                             | a nurse <i>in a maternity ward</i>  |
| (p. 82) shepherd's pie | (p. 89) torta salata del pastore: una tipica ricetta inglese a base di | shepherd's pie: <i>a typical English recipe with mince meat and mashed potatoes</i> |

<sup>1</sup> It is interesting to note that the translator has explicitated the reference to *Wuthering Heights*, whereas she has left the reference to *Pride and Prejudice* implicit.

|  |  |  |
|--|--|--|
|  | carne trita e pure di patate   |  |
| p. (101) Poohs and Pig-gies.   | (p. 108) orsetti Pooh e maialine Piggy.  | Pooh <i>bears</i> and Piggy <i>pig-lets</i>  |
| (p. 123) all formal and English.   | (p. 130) formali come solo noi inglesi sap-piamo essere.   | formal <i>as only us English can be.</i>   |
| (p. 128) carrier bags  | (p. 134) borse di carta stracolme  | <i>bulging</i> paper carrier bags  |
| (p. 183) Ivana bloody Trump.   | (p. 189) Ivana ex Trump.   | Ivana <i>Ex Trump.</i>   |
| (p. 219) she has topped herself  | (p. 225) si è buttata giù dalla finestra   | she <i>jumped from the window</i>  |
| (p. 229) said Una.   | (p. 235) ha borbottato Una.  | <i>muttered</i> Una.   |
| (p. 235) said Mark thoughtfully.   | (p. 241) ha borbottato lui, meditabondo.   | he <i>muttered</i> , thoughtfully.   |
| (p. 245) said Jude, burping again.   | (p. 251) ci ha zittite Jude, con un altro ruttino discreto.  | Jude <i>silenced us</i> , with another <i>delicate burp.</i>                                       |
| (p. 247) I would hate to see Darcy and Elizabeth in bed, smoking a cigarette afterwards. | (p. 252) Non sopporterei la vista di Darcy ed Elizabeth a letto, con lui che dopo si fuma una sigaretta. | I couldn't stand seeing Darcy and Elizabeth in bed, and <i>him</i> smoking a cigarette afterwards. |
| (p. 295) field telephone.  | (p. 299) Il telefono da campo sta squillando.  | The field telephone <i>is ringing.</i>   |

### 3.2 Simplification

According to Baker (1996: 181, 182), simplification is “the tendency to simplify the language used in translation”, so that things are made “easier for the reader (but not necessarily more explicit)”. Baker had previously stated that translators often omit translating words or expressions if the meaning is not vital for the development of the text “to justify distracting the reader with lengthy explanations” (1992: 40). Indeed, “omitting words, phrases, sentences or sections of the original text is the most direct way of simplifying a translation” (Kruger 2002: 91).

As in the case of explicitation, in the Italian version of *Bridget Jones's Diary* we can observe various instances where the translation presents cases of omission to simplify the text, as in the examples reported in Table 3:

Table 4. Simplification by omission of a slang term

| Source text                           | Target text                | Back translation    |
|---------------------------------------|----------------------------|---------------------|
| (p. 18) such <i>Sloaney</i> arrogance | (p. 26) così arroganti     | so arrogant         |
| (p. 40) <i>Sloaney</i> milch cow      | (p. 48) vacca da latte     | milch cow           |
| (p. 247) blond <i>Sloane</i> hair     | (p. 253) capelli platinati | platinum blond hair |

In this case we can note that the translator has omitted translating the adjective *Sloaney* (or the corresponding noun *Sloane*), a slang term used to refer to British girls who go to expensive public schools and are arrogant and snobbish. As in Italian there is no such word with the same denotative and connotative meaning, the translator has probably opted for a strategy of omission to simplify the target text.

Another case of omission can be noticed in the translation of the name of the house where Bridget's parents live, namely The Gables (see Table 4). The references are either omitted, or generalized to *casa* [house], avoiding an element which is not vital to understanding the sentences. The result in both cases is a simplified target text:

Table 5. Simplification by omission or generalization of a proper noun

| Source text   | Target text  | Back translation                                    |
|---|--|---|
| (p. 45) Maybe <i>The Gables</i> has been cut off by the snow? | (p. 53) Forse sono rimasti isolati dalla neve?             | Maybe they have been cut off by the snow?           |
| (p. 281) when we got back to <i>The Gables</i> .              | (p. 285) quando siamo tornati a <i>casa</i> .              | when we got back home.                              |
| (p. 282) "I think The Gables might be saved..."               | (p. 285) "Chissà, forse salveremo almeno la <i>casa</i> ." | "Who knows? Maybe we will save at least the house." |

The strategy of omission with the purpose of simplifying the text can be noticed especially in the case of references to brands and household names, as in the examples reported in the table below.

Table 6: Omission of brands and household names

| Source text  | Target text   | Back translation                              |
|--|---|---|
| (p. 70) Baby Gap <sup>2</sup> G-strings.                                 | (p. 77) mutandine ridottissime.                                       | tiny panties.                                 |
| (p. 123) credit notes from <i>Boules, Warehouse</i> , <sup>3</sup> etc.  | (p. 129) note di accredito.   | credit notes                                  |
| (p. 128) eight <i>Cullens</i> <sup>4</sup> carrier bags                  | (p. 134) otto borse di carta stracolme                                | eight bulging paper carrier bags              |
| (p. 132) the witch in the <i>Whistles</i> <sup>5</sup> suit.             | (p. 138) la strega con il tailleur.                                   | the witch in the suit.                        |
| (p. 133) the most wonderful <i>Joseph</i> <sup>6</sup> shift dress.      | (p. 139) il tubino più bello del mondo.                               | the most wonderful sheath dress in the world. |
| (p. 145) my <i>Gossard Glossies</i> <sup>7</sup> ones would be perfect.  | (p. 151) Ho già in mente quali.                                       | I already have in my mind which ones.         |
| (p. 228) a <i>Body Shop</i> <sup>8</sup> Terracotta Essential Oil Burner | (p. 234) un fornelletto di terracotta per bruciare gli oli essenziali | a terracotta essential oil burner             |
| (p. 242) 1600 volts, <i>Salon Selectives</i> <sup>9</sup>                | (p. 247) Milleseicento volt   | One thousand six hundred volts                |
| (p. 253) a <i>Lynx</i> <sup>10</sup> aerosol                             | (p. 257) un aerosol a ultrasuoni                                      | an ultrasound aerosol                         |

<sup>2</sup> Gap is an American multinational clothing and accessories retailer. Baby Gap is specialized in collections and accessories for babies and children.

<sup>3</sup> Fashion shops in London.

<sup>4</sup> British chain of convenience stores.

<sup>5</sup> Fashion shop in London.

<sup>6</sup> Luxury fashion label.

<sup>7</sup> Gossard is an English underwear brand. Gossard Glossies is a collection from such company.

<sup>8</sup> The Body Shop is an English chain of cosmetic shops.

<sup>9</sup> Salon Selectives is a line of hair care products.

<sup>10</sup> Lynx is a brand of male grooming products.

|  |   |  |
|--|---|--|
| (p. 257) a <i>Hubble</i> <sup>11</sup> telescope   | (p. 261) un telescopio astronomico  | an astronomical telescope  |
| (p. 258) “Olive?” [...] “Nine.” “ <i>Hobnob</i> <sup>12</sup> ?” “Eighty-one” “Box of <i>Milk Tray</i> <sup>13</sup> ?” “Ten thousand, eight hundred and ninety-six” | (p. 262) “In un’oliva?” [...] “Nove.” “In una scatola di cioccolatini?” “Diecimilaottocentonovantasei.” | “In an olive?” [...] “Nine.” “In a box of chocolates?” “Ten thousand, eight hundred and ninety-six.” |
| (p. 286) ‘ <i>Stocking Filla</i> ’ catalogues  | (p. 290) cataloghi  | catalogues   |
| (p. 289) the <i>PACT</i> <sup>14</sup> party   | (p. 293) C’è una festa  | There’s a party  |
| (p. 289) £ 145 <i>English Eccentrics</i> <sup>15</sup> knickers in textures black velvet.  | (p.293) mutandoni lunghi in velluto nero elasticizzato da 145 sterline                                  | £ 145 stretch black velvet long johns  |
| (p. 293) <i>Body Shop</i> <sup>16</sup> Algae and Polyp Oil shower gel   | (p. 297) un Bagno alle Alghe e un Gel Doccia all’Olio di Polipo   | Algae Bubble Bath and Polyp Oil Shower Gel   |
| (p. 293) Magda’s <i>Conran Shop</i> <sup>17</sup> rug.   | (p. 297) tappeto persiano di Magda.   | Magda’s Persian rug.   |

Omission as a strategy of simplification is also common in the case of references to people who might be considered unfamiliar to the Italian lay reader, as in the examples reported in the table below:

Table 7: Omission of references to people

| Source text | Target text | Back translation |
|-------------|-------------|------------------|
|-------------|-------------|------------------|

<sup>11</sup> The Hubble Space Telescope is a space telescope that was carried into orbit by a Space Shuttle in 1990 and remains in operation.

