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FROM THE ORIGINAL TEXT TO THE ITALIAN ADAPTATION: *ITALIANITÀ IN ANOTHER SIMPLE FAVOR* (2025)

Sara CORRIZZATO¹

University of Verona

Department of Foreign Languages and Literatures

Verona (Italy)

¹ sara.corrizzato@univr.it;  <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-9665-9912>

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Abstract. The article explores how the concept of *italianità*, i.e., the sense of Italian identity and cultural belonging, is constructed and reinforced in the Italian dubbed version of *Another Simple Favor* (2025), the sequel to Paul Feig's *A Simple Favor* (2018). Drawing on the framework of audiovisual translation studies, the paper examines how linguistic and cultural choices in dubbing affect the representation of characters and their identities. While dubbing traditionally tends to neutralize linguistic variation to enhance comprehension by the audience, this study reveals the opposite: the Italian version of the film amplifies cultural specificity through deliberate localization.

Using a qualitative, comparative methodology, the analysis includes selected excerpts from both the original English version and its Italian adaptation, focusing on the speech of the main characters. The analysis identifies two main strategies for conveying *italianità*: the insertion of Italian (or dialectal) lines in the English script to mark intimacy or cultural embeddedness, and the extensive use of Neapolitan dialect in the dubbed version to localize characters within a recognizable Italian context. These linguistic choices enrich the film's cultural references but also risk introducing stereotypes associated with Southern Italian linguistic-cultural background. By contrasting the cosmopolitan, multilingual portrayal of characters in the original film with their more regionally defined counterparts in the dubbed version, the study highlights how dubbing becomes an active agent of identity negotiation.

Introduction

Thanks to the flourishing academic interest over the past decades, audiovisual language and its translation are now recognized as eye-opening fields of translation studies research, from which important information about the given language, its use by speakers, and their socio-cultural context can be drawn (Bruti & Di Giovanni, 2013; Denton & Ciampi, 2012; Diaz Cintas, 2008; Diaz Cintas & Anderman, 2009; Freddi & Pavesi, 2005; Gambier & Gotlieb, 2001). Indeed, as pointed out by Hymes (1974, p. 4), “to study language is to study human behavior and society. The ways people speak are the ways they relate to one another.” Considering that films and TV series are excellent examples of microcosms made up of different identities but belonging to a single linguistic-cultural context (or multiple intersecting contexts), analyzing the linguistic vehicle with which characters communicate can be useful to set up remarkable reflections both from the linguistic point of view and from the sociocultural angle. Back in the 1960s, Gregory clarified the fact that audiovisual language can be considered “written to be spoken as if not written” (1967, p. 192); therefore, lines “need not be considered mere means of fictitious communication, but can be understood as faithful representations of everyday communicative exchanges” (Corrizzato, 2015, p. 33). In this regard, if we bring to mind the last film we watched, we can confirm that none of us took into consideration the fact that the characters involved in the story were playing parts, but we simply immersed ourselves in the universe in front of us. We got to know the characters, we got to know their temper and their role within the plot, and we sympathized with them as we identified with them. As we can easily imagine, this viewer-character relationship does not stem solely from the fact that we dis/like the characters, hate/love the role they play, and/or dis/approve of the choices they make (Bruun Aertsen, 2017; Vaage, 2015); language significantly contributes to this evolution, as how characters use language is a key element of their personality development.

Interestingly, the role language plays in the dubbed versions of audiovisual products can heavily influence the representation of characters, partially changing their identity and weakening or strengthening their specificities, with the aim of

catering to the tastes of the target audience or aligning with audience familiarity. From a linguistic-analytical perspective, this is particularly evident in the representation of certain Anglophone speaker communities in original versions. These communities often have distinctive linguistic markers and cultural references that are tightly woven into their identities.²

