Subtitling the Mafia and the Anti-Mafia from Italian into English: An Analysis of Cultural Transfer

El subtitulado de la mafia y la antimafia del italiano al inglés: un análisis de transferencia cultural

Le sous-titrage de mafia et anti-mafia dès l'italien vers l'anglais : une analyse de transfert culturel

Legendagem de mafia e anti-mafia do italiano para o inglês: uma análise da transferência cultural

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Abstract

Besides big Hollywood productions, like *The Godfather* trilogy, and video-on-demand productions, like *The Sopranos*, both filmed in English, new popular Italian productions, based on the linguistic and cultural representation of the Mafia and the Anti-Mafia, have gained momentum. Nonetheless, the body of academic research on the linguistic traits of the former is larger than research on the latter. This study aims to investigate how and by which strategies the lexicon and the culture-bound terms related to the concept of the Mafia and the Anti-Mafia are culturally transferred and subtitled from Italian into English. The TV series *Vendetta: guerra nell'antimafia* is used as the corpus for both a quantitative and a qualitative analysis. Results show that the translation of the Mafia and the Anti-Mafia for the purpose of audiovisual translation, through subtitling, is a simpler and less convoluted form of translation than written legal translation, aimed at conveying complex concepts in a simpler way.

Keywords: mafia, anti-mafia, subtitling into English, culture-bound terms, Italian TV series translation, AVT, cultural transfer

Resumen

Aparte de las grandes producciones de Hollywood, como la trilogía de *El Padrino*, y de las producciones de vídeo por demanda, como *Los Soprano*, ambas rodadas en inglés, han cobrado fuerza nuevas producciones italianas populares basadas en la representación lingüística y cultural de la Mafia y la Antimafia han cobrado fuerza. Sin embargo, el corpus de investigación sobre los rasgos lingüísticos de la primera es mayor que la investigación sobre la segunda. El presente estudio se propone analizar cómo es y a través de qué estrategias se hace la transferencia cultural y el subtitulado del italiano al inglés del léxico y algunos culturemas relacionados con
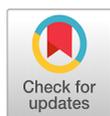
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Íkala, Revista de Lenguaje y Cultura
Medellín, Colombia, Vol. 28 Issue 2 (May-August, 2023), pp. 1-16, ISSN 0123-3432
www.udea.edu.co/ikala

los conceptos de mafia y antimafia. Para el análisis cuantitativo y cualitativo se empleó un corpus tomado de la serie de televisión *Vendetta: guerra nell'antimafia*. Los resultados muestran que la traducción de culturemas del campo de la mafia y la antimafia con fines de traducción audiovisual, a través del subtitulado, plantea menos complejidad que la traducción legal escrita, pues su objetivo es transmitir conceptos complejos de forma más simple.

Palabras clave: mafia, antimafia, subtitulado al inglés, culturemas, traducción de series de TV italianas, TAV, transferencia cultural

Résumé

En dehors des superproductions hollywoodiennes telles que la trilogie du *Parrain* et des productions vidéo à la demande telles que *Les Sopranos*, toutes deux filmées en anglais, de nouvelles productions italiennes basées sur la représentation linguistique et culturelle de la mafia et de l'antimafia ont pris de l'ampleur. La recherche sur les caractéristiques de la représentation linguistique sont plus nombreuses que celles sur sa représentation culturelle. Cette étude vise à analyser le transfert culturel et le sous-titrage de l'italien à l'anglais du lexique et de certains éléments culturels liés aux concepts de mafia et d'antimafia. Pour l'analyse quantitative et qualitative, nous avons utilisé un corpus tiré de la série télévisée *Vendetta: guerra nell'antimafia*. Les résultats montrent que la traduction de culturèmes du domaine de la mafia et de l'antimafia à des fins de traduction audiovisuelle, par le biais du sous-titrage, est moins complexe que la traduction juridique écrite, car elle vise à transmettre des concepts complexes d'une manière plus simple.

Mots-clef : mafia, antimafia, sous-titrage vers l'anglais, culturèmes, traduction des séries télévisées italiennes, TAV, transfert culturel

Resumo

Além dos sucessos de bilheteria de Hollywood, como a trilogia *O Poderoso Chefão*, e das produções de vídeo sob demanda, como *Os Sopranos*, ambos filmados em inglês, novas produções italianas baseadas na representação linguística e cultural da máfia e da antimáfia tem ganhado impulso recentemente. O conjunto de pesquisas sobre as características linguísticas da representação linguística é maior do que as pesquisas sobre sua representação cultural. O presente estudo tem como objetivo analisar como se dá a transferência cultural e a legendagem do italiano para o inglês do léxico e de alguns culturemas relacionados aos conceitos de máfia e antimáfia. Para a análise quantitativa e qualitativa, foi utilizado um corpus extraído da série de TV *Vendetta: guerra nell'antimafia*. Os resultados mostram que a tradução de culturemas do campo da máfia e da antimáfia para fins de tradução audiovisual, por meio de legendagem, apresenta menor complexidade que a tradução jurídica escrita, pois visa a transmitir conceitos complexos de forma mais simples.