<sup>12</sup> Hobnob is a British brand of biscuits.

<sup>13</sup> Milk Tray is a brand of boxed chocolates manufactured by Cadbury, UK.

<sup>14</sup> PACT stands for Producers Alliance for Cinema and Television, a trade association in the UK representing the commercial interests of independent feature film, television, digital, children's and animation media companies.

<sup>15</sup> English Eccentrics is a London-based fashion design label.

<sup>16</sup> See note 7.

<sup>17</sup> The Conran Shop is a retailer of household furnishing.

|   |   |  |
|---|---|--|
| (p. 11) He did a jokey<br><i>Bruce Forsyth</i> <sup>18</sup> step...  | (p. 18) Ha accennato goffamente a un passetto di danza...                         | He clumsily made a dance step...                                       |
| (p. 15) Una threw herself across the room like <i>Will Carling</i> <sup>19</sup> ...  | (p. 23) Una si è lanciata attraverso la stanza nemmeno fosse una centometrista... | Una threw herself across the room as if she was a 100 metres sprinter  |
| (p. 30) <i>Denis Healey</i> <sup>20</sup> eyebrows...   | (p. 38) le sopracciglia a cespuglio incolto...                                    | unkempt bushy eyebrows...  |
| (p. 47) ... over-exposure to <i>Noel Edmonds</i> <sup>21</sup> , popular television.  | (p. 55) ... eccessiva esposizione alla TV spazzatura.                             | ... over-exposure to junk TV.  |
| (p. 76) and now suddenly you're <i>Jeremy Paxman</i> <sup>22</sup>  | (p. 83) E adesso tutto a un tratto ti metti a fare la femminista.                 | And now, you suddenly start acting as a feminist.                      |
| (p. 100) without the <i>Frank Bough</i> <sup>23</sup> -style diamond patterned sweater.   | (p. 107) senza il maglione a rombi.   | without the diamond patterned sweater.                                 |
| (p. 124) lying side by side and not touching, like we were <i>Morecambe and Wise</i> <sup>24</sup> or <i>John Noakes and Valerie Singleton</i> <sup>25</sup> in the <i>Blue Peter House</i> . | (p. 130) sdraiati uno vicino all'altra senza tocerci, come mummie.                | lying side by side without touching each other, as if we were mummies. |

<sup>18</sup> Bruce Forsyth is a well-known English TV host and entertainer.

<sup>19</sup> Will Carling is a former English rugby player who is very well known in England as he was captain of the English team from 1988 to 1996, winning 72 caps.

<sup>20</sup> Denis Healey is a retired British Labour politician who served as Secretary of State for Defence from 1964 to 1970 and Chancellor of Exchequer from 1974 to 1979. Bridget mentions him to refer to his eyebrows, which are well known for their bushy aspect.

<sup>21</sup> Noel Edmonds is a very well-known English broadcaster who has been working both as a DJ on BBC Radio 1 and as a presenter of light entertainment television programmes.

<sup>22</sup> Jeremy Paxman is an English journalist, author and broadcaster, known for being aggressive, intimidating and condescending.

<sup>23</sup> Frank Bough is a retired British television presenter.

<sup>24</sup> Eric Morecambe and Ernie Wise were a British comic double act, working in variety, radio, film, and television. A central part of their sketch show saw them sharing the same bed.

<sup>25</sup> John Noakes and Valerie Singleton are English television and radio presenters, best known for presenting the BBC children's magazine programme *Blue Peter* in the 1960s and 1970s.

|   |   |   |
|---|---|---|
| (p. 166) some crashing<br><i>Geoffrey Boycott</i> <sup>26</sup><br>character  | (p. 172) qualche tipetto<br>tutto azzimato  | some dressed up guy   |
| (p. 186) I knew he was talking about my reaction, as if I were <i>Sara</i> bloody <i>Keays</i> <sup>27</sup> or someone.            | (p. 192) Ho subito capito che alludeva alla mia reazione, nemmeno fossi chissà chi.                           | I understood straight away that he was referring to my reaction, as if I were goodness knows who. |
| (p. 192) ... leaving me looking like <i>Teresa Gorman</i> <sup>28</sup> in a bright blue suit with slithery green blouse underneath | (p. 198) ... lasciandomi sola in casa in un tailleurino azzurro con sotto una camicetta verde tutta scivolosa | ... leaving me home alone in a light blue suit with a slithery green blouse underneath            |
| (p. 197) A plump, middle-aged man with curly blond hair, a denim shirt and red <i>Christopher Biggins</i> <sup>29</sup> spectacles  | (p. 204) un uomo di mezza età piuttosto in carne, con la camicia di jeans e degli occhialini rossi e tondi    | a plump, middle-aged man with a denim shirt and red and round spectacles                          |
| (p. 229) whispered Mum, exaggerating her lip movements like <i>Les Dawson</i> <sup>30</sup> .                                       | (p. 235) ha bisbigliato la mamma, parlando in punta di labbra.  | whispered Mum, at the end of her lips.  |
| (p. 244) subtle-as-a- <i>Frankie-Howard</i> <sup>31</sup> -sexual-<br>innuendo-style irony  | (p. 249) un'ironia sottile tipo allusione sessuale fatta da uno scaricatore di porto                          | a subtle irony similar to a sexual innuendo by a longshoreman                                     |
| (p. 248) "I'm thinking lesbian rape victims, I'm thinking <i>Jeanette Winterson</i> <sup>32</sup> , I'm thinking                    | (p. 253) "Pensate a delle lesbiche vittime di violenza sessuale, pensate a un dottore a <i>Buon</i>           | "Think of lesbian rape victims, think of a doctor at <i>Good Afternoon...</i> "                   |

<sup>26</sup> Geoffrey Boycott is a former Yorkshire and England cricketer.

<sup>27</sup> Sara Keays is the former mistress and personal secretary of British Conservative politician Cecil Parkinson. Keays made the decision to ruin Parkinson's career when she realised that he would not help her with her own and revealed their 12-year affair with the announcement of her pregnancy. Bridget is comparing herself to her because of her status of former girlfriend and secretary of her boss, Daniel Cleaver.

<sup>28</sup> Teresa Gorman is a British politician and was Conservative Member of Parliament for Billericay, in the county of Essex in England from 1987 to 2001.

<sup>29</sup> Christopher Biggins is an English actor and television presenter.

<sup>30</sup> Leslie "Les" Dawson was an English comedian and writer.

<sup>31</sup> Frankie Howard was an English comedian and comic actor.

