Multicultural London English in Film. Comparing the translation into Spanish of Ali G Indahouse and Attack the Block.

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Abstract

This paper aims to illustrate how Multicultural London English is portrayed in the British films *Ali G Indahouse* (2002) and *Attack the Block* (2011) and how this variety is conveyed in their Spanish dubbed versions. The translation of language varieties in audiovisual texts is a complex matter, and they are often reduced to standard language in the target text, resulting in a loss of information regarding the characters and their sociocultural context. I rely on the ST and TT scripts to develop an analysis of some of the defining linguistic features of MLE and youth style. Despite both films constituting a similar starting point, *Ali G* presents a much more freer translation than is expected from a dubbed film, an issue I explore in comparison to the dubbing in *Attack the Block*.

Keywords: Audiovisual Translation (AVT); dubbing; language varieties; Multicultural London English; Youth style; *Ali G Indahouse; Attack the Block*. 
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1. Introduction

The translation of language variation in audiovisual texts is an issue that has been tackled at great length by scholars in the field of Translation Studies. The general consensus seems to indicate that it is somewhat of a fruitless endeavour, for what is purposely represented as non-standard language in the source text (ST), is generally much closer to the standard in the target text (TT). Nonetheless, researching this question is vital for a better understanding of this problem and the possible technical implications that might benefit professionals.

This essay does not attempt to provide answers to whether language variation is untranslatable or not, but rather offer a description of two different ways of dealing with language variation and observing the advantages and disadvantages of each style. One style tends towards free translation, which implies that the translation strategies prioritise function over form, resulting in a TT which is closer to the audience; the other tends towards literal translation, which is therefore closer in form to the ST.

First, I provide an overview of the nature of audiovisual translation with a focus on translation for dubbing purposes. There is a long tradition of dubbing in Spain, and it is not possible to observe the translation of film without taking into account the agents involved in the process and the technical constraints that dubbing is subject to as far as synchronisation or working conditions are concerned. Then, I more specifically focus on the translation of language varieties. Finally, I delve into possible problematic issues that teenage language presents in film, as a variety which is heavily charged with taboo and slang.

The object of study is Multicultural London English, a multiethnolect spoken mainly by teenagers in Greater London that emerged in the ‘90s through the contact of the varieties of English spoken by ethnic minorities in the area. I analyse how this variety is portrayed in
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comedy *Ali G Indahouse* (2002) and sci-fi *Attack the Block* (2011), and how the characters’ speech is dealt with in the translations for dubbing into Peninsular Spanish. The variety that is portrayed in these films is determined by geographical but also chronological and social elements which should be taken into consideration. Therefore, the language spoken by these characters is an essential part of their identity, and this aspect is reinforced in the films by the portrayal of opposing characters that use varieties which are closer to the standard.

The analysis is structured into the more salient and noteworthy aspects of MLE: morphosyntactic and phonological features, vocatives and, on a lexical level, slang and swearing. I also analyse the differences in translating culture-specific items and the use of MLE by other characters who do not belong to its community of speakers. Examples are provided in order to illustrate the techniques used to translate these elements for the TT. My initial outlook considers that a freer translation (as in *Ali G*) in fact allows for a better rendering of language varieties than traditional dubbing tendencies (as in *Attack the Block*), but that the preference for one or the other is subject to many extralinguistic factors, and that its success as a translation ultimately relies on the function of the text.
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2. Objectives and methodology

The main aim of this study is to see how some specific features of MLE teenage language are dealt with in fictional audiovisual texts and how they are translated into Peninsular Spanish. The dubbing of Ali G Indahouse deviates from traditional dubbing conventions, which makes an interesting case to observe. I analyse it together with Attack the Block, which is similar to Ali G as far as language is concerned, but is dubbed in a much more traditional manner.

A corpus of scripts was created from scenes in the films that contain a considerable amount of dialogue; consequently, action-filled scenes were discarded. I transcribed the dialogue in the Ali G Indahouse DVD, using both the soundtracks in English and Spanish, and the same process was undertaken for Attack the Block. Scripts of the films were found online and were used as support in the transcription, but it is essential to state that the corpus is made from the dialogues that appear in the films and not in the scripts.

Due to time restrictions, I have limited the analysis to a set of features which I consider are representative enough to draw up a consistent overview of the chosen translation techniques in each text. The number of examples reviewed is significant enough to provide a holistic description of the films, which is based on linguistic traits, but also considers technical matters, the audience, and films as a commercial product.
3. Theoretical framework

3.1. Aspects of film translation

The translation of audiovisual texts has proved to be a fruitful object of study during the past decades and, although it has also touched on other genres, it has greatly focused on film and television. The defining trait of audiovisual texts is that the messages that it consists of are issued through two semiotic channels: the acoustic and visual channels, and the interaction of these is what results in the text (Chaume, 2004). In the case of feature films, both channels are used to convey various elements presented in the narrative. Often the image bares a lot more information than the words that are uttered by the characters through various cinematic techniques.

The visual channel does not normally impede the distribution of films to other countries, but the language, of course, has to be adapted to the target context, which is currently most commonly done through translation for dubbing or subtitling. In some European countries, the general public prefers the former to the latter, although this might slowly be changing since the emergence of companies such as Netflix, and the improving competence of the audience in foreign languages. Whichever the case, the reality of commercial cinemas is that most of the films that are released reach a large part of the general public in their dubbed version, and viewers who watch original versions or subtitled films still constitute a minority. This is the case of countries such as Italy, France, or Spain, which have a long-established dubbing industry.

Dubbing is to be understood as a revoicing sound editing technique, whereby voice actors in the target context record a script which is intended to work in synch with the mouth of the original actors. Therefore, each actor from the source text (ST) is assigned a dubbing actor who will record a translated version of what the actor in the ST says. The aim is to create
the illusion for the audience of the target text (TT) that they are watching a film which has originally been produced in their language. Voiceover is another revoicing technique where the ST actors’ voices can be heard together with the dubbing actor’s voice, whereas in dubbing the verbal part of the ST soundtrack is omitted completely. The nature of dubbing entails that the audience will never listen to the dialogue in the ST unless they actively seek it, and thus grants greater freedom than other audiovisual translation techniques.

