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Appraising Dubbed Conversation
Systemic Functional Insights into the Construal of Naturalness in Translated Film Dialogue*

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Abstract. The ‘authenticity’ of fictional dialogue is widely held to play a pivotal role in shaping the audience’s perception of the quality of a film. Yet the factors that account for the authenticity of both original and dubbed film conversation remain largely under-researched. This paper begins by outlining key contributions from the fields of stylistics, film studies and corpus-based translation studies that have enhanced our understanding of the specific nature and dynamics of fictional dialogue and its translation. A common assumption that underpins these approaches is that the success of the narrative and characterization-enhancing resources deployed in a film is contingent on the build-up of interpersonal alignments through a combination of prefabricated orality and spontaneous-sounding conversation. And yet both film theory and dubbing studies have so far focused on phenomena that take place within a single turn-at-talk and hence neglected the study of the sequential dimension of film dialogue. Drawing on the analysis of four scenes of the English and Spanish versions of Twelve Angry Men (Sidney Lumet, 1957), this article attempts to demonstrate the advantages of Martin’s (2000a) systemic functional modelling of the exchange, especially his notion of ‘telos’. Ultimately, this paper assesses the advantages of a heightened awareness of the sequential configuration of dialogue among dubbing practitioners.

Dialogue is a textual phenomenon with which translators of audiovisual texts, novels and drama are well acquainted. However, the specific demands posed by the translation of fictional interaction as a form of communication in its own right remain relatively unexplored, even though the ‘quality’ of dialogue (in the sense of being authentic, realistic or truthful) is commonly assumed to

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determine the reception enjoyed by certain films.

This paper aims to widen current perspectives on the specific nature and dynamics of fictional dialogue and its translation. I take as my point of departure the need to shift the focus of research on dubbed dialogue away from its traditional concerns: “synchronization, social and geographic variation, transfer errors [and] a few morphosyntactic and lexical phenomena of the spoken language in dubbed film” (Pavesi 2004). Drawing on a systemic functional model of conversation analysis (Martin 2000a), I propose to investigate how interactional naturalness is sequentially construed. I will argue that the authenticity of dialogue is jointly accomplished by the fictional characters through a combination of prefabricated orality and spontaneous-sounding interaction over extended stretches of conversation. The aim is to explore how translators handle the dialectics between stilted and spontaneous-sounding episodes of dialogue and to ascertain the impact of their mediation on the authenticity of translated conversation vis-à-vis its original counterpart.

1. Film dialogue as an idiosyncratic communicative event

The relationship between spontaneous conversation and fictional dialogue is one that stylisticians interested in the reception of novels and theatre plays have been exploring for decades (Abercrombie 1959, Page 1973). Burton’s (1980) research on the dialogue of modern English drama represents one of the most systematic and insightful studies of the relationship between ‘naturally occurring discourse’ and ‘artefactual discourse’. As opposed to spontaneous interaction, artefactual discourse is conceived and composed by playwrights as a means of staging interaction between the characters inhabiting the fictional world of the play (Burton 1980:10-25). Following her data-driven contrastive analysis of both dialogue types, Burton concludes that spontaneous dialogue differs substantially from fictional speech. She further argues that dramatists model their work on their practical experience of naturally occurring dialogue, thus producing distillations or condensations of the ‘real thing’. In more recent years, Burton’s argument has been echoed by other specialists. In some cases (Simpson 1998), researchers have examined everyday discourse as a benchmark against which fiction readers and theatre audiences measure the acceptability of the artefactual dialogue with which they are presented. In other cases, the emphasis has been placed mainly on the study of those “socially contextualised ‘authenticating conventions’” (Herman 1995:26) that dramatists exploit to manipulate audiences into believing that what they hear is real.

All these studies share a common denominator. They aim to ascertain how consumers of drama or fiction come to perceive fictional dialogue as real or, at least, naturalistic, despite lacking many of the features of spontaneous conversation. Ultimately, specialists postulate a reciprocal relationship between drama and naturally occurring dialogue, if only for the purposes of scholarly
enquiry. Artefactual discourse is thus held to serve as evidence for investigating and formalizing hypotheses on features of spontaneous language in authentic interaction. It should be noted, however, that this approach has not enjoyed a warm reception outside the field of spoken discourse analysis and has done little to break the scholarly stalemate around the dichotomy under scrutiny.¹

The incorporation of sound and hence speech in the overall conglomerate of film semiotics a century ago extended the relevance of research into the essence of fictional dialogue to yet another art form. Supported by an unprecedented series of technological innovations, speech introduced acoustically transmitted linguistic and paralinguistic signs into a medium that had so far relied primarily on visual expression. The ensuing need to weave this new meaning-making resource into the overall semiotic fabric of the film did not come trouble-free and has remained problematic to this day. The arrival of speech challenged a commonly-held assumption by pioneering directors in the film industry at the time, namely that cinema was the most universal and independent art form insofar as it relied on visuals as the vehicle to represent actions and emotions (Izard 1992, Chaves 2000). Unsurprisingly, spoken dialogue was soon accused of curtailing expressive freedom. Film dialogue brought into sharp focus the ‘here and now’ of the linguistic, geographical and cultural context surrounding the action narrated in the film. In doing so, the potentially universal appeal of film semiotics became dramatically restricted. In general terms, initial attempts to incorporate speech contributed to cementing the perception among classical film theorists that “dialogue was a distraction from the camera’s ability to capture the natural world … and encouraged too much attention to character psychology” (Kozloff 2000:7), thus detracting from the viewers’ enjoyment of cinema as a gestalt of stimuli. Even today, when film dialogue enjoys mainstream acceptance, its status as a filmic signifier and its contribution to the semiotic circuitry of films have not been accounted for as systematically as the visibility of fictional conversation would seem to deserve. This is probably best illustrated by the conflicting views held on this matter by the different agents involved in the production, assessment and reception of films.

Examination of any random sample of film reviews reveals just how inextricable the relationship between the ‘authenticity’ of fictional conversation and the credibility of the narrated action is assumed to be by critics and film-goers (Pavesi 2004).² And yet, authenticity as we know it is a relatively

¹ Kozloff (2000:19), a film scholar specialized in the study of dialogue, warns her readers that “linguists who use film dialogue as accurate case studies of everyday conversation are operating on mistaken assumptions”.

² Some directors would seem to owe a considerable part of their success to their mastery of credible dialogue writing. Woody Allen, to give one example, is held to have a “natural talent for dialogue. In [his films] people don’t just recite lines from the script. More often than not, scenes feel like they’re filmed from real life. The thing about realistic dialogue is
new concept. Over the last century film conversation has gradually broken free of the theatre dialogue mould, shifting toward a more naturalistic style that mimics the haphazardness of real conversation and enables the viewers’ identification with the fictional world (Delabastita 1989, Chaume 2001). Ultimately, as reported by Pavesi, the reception of films belonging to certain genres has been widely assumed to rely to some extent on the presence of “frequent stretches of conversation that perform no specific narrative function and whose only objective is to reproduce everyday situations and events” (2005a:32; my translation) and hence add to the realism of the scene in question.

Interestingly, this equation between realistic dialogue and viewers’ identification with the filmic action does not appear to hold much water with film scholars or even filmmakers, for whom film dialogue abides by a set of conventions of its own. Berliner (1999), for instance, argues that film talk is intended to enable effective, economic and streamlined communication around well-defined topics. To this end, it often exploits the implicit meaning which certain lines have come to connote due to their recurring presence within specific film genres. As other specialists from film studies corroborate (Bloom 2006):

> [i]n film, words are used for their implicit rather than explicit meaning. What is important in dialogue is the meaning being conveyed in the circumstances of the scene, not the literal meaning of the words used. What is left unsaid can be as important as what is said … Your dialogue will be stronger if you consciously try to avoid writing on-the-nose dialogue. Underwrite rather than overwrite.

Underwriting would seem to characterize artefactual dialogue across individual art forms, including dramatic scripts, film conversation and interaction-based passages of novels. This writing strategy relies on condensation, implicitness and pragmatic resonance, that is the capacity of certain words/sentences to convey certain meanings and communicative intentions that are not linguistically realized on the surface of language. The rationale for this word-streamlining agenda has been claimed to derive from the double-layeredness of fictional dialogue. According to Vanoye (1985, quoted in Remael 2004:107), artefactual conversation is organized both along a ‘horizontal’ and a ‘vertical’ dimension. The former term denotes the interaction between the fictional characters, whilst the latter is based on the realization that fictional characters are ultimately addressing the audience/viewers/readers of the play, film or novel, respectively. There are obvious reasons why film dialogue should partake of the double-layeredness of fictional dialogue. However, it is equally important at this stage that it’s got to be imperfect. In life, you cut sentences, you jump from a thought to another, you interrupt … And most of Allen’s films are dialogue, and it always remains enjoyable, and often hilarious” (Montreal Film Journal 1998-2006).
to examine other contributions to the debate by specialists in film dialogue. In broad terms, it is these scholars’ contention that medium-related constraints shape the interplay between the horizontal and vertical dimensions of film dialogue in a distinctive manner.