<sup>32</sup> Jeanette Winterson is an English gay writer.

|   |   |                                  |
|---|---|----------------------------------|
| <i>Good Afternoon doctor ...</i>  | <i>pomeriggio!...</i>                                     |                                  |
| (p. 254) a fluid sheath of shot-silk-effect <i>Yves Klein</i> <sup>33</sup> blue... | (p. 258) a un velo fluente azzurro marezzato tipo seta... | a flowing watery silk-like veil. |

Moreover, examples of omission as a strategy of simplification are also sometimes found when Bridget refers to fictional characters, presumably, also in this case, in order to make the target text easier and more immediate to the Italian lay reader:

Table 8: Omission of names of fictional characters

| Source text  | Target text  | Back translation   |
|--|--|--|
| (p. 2) Obsess about Daniel Cleaver as pathetic to have a crush on boss <i>in manner of Miss Moneypenny</i> <sup>34</sup> or similar. | (p.11) Lasciarsi ossessionare da Daniel Cleaver, nel senso che prendersi una cotta per il capo è patetico. | Obsess about Daniel Cleaver, as having a crush on your own boss is pathetic. |
| (p. 30) long curly fingernails like <i>Struwwelpeter</i> <sup>35</sup> ...   | (p. 38) le unghie lunghe e adunche come quelle di un'arpia...  | long and hooked nails similar to those of a harpy...                         |
| (p. 103) I said, in a pre-programmed <i>Stepford Wife</i> <sup>36</sup> sort of way...   | (p. 110) ho risposto (una risposta programmata in anticipo)...   | I answered (an answer which had been planned in advance)...                  |

<sup>33</sup> Yves Klein was a French artist. One of his most famous exhibitions, entitled “Monochrome works: the Blue Epoch” (Milan, 1957) featured 11 identical blue canvases.

<sup>34</sup> Miss Moneypenny is a fictional character in Ian Fleming's James Bond novels, and also in the film series. Miss Moneypenny is secretary to M, James Bond's boss, and, although she has a small part in the films, her relationship with 007 is always characterized by romantic tension.

<sup>35</sup> Struwwelpeter is the character of a German children's book by Heinrich Hoffmann (first edition published in 1845), which is very popular in Northern Europe. Struwwelpeter is a boy who does not groom himself properly and has very long and unkempt hair and curly fingernails. The book was published also in Italy, although it is not very well-known, and this is probably why the translator has opted for omitting this reference.

<sup>36</sup> *The Stepford Wives* is a 1972 satirical thriller novel by Ira Levin in which the submissive housewives living in a Connecticut neighbourhood are actually robots created by their husbands. The term “Stepford Wife”, which stemmed from the novel, is often used to refer to a submissive and docile housewife.

|  |  |                                    |
|--|--|------------------------------------|
| (p. 40) I feel as if I have turned into <i>Miss Havisham</i> <sup>37</sup> . | (p. 48) mi trasformo in una specie di paguro bernardo. | I turn into a sort of hermit crab. |
|--|--|------------------------------------|

### 3.3 Normalization (conservatism)

According to Baker (1996: 183), normalization or conservatism is “a tendency to exaggerate features of the target language and to conform to its typical patterns”. Moreover, Baker claims that this tendency is probably influenced by the status of the source text and the source language, so that the higher the status of the source text and the source language, the less the tendency to normalize.

In the translation of *Bridget Jones's Diary*, we can observe various cases when the translator has opted for the strategy of normalization, with the aim of making the language of the target text more standardized. This does not come as a surprise, considering what previously mentioned: the status of the source text and of the source language, indeed, is not so high.

First of all, the chick lit genre has often been dismissed by critics as low literature. As Ferriss and Young (2006: 1) state: “On the one hand chick lit attracts the unquestioning adoration of fans; on the other it attracts the unmitigated disdain of critics. Such criticisms have become almost as common as the genre's ubiquitous pink, fashion-conscious covers. Highbrow critics, perhaps inevitably, have dismissed chick lit as trashy [fiction]<sup>38</sup>. Secondly, a personal diary is a kind of text that is not generally written with the intention of being published, and consequently its status is usually not considered high. As Lanford and West (1999: 11) claim “few diaries are accepted as canonical cultural documents, and then often only as a result of the public status of their writers”. Last but not least, we cannot but take into consideration the status of the author: *Bridget Jones's Diary* is Helen's Fielding second

Domenico Coppola 17/2/15 19:24

**Commento:** The quote starts after "As Ferris and Young (2006: 1) state: "On the one hand..." I sit too long? Should I skip a line and indent the whole quotation and write it in a smaller font?

DK 21/1/15 15:01

**Commento:** ? where is the other? Only use these if the quote is a quote!

<sup>37</sup> Miss Havisham is a significant character in Charles Dickens's novel *Great Expectations*. Bridget refers to Miss Havisham because she is a spinster, just as she is. It is interesting to note that the translator has not opted for a strategy of generalization (for example, by translating the reference with the generic Italian term *zitella*, meaning spinster), but she has completely changed the text, turning Miss Havisham into a hermit crab.

novel. The first one, *Cause Celeb*, was actually written and published two years earlier (1994), although it only became famous following *Bridget Jones's Diary*'s success<sup>38</sup>. Thus, when the novel was translated into Italian, Fielding could not be considered as a very important name in the literary world.

The *Diary* is characterized by a very colloquial and informal style. This is achieved also through the use of abbreviations, interjections, and onomatopoeic words. Abbreviations, in particular, are most often used at the beginning of the entry of each day, where Bridget makes a summary of the situation (in italics) and usually reports her weight, the number of alcohol units that she drank the previous day, the number of cigarettes smoked, the number of calories ingested, and the number of instant lottery tickets bought. She usually puts a comment into brackets after each data, and such comments are usually in an abbreviated form, such as: *v.g.* for *very good*, *v.v.g.* for *very very good*, *v.b.* for *very bad*, *esp.* for *especially*. As a general rule, in these cases the abbreviations have been maintained in the Italian translation. The phrases reported above have been translated as: *m.b.* for *molto bene*, *m.m.b.* for *molto molto bene*, *m.m.* for *molto male*, *spec.* for *specialmente*.

However, abbreviations sometimes also occur in the text itself, but in most cases they have been normalized in the target text, as can be seen in the table below, which reports some of the many instances of such translational behaviour:

Table 9: Normalization of abbreviations

| Source text                            | Target text   | Back translation                                |
|--|---|---|
| (p. 3) <i>Poss start pension also.</i> | (p. 12) <i>Se possibile cominciare a pagare anche una pensione.</i> | <i>If possible, start paying for a pension.</i> |

<sup>38</sup> In fact, all the pictures of the book cover available by browsing google images report the statement "by the author of *Bridget Jones's Diary*", not to mention the fact that it was published in the United States for the first time only in 2002 and it has never been translated in Italian.

DK 21/1/15 15:51  
Commento: table please

DK 21/1/15 15:51  
Commento: as above.

|   |   |  |
|---|---|--|
| (p. 77) Have woken up <i>v. fed up.</i>                             | (p. 84) Mi sono svegliata <i>stufa marcia.</i>                              | I have woken up <i>sick and tired.</i>                               |
| (p. 78) Have had <i>v.g.</i> idea about birthday.                   | (p. 86) Ho avuto un' <i>ottima</i> idea per il mio compleanno.              | I have had an <i>excellent</i> idea for my birthday.                 |
| (p. 93) <i>V. late</i> now.   | (p. 99) Sono in <i>ritardissimo.</i>  | I'm <i>very late.</i>  |
| (p. 106) ... feeling <i>v. full of</i> myself.                      | (p. 112) Ero <i>piena</i> di me.  | I was <i>full of</i> myself.   |
| (p. 109) A <i>v. posh</i> sheep-voice bleated...                    | (p. 115) Una voce <i>molto chic</i> e sottile ha belato...                  | A <i>very posh</i> and subtle voice bleated...                       |
| (p. 125) ... but creates <i>v. bad</i> situation in head.           | (p. 131) ... ma crea una <i>pessima</i> situazione in testa.                | ... but creates a <i>very bad</i> situation in head.                 |
| (p. 131) ... with Magda, who is <i>v. depressed</i> about Jeremy.   | (p. 138)... con Magda, che è <i>molto depressa</i> per via di Jeremy.       | ... with Magda, who is <i>very depressed</i> because of Jeremy.      |
| (p. 142) come to think of it, not <i>v.g.</i> area for mini-breaks. | (p. 148) ora che ci penso, non è il posto <i>migliore</i> per le minifughe. | come to think of it, it's not the <i>best</i> place for mini-breaks. |
| (p. 184) Head state <i>v. bad</i> again.                            | (p. 190) Sono di nuovo in un <i>pessimo</i> stato mentale.                  | I'm in a <i>very bad</i> mental state again.                         |
| (p. 190) <i>V. bad feeling</i> in pancreas area.                    | (p. 196) Ho sentito un <i>doloraccio</i> nella zona del pancreas.           | I felt a <i>sharp pain</i> in the pancreas area.                     |
| (p. 194) <i>V. bad night.</i>                                       | (p. 200) Una <i>pessima</i> nottata.  | A <i>very bad</i> night.   |

As far as onomatopoeic interjections are concerned, the translator is not always consistent. In some cases they are transposed with commonly used Italian interjections. However, often they are standardized. The most common onomatopoeic interjections used are *ugh*, *argh*, *humpf*, and *hmmm*. *Ugh*, used to express disgust, aversion, horror, and the like, is often standardized to *diavolo [devil]*. *Diavolo* can be used in Italian as an exclamation (similar to the English exclamation *hell*), even though it is not currently very common in the Italian language with such a function.