However, in dubbed versions intended for the Italian market, these features are frequently softened, altered, or entirely erased. This is often done to enhance accessibility for the target audience, who might not recognize or understand the nuances of the original linguistic or cultural elements, or, more simply, because the Italian linguistic-cultural context lacks a linguistically faithful counterpart to the original language variety. As a result, characters' identities become generalized or even distorted, prioritizing viewer familiarity over authenticity.³ Unfortunately, in all these cases the original cultural connotation embedded in the linguistic dimension is lost in the dubbed version. Within this framework, Italian scholarly production has examined the multiple dimensions that come into play in the practice of dubbing, with particular attention given to the treatment of linguistic and paralinguistic features and to the translation of culture-specific references (see, for example, Chiaro, 2010; Di Giovanni, 2016; Freddi & Pavesi, 2009; Pavesi, 2006; Pavesi et al., 2014; Perego, 2005; Perego & Taylor, 2012). Several works offer a number of useful insights into how translations for Italian audiences modify original scripts, showing whether and to what extent the Italian versions remain faithful to the original linguistic features and to the (micro)cultural references included in the original products.⁴

² In this sense, there is no need to meticulously examine audiovisual productions that are unfamiliar to us; it is enough to consider well-known works by internationally acclaimed directors, for instance, Spike Lee, whose films prominently feature African-American English (see *Jungle Fever* (1991), *Get on the Bus* (1996), or *Bamboozled* (2000)). Similarly, several Disney animated films showcase linguistic diversity, such as *The Aristocats* (1971), *Finding Nemo* (2003), or *Soul* (2020), to name but a few. Popular TV series from recent years have also incorporated a range of English varieties, as seen in *The Big Bang Theory* (2007–2019), *Peaky Blinders* (2013–2022), or *Game of Thrones* (2011–2019).

³ In the Italian context, there are many examples where substantial changes have been made to cater to the target audience. The most popular audiovisual productions include *My Fair Lady* (1964) and *Snatch* (2000), for instance, where an artificial *ad hoc* Italian regional was created to replace the characters' Cockney variety. In the famous animated sitcom *The Simpsons* (1989–present), the characters' English varieties were rendered into different Italian regional dialect. In many other cases, such as in *Do the Right Thing* (1989), *Crocodile Dundee* (2002), and *Crazy Heart* (2009), the characters' English varieties were neutralized, with translators opting instead for a standard Italian register.

⁴ Research on films has focused on both timeless classics and more recent titles, including individual works as well as partial or complete filmographies of well-known directors (e.g., Beseghi, 2020; Botta & Corrizzato, 2024; Bruti & Vignozzi, 2016, 2024; Corrizzato, 2015; Corrizzato & Franceschi, 2019; De Bonis, 2014, 2015; Monti, 2018; Parini, 2024a; Ranzato,

Given this brief premise—which frames dubbing as a highly valuable method for providing viewers with an experience free from linguistic barriers, though inevitably involving some loss of the original linguistic and cultural content—the present study focuses on a notable deviation from prevailing trends in audiovisual translation. Thus, while it is commonly observed that dubbing often results in the dilution of characters' original socio-cultural specificities, the Italian version of the film *Another Simple Favor* appears to do the opposite. Rather than neutralizing cultural elements, it reinforces, and in some cases constructs ad hoc, a sense of *italianità* that is not always present in the source text. In fact, thanks to the use of code-switching in the source version and the massive introduction of the local dialect in the dubbed version, the film in Italian amplifies the representation of Italian characters, portraying them within their cultural dimension. This project questions the role of a local dialect in a dubbed version of a foreign audiovisual product using a standard variety, and it amplifies the body of research that explores the presence of dialects in both source and target texts. Although still in its embryonic stage, the project already has potential implications for audiovisual translation research and is intended to contribute to a larger corpus of films in the future.

The Film Under Investigation

Another Simple Favor, directed by Paul Feig, is the sequel to the 2018 black comedy thriller *A Simple Favor*. The film reunites the American actresses Anna Kendrick and Blake Lively in their roles as Stephanie Smothers and Emily Nelson, respectively. Emily, now engaged to Dante Versano, a wealthy Italian businessman with alleged mafia connections, invites Stephanie to serve as her maid of honor at their lavish wedding on the island of Capri. Upon arrival in Capri, Stephanie is drawn into a web of intrigue involving Emily's estranged family as well as Dante's mother, Portia. The narrative takes a dark turn when Emily's ex-husband Sean and her new husband Dante are killed, and Stephanie becomes entangled in the investigation. As the plot unfolds, Stephanie discovers that Emily has a long-lost triplet sister, Charity, who has been impersonating Emily with the intent of usurping her identity and inheritance. The film premiered at the South by Southwest Festival on March 7, 2025, and was subsequently released on Amazon Prime Video on May 1, 2025.