Palavras chave: mafia, antimafia, legendagem para o inglês, culturemas, tradução de séries televisivas italianas, TAV, transferência cultural

Introduction

As highlighted by Parini (2017, p. 103), "the figure of the mafioso is indisputably the most notorious and successful representation of Italians on the Hollywood screen", and it has attracted a great deal of attention from scholars investigating "the distinguishable language variety that characters starring in Hollywood Mafia movies speak" (Parini, 2014, p. 145). However, in addition to big Hollywood productions, like *The Godfather* trilogy (Coppola, 1972, 1974, 1990), *The Untouchables* (1987), *Goodfellas* (1990), *Casino* (1995), *Donnie Brasco* (1997,) and to video-on-demand (VOD) productions, like *The Sopranos* (Chase, 1999–2007), all filmed in English, popular Italian productions, based on the linguistic and cultural representation of the Mafia, have gained momentum in recent years. Nonetheless, the body of academic research on the linguistic traits of the former is larger than that of research on the latter, which is still very limited to this day (Laudisio, 2017; Parini, 2013, 2015; Scarpino, 2011).

This study aims to investigate how and by which strategies the lexicon and the culture-bound terms related to the concept of the Mafia and the anti-Mafia are culturally translated and subtitled from Italian into English. The TV series *Vendetta: guerra nell'antimafia* (2021), comprising six episodes of approximately 38 minutes each, is used as the corpus for both a quantitative and a qualitative analysis highlighting, on the one hand, the frequency of occurrences and, on the other hand, the translation strategies adopted.

With reference to the translation of the vocabulary referring to the Mafia and its cultural context in legal translation as much as in audiovisual translation, "translators need to be able to mediate on three levels: linguistic, legal and cultural" (Whithorn, 2014, p. 169). Attention here is paid to the approaches adopted for the English translation of Mafia-related terms against the background of the translation strategies applied to audiovisual texts according to Díaz-Cintas and Remael's taxonomy (2007).

The term Mafia, defined as "a criminal organisation that makes money illegally, especially by threatening people and dealing in drugs" (Collins Dictionary, n.d.), is deeply embedded in the culture and the society of Sicily, and Italy; but it is also true that this term has travelled across countries and languages, so much so that de Franchis (1996) affirms that the word does not require a translation. Whilst it has been established that the term "Mafia" does not require a translation, its compounds like *antimafia*, its derived words like the adjective *mafioso*, and other Mafia-related terms like *pizzo* or *pentito* may pose a challenge for translators and subtitlers. Furthermore, the different legal systems in place in the various English-speaking countries should be taken into account when translating legal jargon. Lastly, there is a difference between legal documents and audiovisual products, in the sense that the former are legally binding and the latter are for entertainment and/or educational purposes. Therefore, there is a difference between legal translation of documents (for instance, birth certificates, court rulings, etc.) and audiovisual translation of TV series; that is, the former must be accurate and precise, and every word should be chosen carefully, whereas the latter needs to convey the general message and should be easy to understand for the general public.

When analysing audiovisual material, and in particular subtitles in Italian and in English of a docuseries from a renowned VOD platform, such as Netflix, one should take into consideration that the function of subtitles (or any other form of audiovisual translation and media accessibility for that matter) is to provide linguistic accessibility (Díaz-Cintas, 2005), that is to say its purpose is "to facilitate the access to an otherwise hermetic source of information and entertainment". It is known that the concept of linguistic accessibility bears the concept of cultural accessibility in the sense that language and culture are intertwined

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and that language is used to express phenomena deeply embedded in the culture of a certain area, in this case Sicily.

The idea for this research stemmed from the practice of translation from Italian into English of some audiovisual material of this docuseries, mainly archive footage and interviews in addition to random film footage, court rulings, wiretaps, etc. during its production stage. The research question that this article aims to answer is how the subtitles translated into English help the general public understand and ultimately—through films and TV series —appreciate the audiovisual output of a complex phenomenon such as that of the Mafia and the Anti-Mafia.

Theoretical Framework

This section provides a theoretical framework with respect to the differences between legal translation and audiovisual translation. Furthermore, it highlights some differences between the English language and Italian language in relation to the different legal systems adopted by different countries. Lastly, it sums up the taxonomy adopted for the qualitative analysis of this article after providing examples and data excerpted from the quantitative analysis.

The Mafia: Legal and Audiovisual Translations

It seems only logical to start with a cultural and linguistic background of the Mafia phenomenon and its many facets. As highlighted by Di Piazza (2010), the Mafia has its own language, jargon, and identity; and its history is embedded in the history of Sicily in particular and Italy in general. From a linguistic viewpoint, the terms Mafia, Anti-Mafia and other Mafia-related words can be considered "culturemes" (Nord, 1997, p. 34), for which Katan (2009, p. 79) gives the definition of "formalized, socially and juridically embedded phenomena that exist in a particular form of function in only one of the two cultures being compared".

From the point of view of translation from Italian into English, a translator should ask which legal system to take into account, as English is the official language of several countries, and each country has or might have a different legal system and, therefore, linguistic differences. For instance, in England, Scotland, Wales, Ireland, United States, Canada, Australia, South Africa, etc., the legal system is different from one another, so much so that a lawyer passing the bar in one country cannot automatically practice law in the other, despite speaking the same language. It is not just a matter of choosing whether to use UK or US spelling for a word; it is a deeper issue which resonates with the surge of foreign audiovisual content subtitled and translated into English that we are seeing these days (for dubbing into English, see Hayes, 2021 and Sánchez-Mompeán, 2021).