As far as the horizontal level of organization is concerned, there is little difference between film dialogue and other forms of artefactual interaction. As explained by Remael, the writing of filmic dialogue is the very last step in a process that begins with the production of a film script that features “a tight dramatic structure harking back to that of the well-made play, consisting of an Exposition, Development, Climax and Denouement” (2003:227). Dialogue is fleshed out to advance the story only when this structural blueprint of the macro-level narrative pattern is already in place. At the horizontal level, interaction is thus structured by standard conversation-management devices – including conversational maxims, exchange sequences, discourse markers, pragmatic connectors as well as non-verbal and prosodic variables (Vanoye 1985) – within the boundaries of the structural dramatic conventions.

It is, however, at the vertical level that differences between film dialogue and other forms of artefactual conversation arise. Over the years, the Hollywood classical cinematic apparatus has imposed a highly sophisticated set of editing conventions and montage practices that aim to disguise the technological process required for the very construction of films. The upshot is a ‘self-effacing’ (Nichols 1991:165) presentational style based on the “simultaneous signification of camerawork/mise-en-scène/editing that serves to select, emphasize, undercut, distract, reveal, or deform the filmgoer’s interpretation” of the narrative (Chotia 1979:8). In so doing, films manage to keep audience members absorbed in the fiction and “maintain an unambiguous, efficient, purposeful and uninterrupted flow of narrative information” (Berliner 1999:6). Economy and resonance, then, are the outcome of the subordination of dialogue to the exigencies of the plot. Their combination represents the most efficient strategy for masking the fabricated nature of filmic narratives and engaging the viewers in the alternate reality they are watching.  

3 Several attempts have been made to explore the implications of these highly sophisticated editing practices for the work of audiovisual translators. Minh-ha (1992) contends that the constraints operating in mainstream subtitling are not just the result of medium-related considerations and the ensuing need to achieve maximum synchrony between spoken dialogue and subtitles. In Minh-ha’s terms, ‘suture subtitling’ represents an attempt to “collapse, in subtitling, the activities of reading, hearing, and seeing into one single activity, as if they were all the same” and hence “to naturalize a dominant, hierarchically unified worldview” (quoted in Nornes 1999:18). A similar line of argument is pursued by Mowitt (2004) with regard to lip-synchronized dubbing. Drawing on his thorough analysis of a number of documents produced by key figures in the Hollywood establishment in the 1940s, Mowitt claims that the development of edited, synchronous film soundtracks (from which all traces of film work have been effaced) has served to impose the linear narrative patterns of classical Hollywood cinema on other cultures and hamper the penetration of conventions from.
As dictated by the Hollywood industry standards, the linear dramatic structure that films share with theatre plays is adapted to the idiosyncrasy of this medium and mapped out in the form of alternative structural units – such as shots, sequences, scenes, etc. – and the wide range of transitions between the latter. Film dialogue needs to be carefully written in order to highlight narrative transitions to maximum dramatic effect and exploit the contribution of film-specific meaning-making modes – as well as the interaction between the latter – to the overall semiotics of this form of art.\(^4\)

Scholarly efforts to gain insight into film dialogue, then, are at best fragmented. In general, there is one major conclusion emerging from the literature review that I am now bringing to a close. Film dialogue is best understood as the product of the idiosyncratic interaction between the vertical and horizontal levels of cinematic texts, which differentiates it from any other form of artefactual interaction. Weaving together different strands of scholarship, I propose to account for that idiosyncrasy as follows. Horizontal communication – that is the succession of cycles of conversational exchanges within the constitutive stages of the overarching narrative structure – is further shaped by the constraints that the mainstream cinema apparatus places on its vertical counterpart. Effectively, editing and montage practices serve as a filter that selects and frames the way fictional conversation between characters is presented to its ultimate addressee, the film audience.

Acknowledging the mutually shaping influence between the horizontal and vertical dimensions of film conversation has an obvious concomitant: the need to problematize the extent to which condensation and understatement apply also in film dialogue writing. My literature survey suggests that economic, efficiency-oriented dialogue may be suitable in parts of the film to accomplish specific narrative goals. However, other authors insist that conversational activity may occasionally challenge film dialogue conventions and become more ‘imperfect’ in order to perform alternative narrative functions. Ultimately, film dialogue would seem to rely on the combination of two strands of realism. On the one hand, there is the ‘contrived realism’ that arises from the self-effacing conventions of mainstream film-making. On the other hand, there is the ‘real realism’ that aims to reveal “the similarity between the other world cinematic traditions into the mainstream market.\(^4\)

\(^4\) In recent years, literature has emerged that attempts to formalize the interrelation between different modes of meaning within multimodal texts, the most comprehensive and systematic of which is Baldry and Thibault (2006). Previous studies have also addressed multimodal semiotics in connection with translation. As part of their attempt to account for the impact of the multimodal nature of films on translators’ subtitling strategies, Taylor (2003) and Badry and Taylor (2004) propose a multimodal transcription framework that articulates the following meaning-making variables: camera position, visual perspective, visual distance, visual salience, visual collocation, colours, coding orientation, kinesic action and film soundtrack.
The act of creating art and the act of living” (Berliner 1999:9). The lack of joint cross-disciplinary work between film specialists interested in dialogue and conversation analysts means, however, that a thorough understanding of the interplay between both forms of realism within film dialogue is still missing. As Kozzlof acknowledges, “so little serious work has been done on the subject that we do not yet have the tools for determining why one instance of dialogue is brilliantly successful and another leaden-footed” (2000:29).

1.1 Translated film dialogue

Almost a quarter of a century ago, Luyken et al. (1991:165) expressed their concern at the “very limited theoretical and scholarly knowledge” that was then available on the specific linguistic implications of the translation process in audiovisual media. In recent years, the available body of research on dubbing as a specific form of translation practice has grown exponentially, and yet Luyken et al.’s assessment would still seem relevant (Fawcett 1996:65-69, Chaume 2002:1-3). Film dialogue may be the raw material with which audiovisual translators work, but dubbing scholars have not succeeded in casting a more systematic light on the essence of fictional interaction. Likewise, they have failed to formalize the most efficient strategies for transferring key features of the original simulated dialogue into the target language.

It is widely assumed among audiovisual translation scholars that film dialogue is a hybrid of written and spoken language (Gambier and Suomela-Salmi 1994:247, Herbst 1997:293). Chaume (2001, 2004a) has recently attempted to offer a deeper insight into the status of film dialogue by reformulating the hybridity thesis from a relativist stance. From this viewpoint, film conversation is a form of interaction located somewhere along a cline whose endpoints are ‘maximum’ and ‘minimum preparedness’. Accordingly, film dialogue may be best described as a form of prefabricated orality that features more or fewer markers of written language. When working with conversation, translators should aim to place their translated dialogue at a comparable location along the maximum-minimum preparedness cline in the target language. Of note is the fact that Chaume’s work is informed by prevalent practices in the Spanish audiovisual translation industry. In this specific market, the style sheets that commissioners of dubbing-oriented translations impose on the professionals would seem to have contributed to the consolidation of written-sounding, prefabricated orality as the norm. In many cases, translators are explicitly urged to refrain from reproducing the distinctive features of spontaneous spoken discourse in the target language, as these may detract from the audience’s enjoyment and disrupt the viewer’s concentration in doing so. Overall, it is Chaume’s opinion (2004:185; my translation) that
the translator must be acquainted with and competent in the basics of audiovisual discourse orality and strike the right balance between the latter and the normative conventions that clients expect from them in a specific historical, political or cultural context.

The relativism underlying Chaume’s stance permeates other recent approaches to the issue. Pavesi’s (2005b) treatment of the fictional/spontaneous dichotomy, for instance, highlights the role that context plays in determining whether the dialogue in a given scene gravitates toward the realism pole or the fictional endpoint. Genre, culture and evolving cinematic conventions are some of the variables that determine the degree of realism to be aimed at on a case-by-case basis. Despite sharing some important premises, there is some discrepancy between Chaume’s and Pavesi’s relativist stances insofar as the latter’s work is informed by professional practices in the Italian (rather than Spanish) industry. Pavesi’s work suggests that the need to expunge certain features of spontaneous spoken discourse from the target text does not apply in the Italian market.

Whilst the essence of dubbed dialogue remains elusive when it comes to formulating a definition, there also seems to be a somewhat tacit consensus that it is easy to recognize samples of dubbed prefabricated orality (as opposed to original fictional dialogue). In fact, the realization that “people are able to tell quite easily whether they are listening to the soundtrack of an original or a dubbed film” (Herbst 1997:304) has been central to the emergence of an increasingly widespread research paradigm in dubbing studies. Echoing developments in other fields of translation studies, research on dubbing practices has shifted its emphasis from the relationship between source and target text to the role and position of the target text as relatively autonomous from the source text and as part of a dynamic ‘system’, where the internal rearrangement of meaning within the new text becomes paramount. Growing acknowledgement of the independence of the target text, informed by a polysystem-driven agenda, has ultimately served to launch a new strand in the study of spoken language in dubbing.

