

The (Re)Presentation of Organised Crime in Gomorrah – The Series: A Corpus-Based Approach to Cross-Cultural Identity Construction

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Abstract

The following contribution focuses on the identity characterisation of specific ‘voices’ in TV series using a corpus-based approach (Bednarek 2010, 2011) applied to the analysis of the characters of the Italian TV drama Gomorrah – The Series (Season 1). If “dialogue lines are explicitly designed to reveal characters” (Kozloff 2000: 44), analysing how they are cross-culturally translated into another language and reshaped in new formats can highlight given identity traits that producers want to underline about specific characters. In the case of Gomorrah, this is particularly interesting since the identities created for the TV series are intrinsically imbued with its local criminal organisation setting, and the processes of bringing the series across its local borders can reshape and enrich the way characters are presented in a new setting.

Based on a previous pilot study (Fruttaldo 2015), the following contribution adopts a corpus-based approach (Baker 2006, 2014; McEnery et al. 2006; McEnery/Hardie 2012) to analyse the voices of the clan Savastano in the TV series. This allowed for highlighting specific differences in the way Don Pietro, Donna Imma and Gennaro Savastano use their linguistic resources to build, convey and construe the identity of a Camorra boss. The lexicogrammatical status of each character, underlined carrying out a keyword analysis of the original subtitles of the TV series and compared to the keyword analysis of the English subtitles, helped trace the linguistic profile of these dominant personas, unveiling some peculiar characteristics of these characters, which seem to be enhanced in the translation process, highlighting some of their concerns or personality traits (Culpeper 2014), or reshaping their entire identity.

Keywords

identity construction, TV series, TV dialogue, Gomorrah, corpus-based, discourse analysis