Another important difference between legal translation (as a form of written translation) and audiovisual translation, in any of its modalities, is the (im)possibility to resort to footnotes or any other additional piece of information or appendix to explain a complex concept or phenomenon that does not have a direct translation. For instance, further below, it will be shown that the word *pizzo,* the protection money paid to the Mafia, has no direct translation into English. Therefore, a loan is the preferred translation strategy in audiovisual translation, as there is the possibility to resort to an explanation of the phenomenon in a footnote or within the text, which is common in the case of legal written translation.

One last consideration on the differences between Italian and English is that Italian has a grammatical gender system, and English does not. In Italian, all nouns and adjectives are either masculine or feminine, for instance; and this will constitute an important part of the corpus analysis, the adjective *mafioso* is masculine singular (declensions in gender and number are *mafiosa, mafiosi, mafiose*). When translating from English into Italian, the pragmatics of the text and, in the case of audiovisual translation, the reference to the video and

audio help the translator identify the gender (and number). However, when translating from Italian into English, this very issue poses the same challenge from a different point of view, that is, the lack of gendered adjectives and nouns and the lack of use of the word "mafioso" as an adjectival noun.

Taxonomy

Throughout the years, many scholars have devised several classifications of translation strategies in the attempt to produce taxonomies useful for the translation of written text and more recently of audiovisual material. Taking into consideration the chosen modality of (interlingual) subtitling, the taxonomy devised by Díaz-Cintas and Remael (2007) will be used for the analysis of the English translated subtitles of the docuseries *Vendetta: guerra nell'antimafia*. This classification encompasses strategies, such as:

- Loan: when no translation is possible. In subtitles, this is usually italicised (ex. "*pizzo*").

- Calque: a literal translation which benefits from an explanation. In subtitles, this is not always possible due to space and time constraints (ex. "*trattativa Stato-mafia*" [State-Mafia negotiations] translated with "negotiations between State and mafia").

- Explicitation: making the source text more accessible to the target audience.

- Substitution: similar to explicitation. Particularly used to translate wordy subtitles.

- Transposition: replacing a cultural concept in the source language with a cultural concept in the target language.

- Lexical recreation: the invention of a neologism in the target language. In subtitles, the neologism is in quotation marks.

- Compensation: making up for a translation loss by adding something else.

- Omission: sometimes unavoidable due to the space and time constraints.

- Addition: adding something as a form of explicitation.

Particular attention should be paid to the strategy of transposition, which is highly versatile (Walinski, 2015) and "probably the most common structural change undertaken by translators", as argued by Vinay and Darbelnet (1995, p. 94), who identify up to ten types of transposition, including verb to noun, adverb to verb, and adjective to noun, etc.

Method

Vendetta: guerra nell'antimafia (Di Maggio & Gambino, 2021) is a docuseries comprising six episodes of approximately 38 minutes each. The docuseries tells and reconstructs the human and court events of Pino Maniaci and Silvana Saguto, two prominent personalities of the Anti-Mafia movement. During their professional life, both have been at the centre of controversy and accused of crimes against which they claim to be innocent (Ciarlante, 2021). Pino Maniaci, journalist and TV host, took over the Sicilian TV broadcaster Telejato, and has devoted the past two decades to the fight against the Mafia. More recently, he dedicated his work to expose and fight against some personalities of the Anti-Mafia, *i.e.*, the parliamentary commission set up in 1962 to investigate the Mafia phenomenon (Treccani, n. d.a). Silvana Saguto, former magistrate of the Court of Palermo and former President of the Preventive Measures Section, has been one of the most important judges at the forefront in the fight against the Mafia in Sicily.

In 2013, the stories of the two protagonists are intertwined. Maniaci begins to conduct a series of investigations into serious episodes of corruption against some representatives of the Sicilian judiciary system, and in particular, of the Preventive Measures Section of the Court of Palermo,

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focusing precisely on Silvana Saguto. Maniaci accused the then magistrate of having illegally seized assets, charging excessive fees for their administration, and having made several companies go bankrupt with the complicity of her husband and members of her staff. Silvana Saguto, in turn, accuses Pino Maniaci of favouring the Mafia that he himself has attacked from his TV station. In 2016, the Palermo prosecutor's office investigated Pino Maniaci for defamation and extortion. That same year, Silvana Saguto was also investigated: 39 charges were brought against her, including corruption, abuse of office, and embezzlement. Both claim to be innocent and believe the other to be guilty. They both claim to be victims of a "vendetta", a vengeance (Donzelli, 2021).

The docuseries is produced by the production company Nutopia (https://www.nutopia.com/) in association with Mon Amour Films (https://www.monamourfilms.com/), and it is the result of a project started in December 2005 when the producers were given unprecedented access to the protagonists, their families, their legal teams, Sicilian courtrooms, and a vast archive and repertoire material.

