

Rivista Italiana di Studi sull'Umore  
RISU, Volume 2, Issue 2, Giugno 2019, pp. 59-60  
ISSN 2611-0970  
www.risu.biz

*The European Journal of Humour* 7(1), 2019  
Special Issue on Humour in Multimodal Translation

**Margherita Dore**

University of Rome "La Sapienza"

E-mail: [margherita@uniroma1.it](mailto:margherita@uniroma1.it)

Received 10 May 2019; accepted 31 May 2019

---

This Special Issue on The European Journal of Humour Research concentrates particularly in the way multilingualism is used to convey humour and the challenges this phenomenon poses in translation. The idea stemmed from realising that a growing number of literary and non-literary texts features two or more languages (defined as L3 so as to distinguish them from the original text's language (L1) and the translated text's language (L2); Corrius and Zabalbeascoa 2011). The use of heterolingualism in fictional texts is certainly not novel. Shakespeare made extensive use of multilingualism for both comic and non-comic purposes (Delabastita 2002, 2005). Likewise, the use of code-switching and code-mixing has always been a relatively constant feature of audiovisual works over the years (De Bonis 2015). However, it is the turn of the new century and millennium that has brought this phenomenon to the fore. Hence, this special issue has been conceived to debate the intricacies that multilingual humour can bring about when it has to be transferred across languages and cultures.

The call for paper attracted many scholars' attention, particularly those interested in the AVT of multilingual humour, but literary translation is also well represented. The contributions featuring Italian are many. For instance, **Delia Chiaro & Giuseppe De Bonis's** "An Austrian in Hollywood: The representation of foreigners in the films of Billy Wilder" shows how this famous actor and director exploits different languages such as German, Russian, French and Italian to create a comic collision of two or more languages and cultures, which in turn triggers humour. **Monika Wozniak** instead explores how Stanisław Lenartowicz's 1964 film titled *Giuseppe in Warsaw* has been translated into Italian. The film features an Italian soldier stranded in Poland after the end of World War II. Wozniak's analysis reveals how the translation process has led to the subversion of the target audience's point of view because the Italian viewers identify with the protagonist rather than the Polish characters in the movie. **Giulia Magazzù** also deals with Italian as the target language for the transfer of multilingual humour in *Big Night* (Campbell Scott & Stanley Tucci 1992). This dramedy uses Italian as an essential part of the film's narrative and its humour. The comparative analysis demonstrates that the Italian dubbed version loses the bilingualism of the scenes and so in part fails to convey the original idea of opposing misperceptions and stereotypes regarding Italians in the USA. **Margherita Dore** also investigates a North American audiovisual work (*Modern Family*, Christopher Lloyd & Steven Levitan 2009-2019) and its dubbed Italian version. However, the multilingual humour in this series mostly derives from Gloria Delgado's code-switching or code-mixing between English and Spanish. The author shows that in this case the Italian dubbing manages to render otherness and multilingual humour efficiently. A more modern approach that has been probably facilitated by the fact that the L2 (Italian) and L3 (Spanish) are closely related languages.

Three papers in this volume deal with the translation of multilingual humour in literary texts. In particular, **Cristina Vezzaro & Katrien Lievois** analyse the Dutch and Italian translations of Fouad Laroui's works, since humour and multilingualism are two central features of his writing. The comparative examination of the original and two target texts reveals that the humour conveyed via the use of L3 in the source text is rendered in the target texts thanks to a good deal of creativity on the translator's part, which is certainly beneficial to their professional practice and the text itself. **Mary Frank's** study is a reflection of the possible methods of translating a text containing two varieties of German into English. She concentrates on Ottokar Domma's *Der brave Schüler Ottokar* [The Good Schoolboy Ottokar] and proposes two alternative translational methods: "thick" and creative. Both approaches are shown how helpful or, in some cases, necessary it is to adopt a broad understanding of "translation" in respect of texts that exploit multilingualism for humorous purposes. Finally, **Roman Ivashkiv** investigates how transmetic, multilingual and intertextual puns in Pelevin's novel *Generation "P"* have been translated into English, German, Polish, Spanish, and French. The author's analysis of some examples taken from the source text unveils the complexities underlying the creation of puns that rely particularly on code-mixing and the difficulties connected to their transfer into other languages. The translators' roles and tasks are also debated along with the concept of (un)translatability in general terms and in relation to punning in particular.

All in all, this special issue testifies the general interest in heterolingual humour and its function(s) within literary and non-literary texts. All the contributions show that such an intriguing phenomenon cannot be overlooked and needs careful handling in translation. International and Italian TS and Humour Studies scholars alike can surely continue contributing to offering thought-provoking insights into the processes at work when dealing with multilingual humour. It is therefore hoped that research in this direction will steadily increase.

## References

- Corrius, M. & Zabalbeascoa, P. (2011). 'Language variation in source texts and their translations: The case of L3 in film translation'. *Target*, 23 (1), pp. 113–130.
- De Bonis, G. (2015). 'Translating multilingualism in film: A case study on *Le concert*'. *New Voices in Translation Studies*, 12 (2015). *IPCITI 2013 Proceedings*. Guest-edited by P. Castillo, P. Karanasiou, M. Shamy & L. Williamson, pp. 50–71.
- Delabastita, D. (2002). 'A great feast of languages. Shakespeare's multilingual comedy in "King Henry V" and the Translator'. *The Translator*, 8 (2): 303–340.
- Delabastita, D. (2005). 'Cross-language comedy in Shakespeare', in Chiaro, D. (ed.), *Humour and Translation*. Special issue of *HUMOR – International Journal of Humor Research* 18 (2), 161–184.

## Bionote

### Margherita Dore

Margherita Dore is Adjunct Lecturer at the Department of European, American and Intercultural Studies at the University of Rome 'La Sapienza', and the University of Rome "Tor Vergata". She holds a PhD in Linguistics from Lancaster University, UK (2008), an MSc in Translation and Intercultural Studies from UMIST, UK (2002) and a BA in English and Latin American Studies from the University of Sassari, Italy (2001). She has (co)authored several papers and has written books on translation practice. Margherita Dore has worked on the analysis of humour in translated audiovisual texts and in a range of other contexts, including stand-up comedy.