Nevertheless, in the Italian translation of the book, there are eight cases where the translator has opted for this choice<sup>39</sup>. On two occasions<sup>40</sup>, it has been standardized to *ecco*, an Italian adverb used to intensify what the speaker is about to say, more or less equivalent to the English expression *so there*. In other cases<sup>41</sup>, it has been translated with the onomatopoeic interjections *bleah* and *puah*, which well convey the functional and connotative meaning of the original and maintain the same level of informality and colloquialness. Sometimes, however, it is not transposed at all.<sup>42</sup>

As far as the onomatopoeic interjection *aargh* (or its variation *aaargh*) is concerned, we can see that the translator has not always opted for the same strategy. In some cases she has standardized it by translating it as *aiuto[help]*<sup>43</sup>. In two cases<sup>44</sup>, the same interjection has been standardized to *diavolo*, the same translation equivalent that is mostly used in the book to translate the interjection *ugh*. On one occasion<sup>45</sup>, it has been standardized in *oddio* [oh my God]. Finally, in other cases<sup>46</sup>, the onomatopoeic interjection *aargh* has been maintained in the target text (although it has been normalised to the Italian *argh*), and keeps the informal style of the original.

The onomatopoeic interjection “humph” is most often translated as *uffa*<sup>47</sup>, an Italian interjection which expresses bore or annoyance, more or less corresponding in its functional and connotative meaning to the original interjection. In these cases, the target text successfully transposes the colloquial and informal character of the source text. On one occasion<sup>48</sup>, however, it is not translated at all.

Finally, the onomatopoeic interjection “hmm” (or “hmmm”, “mmm”, “um”) is very common throughout the text to express thoughtful ab-

DK 21/1/15 15:29

**Commento:** what does the 2nd number refer to in for example 7/15

Domenico Coppola 17/2/15 22:22

**Commento:** The first number refers to the number of the page in the ST, while the second number refers to the number of the page in the TT

DK 21/1/15 15:30

**Commento:** meaning retained in the italian text or omitted?

Domenico Coppola 17/2/15 21:30

**Commento:** omitted

<sup>39</sup> Pages 7/15, 10/18, 19/25, 59/66, 68/74, 146/152, 268/271.

<sup>40</sup> Pages 190/196.

<sup>41</sup> Pages 189/195 and 247/252 respectively.

<sup>42</sup> Pages 187/193, 215/220, 216/221, 266/270, 272/276, 277/281.

<sup>43</sup> Pages 83/91, 84/91, 152/158, 153/159, 154/160, 295/298, 295/299.

<sup>44</sup> Pages 147/153, 148/154.

<sup>45</sup> Pages 271/275.

<sup>46</sup> Pages 25/33, 118/124, 153/159, 154/160, 261/265.

<sup>47</sup> Pages 43/51, 77/84, 81/88, 104/111, 106/112, 129/135, 142/148, 152/158, 155/161, 229/235, 243/249, 244/249, 256/260, 295/299.

<sup>48</sup> Pages 31/39.

sorption, hesitation, doubt, or perplexity. Also in this case, the translator has not always adopted the same strategy. In many cases<sup>49</sup>, she has transposed it with the equivalent Italian onomatopoeic interjection *mmm*. On other occasions, however, it has not been transposed at all<sup>50</sup>. In one interesting case<sup>51</sup>, the translator has explicitated the interjection, translating it as *Niente male, eh?* [Not bad, eh?].

Domenico Coppola 17/2/15 21:30

**Commento:** Omitted

Examples of normalization can also be observed in some cases when Bridget deliberately distorts word spelling. Such words are sometimes written in italics, so to give a more precise idea of how they are pronounced or to add emphasis. The translator, instead, has translated them with proper Italian spelling:

Table 10: Normalization of spelling

| Source text  | Target text  | Back translation  |
|--|--|---|
| (p. 50) "Shud-urrrrrrrrp"  | (p. 58) "Fatela tacere!"   | "Make her shut up!"   |
| (p. 26) <i>Yesssss! Yessssss!</i>                                    | (p. 34) <i>Ma sì! Vai così!</i>  | <i>Yes! Way to go!</i>  |
| (p. 32) "How are you fixed for Friday?"<br><i>Yesssss! Yessssss!</i> | (p. 40) "Come sei messa<br>venerdì sera?" <i>Libera!</i><br><i>Libera!</i> | "How are you fixed for<br>Friday?" <i>I'm free! I'm<br/>free!</i> |
| (p. 75) "Yeeeeees, next<br>weekend"                                  | (p. 82) "Sì, il prossimo"  | "Yes, the next one"   |
| (p. 75) "Oooh. Yes,<br>please"                                       | (p. 82) "Oh, ma certo, si-<br>curo!"                                       | "Oh, of course, sure!"  |
| (p. 96) "Byeee!"   | (p. 103) "Addio!"  | "Farewell!"   |
| (p. 253) 8st 13lb 8oz<br>(yesss! yesss!)                             | (p. 257) Kg 57,2 e mezzo<br>(vail!)  | Kg 57.2 and a half ( <i>way<br/>to go!</i> )                      |
| (p. 280) cigarettes 50<br>(yesss! yesss!)                            | (p. 283) sigarette 50 ( <i>si,<br/>perché?</i> )                           | cigarettes 50 (yes, <i>why?</i> )                                 |

However, it is interesting to note that whenever Bridget misspells entire sentences because she is drunk, or because she is reporting utterances spoken by drunk people, the translator has not normalized the target text. Indeed, the Italian translation is misspelt too, managing to convey the connotative meaning implied in the original, as can be observed in Table :

<sup>49</sup> Pages 25/32, 45/52, 104/110, 128/134, 167/173, 218/224, 231/237, 235/241.

<sup>50</sup> Pages 27/35, 84/91, 163/169, 213/219, 235/241, 262/266, 285/289, 293/297.

<sup>51</sup> Pages 58/65.

Table 11: Transposition of misspellings

| Source text   | Target text   | Target text properly spelt   |
|---|---|--|
| (p. 68) Argor sworeal<br>brillev with Shazzan<br>Jude. Dun stupid care<br>bout Daniel stupid prat.<br>Feel sicky though. Oops   | (p. 74) Magnifica scerata<br>moooolto scimpatica con<br>Shazzan e Jude. Basta<br>pensare a quel Daniel<br>sciocchina. Ma come mi<br>sento male. Aiut.   | Magnifica serata molto<br>simpatica con Shazzan e<br>Jude. Basta pensare a<br>quel Daniel sciocchina.<br>Ma come mi sento male.<br>Aiuto.  |
| (p. 146) Argo res woror-<br>ribblr. Am olapassit. Face<br>collapsing.   | (p. 152) Una scerata terri-<br>bile. Sto per svenire. A<br>faccin giù.  | Una serata terribile. Sto<br>per svenire. A faccia in<br>giù.  |
| (p. 187) Gor es wor<br>blurry goofun tonight<br>though. Oof. Tumbled<br>over.   | (p. 193) Dio se è tardi.<br>Mamela sono spassata un<br>mondo, stascera. Uff.<br>Sciono caduta per terra.  | Dio se è tardi. Ma me la<br>sono spassata un mondo,<br>stasera. Uff. Sono caduta<br>per terra.   |
| (p. 245) "Look. Shud-<br>dup," said Jude, burping<br>again. "Shagernothebol<br>Chardonnay?"   | (p. 251) "Scentite, smettetela", ci<br>ha zittite Jude, con un altro<br>rottino discreto. "Ordiniamunoaltro-<br>sciardonné?"  | "Sentite, smettetela", ci<br>ha zittite Jude, con un altro<br>rottino discreto. "Or-<br>diniamo un altro Char-<br>donnay?"   |
| (p. 298) Daniel just<br>called "Jonesh" he<br>slurred. "I love you,<br>Jonesh. I made tebble<br>mishtake. Stupid Suki<br>made of plastic. Breast<br>point north at all times. I<br>love you, Jonesh. I<br>comin' round to check<br>how your skirts is." | (p. 302) Ha appena tele-<br>fonato Daniel. "Jones", ha<br>detto con voce impastata,<br>"ti amo, Jones. Ho fatto<br>un err-hic-ore terribile.<br>Sciuki è stupida e fatta di<br>plastica. Ha le tette che<br>segnano scimpre il nord.<br>Ti amo, Jones. Passo da te<br>a vedere come sta la tua<br>gonna." | Ha appena telefonato<br>Daniel. "Jones", ha detto<br>con voce impastata, "ti<br>amo, Jones. Ho fatto un<br>errore terribile. Sciuki è<br>stupida e fatta di plastica.<br>Ha le tette che segnano<br>sempre il nord. Ti amo,<br>Jones. Passo da te a ve-<br>dere come sta la tua gon-<br>na." |