The production of the docuseries was based in Italy, while the editing process was carried out in London with the intent to hire producers and directors who spoke Italian (Creamer, 2021). A team of 11 translators was hired to transcribe and translate hours and hours of footage, archives, interviews, wiretaps, and other audiovisual material. The task was not to create perfectly synchronised subtitles following strict guidelines, but to give a "rough time-code", usually in the region of 30 seconds before or after the start of the sentence, and to translate the audio from Italian into English (and sometimes from Sicilian or a regional Italian into English) without any limitations on characters per line, number of lines, or reading speed. With the aid of the software Inqscribe (https://www.inqscribe.com/), the synchronised translations were then sent to editors, both Italian and English speakers, who would work on the

editing of the episodes based on the work provided as the production team produced more material to be translated and then edited. One of the peculiarities of this workflow was that there was no need to translate legal terms exactly and precisely, but rather to provide a rough translation, a general idea of the words or sentences, taking advantage of the fact that limitations of space and time, usually applicable to subtitling and other audiovisual modalities, did not apply in this instance. The job was carried out by various translators, and there was no concerted approach to the legal terms and the Mafia-related terminology to be translated. Instead, each translator was free to create their own glossary as the project progressed and shared it or compared it with colleagues. However, the English subtitles available on Netflix were translated by a single translator from a time-coded template in Italian. The episodes of the docuseries are listed in Table 1.

In 2019, this author was hired, along with ten other translators to work on the translation of audiovisual material during the production of the docuseries. The translators, located between London and Palermo, where the two production companies operate, were asked to synchronise and translate from Italian into English hours and hours of video footage, archive footage from Italian TV news, secret recordings or wiretaps, and other audiovisual material needed for the editing. The software of choice, as mentioned, was Inqscribe, and the videos were sent or shared via a cloud-based server. The usual daily workflow would require the translators to synchronise as much audiovisual material as possible without a specific chronological sequence to allow the editors to continue their work. The timecodes did not need to be accurate to the frame, or to the second for that matter; instead, they were rough timecodes allowing the editors to follow what was being said in the clips. The transcription and translation file was then sent via email to the editors, and no feedback or comments were provided before moving on to the following clip.

Table 1 List of Episodes of *Vendetta: guerra nell'Antimafia*

Original Title	English Title	Duration
Dichiarazione di guerra	*Declaration of War*	43'
Il grande tradimento	*Death by Video*	33'
Corruzione e estorsione	*Corruption, the Sicilian Curse*	37'
Trappole e complotti	*Traps and Conspiracies*	38'
Verità e bugie	*Truth and Lies*	38'
La resa dei conti	*The Reckoning*	44'

With respect to the translation of the dialogues from Italian (sometimes also from Sicilian dialect or regional Italian, and more rarely from Spanish) into English, the translators were free to provide a sensical translation of the dialogues without the constraints of space and time usually applied to subtitling.

The official subtitles in Italian closed captions (CC), representing a verbatim transcription of the Italian dialogues, and the official subtitles in English were analysed from a quantitative and qualitative perspective.

The first type of analysis that was carried out was quantitative. The occurrences of certain words related to the realm of the Mafia and the Anti-Mafia were listed in a table and divided by episode. Whenever a numeric match of the Italian words and the English translation occurred, the words were classified as "Matched" (i.e., for every Italian subtitle containing that word, there was an English subtitle containing the corresponding direct translation of that word). Whenever a discrepancy in number between the Italian and the English words occurred, a further qualitative analysis was carried out. The qualitative analysis carried out subsequently followed a more thorough approach by watching each episode with Italian original audio and English subtitles. The context, the scenes, and the visual elements all contributed to achieving a better understanding of the translation strategies adopted for the translation of certain words related to the Mafia and the Anti-Mafia.

To start the discussion about the qualitative analysis of the translation of the subtitles, Table 2 features a sequence from Episode 2, titled "Death by video", with the Italian subtitles, the English back translation (my translation) and the English subtitles. The scene depicts a separation of the hearing from the Kevlera trial, which saw Pino Maniaci being charged with Mafia crimes, along with other Mafia associates. This passage can be considered the most technical and complex passage of the entire season due to the presence of legal jargon and complex syntax, and it is interesting to see how the English subtitles use a simpler and clearer vocabulary and syntax.

After watching the episodes and having noted the words related to the Mafia and the Anti-Mafia, a first quantitative analysis was carried out, by counting the repetitions of the words in all episodes. The words or groups of words taken into consideration for this article are listed below (for the purpose of this list, all words start with a capital letter, and foreign words are not italicised). The list is in order of appearance in the subtitles:

- Mafia (noun, both in lowercase and uppercase)

- Antimafia (noun, or "Anti-Mafia" as per English spelling)

- Mafioso (adjective, and its declension in gender and number: mafiosa, mafiosi, mafiose)

- Criminalità Organizzata (noun, or just "Criminalità")

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Table 2 Excerpts of Subtitles from the *Death by Video* Episode

Italian Subtitles	Back Translation	English Subtitles
La richiesta in esame è fondata sulla premessa	The request under consideration is founded on the premise	The request under review is founded on the premise
che i reati contestati all'imputato Maniaci,	that the alleged offenses to the accused Maniaci,	that the crimes that Maniaci is accused of
sono del tutto slegati con quelli contestati agli altri imputati.	are completely unrelated with those disputed to the other defendants.	have nothing to do with the crimes of the other defendants.
E in subordine disporre oᵃ stralcio della posizione	And in the alternative, arrange the excerpt of the position	And therefore, we accept that Maniaci Giuseppe
di Maniaci Giuseppe avanzata	by Maniaci Giuseppe advanced	should be removed from that hearing
dalla difesa dello stesso.	by the defense of the same.	as requested by his attorney.