In order for dubbing to create the aforementioned illusion, dubbed voice and image must be very carefully synchronised together. The most important kind of synchrony is that of the lips and the sound, or lip-synchrony, which can change according to the genre (for instance, mouth movements in cartoons are not too well-defined, which allows for less attention to lip-synchrony). According to Fodor (1969), dubbing also considers kinetic synchrony, or the coherence between the dubbed dialogue and the characters’ movements as well as the fact that the physical image of the actors’ matches their voice. Lastly, isochrony focuses on the length of the utterances, so that the mouth does not keep moving when the line has ended or vice versa (as seen in Díaz-Cintas & Orero, 2010).

Translation studies have traditionally focused on the role of the translator as the most important agent in the process of translating a source text into a target text, but the fact is that dubbing involves a team of professionals, and the translator is only a small part of the whole production process (Castro Roig, 2001). First, the translator receives the script in the source language (SL) and translates it into the target language (TL) bearing in mind synchronisation restrictions and style conventions; then, an adaptor goes over the text to accurately check the synchronisation; lastly, the dubbing director might make changes based on the performance of the dubbing actors or their own preferences (the role of the adaptor is sometimes executed by either the translator or the director). All in all, the translator has little say in the end product. Sometimes the dubbing process is supervised by the original film producer, especially in high-
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grossing film franchises, which entails another variable in the process, whereas other cases are overseen by the dubbing team alone. To this, the role of the audience must be added, or the preferences of the consumer as, after all, films are the driving force of a major industry. Thus, extralinguistic factors, and not the text, are often put first in the translation of films (Lomeña Galiano, 2009).

Generally, the choices made by the translator are based on technical implications such as synchrony but, at a more abstract level, on what is expected from dubbing, or, in other words, what has been created over the years as dubbing norms or conventions. Tradition has created a predictable set of features and recognizable forms – a specific kind of prefabricated language which has been called *dubbese*. In the Spanish dubbing tradition, this is especially noticeable through intonation patterns and borrowings from English, as well as general translation conventions, such as linguistic correction and standardisation. Like in any other craft, it is inevitable for professionals to create habits and patterns. On top of that, in the case of dubbing, working conditions have been criticized by many and held accountable for the unnatural language in dubbed films and the frequency of borrowings from English (*anglicismos*). Although some might accuse the translator of deliberately choosing foreignizing techniques, it is more likely that the quality of the translation is related to improvable working conditions (Chaume & García, 2001, p.121).

As well as the limitations of the industry, translation of films for dubbing has the added issue of the rather particular type of language it deals with. In other words, it is a written script, but it is created to be delivered as if it were spontaneous oral speech. No matter how much the audience is made to believe that the dialogue in film is real, language in film is prefabricated (it has been thought out and devised beforehand) and does not abide by the main features of true oral speech. According to Baños (2009), who compares an original Spanish sitcom to an American one dubbed into Spanish, the fictive orality that is represented in the Spanish script...
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becomes a lot more natural with the performance of the actors, who attempt to make their acting as ‘real’ as possible. In dubbing, on the other hand, the inherent features of the process hinder the dubbing actors’ performance, possibly because dialogue is recorded in a studio instead of a make-believe set, and because they rely completely on the ST actors, who perform in a foreign language to their own. It can be said that, whereas the ST script tries to imitate reality, dubbing attempts to imitate the ST’s prefabricated orality and is, therefore, one step further away from real spontaneous speech.

Despite the inherent unnaturalness of dubbed language, the audience does not seem to mind, and the success of dubbed cinema can account for that. After all, the whole of the cinematic experience is an illusion and that does not take away from enjoying the experience, despite the spectator being fully aware of it. In the same way that the audience can understand a narrative that does not follow a linear time sequence, or watch magical creatures played by well-known actors, they also believe that the actors are speaking their native language. Romero Fresco (2009) contends that language in dubbing is not expected to sound like natural speech at all, but rather like the language in other dubbed films. In other words, the audience complies with whatever it is used to seeing and hearing, and thus contributes to the illusion with their “suspension of linguistic disbelief”.

3.1.1. Translating language varieties

There are several aspects of language that have become the norm in the language of films which have been dubbed into Spanish, such as directives which do not follow the pragmatics of Spanish, English constructions and borrowings, etc. One of the conventions that is seldom questioned by the audience is zation of language varieties. This follows normalisation, one of the translation universals established by Baker, which is defined as “the tendency to conform to patterns and practices which are typical of the target language, even to the point of exaggerating them” (1996a, p. 176–7).
Language variation is tied to the daily use of language itself and speakers most probably interact with others who speak in a different way than them more often than not. Despite language variation being something so ordinary, when it is introduced into a work of fiction, the reader or viewer will undoubtedly take notice of it. This is because it deviates from what is expected, which is standard language, and because language variation is used for a particular purpose: to give certain extra information about the character or the context.

The reasons for language variation are multiple, and many classifications have been suggested. Hatim & Mason (1990) suggest a categorisation of language variation for translation which marks a difference between the use of language and the user of language. The use of language determines the register, which depends on the field, or the language which is specific for each situation; on the tenor, which concerns the relation between speaker and listener; and on the mode, or the way in which the message is transferred (written or spoken, etc.). In the case of mainstream films, the field generally concerns everyday life and therefore non-specific language, except for certain instances where the language used must be consistent with the plot (medical jargon in the context of a hospital, or crime jargon in a police office, etc.). The tenor is developed in two ways, as the communication is established between the characters in the film, but indirectly also between the film and the audience. Lastly, the mode is audiovisual as it is emitted through both sound and image.

Other features of language variation are particular to the user, which entail what dialect will be spoken. The dialect will be defined according to geolectal, cronolectal, social, standard or nonstandard, and idiolectal traits. The information that the dialect conveys is sometimes made explicit in dialogue (a character identifies another character’s hometown from their dialect and remarks on it, for instance), but other times it inferred through the features of the dialect alone. Both situations pose problems for translation: the former entails that either that specific line will have to either be altered, or the whole translation will depend on that single
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line; whereas the latter entails that it is easier to obliterate the dialectal traits in the translation, at the expense of information that might have to be made explicit in another way or be discarded altogether.