2010; Zanotti, 2012). The diachronic perspective also encompasses analyses of TV series (e.g., Corrizzato, 2018; Dore, 2017; Sandrelli, 2020) and animated fantasy films (e.g., Bruti, 2014; Di Nuovo et al., 2018; Minutella, 2015, 2016; Monti, 2023; Parini, 2024b).

The Linguistic Component

From the analysis conducted in this study, *Another Simple Favor* emerges as particularly noteworthy for its portrayal of Italian identity through the main characters' dialogues, both in the original English version and in its Italian dubbed adaptation. The film offers a layered representation of Italian culture not only through the setting and plot but also through how the Italian characters represent themselves. This is achieved through linguistic choices, cultural references, and performative nuances, which together contribute to the construction of a specific image of *italianità* within an international product. The characters at the center of this investigation are four pivotal figures: the female protagonist, Emily Nelson; her new husband, Dante Versano; Portia Versano, Dante's mother; and Matteo Bartolo, Dante's secret lover. Each of these characters employs language as a means of negotiating identity, often oscillating between performative stereotypes and more nuanced, authentic expressions of cultural belonging. Their dialogues, especially when examined across the two language versions, provide a compelling site for analyzing how national identity is mediated, reshaped, or even fabricated in the process of audiovisual translation. It should be emphasized, however, that in order to understand how the notion of *italianità* is reinforced in the Italian version, it is necessary to focus on two levels: how the same concept is presented in the original version as well as in the Italian adaptation.

From a methodological perspective, this study adopts a qualitative, comparative approach, focusing on a selection of dialogue excerpts which are analyzed across two distinct versions of the film: the original English-language version and the Italian dubbed version. The aim of this study is to examine how translation choices in dubbing influence the portrayal of characters, particularly in terms of socio-linguistic markers and cultural specificity.

To this end, the seven excerpts analyzed in this section were selected according to two criteria. First, they contain instances of code-switching (either in the original or the dubbed version), which constitute pivotal moments in the linguistic construction of identity. Second, they display shifts in register or dialect that alter the characterization of the main characters in the story. Only scenes meeting at least one of these criteria were included, as they represent the most meaningful sites for observing how *italianità* is shaped differently across the two versions.

Attention was given not only to lexical and syntactic changes but also to the broader discursive strategies that contribute to the shaping or reshaping of *italianità* in the two versions. The analysis of these scenes enabled the identification of two distinct linguistic strategies through which reference to the Italian socio-cultural context is constructed and conveyed in the film. These include:

1. The use of the Neapolitan dialect in the Italian dubbed version, which reinforces regional identity and contributes to a localized, culturally specific portrayal of characters.

2. The use of Italian in the original script, which functions as a marker of intimacy, emotional proximity, or cultural embeddedness in the Italian setting.

The following section presents a selection of scenes that exemplify the application of the two strategies.⁵

How Is Italianità Conveyed Through Language?

As evidenced by a significant body of research in audiovisual translation studies, Italian dialects are frequently employed in Italian dubbing, partly as a strategy to reproduce—or compensate for—the linguistic diversity originally conveyed through the use of different varieties of English (Bruti & Vignozzi, 2016; Dore, 2017; Iaia, 2015). While this practice can be effective in maintaining a degree of character differentiation through linguistic variation, it often results in the relocation of characters' social and geographical identities to an Italian context. In doing so, the dubbing process can implicitly activate a set of locally recognizable stereotypes associated with specific regional varieties. In such cases, the use of dialects—and the Neapolitan dialect in this specific instance—may evoke stereotypical socio-cultural associations, typically linked to informality, cultural backwardness, ignorance, or even criminality, which, although familiar to the target audience, can significantly reshape the original character's identity and narrative function (Dore, 2020; Iaia, 2015; Maturi, 2023).⁶

Consequently, the use of dialects in Italian dubbing performs a dual function. On the one hand, it grounds characters more firmly in a specific regional context; on the other, it can significantly alter how they are perceived by the audience. By assigning a strong dialect to characters, the dubbed version intensifies their perceived local rootedness, prompting Italian viewers to automatically situate them within a specific socio-cultural context that aligns with the dialect being used. This linguistic anchoring encourages the audience to infer regional identity and background based not on narrative exposition but on auditory cues, which can activate pre-existing cultural associations and stereotypes. The strength of

⁵ In the preliminary phase of the project, the illustrative excerpts were initially intended to be classified according to these two distinct strategies, with the aim of establishing a clear-cut differentiation between them. However, upon completion of the analysis, this approach was deemed inadequate, as isolating the two languages and examining them separately would have considerably hindered the comparative dimension of the study.