Last but not least, talking about normalization, in the source text Bridget very often omits auxiliaries, articles, prepositions, and possessive adjectives, as in a genuine diary. However, in the target text most of the times the translator has standardized these features, by adding the missing words. A few examples are reported in Table 6<sup>52</sup>:

<sup>52</sup> See also the extract reported in Table 11 where the first singular subject has been

Table 12.: Standardization through addition of missing words

| Source text   | Target text   | Back translation  |   |
|---|---|---|---|
| (p.2) Obsess about Daniel Cleaver as [subject and copula omitted] pathetic to have a crush on boss...               | (p.11) Lasciarsi ossessionare da Daniel Cleaver, nel senso che prendersi una cotta per il [article] capo è [copula] patetico. | Let myself be obsessed about Daniel Cleaver, as having a crush on the boss is pathetic. | DK 21/1/15 16:08<br><b>Commento:</b> You should make your back translation closer to the original Italian |
| (p. 82) [subject omitted]<br>Have had [article omitted]<br>v.g. idea about [possessive adjective omitted] birthday. | (p.86) Ho avuto un' [article] ottima idea per il mio [possessive adjective] compleanno.                                       | I have had an excellent idea for my birthday.   |   |
| (p. 93) [subject and copula omitted] V. late now.   | (p.99) Sono [copula] in ritardissimo.   | I am very late.   |   |

Though the subject is not rendered in Italian either, it ought to be noted that Italian is a pro-drop language. Consequently the ellipsis of subject is the default option, and the omission of the subject in the translated version does not convey the connotations of such an omission in the source text. The text, then, is standardized due to the insertion of articles, copulas, and possessive adjectives.

To conclude, we can confirm the presence of universal features of translation (*explication, simplification* and *normalization*). In the next section we will discuss the use of Venuti's (1995) domestication and foreignization translation strategies in the translation of *Brigit Jones*.

#### 4. Domestication vs. Foreignization

Venuti bases his concepts on Schleiermacher's notion of translation methods, according to which "either the translator leaves the reader in peace, as much as possible, and moves the author towards him" (Schleiermacher, quoted in Venuti 2008: 15), therefore *domesticating*

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omitted twice or the second extract in Table 13 where both the first singular subject and the indefinite article are missing.

the text, or “the translator leaves the author in peace, as much as possible, and moves the reader towards him” (*ibidem*), thereby *foreignizing* the text. Concerning this, Venuti (2008: 15) says:

Schleiermacher allowed the translator to choose between a domesticating method, an ethnocentric reduction of the foreign text to target-language cultural values, bringing the author back home, and a foreignizing method, an ethnodeviant pressure on those values to register the linguistic and cultural difference of the foreign text, sending the reader abroad.

As far as the domesticating method is concerned, Venuti (2008: 16) also maintains that, when the translator opts for such an approach, the translation exerts an *ethnocentric violence* on the text, adopting a fluent, transparent style in order to minimize the strangeness of the source text. Indeed, domestication can be considered as an attempt to make the translation read as a non-translation.

The scholar explicitly advocates a foreignizing method and openly criticizes Nida’s “dynamic” equivalence (1964), considering it as the epitome of domesticating translation. In his argumentation on translation theories, in fact, Nida puts forth the concepts of formal equivalence and dynamic equivalence. With formal equivalence, attention is focused on the message itself, in both form and content, and the translated text should match as closely as possible the different elements of the source language (Nida 1964: 159). Dynamic - later denoted “functional” - equivalence (Nida and Taber 1969), on the contrary, is based on what Nida calls “the principle of equivalent effect”, where “the relationship between receptor and message should be substantially the same as that which existed between the original receptors and the message” (Nida 1964: 159). Dynamic equivalence, therefore, is achieved when the effect triggered by the target text on the target reader is the same as the one triggered by the source text on the source reader. According to the scholar, moreover, “the message aims at complete naturalness of expression” (*ibidem*). As Munday (2008: 42) notes, “‘Naturalness’ is a key requirement for Nida”. Indeed, Nida defines the goal of dynamic equivalence as seeking “the closest natural equivalent to the source-language message” (Nida 1964: 166; Nida and Taber 1969: 12). This receptor-oriented approach

considers adaptations of grammar, lexicon and cultural references to be essential in order to achieve naturalness (Nida 1964: 167-8), as Nida remarks that “one cannot have his formal cake and eat it dynamically too” (ibidem: 170).

Venuti maintains that domestication is by far the strategy preferred by translators in the Western world, especially in the UK and USA, where the main aim seems to be making the target text smooth and fluent by trying to avoid any estrangement effect in the reader.

## 5. Domestication vs. Foreignization in the Italian translation of Bridget Jones's Diary

In the Italian version of *Bridget Jones's Diary* we can identify many instances in which the main aim of the translator is apparently to domesticate the text. This can be observed both on a semantic and on a syntactic level. In this paper I will only focus on the transposition of culture-specific items. The most common translation strategies used to domesticate a text are: omission, generalization, and replacement with other elements deemed to be more familiar. In the Italian translation of *Bridget Jones's Diary* we can observe all such strategies.

### 5.1 Omissions

In the section on simplification we have already analysed many cases where the strategy of omission had been adopted presumably for the benefit of the Italian reader unfamiliar with the British culture.

Indeed, as we could note, the strategy of omission is most common in the case of references to brands, household names and people who might be considered unfamiliar to the Italian reader. The translator most probably decided to omit all these references so as to avoid a potential estrangement effect on the Italian reader. Consequently, the strategy of omission has been used in this book in order to domesticate the text.

### 5.2 Generalization

Domenico Coppola 17/2/15 22:29

**Commento:** I think all the cases where the translator has maintained the references to British people or realia that are not really familiar to Italians are instances of foreignization, as I claim in the conclusions of the paper... Shall I say something here as well?

DK 21/1/15 16:37

**Commento:** But a) you don't tell us what the strategies to foreignise are, nor do you tell us if there are examples of foreignisation.

Domenico Coppola 17/2/15 22:31

**Commento:** This as a suggestion of the reviewer

Generalization is an activity which involves the substitution of an element in the source text with a hyperonym in the target text, usually an expression whose literal meaning is wider and less specific than the expression used in the source text. Also in this case, the text turns out to be domesticated. Indeed, through the strategy of generalization an unfamiliar, and hence potentially disturbing element is replaced with a generic one that can be easily understood without difficulty.