Chaume (2004b) is an obvious example of this shift. His study of how discourse markers are rendered into the translated dialogue is based on a traditional small-scale qualitative comparison between the source and target texts. However, in establishing the lower degree of internal coherence of the

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5 Its emphasis on the transfer of this particular item is representative of the two major concerns of dubbing scholarship during the last two decades, namely the impact of (i) synchronization-related constraints on the translator’s choices, and (ii) the transfer of linguistic variation markers and other pragmatically consequential items – e.g. discourse markers, swear words, puns on words, etc. – on the overall perception of the audiovisual text by target language viewers (Pavesi 2004).
target text – resulting from the omission of a substantial number of discourse markers from the source dialogue – Chaume has an original suggestion to make, namely that dubbed dialogue “is already accepted to be less coherent than other genres, the audience accepts deficiencies in cohesion and coherence in audiovisual translation as part of their inherent characteristics” (ibid.:854). Chaume’s stance is representative of a growing attempt to understand the inherent features of ‘audiovisual translationese’ (Chaume 2004a:175), a phenomenon which is said to exist in films dubbed into a variety of languages, rather than only into Italian or Spanish.6

The range of alleged ‘universals’ of dubbed dialogue formulated in recent years has been competently summarized by Pavesi (2004), whose seminal corpus-based work represents the ultimate methodological advance in the application of the polysystem-driven paradigm. Pavesi’s research (2004, 2005a, 2005b) builds on the relatively wide consensus that “dubbed languages are placed closer to a ‘neutral’ uniform written standard, thus failing to portrait sociolinguistic variation” (2004:1) and undermining the orality of the target text. Her search for “regularities of linguistic behaviour in translated film texts” is equated with a “search for translational norms”, which “may yield repeated and systematic patterns of selected features shared by translated products belonging to the same genre, for specific language pairs, for given periods of time” (2005b). To this end, Pavesi identifies a number of linguistic items and structures – including connectors, personal pronouns and marked word order patterns – whose occurrence in the source and/or target text is indicative of the degree of standardization and/or orality in the latter. Having argued in detail the rationale for establishing systematic comparisons between contemporary dubbed Italian, spontaneous spoken Italian and original simulated spoken Italian, Pavesi proceeds to measure and compare the frequency of her chosen search items across the three corpora. It is difficult to do justice to the intricacies of this corpus-based analysis in such a brief summary, but the following general conclusions (Pavesi 2004) are worth quoting at length:

Translators seem to give priority to structural phenomena in their doubtless attempt to simulate spoken language, although selective mimesis occurs, whereby some features are systematically chosen as privileged carriers of orality from which the impression of spontaneity is derived. For other features, translated texts exhibit different behaviours from conversation, which cannot all be accounted for as shifts in level of formality or moves towards the written form of the target language. Rather, these features may have to do with different factors such as film discourse structure and norms emerging both in simulated spoken Italian and film translation.

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6 For a full account of this notion and the wide range of terms that have been proposed to denote it, see Romero-Fresco (2006) and Pavesi (2005a:28).
Corpus-based studies of dubbed language are currently being undertaken in other languages such as Spanish (Romero-Fresco 2006). Findings available to date support both the existence of specific language features used in the dubbed target texts to convey orality and the limited influence of the source text on the configuration of emerging target text norms.

Phenomena so far investigated by both analysts of interlingual transfers and specialists in corpus-driven research include single words, multi-word linguistic items and syntactic patterns at clause level. Drawing on Herbst (1997), one may argue that this is partly due to the traditional obsession of dubbing practitioners with synchronization and the ensuing ‘sentence-by-sentence’ approach to equivalence between the source and target texts. In Herbst’s view, this compartmentalization of the source text during translation accounts for most of the so-called norms of dubbed language, including its overall tendency towards neutralization and standardization. Furthermore, adherence to the constraints of micro-equivalence fostered by the industry is detrimental to the achievement of macro-equivalence beyond the boundaries of a single turn (Herbst 1997:305):

> the quality of dubbed texts could be improved considerably by taking a pragmatic approach to dubbing, in which the sense of a scene, and the naturalness and appropriateness of the translated dialogue … are rated quite highly within the equivalence criteria.

Dubbing practitioners are currently considered to overwhelmingly abide by the constraints of micro-, intra-turn equivalence, making local decisions that are not necessarily informed by the overall picture of what is going on outside the turn at hand. Similar views have been expressed by subtitling scholars concerned about the growing neutralization of the interpersonal dimension of subtitled dialogue and the insufficient attention paid by current subtitling training programmes to the dynamics of dialogue. Remael (2004:105) argues that

> a greater focus on film genre would help reduce subtitling’s homogenizing trend, and a better insight into the narrative function of film dialogue would help subtitlers make the right decision when they have to choose between rendering propositional content or dialogue’s oral and interactional features.

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7 A similar view is expressed by Pavesi (2005a:59), who argues that film dialogue lends itself to a fragmented treatment on the part of the translator. According to Pavesi, the boundaries of typical translation units tend to correlate with turn-transition points.
In this new perspective, the narrative-steering role of film dialogue is seen to rely heavily on the sequential organization of interaction beyond the limits of individual turns. Dubbed dialogue is no longer held to be constrained exclusively by the pursuit of synchronization – with the ensuing compartmentalized (i.e. turn-by-turn) processing of the source text. What is linguistically encoded in the dialogue may work differently and be perceived as more natural or appropriate on the basis of the narrative function that dialogue fulfils over a whole shot and, more widely, the role that each local narrative function performs within the overarching narrative structure of the scene. For obvious reasons, research on the sequential configuration of film dialogue as a narrative and characterization-enhancing resource has to be informed by (i) the translator’s awareness of the overall trajectory of the interaction, and (ii) the impact that the units of filmic syntax (shots, scenes, etc.) have on the definition of that trajectory. Overall, advocating a more pragmatic approach to dubbing (in Herbst’s terms) requires a heavier weighting of the vertical dimension of film dialogue in dubbing studies.

Traditional scholarship on dubbed dialogue has been restricted to studying the horizontal dimension of artefactual spoken discourse. Dubbing scholarship has tended to mirror the emphasis that general studies on dialogue have placed on linguistic phenomena spanning up to one turn-at-talk or the relationship between immediately contiguous turns. As a result, it has tended to overlook the mechanisms that enable the achievement of naturalness and appropriateness over a whole scene. As I explained in the previous section, it is the vertical dimension that enables characters to deploy their interpersonal agendas via the combination of prefabricated orality and spontaneous-sounding conversation. They interact with each other over extended stretches of dialogue to develop as dramatic personas within the overall narrative pattern of the film. In neglecting the vertical dimension of filmic dialogue, dubbing scholars have remained unaware of the impact of narrative conventions on each film genre and failed to investigate how the former shape the viewer’s reception of the fictional interaction. Unsurprisingly, the study of the interface between the horizontal and vertical dimensions in translated conversation has been equally neglected. In sum, there is currently no readily identifiable theoretical framework that can make sense of potential mismatches between source texts and their dubbed versions with regard to the naturalness of the translated dialogue vis-à-vis its original counterpart.

The question then arises as to whether it is worth engendering a heightened awareness among professionals of the need to develop a different approach to the translation of dialogue fragments shaped by ‘contrived realism’ (i.e.

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8 Remael (2000) distinguishes between three main narrative functions of film dialogue: ‘structuring dialogue’, ‘interactional dialogue’ and ‘narrative-informative dialogue’. To the best of my knowledge, Remael’s classification has not been applied so far to dubbing studies.
condensed and resonant dialogue) and ‘real realism’ (in other words, hap-
hazard and mimetic dialogue) that co-exist within a film. The assumptions
that underlie my question can be formulated as follows:

- artefactual or prefabricated interaction constitutes a meaning-making
  resource that characters manage jointly and locally in interacting with
  each other (horizontal dimension of dialogue), in accordance with
  the narrative priorities that shape their interaction with the audience
  at any given point (vertical dimension of dialogue);

- artefactual or prefabricated interaction weaves together two different
  types of dialogue. On the one hand, there is the narrative-steering
  condensed dialogue, and on the other we find the spontaneous-like
  “verbal wall-paper” (Kozloff 2000:47) that contributes to the overall
  characterization of roles and atmosphere, as required by the relevant
  genre conventions.

In the following section I set out to address this question by drawing on a
single case study. My aim is to gain a systematic insight into the dialectics
between the horizontal and vertical dimensions of the target dialogue vis-à-vis
its source counterpart.

2. Interpersonal naturalness in translated dialogue: rationale and
data

In an attempt to corroborate the need for an enhanced awareness of inter-
personal dynamics when translating dialogue, I will focus on the translation
(English into Spanish) of the first four scenes of 12 Angry Men, directed by
Sidney Lumet and released in 1957. Following the trial of an uneducated
Puerto Rican teenager charged with the murder of his father, the jury of ‘twelve
angry men’ retire to a room with a mandate to come up with a unanimous
verdict. After the first ballot, which sees the juror played by Henry Fonda
voting not guilty, the jury in this seemingly open-and-shut case gets caught
in a spiral of ever-increasing tension. 12 Angry Men was chosen for this case
study on the basis of three major criteria:

- Dialogue as a narrative resource. The importance of dialogue as
  a verbal narrative resource is paramount in this film. Except for 5
  minutes of footage at the beginning and at the end, the 90 remaining
  minutes of the film were shot in real-time and revolve around the
deliberations that take place inside the jury room. No other filmic nar-

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9 No published script was available while undertaking this research. The four scenes chosen
correspond to the fragments identified as scenes 1–4 in the DVD version I used for this
study. Overall, they correspond to the first 24 minutes of footage of the film.
ative resources such as flashbacks, captions or voice-overs assigned to extra- or intradiegetic narrators were deployed in this “dialogue-laden” production (Dirks 1996).