⁶ Although this may not be the appropriate context, it would nonetheless be necessary to investigate the culturally embedded assumptions that associate the use of dialects with a(n) (un)conscious unwillingness to make oneself understood by a broader audience. Such assumptions give rise to the rather popular view of the second part of the 20th century that the use of dialect was characteristic of individuals deemed incapable of communicating in standard Italian, and who were consequently perceived as provincial and lacking refinement (for a more detailed explanation, see Marcato, 2016; Pietrini, 2024).

such adaptations lies precisely in balancing the anchoring of the narrative within a specific local context, visually and linguistically, while avoiding the reduction of characters to stereotyped cultural figures.

In the first scene under consideration, Emily lands at Capri’s airport. Awaiting her arrival is Dante Versano, who stands at the edge of the runway. The following table presents Dante’s first lines upon reuniting with Emily, offering insight into his character construction through language:

Example 1

Source text	Dubbed version
DANTE: Morning, babe. Missed you so much. [...] This must be the maid of honor. What a lovely creature.	DANTE: Ecco l’amore mio. Ciao amore. Mi sei mancata assai. [...] Oh, questa e la damigella d’onore, ma che splendore.

What immediately stands out from the comparison in the table is that the two versions construct notably different character profiles. The original English version presents Dante as a relatively neutral figure, whose use of English suggests someone who is not a native speaker but demonstrates a high level of fluency (also testified by his pronunciation). His speech is polished and deliberate, evoking the image of a multilingual cosmopolitan rather than emphasizing any strong cultural or regional identity. This choice reinforces the image of a linguistically competent character who navigates a foreign language with ease.

In contrast, the dubbed version constructs a markedly different identity for Dante. He is voiced with a pronounced Neapolitan accent, and his speech includes syntactic patterns and lexical choices that evoke strong regional connotations. For instance, the translation “*buongiorno, amore/tesoro*,” which is syntactically more consistent with the original line, is replaced with “*ecco l’amore mio*,” an expression rooted in dialectal usage, which departs from standard Italian. This substitution introduces a warmer, more colloquial tone, localizing the character both linguistically and culturally.⁷ The same translation strategy is employed in rendering “missed you so much,” where the standard Italian “*mi sei mancata tanto/molto*” is replaced with “*mi sei mancata assai*.” This choice once again introduces a marked dialectal element, reinforcing the regional flavor of the dialogue.

⁷ Parallel to what is outlined in Footnote 5, according to ISTAT data from 2015, the use of dialect is predominantly favoured in private contexts, such as family interactions or exchanges among friends. In these settings, the use of dialect signals a higher degree of intimacy and interpersonal familiarity (ISTAT, 2015). As pointed out throughout this analysis, dialects embody the cultural heritage of the area in which individuals grow up and develop their social relationships.

This localized portrayal, absent in the original, recasts Dante as a Southern Italian man. Even if this shift operates at a largely unconscious level for the viewer, the alteration in register significantly transforms the perception of the character. Rather than preserving the composed, cosmopolitan tone of the original, the dubbed version presents Dante with a more regionally specific identity, which marks a departure from his initial characterization and introduces a localized interpretation that may activate culturally familiar, though potentially limiting, associations. In this portrayal, Dante appears to emphasize his origins, deliberately avoiding the use of standard Italian, as rendered in the subtitles, and in doing so subtly altering the linguistic balance that characterizes the original version.