This strategy is often used in case of specific brands or household names, as can be seen in the examples reported in the table below:

Table 13: Generalization of brands and household names

| Source text   | Target text   | Back translation  |
|---|---|---|
| (p. 18) some <i>Stilton</i> <sup>53</sup> .   | (p. 26) <i>del formaggio</i> .  | some <i>cheese</i> .  |
| (p. 47) dressed as a <i>Morris dancer</i> ... <sup>54</sup>   | (p. 55) <i>vestito come un ballerino folcloristico</i> ...  | dressed as a <i>folk dancer</i> ...   |
| (p. 72) <i>Jaeger</i> <sup>55</sup> and <i>Country Casuals</i> <sup>56</sup>  | (p. 78) <i>boutique di lusso</i>  | <i>luxury boutiques</i>   |
| (p. 122) in <i>Warehouse</i> <sup>57</sup>  | (p. 128) in <i>un grande magazzino</i>  | in a <i>variety store</i> .   |
| (p. 122) buy a few choice items from <i>Nicole Fahri, Whistles, and Joseph</i> <sup>58</sup> , but the prices so terrify me that I go scuttling back to <i>Warehouse and Miss Selfridge</i> <sup>59</sup> ... | (p. 128) comprare pochi articoli scelti in <i>negozi super chic</i> , ma i prezzi mi spaventano talmente tanto che finisco per tornare a precipizio in <i>un grande magazzino</i> ... | buy few choice items from <i>super chic shops</i> , but the prices terrify me to the point that I end up rushing back to a <i>variety store</i> ... |

<sup>53</sup> Stilton is an English cheese, which has been generalized in a generic “cheese”, although it is quite known to many Italians (even to children, also due to the fact that the main character of an Italian children’s book series – a mouse who loves cheese - is called Geronimo Stilton).

<sup>54</sup> Morris dance is a traditional English folk dance performed by groups of men dressed in white, carrying sticks or handkerchiefs, with bells to their ankles.

<sup>55</sup> Jaeger is a British chain of clothing shops with a reputation for high quality.

<sup>56</sup> Country Casuals is a British leading ladies fashion labels.

<sup>57</sup> Fashion shop in London.

<sup>58</sup> Expensive and high quality clothing shops in London.

<sup>59</sup> Fashion shops in London.

|   |  |   |
|---|--|---|
| (p. 125) three-quarters of a glass of <i>Kir Royale</i>                   | (p. 131) tre quarti di bicchiere di <i>spumatino con succo di mirtillo</i> | three-quarters of a glass of sparkling wine with blueberry juice. |
| (p. 127) three boxes of <i>Milk Tray</i> <sup>60</sup> .                  | (p. 134) tre scatole di <i>cioccolatini</i> .                              | three boxes of chocolates.  |
| (p. 128) my box of <i>Milk Tray</i> <sup>61</sup> .                       | (p. 134) la mia scatola di <i>cioccolatini</i>                             | my chocolate box  |
| (p. 271) something in the blender, e.g. <i>Fairy Liquid</i> <sup>62</sup> | (p. 274) qualcosa nel frullatore, tipo <i>un detergente</i>                | something in the blender, such as <i>washing-up liquid</i>        |
| (p. 135) on to my <i>River Café cookbook</i> <sup>63</sup> ...            | (p. 142) sul mio <i>libro di cucina preferito</i> .                        | on to my favourite cookbook.                                      |
| (p. 159) six cans of <i>Fosters</i> <sup>64</sup> .                       | (p. 165) sei lattine di <i>birra</i> .                                     | six cans of beer.   |
| (p. 258) "Box of <i>Milk Tray</i> " <sup>65</sup> ?"                      | (p. 262) "In una scatola di cioccolatini?"                                 | "In a box of chocolates?"   |
| (p. 304) the <i>Magimix</i> <sup>66</sup>                                 | (p. 307) il <i>frullatore</i>  | the blender   |

The strategy of generalization with the aim of domesticating the text is also sometimes used in case of references to people, as we can see in Table 14:

Table 14: Generalization of a reference to a specific fictional character

| Source text   | Target text   | Back translation  |
|---|---|---|
| (p. 37) Apparently there is a <i>Martin Amis character</i> who is so crazily addicted that he starts wanting a cigarette even | (p. 45) Pare che esista un personaggio televisivo così nicotina-dipendente che comincia a desiderare un'altra sigaretta quando sta ancora | Apparently there is a television character who is so nicotine-addicted that he starts wanting another cigarette when he |

<sup>60</sup> Milk Tray is a brand of boxed chocolates manufactured by Cadbury.

<sup>61</sup> See note 63.

<sup>62</sup> Fairy Liquid is an English brand of washing-up liquid.

<sup>63</sup> The River Café cookbook is a recipe book by the River Café restaurant founders, Ruth Rogers and Rose Gray.

<sup>64</sup> Foster's is an internationally distributed Australian brand of lager beer.

<sup>65</sup> See note 63.

<sup>66</sup> Magimix is a French brand of food processors and blenders.

|                        |                            |                                    |
|------------------------|----------------------------|------------------------------------|
| when he's smoking one. | fumando quella precedente. | is still smoking the previous one. |
|------------------------|----------------------------|------------------------------------|

In the example above, Bridget refers to Martin Amis' character Richard Tull in *The Information* (1995); a frustrated writer, who talks about smoking a cigarette in between each cigarette. In the Italian translation, Bridget generically refers to a television character. So, besides being generalized, the reference has also shifted from the field of literature to that of television. It is interesting to note, however, that in the book there is another reference to Martin Amis and in that case the translator has maintained it in the target text. The name of the writer is not contextualized in either case, therefore the choice to omit it in one case but maintain it appears rather odd:

Table 15: Maintainance of reference to British writer Martin Amis

| Source text   | Target text   | Back translation   |
|---|---|--|
| (p. 96) Apparently, Tina Brown of the <i>New Yorker</i> is brilliant at dealing with parties, gliding prettily from group to group, saying, “ <i>Martin Amis!</i> Nelson Mandela! Richard Gere!”... | (p. 103) Pare che Tina Brown del <i>New Yorker</i> sappia affrontare brillantemente i ricevimenti, scivolando graziosamente da un gruppo all'altro e dicendo: “ <i>Martin Amis!</i> Nelson Mandela! Richard Gere!”... | Apparently, Tina Brown of the <i>New Yorker</i> is capable of dealing brilliantly with parties, gliding graciously from group to group and saying, “ <i>Martin Amis!</i> Nelson Mandela! Richard Gere!”... |

The references to Princess Diana are interesting, as the translator does not show a consistent behaviour in her translational choices. In some cases she has generalized the reference, as in the extract reported in Table 8:

Table 16: Generalization of reference to Princess Diana

| Source text   | Target text  | Back translation   |
|---|--|--|
| (p. 53) with a look of melancholy bravery I swear she copied from | (p. 61) con un'espressione di malinconico coraggio che, scommetto, ha copiato da | with a look of melancholy bravery that, I bet, she copied from |

|                        |                                |                           |
|------------------------|--------------------------------|---------------------------|
| <i>Princess Diana.</i> | <i>qualche testa coronata.</i> | <i>some crowned head.</i> |
|------------------------|--------------------------------|---------------------------|

Here, Princess Diana has been turned into a generic reference to any crowned head (*testa coronata*). Such translational behaviour cannot be easily ascribed to a presumable intention of making the target text more familiar to the Italian lay reader, as Princess Diana was definitely known to Italians. In the extract in Table 17, on the other hand, the reference has been maintained:

Table 17: Maintenance of reference to Princess Diana

| Source text  | Target text  | Back translation   |
|--|--|--|
| (p. 218) We ended up, for some reason, talking about <i>Princess Diana</i> . | (p. 224) Chissà perché, abbiamo finito per metterci a parlare della <i>principessa Diana</i> . | Goodness knows why we ended up talking about <i>Princess Diana</i> . |

Further on in the text, however, another reference to Princess Diana has been omitted, as reported in Table 18:

Table 18: Elimination of reference to Princess Diana

| Source text  | Target text  | Back translation                           |
|--|--|--|
| (p. 269) she adopted her wounded <i>Princess Diana</i> look. | (p. 273) ha adottato lo sguardo da cucciolo bastonato. | she adopted her <i>wounded puppy</i> look. |

Though functional equivalence is achieved, with the image of a wounded puppy, it is difficult to understand why the reference to Princess Diana has been deleted.