- **Dialogue and characterization.** The interactive build-up of the dialogue throughout the film is subservient to its underlying agenda. Symbolically, the deliberations aim to question the alleged infallibility of the American judicial system and challenge the jurors’ capacity to make an informed and objective decision on the issues they are asked to assess. *12 Angry Men* – a “master-class in projecting the subtle details of character” (Cannon 1997) – exposes the twelve men’s prejudices and biases, combining phases of small talk with episodes of more or less tense negotiations and even open verbal dispute around the circumstances of the case. The film thus draws on the interpersonal dimension of spoken interaction for the purposes of characterization. As the film advances, the characters’ individual stances on the case under scrutiny sway between the two possible verdicts. Their “heated discussions, the formation of alliances, the frequent re-evaluation and changing of opinions, votes and certainties, and the revelation of personal experiences, insults and outbursts” (Dirks 1996) help to flesh out their personalities and backgrounds for the benefit of the viewer. In sum, the realignment of the characters’ stances in the horizontal dimension of the interaction is exploited in order to influence the viewer’s interpretation of the events, thus realizing the vertical dimension of the interaction.

- **Dialogue and visual resources.** In filmic texts, dialogue interweaves with resources of visual expression to perform its narrative role. As acknowledged by different reviewers of *12 Angry Men*, the filmic syntax and the arrangement of visual perspectives on the unfolding action underscore the character-building role of the dialogue throughout the deliberations. The opening of the discussions is shot with a wide-angled perspective of the room. Viewers are thus placed in the position of “objective onlookers”: they are free to monitor how individual jurors “are reacting while listening to the speaker and sometimes watching him to see if he’s ready to fold or explode” (Lorefice 2001). As deliberations unfold, the cameras start narrowing down their focus, accentuating the throbbing pulse of the ceiling fan and even “picking out individual beads of sweat” (Cannon 1997). Smith (2006:47) describes this technique as follows:

If you feel that the jury room is getting more and more confining as the movie progresses, that’s testimony to the success of what Lumet called his “lens plot”. By shifting the camera angle and varying the focal length of the lenses, he subtly creates the impression that the walls and ceiling are actually closing in on his characters.
Episodes of social and institutional interaction – i.e. haphazard and streamlined dialogue, respectively – are deployed concurrently along the horizontal and vertical dimensions of film dialogue. At the horizontal level, jurors explore one another’s identities through spontaneous-sounding conversation (‘real realism’). This attempted naturalness contrasts and alternates with the artificiality that characterizes the purpose-driven interaction unfolding at the vertical level (‘contrived realism’). In this latter domain, the jurors are not individuals but fictional characters embodying (in the eyes of the viewer) conflicting systems of values and attitudes in life that spark successive clashes and allow for renewed empathy, all of which is punctuated by shifts in visual perspective. Whilst the character-building role of vertical dialogue represents the major narrative force in the film, horizontal dialogue secures the viewer’s involvement in the story. The naturalness of filmic dialogue resides precisely in the capacity of the writer (and hence the translator) to choose between the interpersonal dynamics of conversational artificiality and real-life mimesis, as required by mainstream narrative conventions, to advance the story.

Choices, however, may be skewed from the start by prevailing professional trends. As explained in the previous section, the importance attached to synchronization in dubbing practice has resulted in a sentence-by-sentence approach to equivalence between the source and target texts on the part of translators. This compartmentalized processing of the source texts has been held responsible for non-matching interactional dynamics in the target text (Herbst 1997). In our own terms, translators prioritize the transfer of the conversational dynamics at the horizontal level and may inadvertently neglect the full interactive potential of each contribution at the vertical level. In naturally occurring conversation, turns are not only determined by what was said before, but also contextualize upcoming talk, thus serving to put specific interactional stances across to the viewer. Consider the following example from my data:

**Example 1** (Scene 2, turns 57-60)
Participants: Juror A and Juror B. Contextual information: Soon after the end

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10 Similar claims have been made in connection with subtitling practice, where concern for clarity has “on occasion led to the production of subtitles with a sequential structure of their own, one that almost disregards the interactive build-up of the source text dialogue” (Remael 2003:225).

11 Transcriptions of the source and target text turns (numbered in the left-hand side column) are my own. Each speaker’s turn at talk may consist of more than one move, the smallest unit of interaction with a communicative function of its own. Within a single turn speakers may, for instance, reply to a preceding question (move 1) and then proceed to pose one of their own (move 2). In my examples, the constitutive moves of each turn are placed in separate lines, in order to facilitate the reader’s appraisal of the scope of structural shifts that arise in the translation.

12 The twelve members of the jury featuring in the film are anonymous characters. Letters
of the hearing, the jurors are now in a room waiting to begin the deliberations. They all interact in pairs or small groups while waiting for the proceedings to start.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Turn</th>
<th>Juror A</th>
<th>Juror B</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>58</td>
<td>B: Oh, I don’t know.</td>
<td>B: Pues no sé. [I don’t know]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>It was pretty interesting.</td>
<td>Ha sido interesante. [It has been interesting]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>59</td>
<td>A: Yeah? I almost fell asleep.</td>
<td>A: Yo casi me duermo. [I almost fell asleep]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>60</td>
<td>B: I mean, I’ve never been on a jury before.</td>
<td>B: Es…es…es la primera vez que formo parte de un jurado. [It’s…it’s…it’s the first time I am part of a jury].</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The sample transcribed in Example 1 above comes from one of the episodes of ‘social’ or spontaneous-sounding dialogue with which the jurors’ purpose-driven interaction (i.e. their deliberations) is interspersed. In turn 59, Juror A produces a false initiating move (‘yeah?’). This is obviously not intended to elicit a response from Juror B; it serves more like a pretext for Juror A to feign interest in Juror B’s opinion before proceeding to deliver his own.13 The following turn (60) represents an important crux point for Juror B: aware of the conflicting assessments that he and Juror A have delivered in the second halves of turns 58 and 59 (‘interesting’ versus ‘boring’, respectively), he needs to decide how to project the conversation forward. In the source language dialogue, Juror B’s turn 60 opts to reactivate the discourse expectations set by the false initiation in turn 59. In other words, he opts to deal with Juror A’s false initiation as a genuine question and justify his previous appraisal of the criminal hearing as interesting (turn 58). Overall, this serves to flesh up

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13 From a strictly structural point of view, this false or weak initiation could also be considered as a follow-up move (see section 3.1 below for a definition) closing up the exchange. From an interactional standpoint, this false elicitation (admittedly, very representative of the interactional dominance that Juror A displays throughout the deliberations) comes across more as a ‘challenging move’ (Ventola 1987) that prompts a reformulation of Juror B’s assessment.
his character in these early stages of the film and to frame his future contributions to the deliberations. The dynamics of the target language dialogue fail, however, to replicate this interactional build-up. On the one hand, the translator irons out the false initiation in turn 59 and formulates turn 60 as a purely informative statement in the target text. This structural shift tidies up (in the sense of streamlining) the dynamics of the interaction, undermines the sequential coherence of Juror’s B contribution and neutralizes the natural-sounding quality of the source text.

In some cases, the translator’s mediation brings about changes between the relations that characters develop with each other through conversation in the source language and the social relations that these same characters develop in the target dialogue. In this paper, I propose to label such changes as ‘interpersonal shifts’. As illustrated by Example 1, interpersonal shifts may surface in the target text when a one-to-one correspondence between structural units (conversational turns), communicative units (moves) and syntactic units (sentences) does not obtain. In dubbing, the pursuit of phonetic and other forms of synchrony often leads to omissions and rearrangements of the linguistically encoded information that exceed what would be normally accepted in other fields of translation practice. In the example under scrutiny, the removal of an apparently unimportant item – at least from a semantic point of view (the false initiating move in turn 59) – simplifies the discursive potential of the multi-tiered conflation of meanings that turn 59 represents in the source text.

Drawing on the data and the rationale outlined in this section, the remainder of this paper will address the following questions:

1. How is interactional naturalness construed sequentially in film dialogue, i.e. beyond the boundaries of a single turn?
2. What sort of shifts do naturalness-building resources undergo in dubbing?
3. Is it feasible to identify differences along the horizontal/vertical dimensions in the realization of conversational naturalness and outline a rationale for the prevalence of specific patterns depending on the narrative function of the dialogue that prevails at any given point? If so, are these mirrored in the target language?
4. Does the compartmentalized approach to the source text fostered by dubbing affect the portrayal of the interpersonal dimension of the original dialogue?

In the next section, I intend to articulate an approach to the study of naturalness and a more systematic account of the shift between the two dimensions of conversation that constitute naturalness, namely interactional artificiality.

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14 In his review of the film, Dirks (1996) describes this character as a “wimpy, balding bank clerk/teller easily persuaded, meek, hesitant, [who] goes along with the majority [and] eagerly offers cough drops to other men during tense times of argument”.
and conversational realism. Two contentions are worth formulating in this respect. First, conversational naturalness originates from the interplay between interactional haphazardness and prefabricated orality. Second, naturalness is interactionally construed and, therefore, exceeds the boundaries of individual turns produced by a single character. The ability to track down the sequential construction of dialogue on a moment-by-moment basis is therefore a requirement which our search for a theoretical framework must prioritize.