During the first decades of film history, the use of varieties of language was often stereotypical and sometimes downright offensive to modern ears for the manner in which they endorsed stereotypes. Nowadays, although stereotypes are still a major element in films, the performance of different varieties is highly valued in the industry, and their use, very common. In major productions, actors are often coached by professionals so as to portray believable dialects (see Idris Elba, a British actor playing a Baltimore drug kingpin in *The Wire*, (2002)), or, in the case of biopics, faithful idiolects (such as Philip Seymour Hoffman as Truman Capote in *Capote*, (2005)).

Once again, however, the practical matters of the industry interfere with the ideal translation of audiovisual texts. The deadline is once more one of the determining factors that influences the translation of dialects. Dubbing actors have no time to prepare for specific manners of speech and accents. This especially stands out in the case of Latin-American characters who speak in Spanish in American films, who are dubbed in the Spanish film for Spain with a rather inaccurate accent (such as Gloria in the TV series *Modern Family*, whose Colombian accent in the Spanish version is something close to a parody).

The purpose of using certain varieties of language is based on a set of functions, which can be analysed from Delabastita’s approach on the functions of multilingualism (2002). The mimetic function leads the audience to place a character in a certain time and place; in the case of *Ali G* and *Attack the Block*, it is easy for people who are familiar with varieties of English in Britain to recognize the characters in the films at hand as members of a certain class (underprivileged), age (teenagers) and region (the London area). The ideological function
enables the audience to establish relations of community among the characters (the youths vs. “the establishment”, embodied by politicians, the police, or characters from wealthier backgrounds), but also to establish social relations with the characters. Finally, the comic function is the age-old strategy of making a character “talk funny”. This function differs greatly in both films: it is present in Ali G, because his manner of speech is often in itself the joke, whereas in ATB, MLE is used as a means to create jokes, but not so much as the basis of humour.

Delabastita’s functions are redistributed when it comes to the translation of language varieties in the TT. The mimetic function ceases to apply, because a variety is identifiable within one single language (the source language). The ideological function is often also disregarded, because the nuances that come with a variety are often related to sociohistorical events, which will only be understood by the target audience if they are compensated or made explicit, and only if they are essential to the narrative. The comic function, on the other hand, is usually upheld and compensated by the use of other strategies, which is the case of Ali G. Due to the creative nature of the dubbing of this film, the strategies do not follow traditional conventions; for instance, Ali G’s friend, Ricky C, has a ridiculously high-pitched voice in the dubbed version that does not match Martin Freeman’s voice in the slightest, for the benefit of comedic effect. In this case, breaking the kinetic synchrony compensates for the lack of other humorous traits that appear in the ST but cannot be transferred to the TT.

Taking all this into consideration, there are many ways to tackle the translation of dialects. Czennia (2004) suggests nine strategies: (i) using TL dialectal features to replace those in the ST; (ii) using a variety of TL dialectal features, thus creating an artificial, blended dialect; (iii) replacing dialectal features with sociolectal features; (iv) replacing dialectal features with idiolectal ones; (v) standardisation of dialectal features but use of orality markers of the TL; (vi) replacing the geloectional features with features of the TL that create the same distance; (vii)
disregarding any dialectal traits; (viii) introducing a marked written TL that replaces the dialect in the ST; (ix) a combination of strategies (as seen in García-Pinos, 2017). The choices are subject to a number of variables and might vary throughout the text.

So far, language varieties have been considered in relation to the standard variety and to the real cultural context. However, they can also be considered as isolated elements interacting within the text. In this manner, a variety is often established (L1) as the centre, be it the standard variety or not, and other varieties are portrayed in relation to the centre (L3). These varieties can be considered L3 if they are “sufficient to signal more than one identifiable speech community being portrayed or represented within the text” (Zabalbeascoa & Corrius, 2011, p. 5). In the TT, L1 becomes L2, and L3 is dealt with considering its relevance to the narrative and the characteristics of the target context. This pattern, however, ignores the role of the L1 within the source context, because although it might be defined as L1 in the ST, that does not mean it is also understood as L1 for the audience. For instance, MLE is the L1 in *Attack the Block*, but, because this variety is dubbed into standard Castilian Spanish (L2), two essential elements are lost: firstly, the cultural and social nuances that this variety displays and, secondly, its position in relation to the other varieties in the film. Essentially, in the TT, L3 blends into L2, and everything becomes standardised.

The other procedure to tackle this issue is presented in the translation of *Ali G Indahouse*. In the ST, the main character, Ali, and his friends also use MLE (L1 in the text / L3 for the audience), in contrast to the MPs and other members of the political sphere who are Standard English speakers (L3 in the text / L1 for the audience). In the Spanish dubbed text, Ali and his friends’ manner of speech is translated into an idiolect that combines teenage slang with lexical creation and non-standard pronunciation (also L3). In other words, the translation of *Ali G* decided on a free translation and consequently maintained the L3, encouraged by the fact that, apart from dialectal, Ali’s speech is also creative and amusing.
Moreover, the free translation that is applied to Ali G involves the naturalisation of humour (Botella Tejera, 2006). That is, the domestication of references in jokes so that they fit into the target culture. For this purpose, the film adapts place names, creates intertextuality with pre-existing jokes in Spanish culture, and uses a great deal of *cheli* jargon. This kind of free translation entails that the TT is distanced in many ways from the ST, and that some instances of the dubbed language might not match the ST setting (“Je m’appelle Ali y vengo de Lugo”, says Ali, but from the context it is obvious he is in England). On the other hand, it creates a text that can easily be enjoyed by the target audience, which would not have been possible had the translation been more literal.

The case of *Attack the Block*, on the other hand, is an example of a more literal translation. The culture-specific items are maintained as British referents (*The Guardian*, Simon Cowell, among others), and the dubbing, the *dubbese*, is closer to the English text in its construction and choice of words. It might appear paradoxical, but it seems that a freer translation makes it possible to maintain the connotations of language variation while naturalising other aspects, whereas a more literal translation entails a translation that is closer to the SL, but which also does away with the SL language variation traits.

