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### SESSION 13. MULTILINGUALISM AND LANGUAGE VARIATION

"Language variation and identity construction: the translation of multilingualism in  
"Killing Eve""

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VIDEO PRESENTATION: This video presentation is not available in open access, but  
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#### ABSTRACT

Multilingualism and, more generally, language variation have become the most common tools for conveying information about characters in telecinematic fiction. Even though variety in films and TV series can be 'cliché' and the use of specific languages is related to 'established preconceived notions' (Hodson 2014: 62, quoting Kozloff 2000 and Lippi-Green 2012), their adoption is an immediate way to characterise a fictional or represented person. In short, filmmakers often choose to employ language variation in their dialogues because it is a valuable 'shortcut' to sketching out the character's socio-cultural background, even if this leads directly into stereotyping (ibid.). Stereotyping is triggered by language variety even more overtly in those cases where characters switch to other languages or other dialects for specific purposes when, for example, eliciting humour, providing social commentary or imitating someone (Ranzato et al. 2017). As regards the translation of films containing parts of dialogue that include foreign languages, accents and dialects; recent scholarly studies in the AVT field in Italy have pointed out that while the tendency for multilingualism seems to be its – at least partial – preservation (Minutella 2012, De Bonis 2014, Parini 2015), omission is undoubtedly the most common option in the case of L1 varieties (Chiaro 2008).

Building on the approaches and results of previous studies on the topic (O’Sullivan 2011, Díaz Cintas 2011, De Higes Andino 2014, but also more recently Beseghi 2017), this paper is aimed at exploring the translation strategies adopted by a team of translators to render the multilingualism of the BBC TV series *Killing Eve* (Gentle and Waller-Bridge, 2018-present) for the Italian dubbing. In particular, the analysis will focus on the character of Villanelle (Jodie Comer), a psychopath assassin who is particularly skilled on the linguistic level. Throughout all three seasons, in fact, she shows she can speak not only her native Russian fluently, but also English, French, Italian and German. Also, she often switches her Russian-accented English to other varieties of English, which she manages to master to construct disguised identities (e.g. RP, Scottish, Australian, Californian and New York accents).

The methodology of this paper is mostly empirical and descriptive; it will include linguistic qualitative data which will be analysed to identify the function of the language variety in the text, following the list provided in the website *Dialects in Audiovisuals*, a project coordinated by Irene Ranzato and to which the author of this paper is a contributor (Ranzato et al. 2017). As a second step, an overview of the translation strategies aimed at rendering (or neutralising) these functions in the Italian dubbed version will be provided. The outcomes of this study, which is –at the moment of the submission of this abstract– in its early stage of gathering data, are expected to confirm the general tendency of preservation of multilingualism and omission of accents. However, several attempts at compensating this omission through prosody, voice quality and the use of foreign languages, even when they are not found in the original text, will show that AVT professionals are perhaps becoming more concerned with maintaining at least the functions that these varieties bear in the ST.

**Keywords:** multilingualism, language variation, audiovisual dialogue, audiovisual translation, *Killing Eve*.

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