A similar transformation occurs with the introduction of Matteo Versano, the true co-protagonist in Dante's personal life. Matteo, heir to another powerful family in Capri, is revealed to be Dante's genuine romantic partner, a fact known only to Emily. His first appearance takes place during a scene in which Stephanie is firmly instructed not to take any photographs or videos of the wedding festivities. Unaware of this restriction, Stephanie inadvertently heightens the tension between the two men. This moment marks again the distinction between the original version (supported by Italian subtitles) and the dubbed version, as the following example shows:

Example 2

Source text	Dubbed version
MATTEO: The families are on a truce. Hey, look at me. We agreed with the rules. No pictures of the Bartolos at this event. [...] Miss America, delete everything you have on your phone, okay? DANTE: Matteo, Matteo, Matteo, Matteo, Matteo.. calm down everyone, okay? Stephany is a visitor. She didn't know that. Yeah. MATTEO: She didn't know. She is a visitor. And whose fault is that? Huh? Si tu chi continui a portare sti fessi di americani inta la famiglia.	MATTEO: Le famiglie stanno in tregua. C'eravamo accurdati, nesciuna fotografia ai Bartolo. [...] Miss America, cancella tutt'quillo che sta laddentro. DANTE: Matteo, Matteo, Matteo, Matteo, Matteo.. calma, calma tutti quanti, ok? Stephany è un'ospite e non lo sapeva. MATTEO: Lei non lo sapeva, è un'ospite, e la colpa i chi è? Si tu chi continui a portare sti fessi di americani int'all'affare

In the original version, Matteo speaks English, though with less fluency and confidence than Dante. His prosody and accent, however, do not convey any specific cultural or regional identity, instead presenting a more neutral, internationally intelligible voice. What is particularly intriguing is the shift that occurs in Matteo's final line in the original audio: he abruptly switches to the Neapolitan dialect, saying "*Si tu chi continui a portare sti fessi di americani inta la famiglia*," (You're the one who keeps bringing these foolish Americans into the family). This sudden code-switch not only departs from the neutral tone of his speech but also functions as a strong marker of his cultural and regional identity. The decision to include this line in dialect in the original audio adds a layer of authenticity and character depth while simultaneously signaling Matteo's social positioning and origins.

In the Italian dubbed version, Matteo's regional identity is made explicit from the outset, as he speaks almost exclusively in the Neapolitan dialect. This linguistic choice, characterized by both lexical substitutions and phonetic features typical of the dialect, contributes to a portrayal of the character that is markedly "more" Italian than in the original. For instance, while in the original English version Matteo says, "Delete everything you have on your phone, okay?", the dubbed version renders this as "*Cancella tutt'quillo che sta laddentro*" (Delete everything in there). The substitution of "*laddentro*" (in there) for the more specific "on your phone" introduces a vague and colloquial tone, while the omission of the tag "okay?" removes the softening, almost polite appeal present in the original. This also results in a line that sounds more direct and commanding.

Additionally, the replacement of "*famiglia*" (family) with "*affare*" (business or affair) in a later line subtly shifts the emotional register of the dialogue. The translation choice from "family" to "business" might be questionable for an expert reader, particularly because the target audience is Italian, and thus culturally aware that, in certain contexts such as those of Dante and Matteo, business is firmly and indelibly intertwined with family tradition. While the term family emphasizes personal ties and intimacy, *affare* implies a more transactional or secretive relationship, further contributing to the character's more ambiguous representation, which could potentially make the audience think of a typical Italian business relationship more than a romantic one.

A similar approach emerges in the scene where Dante encounters Stephanie in the center of Capri. At that moment, Stephanie is engaged in conversation with an American FBI agent. When Dante approaches, she attempts to conceal her association with the agent by introducing her simply as a fan of her blog. This brief interaction provides another opportunity to observe how Dante's character, in the dubbed version, is linguistically and culturally situated within the Italian context.

Example 3

Source text	Dubbed version
DANTE: Good morning! I see you're making friends.	DANTE: Buongiorno! Hai fatto amicizia.
STEPHANIE: Well, the power of the Internet. You know. She's a big fan of my show. That's the show I do.	STEPHANIE: Beh... È il potere di Internet. Lo sai, lei è una grande fan del mio show. Lo show su Internet.
DANTE: Oh, my goodness, Stephanie. It seems like you're an international superstar! [...] Wait, wait... Do you want me to take a picture with her? [...] Aw, beautiful.	DANTE: Santo cielo, Stephanie. Ma allora tu sei una star internazionale! [...] Uè, aspetta, aspetta... Te la vuoi fare una foto insieme a lei? [...] Bell'assai!