3.1.2. Youth films and their implications

The films that constitute the subject of this paper are essentially films with teenagers as main characters and that are, to a great extent, addressed to teenagers as well. Their variety of speech is largely tied to their age, for it constitutes a style which is highly regarded within their social group, aka their peers. They use a colloquial register throughout the films, possibly due to the situations they find themselves which are mostly in informal contexts, or simply because that is the only way they know how to speak (“Relax ya batty”, says Ali, to a room of gaping MPs).
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Topics teenagers from urban areas deal with are reflected in their slang, which provides numerous terms for concepts related to crime, drugs, violence and girls, to name a few. Teenage speech in general is defined by the frequent use of slang, expletives and taboo language as a way of reacting against the status-quo, and that is something that is shared cross-culturally (Zanotti, 2012), or at least it is in the case of the UK and Spain.

Although translating dialects is highly complex, the formal and informal register dichotomy is normally taken into account and maintained in some way, but with restrictions. As Romero-Fresco (2009, p. 68) states, “Hesitations, hyperbatons and anacoluthons are not to be used, and neither are non-grammatical constructions or relaxed pronunciations” but, as Chaume mentions, colloquiality is upheld through the use of pertinent discourse markers and intensifiers (2004, p. 179). Baños (2013) also argues that the colloquial register in Spanish dubbing is often conveyed through the use of teenage jargon, which compensates for the artificiality in the colloquial language. In her analysis of the dubbing of *Friends*, she finds vocabulary belonging to teenage slang such as *pasta* for “money” or *enrollarse* for “to have sex”, uttered by adult characters. This raises the question of whether the audience assimilates this convention as the norm, which would entail that using teenage jargon to translate actual teenage speech in films serves no purpose. In other words, it would be possible for audiences to perceive teenage jargon as a general mark for colloquiality, and thus not as a mark of teenage speech. If this is the case, other strategies should be employed in order to convey teenage speech as a particular variety to avoid both varieties becoming interchangeable.

Teenage films contain scenes where teenagers are taking drugs, engaging in sexual activity or committing crimes more often than not, so in theory, it should not be something to shy away from when translating. However, research has shown that taboo has often been toned down in the translation of these situations. Even though the behaviour of adolescents might be prototypically reckless and immoral no matter the country, general opinions towards this
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behaviour differ, and more so towards their portrayal in the media. This entails that, when films that touch on these subjects are imported, some of the more sensitive expressions and words are modified. Zanotti (2012) demonstrates how the film *Grease* suffers a considerable amount of linguistic manipulation that affects taboo words and swearing, as well as sexual comments in the Italian dubbed version.

A substantial component of taboo language is swearing and expletives, or taboo words with non-literal meaning which are expressed through formulaic language for expressive reasons (Ljung, 2011). As for its translation, Castro-Roig (1997, p. 422) mentions the “falta de imaginación de algunos traductores” which does not make the most of how “[e]l habla vulgar y la germanía también es muy fértil en castellano y no se le saca todo el partido por miedo a hacer una adaptación demasiado libre del texto original” (as seen in Fontcuberta i Gel, 2001, p. 311). It is true that Spanish dubbed films are replete with light expletives such as ¡Demonios! and ¡Cielo santo!, but it seems to be that the tendency is changing for stronger insults that are actually used in real vulgar registers, as I reveal in the analysis.
4. Multicultural London English

Over the past few decades, London has turned into one of the most multicultural cities in the world. It has seen waves of immigration from many different countries, and families that, over generations, have made the city their home. They have become part of British society and have kept many aspects of their culture. Although certain ethnic segregation is expected among adults, younger generations socialize among each other, for the most part in educational contexts, no matter their ethnic background (Cheshire et al, 2013). Inevitably, this mixing of ever-changing cultures is bound to impact the local language in one way or another.

During the 1950s and 60s, the largest cities in Britain, such as London, Manchester or Birmingham, absorbed a considerable number of people from the ex-colonies in the West Indies. They were mostly speakers of Jamaican Creole, which ended up having a significant influence on the type of English spoken in Greater London, mostly in working-class neighbourhoods. During the 1980s, research projects were carried out to assess the level of creole spoken especially by children and teenagers, in an attempt to assess whether the variety that was spreading among teenagers was truly Jamaican Creole or an evolved variety, as well as who were its speakers. Hewitt (1986) contends that the contact white children had with their black peers was leading to notable sociolinguistic changes and that lexical items were “employed by them unmarked with regard to ethnicity” (p. 127). Hewitt highlighted the spread of lexical creole items, but a more recent study (Cheshire, Fox, Kerswill, & Torgersen, 2008) displays the more extended phonological features that are shared among teenagers of all ethnic groups. This does not mean that all or even most teenagers in London all speak Jamaican Creole. Although the focus for the media was on Jamaican Creole, which lead this variety to receive the name of Jafaikan (Ashton, 2006), research suggests that “there are so many different languages involved that in most cases it is unrealistic to attribute the innovations to contact with any one specific language” (Cheshire, Fox, Kerswill, & Torgersen, 2013). Due to
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these reasons, the preferred term to refer to this variety of speech is *Multicultural London English* (MLE).

MLE is associated by the general public to teenagers in Greater London. This raises the question of whether it is a form of teenage speech rather than a regional variety. Cheshire et al., in comparing younger speakers with older ones, indicate that older speakers use features of MLE “less consistently than younger speakers” (2013, p. 66), which would indicate that it is, indeed, a teenage variety. On the other hand, the emergence of MLE took place during the 90s, when third-generation immigrants (if they can be called immigrants) were in school and socialized in a mostly unsegregated manner, unlike their parents. Therefore, it is unsurprising that today it is still mostly associated to young people. However, it has been observed that some of the features are typical of any regional variety, and others are transient as the ones associated to teenage language are (Cheshire et al, 2013). The features that are understood as new elements of a further stage in the evolution of English, can be identified depending on whether they are acquired by young children, and whether they reach places beyond London.