3. Interweaving interactional artificiality and conversational realism: Martin’s modelling of the exchange

Conversation has been studied in a wide range of disciplines. Whilst each model has built its own descriptive apparatus around variables of particular relevance to its own research agenda, a number of notions seem to recur across individual approaches. Despite certain differences in definitions and scope, structural units such as ‘turns’ and ‘sequences’ are fairly ubiquitous and, to a certain extent, self-explanatory. However, it is the exchange that has managed to attract most of the analyst’s attention. In its most common manifestation, an exchange consists of a series of conversational turns delivered by two interactants. Its internal structure and length depends on the speakers’ degree of cooperation towards the fulfilment of the purpose of the exchange. As I will explain in more detail later in this section, the two main purposes of an exchange are (i) request for/proffer of information, and (ii) securing/making a commitment for the performance of a certain action. Among the wide range of interpretative frameworks which provide useful tools for the study of the exchange, I propose to draw on Martin’s systemic functional model (Martin 1992, 2000a) for a number of reasons:

- Systemic functional linguistics (as developed, among others, by Halliday 1978, 1985) regards texts as “(inter)actions that occur in a cultural and situational context, by modelling them as cultural types of unfolding social action – genre – which have features appropriate to their current social situation – register” (Ventola and Hofinger 2004:194). In turn, register is configured by the field (the topic of the conversation), tenor (the relations between the interactants) and mode (the means deployed to enable the communication) characterizing each conversational encounter. This conceptualization of linguistic semiosis is obviously relevant to the systematic study of conversational naturalness in films. The prominence of the notion of ‘genre’ in film studies attests to the importance of culture as the substratum of

15 Although these definitions are restricted to the domain of spoken texts, they also apply to the study of written language.
cinematic fiction. Experienced viewers acquire the capacity to entertain expectations in line with generic conventions: social situations involving a given community and set in a specific period tend to be depicted and narrated along fairly uniform lines. Genres are then realized through the ‘here-and-now’ of the plot, where characters enact specific registers determined by the scriptwriters’ choices in terms of field, tenor and mode. Going back to the first of the two contentions formulated at the end of the previous section (namely, that conversational naturalness originates from the interplay between interactional haphazardness and prefabricated orality), register allows for ‘interactional haphazardness’ against the backdrop of the ‘prefabricated orality’ favoured by generic stability.

- Being a social semiotic system of signs, language has evolved to fulfil social functions or ‘metafunctions’ (ideational, interpersonal and textual) that loosely correlate with the three dimensions of register listed above. As Martin explains, “ideational resources construe the world as we think we see it; interpersonal resources construe social relations as we enact them; and textual resources map these construals onto one another as digestible bites of information” (2000a:19). In relation to the second of the above contentions (namely, that naturalness is interactionally construed and that it exceeds the boundaries of individual turns produced by a single character), this view of language use as a process of ongoing ‘construal’ is particularly conducive to the study of the generative potential of talk in interaction and, hence, to addressing the sequential accomplishment of naturalness in conversation.

Martin’s (2000a) modelling of the exchange aims to advance prior research on the structure of interaction, shifting the focus of attention away from the structural realization of conversational dynamics onto the co-construction of interpersonal meaning through talk. In his attempt to articulate the interpersonal substratum of conversation more coherently, Martin builds on the strengths of previous frameworks, exploring the extent to which they complement one another. In the remainder of this section I examine how Martin’s modelling of the exchange creatively appropriates such insights before outlining the extent of his own contribution.

3.1. An overview of traditional descriptions of the exchange

The simplest account of the exchange, the ‘adjacency pair’, was first put forward by ethnomethodologists (Sacks et al. 1974, Sacks 1992). In the most

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16 Although systemic functional theories have traditionally focused mainly on the study of language, they have also been expanded to account for other non-linguistic kinds of semiosis, including the semiotic metafunctions of film (Baldry and Thibault 2006).
recurrent form of this account, exchanges are two-move structures whose initiating and responding constituents are mapped onto two distinct speech functions, e.g. question and response, respectively. In Martin’s (2000a) terms, those frameworks that define exchanges as adjacency pairs are only concerned with the ‘serial motif’ or structure of this conversational unit. From a serial perspective, an exchange is a “chaining structure involving interdependent turns at talk” (ibid.:23) which are bound together by their mutual adjacency.

Other scholarly traditions have based their descriptions on alternative structural motifs. Discourse analysts Coulthard and Brazil (1981) and systemicists (Halliday 1985), for instance, agree that human interaction is ultimately based on the exchange of goods (including information) or services (including actions). Berry (1981) constitutes one of the most influential attempts to describe conversation as a series of ‘knowledge’- and ‘action-orientated exchanges’:

- **Knowledge-orientated exchanges** revolve around K1. This is the conversational move where information is provided by the speaker who holds it, i.e. the ‘primary knower’.
- **Action-orientated exchanges** are organized around A1. In this move, one of the speakers (‘primary actor’) performs a service or commits him/herself to do so.

K1 or A1 may occur either in isolation or in combination with other conversational turns. In the first scenario, primary knowers/actors disclose the information or act of their own accord. In the second scenario, the primary knowers/actors are asked to inform or prompted to act by the ‘secondary knowers/actors’, respectively. In other words, K1 and A1 may follow the secondary knower’s elicitation of information (K2) or the secondary actor’s request for a given action (A2).

The [K2/A2 ^ K1/A1] series may incorporate additional conversational moves. ‘Delaying moves’ (dK1 or dA1) are deployed by the primary knower/actor to suspend the proffer of information or the performance of an action until the secondary knower agrees to receive the information or the secondary actor gives the go-ahead to the proposed action. ‘Acknowledging moves’ (K2f or A2f) allow the secondary knower or actor to acknowledge the information provided (K1) or the action performed (A1), respectively.

These four types of move are subject to a number of sequential constraints. A1/K1 has to be realized obligatorily in each exchange, while the remaining optional moves “can be identified by their position in sequence relative to K1 [or A1] and to each other” (Berry 1981:128) as per the following formula: dA/K1 ^ A/K2 ^ A/K1 ^ A/K2f (where the underlining denotes compulsory occurrence). Following Ventola (1987) and Martin’s (1992) adaptation of this formalism, it is also accepted that the completion of exchanges can be interrupted
either when one of the interactants seeks clarification or challenges the unfolding of the exchange with a ‘clarification-seeking’ or a ‘challenging’ move.

Since no move-type can occur twice within the same exchange, any instance of recurrence automatically reinstates the full structural potential of a new exchange. In other words, recurrence (i) causes the exchange formula to loop back to its first slot, and (ii) signals the existence of an exchange boundary between the two realizations of the recurring elements. In Example 2 below, horizontal lines are used to indicate exchange boundaries:

**Example 2** (Scene 1, turns 16-24)
Participants: Jurors C, D, E and Court clerk (F). Contextual information: Shortly after the end of the hearing, the jurors are now in a room waiting to begin the deliberations. They all interact in pairs or small groups while waiting for the proceedings to start. The court clerk goes around calling roster.

[A ‘actor’; K ‘knower’; 1 ‘primary’; 2 ‘secondary’; d ‘delayed’; f ‘follow-up’; cl ‘clarification-seeking move’; Rcl ‘response to clarification-seeking move’.]

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Exchange 1</th>
<th>Exchange 1’</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>16 C:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hey, ho ho… (pause)</td>
<td>Eh, oh oh… (pause)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wanna piece of gum?</td>
<td>¿Un chicle?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>dA1</td>
<td>[Some chewing gum?]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17 D:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No, thanks.</td>
<td>No, gracias.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A2</td>
<td>[No, thank you]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>[(A1 ‘giving chewing gum’) is aborted]</td>
<td>[(A1 ‘giving chewing gum’) is aborted]</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Exchange 2</th>
<th>Exchange 2’</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>18 E:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>This thing…isn’t moving…</td>
<td>Vaya por Dios…</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A2</td>
<td>[Oh God…]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19 C:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wait, I’ll give you a hand.</td>
<td>Le echaré una mano.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A1</td>
<td>[I’ll give you a hand]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>[Non verbal: C helps E to close the window]</td>
<td>[Non verbal: C helps E to close the window]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exchange 3</td>
<td>Exchange 3’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------</td>
<td>-------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>You know something?</td>
<td>Acertaron. [They were right]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>[No response from E]</td>
<td>[E:] ¿Qué? [What?]</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Exchange 4</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I called the weather Bureau this morning. This is going to be the hottest day of the year.</td>
<td>Esta mañana llamé a la radio. Hoy va a ser el día más caluroso del año. [This morning I phone the radio. Today is going to be the hottest day of the year].</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20 E: I bet.</td>
<td>Puede. [Maybe]</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Exchange 5</th>
<th>Exchange 4’</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>You’d think that at least they’d air-condition this place.</td>
<td>Aquí ya podían poner aire acondicionado. [The least they could do is to air-condition this place]</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Exchange 6</th>
<th>Exchange 5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>What is your name, sir?</td>
<td>¿Cuál es su nombre, señor? [What is your name, sir?].</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>F:</th>
<th>K2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Oh, it’s that one [Non verbal: he points at a name in the list]…yeah.</td>
<td>Ah sí [Non verbal: he points at a name in the list]…éste. [Oh yeah, this one].</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>F:</th>
<th>K2f</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Thank you very much.</td>
<td>Bien, muchas gracias. [Fine, thank you]</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note that the interactional structure of the sequence (exchange 3-exchange 4) in the source text undergoes changes when rendered into the target language (i.e. they are merged into exchange 3), which has implications with regard to characterization. In the source text, Juror E comes across as reluctant to take Juror C’s cue (‘you know something?’) and engage in conversation. In
the target language, however, Juror E is granted a turn that does not exist in
the English original text (‘¿qué?’) and which he uses to request clarification
on Juror C’s abrupt initiation (‘Acertaron’). In the Spanish version, Juror E
therefore comes across as almost inquisitive, which clashes not only with the
interactional dynamics of the original, but also with the actor’s non-verbal
demeanour in this shot and his overall passive attitude throughout the ensu-
ing deliberations.