Unlike the original version, the dubbed adaptation once again employs a regional dialect, through which the male character interacts with the two women. Dante's use of dialect, combined with his prosody, contributes to the construction of a more informal register. This linguistic choice subtly alters his characterization in the scene: rather than coming across as cautious or suspicious, as the context might suggest, he appears somewhat more approachable and familiar, which softens the tension and potentially shifts the viewer's interpretation of his intentions. On the other hand, the use of informal Italian in the dubbed version may arguably be more contextually appropriate, given the setting of the scene: the characters are seated at a picturesque café on a small Mediterranean island, having breakfast. In this relaxed environment, the choice of a more familiar and regionally marked register could be seen as aligning more naturally with the social dynamics and atmosphere of the moment.

The use of the local dialect is also a defining feature of Dante's mother, Portia. As a widow who has devoted her life to raising her son, Portia is portrayed as a strong, traditional figure, whose speech reflects her deep roots in the local culture. Her disapproval of Dante's wedding further reinforces her protective and conservative behavior, positioning her as a character who embodies both familial loyalty and regional identity through language.

In the following scene, Portia administers a truth serum to Stephanie, believing that she is responsible for the death of her son, Dante. Driven by a desire for answers, Portia seeks to uncover Stephanie’s reasons:

Example 4

Source text	Dubbed version
PORTIA: I used it on my husband once, yeah, to find out who he was fucking. But there were so many names, he wouldn't stop. [...] Let's stick to the subject. [...] Ehm I read your book, nammerda, tabloid garbage.	PORTIA: L'ho usato con mio marito una volta, per scoprire a chi si stava scopando. Ma i nomi erano proprio assai. Chello non si fermava più, [...] Basta, non divaghiamo, picciri. [...] Ho letto il libro tuo, nammerda, monnezza da tabloid.

As the original version demonstrates, Portia is interacting with Stephanie using standard English. As in the previously analyzed scenes, the translation is undoubtedly faithful at the level of content. What changes once again, however, is the introduction of dialectal elements in the Italian version. The line “But there were so many names, he wouldn’t stop” is rendered in the dubbed Italian version as “*Ma i nomi erano proprio assai. Chello non si fermava più,*” which departs from the more neutral “*Ma c’erano così tanti nomi che lui non si sarebbe più fermato.*” In addition to the syntactic shift, the lexical choices of “*assai*” (many names), “*chello*” (that man), and “*monnezza*” (garbage) clearly mark a dialectal register. There is also the introduction of the vocative “*picciri*,” meaning “little one” or “kid,” which further reinforces the linguistic and cultural connotation of the dialogue.

While in the dubbed Italian version the connection to Portia’s origins is conveyed through the use of dialect, in the original version code-switching to Italian, which Portia uses to criticize Stephanie’s published book, describing it as “*nammerda*” (literally, “a piece of shit”), contributes to shaping her character and making her appear typically Italian.

In another scene, Dante’s entrance once again underscores the dichotomy between his characterization in the original version and the Italian dubbed adaptation:

Example 5

Source text	Dubbed version
DANTE: Baby, baby. I'll deal with it. I'll deal with it. Don't worry. Don't worry. Prima di tutto, ok, qui non si fa business. Non ci sarà solamente una foto di un singolo Bartolo. Ti do la mia parola.	DANTE: no, aspettate, pe favore. Cercammo de sta quieti. Mo' ci pense io, picciri. Prima di tutto, uagliò, qua non si fa business. Avevamo deciso che manco una foto sola poteva essere fatta ai Bartolo, vabbuò? Compà, ti do la parola mia.

The decision to have Dante speak Italian even in the original version is undoubtedly significant, as it signals his attempt to bridge the emotional distance between himself and Matteo. This linguistic shift functions as an act of intimacy, highlighting Dante's desire to connect on a more personal level. However, a closer examination of his lines reveals that his identity remains rooted in a cosmopolitan framework. Despite switching languages, Dante maintains a neutral Italian accent, and his lexical and syntactic choices adhere closely to standard Italian norms. This deliberate use of an unmarked register reinforces his portrayal as an internationally mobile and socially adaptable character, rather than anchoring him within a specific regional or local identity.