Clyne (2000) coins the term “multiethnolect” which accounts for the dychotomy between a teenage and/or regional variety. A multiethnolect is defined as a combination of kinds of speech from different ethnic minorities living in one city (in the case of London, creoles, such as Jamaican; ex-colonial Englishes, such as Nigerian or Pakistani, and learner varieties of varieties), which evolves into a situation where teens of dominant ethnic groups share language features with minorities. A continuum is established from a vernacular variety to a youth style; the vernacular, in this case would be traditional London Cockney, which receives influences from the language of the aforementioned ethnic minorities. Youth style refers to the fact that a variety such as MLE can be used by members of upper classes, although it is mostly associated to the working classes, for purposes of style, especially concerning slang (Kerswill, 2015). In other words, MLE displays covert prestige, for it is not considered a
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prestigious variety, but it can be used sporadically by speakers of prestigious varieties in order to accommodate to more informal contexts.

As the audiovisual texts that are dealt with in the present study are essentially delivered in MLE, it is worth explaining its main features. The most salient phonological features observed by Cheshire et al. (2008) include vowel changes: TRAP becomes more open and centralized, STRUT is backed and less open, FOOT is centralized, and GOOSE is fronted. Moreover, FACE, GOAT and PRICE acquire near monophthongal qualities. As far as consonants are concerned, H-dropping (typical of Cockney English) is reduced significantly, [k] backing at the beginning of words is observed, DH-stopping involves switching [ð] for [d], and TH-fronting is widespread ([f] instead of [θ]), although there are some words (loans from creole) that manifest [θ] instead of [θ]) as in, *thing,* and *thief.*

Grammatical features have been analysed by Martínez (2011), and although they are described as features belonging to the speech of British teens in general, they can be taken to apply to a great extent to Multicultural London English as well, as the data is retrieved from spoken recordings of teenagers in the London area, who Martínez describes as belonging to ethnic minorities. The findings show that there is a reduction and simplification of the verbal system, which is manifested in the use of base forms instead of the present, the omission of auxiliaries, and use of non-standard past forms (as in *She think she done nothing* for *She thinks she didn’t do anything*). One of the most salient features is the lack of agreement, as in *You wasn’t there.* Moreover, there is a high frequency of negative forms among teenage speakers, in the form of ain’t and dunno, as well as negative concord structures (double negation), which is often used as a way of intensifying language – a very common feature of teenage speech (*no way*). When introducing direct speech, the quotatives that are used the most are ‘be/go + like’, or ‘this is + subject’, as in *This is me:* “*What are you doing?*”. Innovation in the pronominal
MLE in Film: Comparing the translation into Spanish of *Ali G Indahouse* and *Attack the Block.*

System is also observed, such as *youse* for the second person plural, *man* as an indefinite pronoun, and *them* instead of *those.*

Teenage speech is rich in the use of vocatives, and terms of abuse are especially significant. As well as *boy, man,* also typical of MLE are *fam, blud, bruv and bruvva,* and *cuz.* Vague language is manifested in the use of placeholders such as *thingy,* quantifiers such as *loads of,* and marking tags, such as *and stuff,* or *something.* There is a high frequency use of noncanonical tags such as *innit, yeah, right, eh, okay,* and also of intensifying, through *well, right, enough* and *bare* (very). Lastly, it appears that MLE speakers use a “more syllable-timed (staccato) rhythm” (Kerswill, 2015).

The use of slang in MLE is one of its most striking features. It has been reported that teachers are sometimes unable to understand their students in class (Ashton, 2006). Some of the lexis used by MLE speakers is *ends* for *neighbourhood; yute* for *teenagers* (from *youth; sick* for *good,* or *allow it* for *forget it,* among many others, which are in a constant process of appearing and disappearing.

Whether it is a style of youth speech, or a regional variety that is slowly gaining consistency, MLE fluctuates constantly, especially in terms of lexis, whereas it seems that phonological features are slowly becoming ‘standardised’. The roots of this variety are linked to a strong feeling of group membership, and also resistance to ‘the norm’ or, in other words, Standard British English. Although its features are still coming to be, MLE has become a variety of British English in its own right which reflects the multicultural society that Britain has become.
MLE in Film: Comparing the translation into Spanish of *Ali G Indahouse* and *Attack the Block*.

4.1. Representation of MLE in the media

Countries display dialects in the general media (television, radio, cinema, etc.) according to their tradition and the way they value geolectal traits. For instance, on Catalan TV channel TV3, reporters in the news often speak in their own regional dialect, but news presenters always use the standard variety. On Spanish TV, advertisements rarely feature accents, whereas on British TV it is not uncommon. That has not always been the case in the UK, for before the ’80s Received Pronunciation, also called BBC English, governed the media. Towards the ‘90s TV series such as *East Enders* and *Coronation Street* depicted characters who spoke everything but RP, and the audience’s opinion on dialects started to shift (Crystal, 2010).

In the past few years MLE has gained some prominence on TV and in cinema, in series such as *Skins*, *Misfits*, or films like *Bullet Boy* (2014) or *Harry Brown* (2009), as well as the ones discussed in this paper. However, they are chosen for very specific roles that often portray the stereotype of the young underprivileged delinquent. Queen argues that “[o]nce linguistic styles become widely recognized as distinctive and established, they may become useful for achieving artistic or creative effects because they are available to quickly index a certain type of person, activity or attribute” (2004, p.516). Stereotypes have always been a useful technique in story-telling, and dialects often help to create them; Mühleisen indicates that they “display long-standing favourable or unfavourable dispositions as part of a society’s cultural memory. […] Dialects/sociolects denote group membership and the positive or negative features that are associated with it” (2005, p. 226).

As a dialect that real people speak on the screen, however, it is not that well received. This dialect, says Daniel Kaluuya, who starred in 2017 film *Get Out*, is surrounded by prejudice (Brockes, 2018, para. 12):
Sometimes in England, they make it feel like you can’t talk the way you talk. And even the term ‘slang’: it’s not slang, it’s a dialect. You wouldn’t tell someone from Edinburgh to change how they speak, or someone from Liverpool. But, yeah, if you’re working class from London, I have to what, accommodate you? Don’t tell Liam Gallagher that, so why are you telling [British rapper] Giggs that?