Moreover, towards the end of the book there is one more reference to Princess Diana, which has been eliminated. As we can see in Table 19, in the original version Bridget compares herself to the princess because of their shared status as single women, while in the translation she describes herself as an outcast (*una reietta*):

Table 19: Elimination of reference to Princess Diana

Domenico Coppola 17/2/15 22:41

**Commento:** Do you think I should write your "theory" here? BTW, I agree with you, I had not thought about it...

DK 21/1/15 17:12

**Commento:** I have a theory. Diana died before the translation (I think). So general discussion about Diana is kept (she's dead) but specific reference to her as a live model of behavior/dress/singleton-ness etc is generalized as she is yesterday – which would make the Diary historical.

| Source text  | Target text   | Back translation   |
|--|---|--|
| (p. 297) So glad decided to be festive Home Alone Singleton like <i>Princess Diana</i> . | (p. 300) Sono felice di aver deciso di essere una Single che Festeggia in Casa da Sola... come una <i>reietta</i> . | I'm glad I've decided to be a Single Woman who Celebrates Staying Home Alone... like an <i>outcast</i> . |

Other interesting cases of generalization can be noticed throughout the text whenever Bridget refers to the brand of cigarettes she and her friends smoke, namely Silk Cut. Most of the times the translator has generalized the references, referring simply to "cigarettes"<sup>67</sup>. It is a fact that Silk Cut cigarettes are not one of the best-known brands in Italy. However, they are available, and there is also an Italian Silk Cut Wikipedia page<sup>68</sup>.

Interestingly, there are two cases when the original references to cigarettes have been totally omitted and the translation has completely altered the meaning of the source text, as can be seen in Table 20:

Table 20: Elimination of reference to cigarettes and alteration of original meaning

| Source text  | Target text  | Back translation   |
|--|--|--|
| (p. 28) Panic stricken, I reached for the <i>Silk Cut</i> .          | (p. 36) In preda al panico, <i>avrei voluto tagliarmi le vene</i> .              | Panic stricken, <i>I wanted to cut my veins</i> .                    |
| (p. 46) I went round the corner, shaking, for some <i>Silk Cut</i> . | (p. 54) Sono arrivata tremando fin dietro l'angolo per comprare <i>da bere</i> . | I went round the corner, shaking, to buy something <i>to drink</i> . |

### 5.3 Substitution

The strategy of substitution in translation involves replacing a culture-specific item or expression in the source text with a target lan-

<sup>67</sup> Pages 126/132, 127/133, 188/133, 190/197, 209/214, 301/304.

<sup>68</sup> In the trivia section of the Italian page (but not in the English one), it is reported that the brand is the preferred one by comic book character John Constantine, by writers Warren Ellis and Tom Stoppard, by singer Robbie Williams and by literary and cinematographic character Bridget Jones.

guage item that describes a similar concept in the target culture likely to have a similar impact on the target readers. The ultimate aim of this strategy is once again the minimization of the potential estrangement effect that an unfamiliar reference may arouse in the target reader. Here follow some examples of the use of substitution in the Italian translation of the novel:

Table 21: Substitution of reference to a TV show

| Source text   | Target text   | Back translation  |
|---|---|---|
| (p. 18) while watching <i>EastEnders</i> .                                  | (p. 26) intanto ho guardato <i>Love Boat</i> .  | while watching <i>The Love Boat</i> .                                     |
| (p. 98) Want to stay home with bottle of wine and watch <i>EastEnders</i> . | (p. 104) Voglio restarmene a casa con una bottiglia di vino a guardare <i>Love Boat</i> . | I want to stay home with a bottle of wine watching <i>The Love Boat</i> . |

In the examples in Table 21 (to which the title of this essay refers) we can note that the translator has replaced the references to *EastEnders* with *The Love Boat*. *EastEnders* is a BBC television soap opera, and has been broadcast since 1985, and is one of the UK's highest rated programmes. It centres on the lives of the people who live and work in a fictional borough in the East End of London. *The Love Boat*, instead, is an American television series set on a cruise ship, broadcast in the United States from 1977 until 1986. Whereas *EastEnders* has never aired on Italian television channels, and consequently is unknown to most Italians, *The Love Boat* was broadcast on Italian channel Canale 5 from 1980 till 1990, and is familiar to the majority of Italians who lived in that period. This substitution domesticates the target text, avoiding any estrangement effect in the reader.

Interesting cases of substitution can be observed also in case of references to food items which are thought to be unfamiliar to the Italian reader, and consequently are replaced with other items which are better known in Italy. Throughout the book there are various references to Milk Tray, which we have already noted has been generalised due to the fact that the product is unknown in Italy.<sup>1</sup> There are other cases, however, when the translator has opted for substituting the reference

DK 21/1/15 17:23

**Commento:** You have already told us this in a footnote

to this specific chocolate product, as well as to others, as can be seen in the table:

Table 22: Substitution of brands of chocolate products

| Source text   | Target text  | Back translation  |
|---|--|---|
| (p. 7) 12 <i>Milk Tray</i> .  | (p. 15) 12 <i>Quality Street</i> .   | 12 <i>Quality Street</i> .  |
| (p. 51) it is like eating the last <i>Milk Tray</i>                                 | (p. 59) è un po' come mangiare l'ultimo <i>Quality Street</i>                            | it is a bit like eating the last <i>Quality Street</i>                          |
| (p. 115) 1 <i>Milky Way</i> .   | (p. 121) 1 <i>Quality Street</i> .   | 1 <i>Quality Street</i> .   |
| (p. 242) You bring me <i>Diary Box</i> , please, instead of <i>Quality Street</i> ? | (p. 247) Potresti portarmi degli <i>After Eight</i> invece delle <i>Quality Street</i> ? | Could you bring me some <i>After Eight</i> , instead of <i>Quality Street</i> ? |
| (p. 242) Get us a <i>Twix</i> and a <i>Lion</i> bar                                 | (p. 247) Prendici una <i>Fiesta</i> e un <i>Mars</i>                                     | Get us a <i>Fiesta</i> and a <i>Mars</i>  |

As we can note, in two cases Milk Tray has been replaced with references to Quality Street chocolates, available also in Italy.. Thus, by replacing an unknown food item with a familiar one, the translator has domesticated the text.

Quality Street has also been used to substitute a reference to the Milky Way chocolate, which are not available in Italy. Diary Box chocolates (also not available in Italy), instead, have been substituted by After Eight, a confectionary product which is distributed in Italy. Finally, it is interesting to note that a reference to Twix, a chocolate bar made by Mars Inc., has been replaced with a reference to Fiesta, an Italian snack produced by Ferrero. Actually, Twix bars are distributed and very popular also in Italy, therefore in this case it is not easy to understand the reason why the translator opted for a strategy of substitution. In the same sentence, moreover, a reference to a Lion bar has been replaced with a reference to a Mars bar. Also in this case it is quite difficult to infer the reasons underlying such a translation strategy, as Lion bars are as popular in Italy as Mars bars are. It is worth noting that in cases like these we can observe two different degrees of domestication: by passing from Mars to Fiesta we are totally moving into the Italian culture, while by substituting Diary Box with After

Eight, or Milk Tray with Quality Street, the Italian reader remains within the British borders, though on more understandable grounds.

Examples of substitution used as a strategy of domestication can also be found in the case of fashion shops. For instance, a reference to Nicole Farhi has been substituted with Laura Ashley, again better known to Italians:

DK 21/1/15 17:33

**Commento:** I began by cutting. But I think a table of: product name + type and available or not in Italy with translation (name and product type) would be more useful. Then a very short analysis of the general pattern and then the inconsistencies.

Table 23: Substitution of names of fashion shops

| Source text   | Target text  | Back translation                                   |
|---|--|--|
| (p. 123) something really nice from Nicole Farhi... | (p. 129) qualcosa di veramente carino da <i>Laura Ashley</i> ... | something really nice from <i>Laura Ashley</i> ... |

The strategy of substitution, moreover, is also used on a few occasions when Bridget refers to famous people:

Table 24: Substitution of names of people

| Source text  | Target text  | Back translation  |
|--|--|---|
| (p. 176) Usually once he gets going he will see things through to their logical conclusion come earthquake, tidal wave or naked pictures of <i>Virginia Bottomley</i> on the television. | (p. 182) Di solito, quando comincia, porta le cose alla loro conclusione logica, e questo che venga un terremoto, un'onda, o che compaia sullo schermo TV l'immagine nuda di <i>Cicciolina</i> . | Usually, once he has started, he brings things to their logical conclusion, it doesn't matter if an earthquake comes, a flood, or if the naked image of <i>Cicciolina</i> appears on the TV screen. |

In the example above Bridget makes a reference to naked pictures of ultra-Conservative party MP, Virginia Bottomley. She would never appear naked in public which is why Bridget correlates it to an earthquake and a tidal wave. In the target text the reference to Virginia Bottomley has been replaced with a reference to Cicciolina, porn star and former politician. Seeing her naked on TV is by no means an extraordinary event. The target text here has been domesticated, as Cicciolina is definitely famous in Italy. However, functional equivalence is not achieved.