Unlike the original English version, the Italian dubbed adaptation repositions the scene within a more locally anchored framework, where Dante interacts exclusively through a regional accent, specifically one that aligns with Matteo's Neapolitan dialect. The frequent use of vocatives, i.e., "*picciri*" (kid), "*uagliò*" (boy), and "*compà*" (mate), contributes to highlighting Dante's effort to decrease tension between Matteo and the two women. While this choice arguably enhances the character's connection to both Matteo and the surrounding environment, it simultaneously distances the portrayal from the more international identity established in the original version. The use of a strong regional accent in the dubbing process may serve to strengthen a sense of cultural familiarity for Italian audiences, but it does so at the expense of the protagonist's original complexity. Rather than presenting Dante as a multilingual, transnational figure, the dubbed version reconfigures him as a character firmly embedded in a specific regional identity, thereby altering the narrative and relational dynamics of the scene.

Overall, the character's speech displays a highly marked Neapolitan dialect, featuring numerous phonological, lexical, and syntactic traits characteristic of Southern Italian varieties. Examples include the use of "*pe*" instead of "*per*" (for), "*mo*" for "*adesso*" (now), and the vocatives listed above. On a syntactic level, the omission of prepositions ("*de sta*" instead of "*di stare*" (to keep [calm])) and the simplified verbal construction "*cercammo de sta quieti*" (try to keep calm) reflect spoken dialectal grammar rather than standard Italian. Compared to other parts

of the film, the density of these dialectal markers is particularly high, which intensifies the regional flavor and emotional immediacy of the dialogue, but also risks turning the character into a stereotype through hyper-localization.

When Dante decides to tear up the prenuptial agreement, Portia expresses her disapproval with a pointed remark that encapsulates both her frustration and her cultural grounding. She concludes by saying:

Example 6

Source text	Dubbed version
PORTIA: Io sono all'inferno. Questo è l'inferno e io sto pagando per i miei peccati.	PORTIA: Chist'è l'inferno, chist'è l'inferno e ii sto pagando per i peccati mie.

What is worth noting in this excerpt is that the English language does not appear in the original script, which instead contains Italian. Portia speaks her thoughts aloud, commenting on her son's choices. In the original version, the woman speaks standard Italian, whereas in the Italian dubbing she switches to dialect. This change reflects a different representation of the character in the dubbed version: an Italian mother of a clan leader, portrayed as a strong, proud, and deeply traditional woman. She embodies the emotional and moral core of the family: devoted to her children, loyal to family honor, and guided by a strict sense of duty. From the point of view of adherence to the source text, the dubbed version remains faithful to the original.

The use of Italian in the original script occurs once more when the protagonist, Dante's future bride, addresses his bodyguards:

Example 7

Source text	Dubbed version
BODYGUARDS: Give me the phone now.	BOBYGUARDS: Caccia subito u telefono!
EMILY: Quale problema?	EMILY: Qual è il problema?
BODY GUARDS: Se il signor Bartolo la vede prima schiaccia il telefono e poi getta la signora giù dalla scogliera.	BODYGUARDS: Se il signor Bartolo la vede prima ci scassa quillu telefono e poi ietta la signora abbiasciu scogliera.
EMILY: Ho capito. Tutto a posto, vai! Ora!	EMILY: è tutto a posto, iattevinne, ora.

This final excerpt is a perfect example of the constant code-switching found in the two versions of the film. As can be observed, in the original version the bodyguards speak standard English, while Emily replies in Italian. In the dubbed version, however, the bodyguards speak the Neapolitan dialect, and Emily also continues in Italian, only adding a word in dialect, “*iattevinne*” (go away), to narrow the distance between her foreign origins and their local background. The bodyguards’ Italian line, “*caccia subito u telefono!*” (Get your phone out right now!), is more informal and direct than the original, conveying urgency through direct command while remaining socially and culturally neutral. By contrast, the dialectal expression adds a layer of social intimacy and local identity. The second line spoken by the bodyguards moves in the same direction, reinforcing the effect of linguistic and cultural localization. In the original version, the bodyguards’ English line (“If Mr. Bartolo sees her first, he crushes the phone and then throws the lady off the cliff”) is rendered in the dubbed version through the use of typical Neapolitan expressions, such as “*quillo*” (that one), “*ietta*” (throw off), and “*abbasciu*” (down the cliff).