Kaluuya’s words indicate that the media accommodates to MLE in the same way teenagers from the upper classes do. They value it for entertainment purposes, but it does not have a place in formal contexts.
5. The films

The films that have been chosen for this analysis are *Ali G Indahouse* (2002) and *Attack the Block* (2011). The selection has been carried out on the basis that they are both representative of British films which portray teenage speakers of Multicultural London English. Although the speech of the characters in both films bears many similarities, the dubbed films are completely different: one presents features of a literal translation, whereas the other follows tendencies related to free translation.


Ali G is a persona created and impersonated by actor and writer Sacha Baron Cohen, a young man from Staines (Surrey, Greater London), who thinks of himself as a rapper from the Bronx, hence his baggy clothes, “bling” and woolly hats. He is unemployed and likes to spend most of his time smoking marihuana with his best friend Ricky C (Martin Freeman) and his gang, the West Staines Massiv, and his girlfriend Julie (me Julie). He first appeared on TV in 1998, and later hosted his own show, *Da Ali G Show*, where he interviewed politicians, musicians and other celebrities. They were unaware that they were being interviewed by a character, and awkwardly answered his often crude and politically incorrect questions.

The popularity of his character prompted Cohen to make a film with director Mark Mylod, called *Ali G Indahouse*, which was released in the UK in 2002. The plot revolves around Ali, who ends up running for Parliament because he is told that he will be able to save the youth centre he volunteers in from closing down. In fact, he is part of a plan led by the Deputy Prime Minister David Carlton (Charles Dance) to remove the Prime Minister (Michael Gambon) from power. Surprisingly, Ali’s ignorance and childish behaviour wins over the general public and he becomes increasingly popular, eventually joining Parliament. After a series of ludicrous events, Carlton intends to destroy Staines, but Ali and his friends save the
day and reinstate the Prime Minister. As a reward, Ali is named the British ambassador to Jamaica.

The plot is an excuse to put together a series of gags, which touch on every taboo subject imaginable, ranging from sex and drugs, to race and class (consequently, the film received a 15 rating). The result is a comedy replete with rudeness and easy jokes; *The Guardian*’s review reads, “It’s rude. It’s crude. It’s quite deplorable in taste” (Bradshaw, 2002, para. 1) to later admit that the whole audience could not help but laugh all the way through the film. Others even appreciated the social commentary, declaring that the film “handles race and sexism very gently and carefully, almost with a sweet naivety that takes the edge off the aspects of it you might feel uncomfortable with” (Felperin, as reported in Solomons, 2002, para. 8). However, not everyone felt the same way when it first came out; some were offended at its racist and sexist jokes, and at the fact that Ali G tries to “act black”. The point of Cohen’s character is precisely that, to make fun of white middle-class teenagers that attempt to act “street”. The film was deemed inappropriate by many, to the point that the change in the name of Staines (Ali’s hometown) to Staines-upon-Thames, was linked to the infamous character (“Staines becomes Staines-upon-Thames”, 2012).

Apart from his clothes and tendency to rap at any moment, what makes Ali Ali is his way of speaking, which is an exaggeration of the Multicultural London English described above with more Jamaican Creole elements. His manner of speech is also the subject of many jokes throughout the film, such as his misspelling of his phrase “Respect” (example (1)) or misunderstandings that display his ignorance towards political and economic affairs. All in all, the film itself would not have much to say for itself were it not for the script, which is made up of one word game or joke after another.
MLE in Film: Comparing the translation into Spanish of *Ali G Indahouse* and *Attack the Block*.

(1) **Ali G intervenes in a parliamentary session (00:31:11).**

| **Ali:** Look at you! All you ever do all day long is cuss each other. **R-E-S-T-E-C-P.** Do you even know what that spells?  
**MP:** Restecp?  
**Ali:** … Yes. Restecp.  
**MP:** Restecp.  
**Ali:** How’s anyone out there meant to restecp each other if you lot in ’ere don’t even start restecping one another?  
**MP:** Sergeant, eject the gentleman.  
**Ali:** Wanna know how to make this country better? It’s simple. Two words: keep it real.  
**MP:** That’s three words.  
**Ali:** Don’t be a spanner. "lt" ain’t a real word. It’s short for "innit", innit. Keep it real! Keep it real! |

The creative language displayed in the film creates a problem for translators. The high frequency of nonsense, rhymes, cultural references etc. makes it a near impossible script to translate in a conventional way. To solve this issue, the job was given to a famous Spanish comedy duo, Gomaespuma, (Guillermo Fresser, who plays Ali, and Juan Luis Cano, who plays Ricky C). Their task involved adapting the translated script, previously commissioned to Sally Templer (eldoblaje.com, n.d.), in order to create a funny film for Spanish audiences. The resulting text is heavy on Spanish popular cultural references (“Je m’appelle Ali, y soy de Lugo”) and significant modifications from the ST script for the benefit of the audience’s enjoyment. Many agree that the film, in Spanish, would be a complete failure were it not for Gomaespuma’s performance. The dubbing was so successful that some of its sentences have penetrated general spoken language, such as “Te voy a comprar una bolsa de chuches” or “respecto”. However, *Ali G anda suelto* was not much of a success at the box office, and received harsh criticism from the press.

5.2. **Attack the Block** (2011)

Hollywood has produced countless alien films, and most of them involve a film star saving the earth from an extra-terrestrial invasion. Joe Cornish’s paints a very different picture in his debut film, where aliens target a council estate in London and the creatures are confronted by a group of teenagers who have just mugged a nurse (Jodie Whittaker). The gang finds an
alien and kills it, and decides to take it to Ron’s Weed Room (Nick Frost) to see if they can find out what it is. Nobody takes them seriously until other aliens arrive, having followed the scent of the first one. Meanwhile, the police are on the look for them, as is the dangerous drug-dealer Hi-Hatz (Jumayn Hunter). No one seems to believe them, but Moses (John Boyega) and his friends manage to save “the hood”, riding their bikes and armed with bangers.