Another instance of substitution can be observed in the table below:

Table 25: Substitution of names of people

| Source text   | Target text   | Back translation  |
|---|---|---|
| (p. 214) I'm thinking studio: <i>Frank Skinner and Sir Richard Rogers</i> on furry seats... | (p. 220) Pensate a uno studio televisivo: <i>Tony Blair e Major</i> su assi ricoperte di pelliccia... | Think of a television studio: <i>Tony Blair and Major</i> on furry seats... |

Bridget's boss refers to two popular British personalities, namely writer and comedian Frank Skinner and architect Sir Richard Rogers.. In the target text both have been replaced with references to British politicians who are very well known to all Italians: Tony Blair and John Major.

Table 26: Substitution of names of people

| Source text   | Target text   | Back translation   |
|---|---|--|
| (p. 76) We stared at each other transfixed like two African animals at the start of a fight on a <i>David Attenborough</i> programme. | (p. 83) Ci siamo fissati come due animali selvaggi in procinto di iniziare un combattimento in un documentario di <i>Richard Attenborough</i> ... | We stared at each other like two wild animals about to start a fight on a <i>Richard Attenborough</i> programme. |

An interesting case of substitution can also be observed in Table 26, in which Bridget refers to a David Attenborough TV programme, who is surprisingly replaced by his older brother, Richard Attenborough. The former is an English broadcaster and naturalist, Richard, instead, was a famous film director (e.g. *Ghandi*). [The strategy of substitution in this case, however, does not seem to be ascribable to domesticating purposes and the reasons underlying such a translational choice are rather obscure.]

Attenborough's documentaries are also mentioned in another part of the text, though this time they are used in the target text as a substitu-

Domenico Coppola 17/2/15 22:53

**Commento:** I still think this is a referential mistake, as Richard Attenborough never directed documentaries with African animals. The Life documentaries were also broadcast on Italian channel Rete 4. I really do not agree with this kind of manipulation of the text

DK 21/1/15 17:52

**Commento:** BUT the Ghandi film was well-known in Italy, while Richard is certainly even less well so.

tion strategy when the source text refers to a fictional character unknown to most Italians:

Table 26: Substitution of a fictional character with a TV programme

| Source text   | Target text  | Back translation   |
|---|--|--|
| (p. 108) "Except in the case of <i>Mr Blobby</i> , who should have been punctured at birth" | (p. 108) "Tranne nel caso dei <i>documentari di Attenborough</i> che avrebbero dovuto essere stroncati alla nascita" | "Except in the case of <i>Attenborough's documentaries</i> which should have been torn apart at birth" |

Mr Blobby was a character on Noel Edmond's Saturday night variety television show *Noel's House Party*. He was a bulbous pink figure covered with yellow spots who only said the word "blobby". The translator has replaced the reference with Attenborough's documentaries (this time first names are not mentioned at all). Although the target text somehow manages to avoid estrangement effects by eliminating potentially disturbing elements (Mr Blobby), it is not possible to state that functional equivalence is achieved, as Attenborough's documentaries are highly valued products and the character who is speaking (Perpetua, Bridget's colleague) is an educated person who would not be expected to criticize them.

One more interesting instance of substitution of a reference to a popular person is reported in Table 27:

Table 27: Substitution of a person with a fictional character

| Source text   | Target text   | Back translation  |
|---|---|---|
| (p. 47) "I'll just clean the house like <i>Germaine</i> sodding <i>Greer</i> and the Invisible Woman" | (p. 55) "Darò una bella ripulita in casa... come <i>Luisa che comincia presto, finisce presto e di solito non pulisce il water.</i> " | "I will clean up the house... like <i>Luisa who starts early, finishes early, and usually does not clean the toilet bowl.</i> " |

In this example, the speaker (Bridget's mother) makes reference to outspoken feminist Germaine Greer. "Luisa", on the other hand, is a fictional character from a popular Italian TV advertisement in the 1980s, whose catchphrase was "Luisa comincia presto, finisce presto e di solito non pulisce il water".

## **6. Conclusions**

This study analysed the Italian translation of the novel *Bridget Jones's Diary* taking two frames of reference, the distinctive universal features observed in computer-based corpus translation, namely *explicitation*, *simplification* and *normalization* and Venuti's dichotomy of translation strategies into domestication and foreignization (1995). The manual analysis analysis has basically confirmed the results of previous studies about translational behaviour in both cases.

The analysis reveals numerous cases of explicitation, simplification and normalization, as well as a vast number of examples of domesticating strategies of various kinds, in line with Venuti's assertion that domestication is the strategy preferred by translators in the Western world..

However, it is worth noting that fluency of the text is not the only result of the acts of manipulation that have been observed. In fact, these translational behaviours have also affected characterization, especially that of Bridget.

First of all, Bridget Jones turns out to be less typically British. The original text has a considerable number of references to well-known British people or cultural items, a great part of which are lost in translation. It ought to be mentioned that not *all* references have been lost. Indeed, some of them have been maintained<sup>69</sup>, although many of these

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<sup>69</sup> References to British people that have been maintained: Nigel Cole, Jane Seymour, Joanna Lumley, Bonnie Langford, Kathleen Tynan, Katie Boyle, Prunella Scales, Amanda Wakeley, Laura Ashley, Margaret Thatcher, Winston Churchill, Barbara Cartland, Barry Norman, Delia Smith, Tony Blair, Ian Paisley, Marianne Faithful, Alan Yentob, Diana Dors, Harold Pinter, Shakira Caine, D.H. Lawrence, Douglas Hurd, Michael Howard, Jim Davidson, Nick Hornby, Rosemary West, Colin Firth, Jennifer Ehle, Marco Pierre White, Wendy Cope, Dinny Hall, Cilla Black, Hugh Grant, Elizabeth Hurley. References to British cultural specific elements that have been maintained: Marks & Spencer, Cullens, Pimms,

names are definitely known to most Italians (for example, Margaret Thatcher, Winston Churchill, Barbara Cartland, Tony Blair, Marianne Faithful, Colin Firth, Hugh Grant, Elizabeth Hurley, and probably also Laura Ashley, Harold Pinter, D.H. Lawrence and Nick Hornby). However, out of 69 references to famous British characters, 25 have either been omitted, generalized or substituted, and the same has happened to 36 British culture-specific elements (some of which are referred to many times in the source text), whereas only 11 have been maintained.

Secondly, the Italian Bridget Jones appears to be less educated than the original one. Indeed, in the source text Bridget often mentions or refers to politicians (Denis Healey, Teresa Gorman, Virginia Bottomley), academics (Germaine Greer), writers (Jeanette Winterson, Martin Amis, Frank Skinner), journalists (Jeremy Paxman), documentarists (David Attenborough), literary characters (Darcy, Heathcliff, Miss Moneypenny, Miss Havisham, Stepford Wife), novels (*Pride and Prejudice*, *Wuthering Heights*, *The Information*), and artists (Yves Klein). In the Italian translation many of these references have not been transposed. The general effect is that the Italian Bridget Jones is a more simple and less cultured person than her English counterpart.

To conclude, *Il diario di Bridget Jones* turns out to be a fluent translation, a pleasing, entertaining, and amusing book which reads smooth and easily. It also succeeds in maintaining the confidential, humorous and light-hearted tone of the original. However, it is undeniable that the omission of the very many references to British contemporary popular culture, as well as to literary novels, authors, and politicians has an impact on the characterization of the main character.

DK 21/1/15 18:26

Commento: No, they are not primarily authors

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