Concluding Remarks

The comparative analysis of the two versions highlights that dubbing choices inevitably involve a complex set of challenges. The study suggests that the use of dialect generally operates on two interrelated levels. On the one hand, as demonstrated by the Italian dubbed version, dialect may function as a valuable resource for enhancing authenticity by anchoring characters within their presumed sociocultural environment. It is, after all, plausible to assume that a man born and raised in Capri would naturally employ the local linguistic code. On the other hand, the inclusion of dialect, in this case, Neapolitan, runs the risk of confining characters to stereotypical representations that are absent from the source text.

Unlike the Italian version, the original script establishes its connection to the geographical setting through subtle insertions of Italian, both standard and dialectal, while remaining within a defined linguistic macrocosm dominated by standard English.

Despite the exploratory nature of this analysis, based on a single audiovisual product, the results may serve as a springboard for further research. First, the study contributes to a reconsideration of the role of dialects in dubbing. In this case, the Italian dubbed version increases linguistic markedness even when the original does not, which challenges the traditional view that dubbing tends toward standardization and neutralization. Instead, it suggests that dubbing practices may also promote a shift toward creative re-localization.

Furthermore, the analysis raises questions about how dubbing negotiates between authentic representation (what is plausible for characters in Capri) and

audience expectations (what “sounds Italian” or “sounds Southern” to foreign or Italian viewers). The dubbing of this film also illustrates that multilingualism and code-switching can serve different narrative functions in the source and target versions, highlighting the need for more research into how audiovisual translation reframes multilingual identities. Finally, special attention could be dedicated to the systematic inclusion of dialects in dubbing, as they may reproduce or reinforce cultural belonging or local stereotypes. This could invite further research on the ideological impact of dubbing choices when they include regional or local linguistic variations not present in the original version.

In line with previous reflections, an interesting avenue for future research is to explore how contemporary Italian dubbing introduces regional dialects even when the original soundtrack does not contain significant linguistic variation, and/or how it manages code-switching in American films set in Italian locations. This phenomenon—observable, for instance, in recent Netflix productions such as *Love in the Villa* (2022) and *La Dolce Villa* (2025)—raises broader questions about the relationship between source and target texts and their function in constructing authenticity, identity, and audience proximity.

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Сара КОРИЦАТО

Универзитет у Верони

Одељење за стране језике и књижевности

Верона (Италија)

Од оригиналног текста до италијанске адаптације:
italianità у филму *Another Simple Favor* (2025)

Резиме

Рад се бави анализом начина на који се концепт *italianità* – осећај италијанског идентитета и културне припадности – обликује и афирмише у италијанској синхронизованој верзији филма *Another Simple Favor* (2025), наставку остварења *A Simple Favor* (2018) у режији Пола Фига. Полазећи од теоријског оквира студија аудиовизуелног превођења, рад испитује како језички и културни избори у процесу синхронизације утичу на представљање ликова и обликовање њихових идентитета. Иако синхронизација традиционално тежи да ублажи језичке разлике како би се публици омогућило лакше разумевање садржаја, ова студија открива супротан тренд – италијанска верзија филма свесно наглашава културну специфичност кроз пажљиво осмишљену локализацију.

Применом квалитативне, компаративне методологије, анализом су обухваћени одабрани исечци из оригиналне верзије филма на енглеском језику и њене италијанске адаптације, са посебним освртом на говор главних ликова. Идентификоване су две кључне стратегије за преношење *italianità*: 1) уметање италијанских (или дијалекатских) реплика у енглески сценарио ради означавања интимности или културне укоренености; 2) интензивна употреба напуљског дијалекта у синхронизованој верзији ради стављања ликова у препознатљив италијански контекст. Ови језички избори доприносе обогаћивању културних референци филма, али истовремено носе ризик од репродукције стереотипа везаних за јужноиталијански језичко-културни простор. Супротстављањем космополитске, вишејезичне представе ликова у оригиналу њиховим регионално обликованим панданима у синхронизованој верзији, студија указује на то да синхронизација постаје активни чинилац у процесу креативне транспозиције идентитета.

Кључне речи: аудиовизуелни превод; италијанска синхронизација; дијалекат.



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