ᵃThe Italian cc reads "E in subordine disporre o stralcio della posizione" but the Italian original dialogue says "E in subordine disporre allo stralcio...". This discrepancy can be understood as a typo.

- Pizzo (noun, uncountable)

- Racket (noun, uncountable)

- Pentito (adjectival noun, and its declension in gender and number: pentita, pentiti, pentite)

- Misure di Prevenzione (noun, usually plural, but also "Misure")

- Beni (noun, usually plural, but also "Bene")

- Confiscare (verb, and the adjective "Confiscato" and its declension in gender and number: confiscata, confiscati, confiscate)

- Sequestrare (verb, and the adjective "Sequestrato" and its declension in gender and number: sequestrata, sequestrati, sequestrate)

- Trattativa Stato-Mafia (as a compound)

Upon entering the data on the frequency of occurrence in the table and realising that some words did not occur as much as originally anticipated, words repeated four times or less were excluded from the in-depth analysis. These words were *racket* (extorsion of money), *pentito* (informant), and the compound *trattativa stato-mafia*. Nevertheless, the compound *trattativa stato-mafia*, despite being repeated only twice throughout the six episodes, deserves a brief analysis. The term refers to a pact between the Italian government and the Mafia after the terror attacks of 1992 and 1993 to prevent further attacks[1]. In the English subtitles the term was translated with "negotiations between the State and Mafia" in Episode 4, and with "the State versus Mafia trial" in Episode 6, using the strategy of explicitation.

In the analysis, there are some terms that relate to the Mafia and are culturally and socially relevant but did not pose any particular strain on the translation. These terms were translated consistently throughout the TV series, and they include the nouns *antimafia* and *pizzo* as well as the collocations *criminalità organizzata* and *misure di prevenzione*.

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1 https://tg24.sky.it/cronaca/2018/04/20/trattativa-stato-mafia-sentenza

Results

In the Italian subtitles, the term *antimafia*, which is both an adjective and a noun referring to anything that is against the Mafia, is spelt as one word and in lowercase. In the English subtitles, the word is rendered with Anti-Mafia, capitalising the A for Anti and the M for Mafia and using a dash to indicate a compound.

The noun *pizzo*, which refers to the protection money extorted by the Mafia organisations, was left untranslated, using the loan strategy. In the English subtitles, the word *pizzo* was italicised following two rules of the *Netflix English Timed Text Style Guide* (2022). The style guide states that "familiar foreign words and phrases which are listed in Webster's dictionary should not be italicized and should be spelled as in Webster's dictionary (e. g. bon appétit, rendezvous, doppelgänger, zeitgeist, etc.)" and also that "unfamiliar foreign words and phrases should be italicized". The word *pizzo* is widely known in Italy and it is starting to circulate outside Italy also thanks to docuseries like *Vendetta: guerra nell'antimafia*. However, as of yet, the word *pizzo* is not listed in Webster's dictionary (The Merriam-Webster dictionary: http://www.merriam-webster.com/), therefore it was italicised in the Netflix English subtitles. The collocation *criminalità organizzata*, which refers to the criminal activities of organised groups, was translated as "organized crime".

The term *misure di prevenzione* (sometimes just *misure* or *misura*), which refers to a law introduced in 1982 aimed at the recovery of illicitly gained assets by means of seizure of confiscation (Treccani, n. d.c; United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, 2014), plays a pivotal role in the TV series and also in the history of the Anti-Mafia. In the English subtitles, the term "preventive measures" (sometimes "measure" if singular) was used consistently, much in line with legal translation (see La Spina, 2014; Calamunci et al., 2021), although the translation "prevention measures" is sometimes used in other legal documents.

Numerically speaking, on one occurrence the Italian *misure di prevenzione* was not translated at all in the English version because it was uttered by a TV news anchor and the entire utterance, which was neither clear nor loud enough, was not subtitled in the English version.

The first group of words worth further analysis was related to a practice typical of the fight against the Mafia, and it is of pivotal importance for plot development. The words were: the noun *bene* (often plural, *beni*), combined with the verbs *confiscare* and *sequestrare*, the adjectives *confiscato* (and its declension in gender and number) and *sequestrato* (and its declension in gender and number), and the nouns *confisca* and *sequestro*. These words were used throughout the six episodes of the series as they describe a phenomenon typical of the Anti-Mafia.

Usually, when a person is suspected of having something to do with the Mafia, but there is no evidence against them or it will take time to produce evidence, it is possible for a judge to use the aforementioned preventive measures (*misure di prevenzione*) to stop said person from using everything that has value (homes, financial assets, businesses, etc.). Around Sicily, and around Italy in general, it is now common to see businesses that once belonged to the Mafia being confiscated and given to new organisations to repurpose them and give them a new life. Outside or inside these businesses, there is usually a sign reading "*Bene confiscato alla mafia*" (asset confiscated from the Mafia, my translation). The literal translation provided is not widely used as the few official translations tend to specify which asset (property, land, etc.) is being confiscated (Cascone et al., 2019; Rakopoulos, 2014). This is just another example of how translating legal words and sentences, outside the courtroom and not for the purpose of legal translation, can be challenging.