*Attack the Block* is a low-budget film; a sci-fi film with plenty of comedy in it as well. It has been considered somewhat of a cult film and received overall good reviews from critics. The special effects are far from sophisticated and the teenage actors are inexperienced, but the film manages to portray a very honest tale. In order to create this realistic world from “the block”, Cornish purposely looked for actors who were still learning, and interviewed hundreds of teenagers from council-estates. The result shows a very truthful representation of Multicultural London English, to the point that subtitles were considered for the US version (Kit, 2011), although an American audience at a screening claimed to have no comprehension problems (Olsen, 2011). The language tapestry of London is represented through other characters as well: Brewis (Luke Treadaway), an upper-class university student that buys weed off Ron and is unable to hide his upper-class RP; Ron (Nick Frost), who uses a Cockney variety, and the nurse, who uses modern Standard English.

In Spain the film did not reach the cinema but was screened in English at the 2011 Sitges Film Festival and won the Special Jury Award as well as the Grand Audience Appreciation Award. It was also released in Spain in DVD with subtitles and dubbing into Spanish, the latter having been carried out by Ignacio Sánchez (translation) and Mar Borgallo (director and adapter) in Peakland Estudios (eldoblaje.com, n.d.). The dubbing actors are not easily identifiable by the general audience, and the slang and specificities of MLE are mostly standardised.
MLE in Film: Comparing the translation into Spanish of Ali G Indahouse and Attack the Block.

6. Analysis

The following pages describe Ali G Indahouse (Ali G) and Attack the Block (ATB) and their dubbed versions mainly from a linguistic point of view, in order to analyse how the characters’ speech has been portrayed in their Spanish counterparts. The features which have been chosen are those that provide more relevant and noteworthy insight, namely vocatives, slang, and swearing or taboo language. On a more textual level, the translation of culture-specific items is described as well as specific instances of characters who do not belong to the community of speakers of MLE, but in some cases accommodate to their style of speech.

It is not usually possible in film translation to create two perfectly matching parallel texts. This does not apply to the words themselves, but to the length of the utterances, the amount of information, referentiality, and even turns of speech. This is mostly due to technical impediments brought about by synchronisation as has been mentioned in previous sections. It might also be added, however, that the original script is manipulated for other reasons as well; as Zanotti (2012) puts it “films are often regarded by film majors and distribution companies more as marketable products than as authorial creations” (p.352). The ST screen-writer’s words are not as relevant as they might seem at first sight, and this leads to changes in the TT that have less do to with technical constraints and more with the personal choices of the translation and dubbing agents.

For these reasons, not all the instances of the TT that follow correspond to the turns of speech of each character in the ST. In ATB, for example, there are a lot of scenes where the teenagers interrupt each other or talk over one another. Moreover, their mouths cannot always be seen clearly. This gives the dubbing team the freedom to choose from the ST script and reduce the number of lines. The actors in the ST also improvise now and then and go off script, which is often not taken into account by the translator or the dubbing team, as they usually
work with the original script and not the finished film. As a result of this, in the case of ATB, sometimes the TT and the ST differ.

6.1. Morphosyntax and pronunciation

Section 4 of this paper explained that one of the most salient features of MLE is its ungrammatical features. That is, morphological and syntactical constructions that are not considered standard English. Although the choices might seem random, they follow certain patterns, in the same way that standard language does. It seems obvious, then, that the dubbing would disregard this “ungrammaticality”. On the other hand, prejudice and the notion that MLE constitutes incorrect language would deem the ungrammaticality significant enough for it to be included in the TT. However, this is generally avoided no matter the opinion on the language in the original text, due to standardisation, hence the use of standard morphosyntactic structures in both Ali G and ATB. Ali G does however sometimes utter incoherent semantic constructions, such as “Ya sé que muchos dicen jamás digas siempre nunca”. Instances such as these attempt to convey the “incorrect” use of language that the source text portrays. The reason for this is the prevailing absurdity of Ali G’s discourse, who is presented as lacking formal education and common sense, hence his grammatical errors. In ATB, on the other hand, there are no instances of ungrammatical language in the dubbed text.

Along the same lines as morphosyntactic features are features of pronunciation, for they are specific to the source language and are never transferable. It is a different affair when particular pronunciation is restricted to the speech of one character and is the basis for a joke. A clear example of this exception is Pontius Pilate’s speech impediment in The Life of Brian (1979) and his speech defect, rhotacism, which entails that he is unable to articulate his /r/ in correctlly. Consequently, the crowd he is addressing trick him into calling as many names with the sound /r/ as they can think of. Because the butt of the joke is a specific feature of speech, the dubbed version also shows Pilate as having a speech defect. In the case of Ali G and ATB,
MLE in Film: Comparing the translation into Spanish of *Ali G Indahouse* and *Attack the Block*.

although Ali’s manner of speech is exaggerated and even peculiar, the characters’ phonetic choices are determined by their dialect, and therefore do not have a specific function like the speech impediment in *The Life of Brian* does.

Nonetheless, there is an intention in *Ali G* of reproducing informal speech. The dubbing of the main character in the TT is often relaxed, which shows in occasional *ceceo* (as in [z]oy) or consonant dropping at the end of words (as in *pringao*), as well as the velarisation of /s/, as in *e[j]cuela*. In the dubbing of *ATB* this phenomenon happens to a lesser extent, with the isolated consonant dropping, as in “Dices un *puñao* de palabrotas” (see example (11)). The fact that these pronunciation features are not consistent throughout the film (more so in *ATB* than in *Ali G*) distances the characters’ speech from a faithful portrayal of reality and can even result in incoherence. If the dubbing actor switches from flawless standard pronunciation to a suddenly relaxed manner of speech, it creates a discourse that defies common sense.

In example (2), the non-standard pronunciation of the TT is especially emphasized in order to make the joke funnier, whereas the ST does not make this character’s pronunciation any different for this specific moment in the film.