According to Martin (2000a), models like Berry’s bring into sharp relief the
‘orbital’ and ‘periodic’ motifs that underpin every conversational exchange:

- The **orbital motif** or structure is based on the notions of ‘nucleus’
  and ‘satellite moves’. Being a compulsory move, A1/K1 acts effec-
  tively as the **nucleus** of the exchange, around which the other moves
  orbit as “dependent satellites” (Martin 2000b:23). The nucleus
  concludes the transfer of information or the securing of a commit-
  ment to perform the action to which every exchange is oriented. The
  gravity that the nucleus exerts over its satellite moves thus defines
  the boundaries of the exchange and, in doing so, determines the
  periodicity of conversation.

- The **periodic motif** or structure defines the scope and the external
  boundaries of the exchange as a formal unit. The domain or ground
  covered by any given exchange is shaped by the gravity that the
  nucleus exerts over its satellites: they all contribute to the same
  purpose inasmuch as they all revolve around the same nucleus. The
  periodical nature of conversation is thus based on the initiation of
  a new exchange as soon as the previous one ends. For Martin, the
  ‘periodic motif’ therefore maps out the exchange as a wave of infor-
  mation “with all but one missing piece of information provided in
  the opening move” (2000:24). Once A1/K1 has been realized – and
  hence, the only missing element of information has been delivered or
  an action has been agreed – the wave of information breaks, subsides,
  and a new exchange/wave is initiated.

From Martin’s point of view, the serial motif (defined earlier as a chaining
structure and relating to the fact that moves follow one another/are adjacent
to each other) and the orbital motif defined above correlate with the deploy-
ment of ideational resources in interaction. The constitutive moves of the
exchange are held together because they contribute to advancing the issue
under discussion or secure the action under negotiation within that conver-
sational unit. The periodic motif correlates with the realization of the textual
metafunction: the possibility of fragmenting conversation in terms of waves of
information enables the analyst to delimit the boundaries of each exchange for
the purposes of analysis. However, none of these motifs caters explicitly for the deployment of interpersonal resources – a claim that I will now proceed to illustrate in more detail.

Consider Exchanges 4, 5 and 6 of the source text (left column) in Example 2 above. In all three cases, the missing information is supplied or provided in a conventional fashion. Similarly, Exchanges 1 and 2 negotiate the (non)performance of an action in such a way that the purpose of the exchange is efficiently culminated. In all these cases, the serial, orbital and periodical structures map onto one another in what Martin would regard as instances of “harmonious mapping” of motifs (2000a:25). The unfolding of conversation, however, is not always that neat, as illustrated by Example 3 below.

**Example 3** (Scene 3, turns 43-46)
Participants: All jurors gathered around the table. Juror G – the only one who voted ‘not guilty’ in the first ballot – has already set out to persuade his fellow jurors of the need to be more critical with the evidence presented to them. Juror H in this excerpt, who challenges Juror G’s attempt, will turn out to be one of the last in the group to change his vote.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Exchange 1</th>
<th>Exchange 1’</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>43 G:</td>
<td>K1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Look there was one alleged eyewitness to this killing. Someone else claims he heard the killing, says the boy run out afterwards and there was circumstantial evidence. But actually, these two witnesses were the entire case for the prosecution.</td>
<td>Veamos, hay un supuesto testigo ocular del crimen. Otro parece ser que oyó algo y vio salir al chico y hay otras muchas pruebas circunstanciales. Sin embargo, esos dos testigos son la base de la acusación. [Let’s see, there is one alleged eyewitness to the murder. Another seems to have heard something and says he saw the boy leave and there is plenty more circumstantial evidence. However, those two witnesses are the basis for the prosecution]</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
In Exchanges 2 and 3 (source text) of Example 3, Juror B’s challenging moves (turns 44 and 46) initiate a new adjacency pair instead of concluding the ones that Juror G had already initiated in turns 43 and 45, respectively. In fact, one may even argue that the second of these challenging moves represents a challenge to a challenge, rather than an initiation in its own right.

In turn 44, Juror H challenges the trajectory that Juror G projected at the beginning of Exchange 2 (‘Supposing they are wrong . . . ’). In turn 45, however, Juror G chooses to ignore this challenge. Instead, he opts to reinstate the same interactional expectations that he set before, only this time he upgrades his tentative speculation to a direct question (‘could they be wrong?’). In this fragment, new waves of information rise before their predecessors have waned; in other words, periodicity falls out of step with serialization and orbital dynamics in what Martin calls a “dissonant mapping” of motifs (2000a:26).

The dissonant mapping of motifs in Exchanges 2 and 3 turns out to be consequential from a translational point of view. Whilst Exchange 2’ (target text) loosely reproduces the frictional dynamics of its source text counterpart, Exchange 3’ represents a major shift with respect to the original dissonant configuration. Juror H’s challenge in turn 46 is ironed out and Exchanges 3 and 4 (source text) are then merged into a canonical question-answer pair. The

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Exchange 2</th>
<th>Exchange 2’</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>44 H:</td>
<td>K1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supposing they are wrong…</td>
<td>¿Y si están equivocados? [What if they are wrong?]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What do you mean supposing they are wrong? What’s the point of having witnesses at all?</td>
<td>¿Por qué iban a estar equivocados? ¿De qué sirven entonces los testigos? [Why would they be wrong? What are witnesses for then?]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exchange 3</td>
<td>Exchange 3’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>45 G:</td>
<td>K2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Could they be wrong?</td>
<td>¿Pueden equivocarse? [Can they be wrong?]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>46 H:</td>
<td>ch</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What are you trying to say?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exchange 4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>K1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>These people sat on the stand under oath.</td>
<td>Esas personas han declarado bajo juramento. [Those people were under oath]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>K1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
upshot of this strategy is that the translator harmonizes the conflation of the serial, orbital and periodic tiers in this exchange.

Martin contends that most occurrences of dissonant mappings of the serial, orbital and periodic motifs arise from interactants’ engagement in the construal of their relations with one another through conversation. Securing certain alignments and accomplishing specific conversational purposes may lead interactants to interrupt the predicted closure of unfolding conversational patterns – with a view, for instance, to opposing the trajectory that the previous interactant has shaped, as in Example 3 above. In doing so, they are effectively projecting the culmination of that very same goal over a sequence of exchanges, rather than confining the pursuit to a single unit. The insight that serial, orbital and periodic motifs may be ultimately subordinated to the realization of interpersonal meaning in interaction led Martin to articulate a more detailed model of the role that this metafunction plays in conversation.

3.2.  Articulating the realization of interpersonal meaning in conversation

Staying true to his systemic functional roots, Martin tackles the dynamic relationship that holds between the serial, orbital and periodic structures of the exchange and the ‘purpose’ of the latter by positing a fourth tier: the prosodic motif. The rationale for this fourth structure is explained as follows (Martin 2000a:24):

Once an exchange is initiated, we know how it is expected to finish – what it’s [sic] goal is. It is on this basis that we recognize the tracking and challenging moves … as interruptions … Because it maps over several moves this teleological aspect of the exchange can be treated as prosodic, establishing the domain throughout which the exchange unfolds.

The prosodic aspect may transcend the periodicity of the exchange as a textual unit – and hence encompass a succession of orbital moves with no discernible nucleus – when the projected culmination of the purpose at hand (or telos) does not obtain. Whilst the realization of ideational and textual metafunctions can always take place within the domain of a single exchange, the construal of interpersonal meaning may occasionally span a whole sequence of exchanges, as required for the telos to resolve successfully. The harmonious mapping of all four motifs is typical of conversational encounters with a clearly defined purpose, such as courtroom interaction or medical interviews. The lack of alignment between the prosodic motif and its three other counterparts tends to happen in everyday contexts, where conversation fulfils a more social function. It may be argued that, although harmonious and dissonant mappings co-exist and complement one another in
any given interactional episode, the conversational settings determine which one dominates overall.

To account for these two major trends in the construal of the prosodic motif (i.e. harmonious and dissonant mappings), Martin posits two sources of telos. To begin with, there is the mood telos (2000a:27), which draws on the homonymous systemic functional notion (Halliday 1985). In interaction, speakers exchange meaning as initiators or responders by choosing the most suitable grammatical structure (declarative, interrogative or imperative) among the range of options that constitute the interpersonal system of mood. In each language, a clear correlation exists between the speech functions of offer, command, statement, question and the grammatical mood structures that realize each function. In English, for instance, an interrogative function realized through a stable grammatical combination of ‘mood’ (‘Could they…’) and ‘residue’ (‘…be wrong?’) is able to set specific interactional expectations. When hearing a question, interactants know that the interactional purpose of the exchange will culminate when A2/K2 has elicited a A1/K1 move. Statements or commands realized by declarative and imperative moves, respectively, launch a different telos: they themselves bring the exchange to a close. The capacity of mood functions to set up interactional expectations is so remarkable that “mood telos can be read as projecting closure for the exchange; it grammaticalizes a culmination” (Martin 2000:30). In conclusion, mood telos paves the way for a harmonious mapping of the four motifs of the exchange, thus representing the prevailing strategy for the construal of interpersonal meaning in purpose-driven interaction.