Quantitative Analysis

In the corpus under scrutiny, the quantitative analysis shows the repetition of occurrences of the

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word *bene* (singular) or *beni* (plural) 23 times in the Italian subtitles throughout the six episodes; whereas, in the English subtitles, the words "asset", "assets", "good" (as a noun), and "goods" were used 29 times throughout the six episodes. The increase in the number of occurrences in the English subtitles was not directly related to an increase by six occurrences (e.g., in Episode 1, in the Italian subtitles, there were 1 *bene* and 9 *beni* as opposed to 1 "goods" and 13 "assets" in the English subtitles; in Episode 2, in the Italian subtitles there were 2 *bene* and 7 *beni* as opposed to 2 "goods" and 5 "assets" in the English subtitles).

The majority of the occurrences of the words *bene* and *beni* were translated with their direct translations "good(s)" or "asset(s)" interchangeably as synonyms; however, a preference for "asset(s)" should be noted. One of the subtitling constraints to bear in mind when choosing between one word and its closest synonym is the maximum number of characters per line and maximum number of lines per subtitle allowed by the different guidelines. Netflix guidelines (2022) allows up to 42 characters per line (cpl) and this can be considered a generous character limit as it usually ranges between 37 and 42 for other VOD platforms and broadcasters. Linguistic economy would suggest choosing one over another based on their character count; however, the words "goods" and "assets" have a very similar number of characters, so this rule does not apply. Unlike written translation, in audiovisual translation, space and time constraints dictated by the modality may impact the choice of words when it comes to synonyms. Similarly to subtitling, where the compliance with the maximum number of characters per line is paramount, in dubbing, a word may be chosen over its closest synonym in order to match the lip-sync as close as possible to the original. Unfortunately, the TV series Vendetta has not been dubbed into English, but rather Voiced-Over, therefore an analysis of this theory is not possible at this stage.

The nouns "good(s)" and "asset(s)" usually collocate with the verbs *confiscare* and *sequestrare*, and

the past participle *confiscato* (and its declension in gender and number) and *sequestrato* (and its declension in gender and number). In the Italian dialogues, the verbs *confiscare* and *sequestrare* are sometimes used interchangeably, although their exact meaning is different because *confiscare* means "to take and give to the fiscal system" (Treccani, n. d.b), whereas *sequestrare* means "to take possession of by legal process" (Treccani, n. d.d). Once again, should the purpose of the translation be of legal nature and should the translations of the verb *confiscare* and *sequestrare* be as accurate as possible for the purposes of court room translations, the English translation of the verbs in question—the most direct translations of which are "to confiscate" and "to seize", respectively—should be chosen carefully. Even the protagonists of the TV series used the verbs interchangeably, and the translation of the subtitles from Italian into English reflected this randomness of terms. However, from a quantitative point of view, the words relating to the verb *confiscare* (verb *confiscare*, past participle *confiscato* and its declension in gender and number, and the noun *confisca*) were used 14 times throughout the six episodes, as opposed to their direct translations, which were used 10 times. The words relating to the verb *sequestrare* (verb *sequestrare*, past participle *sequestrato* and its declension in gender and number, and the noun *sequestro*) were used 14 times throughout the six episodes, as opposed to their direct translations, which were used 23 times.

The Translation of Mafia and Mafioso

The group of words that generated the most interest for the quantitative and qualitative analysis of this contribution comprised the noun *mafia* (spelt in lowercase and uppercase, more on this later) and the adjective *mafioso* with its declension in gender and number (*mafiosi* masculine plural, *mafiosa* feminine singular, *mafiose* feminine plural). In the Italian subtitles, the word *mafia* was repeated 74 times, whereas the word "Mafia" was repeated 124 times in the English subtitles, where the word "Mafia" was always capitalised (apart

from one instance in Episode 1) following the spelling and capitalisation of dictionaries and usually introduced by the article "the": "Definition of the Mafia: a secret criminal organization in Italy" (Merriam-Webster, n. d.) and "The Mafia is a criminal organization that makes money illegally, especially by threatening people and dealing in drugs" (Collins Dictionary, n. d.).

The strategy used for the translation of the word *mafia* in the English subtitles was mainly direct translation, apart from a few instances in which even the original Italian dialogues were somewhat intricate, although understandable for an Italian audience. Therefore, different translation strategies were adopted, as shown in Table 3.

In the Italian dialogues, the word *mafioso* (masculine singular) was used as an adjective as well as an adjectival noun. In the English subtitles, the word *mafioso* was used only as a noun due to the lack of the adjective in the English language. In Italian, the masculine plural of the word is *mafiosi* and it is used as an adjective as well as an adjectival noun; in English, the (masculine) plural is "mafiosos" or sometimes *mafiosi* if used as a loan. The feminine adjective, both singular and plural—*mafiosa* and *mafiose*, respectively—was used in the Italian dialogues in agreement with feminine nouns and not

in reference to female members of the Mafia. This was merely a coincidence as the adjective can, in fact, be used as an adjectival noun in reference to a female member of the Mafia (*Lei è mafiosa*. [She is a Mafia member]). From a quantitative point of view, the adjective *mafioso* with its declension in gender and number was used 62 times in the Italian subtitles; whereas, in the English subtitles it is possible to read "mafioso" 6 times and the plural "mafiosos" 16 times, not in italics as it is present in the Merriam-Webster dictionary (n. d.). Table 4 shows a variety of translation strategies employed for the translation of the adjective and adjectival noun *mafioso* in the English subtitles. The translation of the word in the English subtitles required a deeper analysis of the strategies employed.

Similarly, the adjective *mafiosi*, masculine plural, was used as an adjective and as an adjectival noun in the Italian dialogues and translated with "mafiosos" in the English subtitles. By adding the inflectional suffix -s at the end of the word "mafioso", the noun substitutes de facto the Italian *mafiosi*. In the English subtitles, the word was not italicised as it is the plural of a word found in the Merriam-Webster dictionary. Odd translations, or rather translations that deserved a deeper analysis, are listed in Table 5, in which it is possible to see the Italian dialogues, the back translation, the English subtitles, and the strategy adopted.

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Table 3 Translation Strategies of the Word Mafia

Italian Subtitles	English Back Translation	English Subtitles	Strategy
La mafia di Riina era una mafia troppo stragista.	Riina's mafia was too much of a massacre mafia.	Riina's Mafia committed many massacres.	Omission (of Repetition)
[…] e poi ci arrestano con l'accusa di mafia.	[…] and then they arrest us on mafia charges.	They arrested us under suspicion of being Mafia members	(Addition as a form of) Explicitation
Sono stati colpiti dall'accusa di mafia.	They were charged with mafia.	They were accused of being Mafia members.	(Addition as a form of) Explicitation
[…] e che è stato, appunto, condannato definitivamente per mafia.	[…] and who was, in fact, definitively convicted of mafia.	and who was ultimately convicted of Mafia association.	(Addition as a form of) Explicitation
[…] il cui nonno era stato condannato per mafia.	[…] whose grandfather had been convicted of mafia charges.	[…] whose grandfather had been convicted of Mafia association.	(Addition as a form of) Explicitation

Table 4 Translation Strategies of the Word Mafioso

Italian Subtitles	English Back Translation	English Subtitles	Strategy
Una pallottola non costa niente a un mafioso.	A bullet costs a mafioso nothing.	One bullet doesn't cost the Mafia anything.	Transposition
[...] a combattere il fenomeno mafioso in Sicilia.	[...] to combat the mafia phenomenon in Sicily.	[...] to fighting the Mafia in Sicily.	Transposition
[...] lo strapotere mafioso della famiglia dei Vitale.	[...] the mafia dominance of the Vitale family.	[...] to the Vitale family's excessive power.	Omission
il potere mafioso sul territorio di Partinico,	mafia power in the Partinico area,	the Mafia's power in Partinico,	Direct Translation / Transposition
Il rischio per il mafioso è accettabile.	The risk for the mafioso is acceptable.	The risk is acceptable to the Mafia.	Transposition
[perché l'estorsione è il tipico reato] delle associazioni criminali di stampo mafioso.	[because extortion is the typical crime] of mafia-type criminal associations.	because extortion is a typical Mafia crime.	Substitution
Generalmente, il mafioso è omertoso.	Generally, the mafioso is omertous.	In general, mafiosos abide by the code of silence.	Explicitation

Table 5 Translation Strategies of the Word Mafiosi

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Italian Subtitles	English Back Translation	English Subtitles	Strategy
[È amico] di mafiosi.	[He is friends] with mafiosi.	[He's a friend] of the Mafia.	Transposition
"Qui siamo al punto giusto per cercare di fargli il culo ai mafiosi".	"Here we are at the right place to try to kick the mafia's ass."	"We're in the right place to try to fuck the Mafia"	Transposition
[...] che i mafiosi esercitano sui commercianti locali.	[...] that mafiosi exert on local traders.	[...] that the Mafia is putting on local business owners.	Transposition
[...] foraggiare quello che sono i mafiosi,	[...] foraging what mafiosi are,	[...] funding the Mafia,	Explicitation
Ora, pensate se questa legge diceva: "Togliamo i beni ai mafiosi, [...]	Now, think if this law said: 'Let's take the assets away from the mafia, [...]	Now, imagine if this law said, "We take assets from the Mafia, [...]	Transposition
[...] per potere perseguire su questo terreno i presunti mafiosi.	[...] in order to prosecute alleged mafiosi on this ground.	[...] to be able to prosecute the alleged Mafia members.	Transposition
Ovviamente non solo per i mafiosi e i malavitosi, [...]	Obviously not only for mafiosi and gangsters, [...].	and not just the Mafia and criminals, [...]	Transposition
la gestione dei beni sequestrati ai mafiosi	the management of assets seized from mafiosi	the management of the seized Mafia assets	Transposition
[...] e che avevano come riferimento dei mafiosi locali.	[...] and that they had local mafiosi as their reference.	[...] and had connections with the local Mafia.	Substitution
Mi accusa che io ho incontrato dei mafiosi a New York.	He accuses me of meeting mafiosi in New York.	He accuses me of having met with Mafia members in New York.	Transposition
Sono tanti a voler far tacere Maniaci, mafiosi e non mafiosi.	There are many who want to silence Maniaci, mafiosi and non-mafiosi alike.	Many people want to shut Pino Maniaci up, and not just mafiosos.	Omission
Io i mafiosi li conosco.	I know mafiosi.	I know the Mafia.	Transposition

In the corpus analysed, the adjective in its feminine declension, *mafiosa* and *mafiose* (singular and plural, respectively) were used in the Italian dialogues with feminine nouns, for gender accordance mainly; they were rarely used as adjectival nouns in reference to female members of the Mafia. Therefore, in the English subtitles the translator resorted to different translation strategies, mostly transposition, to bypass the lack of gendered adjectives in the English language.