Drawing on the insight that “emotions, judgements, and values are sites around which negotiation might take place” in conversation (2000b:145), Martin sets out to articulate an alternative source of telos: the ‘appraisal telos’ (Martin 2000a:30). Rather than relying on the deployment of grammatical resources (as is the case with mood telos), appraisal telos is articulated around “semantics of evaluation” or, to put it in more general terms, evaluative lexis. Specifically, appraisal telos is realized through three systems of semantic resources (ibid.:146):

**AFFECT** is the resource deployed for construing emotional responses (‘happiness, sadness, fear, loathing’, etc.), **JUDGEMENT** is deployed for construing moral evaluations of behaviour (‘ethical, deceptive, brave’, etc.); and **APPRECIATION** construes the ‘aesthetic’ quality of semiotic text/processes and natural phenomena (‘remarkable, desirable, harmonious, elegant, innovative’, etc.).

Whilst evaluative lexis from these three systems is found in any form of conversation, evaluation is held to be particularly important in everyday or colloquial conversation. Eggins and Slade (1997), for instance, distinguish two kinds of casual talk. The first type occurs when the interactants are very
close to each other on account of their shared background. Interaction within this group is characterized by a great deal of evaluation in the form of challenges and disagreements. In the second type of colloquial conversation, where the degree of intimacy is lower, the interactants use evaluation to construct agreement. In both cases, evaluative meanings accumulate as interactants construct and negotiate positions of solidarity or difference through talk for lack of a specific interactional end to their encounter. Martin draws on Eggins and Slade’s proposals and endorses the insight that evaluation represents a “major source of propulsion in casual conversation” (2000a:32), whereby speakers encourage their interlocutors to take the floor for an extended turn or, alternatively, to take more turns-at-talk. Appraisal telos is therefore more likely to result in dissonant mappings of the four motifs of the exchange. In other words, evaluation-loaded moves aiming to propel the conversation forward by eliciting interpersonal alignments or securing solidarity are likely to trigger off challenges and disagreements. For all these reasons, appraisal telos constitutes the most common strategy for the construal of interpersonal meaning in spontaneous interaction.

4. Interpersonal meaning in Twelve Angry Men: An extended analysis

The excerpts of conversation transcribed in Examples 1, 2 and 3 above unfold overwhelmingly as series of exchanges whose four structural motifs correlate harmoniously with one another. Overall, these three samples appear to be governed mainly by the mood telos of their constitutive exchanges. The mood structures that manifest themselves either as initiation (in the case of exchanges consisting of at least two moves) or nucleus (in the case of one-move exchanges) succeed in shaping the domain of the exchange effectively and ensure that the resolution of the item under negotiation culminates satisfactorily within the boundaries of the current exchange. As summarized in Table 1 below, a comparison of the number of exchanges projected by mood and appraisal telos (rows 2 and 3, respectively) in both the source and target language dialogue reveals that the former prevails against the latter throughout the four scenes that constitute my data sample. Considering that mood telos fosters harmonious mappings of the four exchange structures, this distribution of frequencies underscores the ‘artificial’ or prefabricated nature of fictional dialogue. The samples of filmic dialogue under scrutiny thus tend to rely more on prototypical structures of interaction that help to advance the narrative without compromising clarity in the presentation of information to the viewer.¹⁷

¹⁷ The purpose-driven nature of deliberations is bound to account, at least partially, for the prevalence of prototypical structures in Twelve Angry Men. Only further research looking at more spontaneous-sounding dialogue will allow us to ascertain the generalizability of

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Scene 1</th>
<th>Scene 2</th>
<th>Scene 3</th>
<th>Scene 4</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Duration</strong></td>
<td>00:00-</td>
<td>04:15-</td>
<td>10:03-</td>
<td>15:11-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>04:14</td>
<td>10:02</td>
<td>15:10</td>
<td>24:40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>SL</td>
<td>TL</td>
<td>SL</td>
<td>TL</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 Overall No. Exchanges</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 No. Exchanges (Mood Telos)</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 No. Exchanges (Appraisal Telos)</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 No. Shifts A → M Telos</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 No. Shifts M → A Telos</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1. Summary of Results in Data Sample (Scenes 1-4 of Twelve Angry Men)

Of particular relevance to the objectives of this study is the fact that the frequency rate of both telos-types is even more skewed towards the deployment of mood resources in the target language, as indicated in row 4 (Table 1). By ‘shift from appraisal to mood telos’ I refer to those instances of translation where an exchange projected by appraisal telos in the source language becomes launched by mood telos in the target language. The set (Exchange 2-Exchange 2’) in Example 3 above illustrates this type of shift. Exchange 2 (English) is initiated by a statement foregrounding judgement – one of the three systems of evaluation resources underpinning appraisal telos (‘Supposing they are wrong…’). Exchange 2’, however, dilutes the evaluating load of the original and opts for a direct question that projects a strong mood-telos (‘¿Y si están equivocados?’ – ‘What if they are wrong?’). Whilst the shifts of telos in this particular direction are relatively frequent in the four scenes (row 4, Table 1), the only instance of a reversed shift – that is, from mood in English to appraisal telos in Spanish (row 5) – occurs in Exchange 3-Exchange 3’ of Example 2 above. In this case, a question (‘You know something?’) projecting a closure that never arrives (in the source language) is rendered into a judgement-loaded this tendency.
statement in the target language (‘Acertaron’ – ‘They were right’).

The higher incidence of mood telos in the target language dialogue suggests a preference for exchange structures that prioritize the transfer of ideational and textual meanings of interaction at the expense of the interpersonal aspects. Compared with the interplay of mood and appraisal telos that obtains in certain parts of the source language dialogue, the sample of translated conversation analyzed here exhibits a greater uniformity throughout. Canonical realizations of the exchange prevail over less predictable patterns of conversational organization present in the source text. The interactional reconfiguration that these shifts bring about – with the ensuing bundling together into a single exchange of moves that constituted (partial) exchanges in their own right in the original – accounts for the overall lower number of exchanges in the target text (row 1 in Table 3). An illustration of these shift-initiated reconfigurations and their interactional effects is provided in Example 1b below, an extension of the sample of conversation that was discussed earlier under Example 1a.

### Example 1b (Scene 2, turns 57-63)

Participants: Juror A and Juror B. Contextual information: Shortly after the end of the hearing, the jurors are now in a room waiting to begin the deliberations. They all interact in pairs or small groups while waiting for the proceedings to start.  

[K ‘knower’; 1 ‘primary’; 2 ‘secondary’; f ‘follow-up’; ch ‘challenge’; rch ‘response to challenge’]

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Exchange 1</th>
<th></th>
<th>Exchange 1’</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>57 A:</td>
<td>How did you like it?</td>
<td>K2</td>
<td>¿Usted qué opina?</td>
<td>K2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>58 B:</td>
<td>Oh, I don’t know.</td>
<td>K1</td>
<td>Pues no sé.</td>
<td>K1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>59 A:</td>
<td>It was pretty interesting.</td>
<td>K1</td>
<td>Ha sido interesante.</td>
<td>K1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Yeah?</td>
<td>ch</td>
<td>[It has been interesting]</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>I almost fell asleep.</td>
<td>K1</td>
<td>Yo casi me duermo.</td>
<td>K1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Example 1b

Example 1b

Example 1b

Example 1b

Example 1b

Example 1b

Example 1b

Example 1b
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Exchange 4</th>
<th>Exchange 4’</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>60 B: I mean, I’ve never been on a jury before.</td>
<td>K1 Es…es…es la primera vez que formo parte de un jurado. [It’s…it’s…it’s the first time I am part of a jury].</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>61 A: No?</td>
<td>K2f Ah…</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exchange 5</td>
<td>Exchange 5’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I’ve sat on many juries. Those lawyers talk and talk and talk, even when it’s an open-and-shut case like this one…</td>
<td>K1 Yo he participado en muchos. Me enferma oir hablar a los abogados, sobre todo en un caso tan claro como este. [I have taken part in many. I feel sick to hear lawyers speak, especially in such a clear case as this is].</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exchange 6</td>
<td>Exchange 6’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Did you ever hear so much talk about nothing?</td>
<td>K2 ¿Había oído alguna vez tanta verborrea? [Had you ever heard so much verbiage?]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>62 B: Well, I guess they are entitled.</td>
<td>K1 ¿No cree que tienen derecho? [Don’t you think they have a right to it?]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>63 A: Sure, they are entitled.</td>
<td>K2f Sí, claro. [Yes, of course]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exchange 7</td>
<td>Exchange 7’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It’s the system, but…</td>
<td>K1 Así es el sistema. [That’s what the system is like]</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
If you ask me, I’d slap those tough kids down before they start any trouble. It’d save a lot of money.

[Pause]

Let’s get started, eh?