Examples of translations and strategies can be found in Table 6 as well.

It is interesting to see how the declension of gender and number of the Italian adjective "mafioso" was rendered in the English translated subtitles mainly with the transposition strategy. The lack of gendered adjectives in the English language was compensated by a clever restructuring of the syntax, highlighting the functionality and the pragmatism of the English subtitles. The Netflix

Table 6 Translation Strategies of the Word *Mafiosa* and *Mafiose*

Italian Subtitles	English Back Translation	English Subtitles	Strategy
Partinico è un paese con una discreta densità mafiosa.	Partinico is a town with a fair Mafia density.	Partinico is a town with a lot of mafiosos.	Explicitation
[...] nell'ambito di un'inchiesta sulla cosca mafiosa di Borgetto.	[...] as part of an investigation into the Borgetto Mafia gang.	[...] as part of an inquiry into the Mafia in Borgetto.	Explicitation
[...] di "partecipazione ad un'associazione mafiosa".	[...] of 'participation in a Mafia association'.	[...] of "participating in a Mafia group."	Explicitation
Perché appena si dice "famiglia" si intende la famiglia mafiosa!	Because as soon as you say 'family' you mean the Mafia family!	You say "family" and people think of the Mafia family.	Explicitation
[...] una minaccia di natura mafiosa.	[...] a threat of a Mafia nature.	[...] a threat from the Mafia.	Transposition
Borgetto, sciolto il comune per infiltrazioni mafiose.	Borgetto, municipality dissolved for Mafia infiltration.	The Borgetto Council has been disbanded due to Mafia infiltration.	Direct Translation

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English subtitles help the foreign audience understand a complex phenomenon, such as that of the Mafia and the Anti-Mafia, and allow the foreign audience to appreciate an audiovisual product that showcases real-life characters in the form of a docuseries about the Mafia and the Anti-Mafia of Palermo, and Sicily in general.

Conclusions

In conclusion, this article's goal was to demonstrate how the translation of the word *mafia*, the word *antimafia* and other Mafia-related words are being translated from Italian into English against the background of audiovisual translation as opposed to the realm of legal translation. This was possible through the analysis of the Italian subtitles (which are a verbatim transcription of the

original dialogues) and the English subtitles of the Netflix TV series *Vendetta: guerra nell'antimafia*, a modern series narrating the complicated yet engaging world of the Anti-Mafia focussing on the story of the two main characters, Pino Maniaci and Silvana Saguto.

Legal translation aids legal teams understand the facts and the documents written in foreign languages, whilst audiovisual translation is employed, in this case, for the purpose of entertainment (and possibly educational purposes). Furthermore, the constraints of audiovisual translation play an important role in the word choice process (for instance, in subtitling as much as in dubbing, it is not possible to use footnotes explaining a certain concept which is clear or understandable in one language but unclear or complicated in the other language).

The quantitative analysis aimed to demonstrate how and how much certain translations were employed and how systematic the choice of words and the consistency were in relation to the repetitions of the same term. The discrepancies and the anomalies were examined using a subsequent qualitative analysis, which took into consideration many factors: Italian is a Romance language whereas English is a Germanic language; Italian and English follow different rules when it comes to the declension of adjectives and nouns; Italian has gendered adjectives and nouns, whereas English does not; Italian is a language mainly spoken in Italy whereas English is the official language in many countries; each English speaking country has or might have a different legal system; and so on and so forth.

From the results shown in the last section of this article, it is both possible to understand and safe to assume that the translation of the Mafia, the Anti-Mafia, and Mafia-related terms for the purpose of audiovisual translation through subtitling is a simpler and less convoluted form of translation aimed at conveying complex concepts in a simpler way. This type of translation aims at "striking a balance between accuracy and accessibility" (Sandrelli, 2020, p. 318) in the sense that it aims at making it more accessible for the general public interested in learning more about one important social phenomenon that has characterised the modern history of Sicily, and Italy in general.

It is worth mentioning that, at the time this article was written, the Sicilian TV broadcaster Telejato, at the centre of the story of *Vendetta: guerra nell'antimafia* was shut down (Scafiddi, 2022). After 33 years of militancy, Telejato was forced to close its doors because the broadcaster was not admitted to the list of local broadcasters that can transmit with the so-called second-generation digital terrestrial television broadcasting, although it keeps on living in its web and social media format.

Streaming services and productions, such as Netflix, Amazon, Disney+ to name a few, are bringing more and more projects to Sicily (Vivarelli, 2022). As a consequence, more and more audiovisual content will be translated from Italian into English and other languages, which is a fresh change from the Anglocentric Hollywood market. These films, documentaries, and TV series will certainly focus on the lives of great people who live or have lived in Sicily, but they will also (certainly) tell other stories of the Mafia and the Anti-Mafia hence the need for more research on the translation of the Mafia, the Anti-Mafia, and other Mafia-related terms from Italian into English and into other languages with the modalities of audiovisual translation.

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