This sample of interaction between Jurors A and B takes place prior to the start of deliberations and therefore lacks a clearly defined purpose. Having met in court for the first time, the interactants have no common ground and need to start building one from scratch, taking as a starting point the experiences they have just shared. Juror A kicks off turn 57 with an open question projecting his expectations as to the form and content of Juror B’s next contribution, which are not met by the latter’s under-informative response. Aware of his failure to add to the common ground under construction but uncertain about how to do so, Juror B initiates exchange 2 – clearly projected by an appreciation-based appraisal telos. Juror B is thus able to move the interaction forward while transferring to Juror A the responsibility to steer the trajectory of their upcoming conversation. Juror A reacts with a minimal challenge (turn 59: ‘yeah?’) followed by an appreciation-based move of his own (‘I almost fell asleep’). In doing so, he subtly expresses his disagreement with Juror B’s initial assessment of the case as ‘interesting’ and forces a realignment on the part of Juror B: his lack of experience prevents him from having an informed opinion. In sum: the mood telos projected by Juror A in turn 57 is tentatively resolved by Juror B’s assessment in Exchange 2 but re-opened again with a challenge to secure an alternative one in turn 60, the actual culmination. The Spanish version of this excerpt follows the original dialogue quite closely until the second half of Exchange 2’, where Juror A produces no challenge. As a result, exchanges 2’–4’ come across as a mere juxtaposition of statements which fail to convey to the viewer the sort of sequential build-up found in English: the underlying dominance of Juror A.
Having imposed his stance over his interlocutor’s so far, Juror A perseveres with an upgraded version of his previous strategy: Exchange 6 is initiated with a yes-no evaluative question (‘Did you ever hear so much talk about nothing?’) that restricts Juror B’s options as to the culmination of the strong mood telos. Again, Juror B’s response represents a weak culmination, opting instead to launch an alternative judgement-based appraisal telos (K1, ex. 6) that subtly opposes the expectations set up by the previous question. Facing a second ‘dispreferred’ response to the closure-oriented move he projected, Juror B hesitates as to how to shape the upcoming talk. His next moves (K2f, Ex. 6; K1, Ex. 7) are repetitive, inarticulate and fail to launch any distinct mood. Juror A’s final attempt to secure his interlocutor’s solidarity through an affect-based appraisal telos (K1, Ex. 63) is also unsuccessful (Juror B is unwilling to break the silence that ensues) so he decides to bring the conversation to an end. In the Spanish version of this excerpt, a fully-fledged challenge on the part of Juror B (ch, Ex. 6’) introduces a shift from an appraisal to a mood telos. This move puts both jurors on an equal footing and turns Juror B’s confused reaction in the original dialogue into a series of harmoniously mapped exchanges in the Spanish version.

Example 1b showcases the impact of the interplay between mood and appraisal resources on characterization. In the English dialogue, each speaker pursues a different source of telos. Juror A shows willingness to explore sites of interpersonal solidarity within certain limits. Whilst his decisive initiating moves (K2, Ex. 1; K2, Ex. 6) orientate towards evaluation, they ultimately draw on control-seeking mood structures. For his part, Juror B relies almost exclusively on a collaborative appraisal telos. However, his judgement-based contributions appeal to objective criteria (such as his lack of experience or familiarity with the judicial procedures) and come across as subtly challenging. The complex network of interpersonal interests under negotiation acts as the spring board for launching the personas that each of these jurors will develop during the ensuing deliberations.¹⁸ In the Spanish version, however, these nuances are neutralized. Whilst the translation of every move is correct in semantic terms, the overall naturalness of this fragment is negatively affected. In the absence of Juror B’s challenge (Exchange 2’) in the target text, his understated dominance is completely diluted. Consequently, the ensuing series of evaluative statements are not perceived as an attempt from the characters to realign with one another, still under the telos projected by the initial question. Instead, the lack of an interpersonal dimension means that these turns come across as stilted and fail to contribute to the characterization of the jurors. The

¹⁸ According to Dirks (1996), Juror A will ultimately evolve into “a bullying, rude and husky man, extremely opinionated and biased, completely intolerant, forceful and loud-mouthed, temperamental and vengeful … quick to convict and defiant until the very end”. Juror B (already described in footnote 13 above), on the other hand, is the sort of character who reminds the group of important facts, thanks to his outstanding memory.
dilution of the original dialogue’s interactive build-up is underscored by the mood shift that takes place later in the Spanish version (ch, Ex. 6’), with the consequences outlined above.

Going back to the general discussion, it should be noted that the proportion of exchanges launched by mood telos against the overall number of exchanges is higher in Scenes 3 and 4. Also noteworthy is the fact that the proportional number of occurrences of shifts from appraisal to mood telos in these same scenes is lower. Whilst the main narrative emphasis of the first two scenes was on the characterization of the jurors through occasional episodes of colloquial talk, the next stage of the film focuses on the unfolding of the deliberations – and, ultimately, on presenting the jury system under a critical light. The figures in Table 1 suggest that talk in these purpose-driven scenes is not so often interspersed with casual-sounding talk, hence the changes in the relative distribution of exchanges projected by mood and appraisal telos.

4.1 Telos and the assessment of translated dialogue

Having examined the impact of the translator’s intervention on the interpersonal dynamics of the target dialogue vis-à-vis its source counterpart, it is now time to move up a level of abstraction and explore how the notion of telos might help with the assessment of translated dialogue.

In section 1 above, I drew on Vanoye’s differentiation between the horizontal and vertical dimensions of artefactual dialogue. Considered in isolation, mood telos opens up and projects micro-conversational domains, i.e. individual exchanges, and is of particular relevance to the description of purpose-driven interaction at a horizontal level. Consequently, mood telos resources allow dubbing researchers to (i) concentrate on the rendering of intra-turn content – mainly lexical, semantic and pragmatic meaning – across languages, (ii) investigate whether (or not) the sequential realizations of adjacency – in terms, for example, of conversational coherence – hold across languages, and (iii) identify the reasons for such (lack of) variation between the interactional dynamics of the source and target texts.

Examined on its own terms, appraisal telos opposes the closure of individual exchanges through the deployment of evaluative lexis, thus representing a suitable tool for the description of spontaneous-sounding conversation at a horizontal level. Appraisal telos helps dubbing researchers to account for deviations from projected interactional trajectories as a source of conversational propulsion. Thus an acquaintance with appraisal telos resources is vital for dubbing researchers to identify how and whereabouts in the exchange the interactants might start reconfiguring their mutual interactional alignments (e.g. growing/waning hostility, indifference or solidarity).

Like most classical films, 12 Angry Men relies heavily on mood telos as the preferred means for the negotiation of interpersonal meaning through dialogue.
The ensuing predominance of canonical exchanges therefore serves as the background of prefabricated orality or ‘contrived realism’ that the Hollywood apparatus fosters in an attempt to ensure an efficient delivery and reception of the filmic text and underlying subtexts. Occasionally, however, appraisal telos resources are deployed and sustained over whole sequences of exchanges, thus enacting the sort of frictional dynamics that ‘real realism’ requires, with a view to accomplishing certain narrative and characterization-enhancing goals. It is precisely when the interplay of mood telos and appraisal telos is filtered and framed by the editing practices of mainstream cinema that film dialogue realizes its vertical dimension and enacts the standards of naturalness required by this specific form of artefactual interaction.

5. Conclusion

I have tried to address the set of four questions listed at the end of section 2 above, as follows:

- In response to the first question, I have argued that naturalness is sequentially construed by the characters through the conversational interplay of mood and appraisal telos on the fictional plane (horizontal dimension of dialogue). In film conversation, the presentation of these horizontal dialectics to the non-fictional audience (vertical dimension of dialogue) is constrained by the editing conventions of the mainstream cinema apparatus.
- As for the second question, the analysis of my data indicates that film dialogue relies heavily on mood telos. The ensuing dominance of prefabricated orality is, however, interspersed with and punctuated by haphazard or realistic conversation, as required to advance the flow of narration or enhance the effect of characterization strategies in certain parts of the film.
- In relation to the third question, my data suggests that the translation of conversation triggers off shifts from appraisal telos (in the source text) to mood telos (in the target dialogue). The upshot of this is that the spontaneous-sounding fragments of the original dialogue are occasionally neutralized by the overall artificiality of the interactional dynamics in the target language.
- In response to the fourth question, I have contended that naturalness can be best described by focusing on the sequential negotiation of interpersonal meaning in conversation. In other words, naturalness in film dialogue is more amenable to systematic description when analyzed over extended stretches of interaction rather than by ascertaining the presence/absence of certain linguistic items within the limits of a single turn or clause.
- Ultimately, I have advocated the relevance of systemic functional
models of conversation analysis as the most productive set of tools that can allow us to gain insight into the interactive build-up of credible or realistic conversational dynamics in pursuit of specific narrative needs.

The fact that I draw on a relatively small sample of data is clearly an important limitation as far as the generalizability of findings discussed in this paper is concerned. The results presented above need to be corroborated with the analysis of larger samples of data and tested in other filmic genres and language combinations. On the other hand, systemic functional theories are complex and draw on a wide range of relatively obscure meta-terms. In order for future systemic functional research on naturalness to inform the training of a new and better equipped generation of audiovisual translators (in the form, for instance, of guidelines for the translation of filmic dialogue), some effort will be required to streamline the theory and terminology. In the meantime, in addressing dialogue, a textual phenomenon whose idiosyncrasy has been largely ignored by translation specialists despite the prominent role it plays in commercially and culturally sensitive texts, this exploratory study will hopefully have contributed to widening the so far restricted range of theoretical resources available to researchers of audiovisual translation.

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