(2) Hassan B, Ali G’s nemesis, tries to belittle Ali by insulting his mother (8’30’’).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Hassan B: Your mama is so fat that when she volunteered to clean the cages at the zoo, people them-a walk by and say, “Look at that hippopotamus”.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ali: That ain’t fair. It’s glandular.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hassan B: Huh, let’s leave these batty boys.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Hassan B: Tu mamá, es <em>tán</em> gorda, <em>queunavesedió</em> la vuelta en la cama, y se <em>cayópolodolao</em>, la muy hipopótama.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ali: Eh, no te pases. Es de tiroides.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hassan B: ¿Tiroides? Vamos a pasar de estas petardas.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The choice of pronunciation is worth noting in this fragment: the main joke displays an exaggerated intonation, where *tan* is overly stressed, and consonants are dropped, such as /z/ in *vez* which assimilates to the /s/ in *se*, or other final consonants such as the /t/ in *por* and the /s/ in *los dos lados*. On the other hand, Hassan B pronounces every consonant in “vamos a pasar de estas petardas” instead of /vamoapasádehtapetardal/, in accordance with the rest of
MLE in Film: Comparing the translation into Spanish of *Ali G Indahouse* and *Attack the Block.*

his script. This is consistent with Czennia’s (2004) second option for the translation of language varieties: using a variety of TL dialectal features which are not accurately characteristic of any real TL language variety.

6.2. Vocatives

Vocatives are widely used in MLE. They appear to a greater extent in *ATB* than in *Ali G,* which is surprising, considering that for the most part, Ali G’s speech is an exaggerated version of MLE. The youths in *ATB* use a vocative in practically every other sentence, which has to do with their dialect, but which is also encouraged by the fact that they are together throughout the whole film. As a result, they inevitably address each other constantly, as can be seen in example (3).

Example (3) shows six different vocatives in the source text (seen nine times) and only two in the target text (seen four times), which is representative of the general pattern that appears throughout the film. Although the vocative that is used the most in the TT is *tío* by far (in the first 30 minutes of the film it appears 30 times), others are used, such as *colega,* or *tía.*
MLE in Film: Comparing the translation into Spanish of Ali G Indahouse and Attack the Block.

and *mona*, when addressing female characters. In this sense, *ATB* endorses *tío* as the dominant vocative for colloquial contexts, as do most dubbed films and TV-series. The widespread preference for *tío* could be due to the isochrony restraint, for most of the vocatives used in English are monosyllabic words, and other possible vocatives in Spanish are longer and would require that the dialogue be shortened elsewhere. It must be said, however, that the actors’ mouths are not visible for most of this fragment, and therefore the isochrony restraint does not apply. For *mofucker* the TT uses *hijoputa*, which is equivalent in explicitness and force.

In the case of *Ali G* the use of vocatives is radically different, which makes it deviate from *ATB* as far as veracity is concerned. In instance (4) the characters use *nigger*, a historically charged offensive word, which “is said to represent ‘reclaimed usage’ of a basically derogatory term in the speech of African American rappers” but is “rare in British English” (Ljung, 2011, p. 29). Of course, Ali G is neither of African descent or American, but he mirrors himself in American rappers, so he feels he can use this term as well.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>(4) Ali G meets the rest of the West Staines Massiv in the park (6'55'').</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| **Ali:** So, what’s going down in Staines town, *my nigger*?  
**Ricky C:** Yo *nigger*, we just be cold chillin’, kicking back. Sucking on some gin and juice, laid-back.  
**Ali:** Bueno, ¿Y qué pasa por el barrio, *negro*?  
**Ricky C:** Pues, nada, *negro*, aquí nos tienes. Muy preocupaos y con mucho estrés y mucho lio. |

In the TT, this vocative was deemed significant enough to be preserved, even though the rest of the dialogue is translated freely. The term is kept because of its incongruity with the characters, and perhaps also for the sake of consistency with the line that appears later in the film when Ali is thrown out of Parliament. As he is dragged out, he cries: “Is it because I is black?” and, in the TT, “¿Es porque soy negro?”. The choice of *negro* is not so much an offensive term but a more neutral one. Other terms, such as *negrata*, do not have the dual meaning that *nigger* holds and can only be understood as an insult. Moreover, they match in the number of syllables, making synchronisation possible.
Despite the little use of vocatives in the ST, in *Ali G* the TT adds some in order to make the general discourse more informal and vulgar, for they generally use coarse terms. In example (5), a middle-aged man asks the youths to leave, to which Ricky C answers as if he were being threatened by the member of a rival gang, a reaction which is uncalled for.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>(5)</th>
<th>Ali’s gang is outside a building when a man comes out and asks them to leave (7’27’’).</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>MAN:</td>
<td>Will you boys move? I’ve told you it’s a fire risk.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RICKY C:</td>
<td>Hey, yo, yo, yo, what’s the problem? Four brothers chilling out on da sidewalk, maxing, relaxing, it ain’t too taxing. Boof!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SEÑOR:</td>
<td>Aire, machotes. Fuera, que os temo más que a un nublao.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RICKY C:</td>
<td>Eh, mamón, quée tee pasaa eeh? A ver somos hare krishna estamos aquí rezando, hare krishna, krishna rama, a la cama, ¡pun!</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In the TT, the man speaks in an overly aggressive manner and Ricky responds likewise. The vocatives, *machotes* and *mamón*, add hostility to the interaction, and contribute to the colloquiality of the TT. There are other instances of the use of vocatives in the TT where there are none in the ST, such as “¿me los das, chato?” or “chaval, eres más tonto que un pez”. The use of *chato* defies the principle of standardisation because it is only used in certain regions of Spain, and although it is most probably understood by everyone, it is still considered to be a regionalism.

As far as vocatives are concerned, *ATB* and *Ali G* differ greatly. The *ATB* ST displays a wide range of vocatives which are cut down and simplified in the TT, whereas the *Ali G* ST displays a limited range which is increased in the TT.

6.3. Slang

The slang terms used by the characters at hand are very specific and might be hard to understand for someone outside their environment. The translation of these terms could prove difficult and might require some research, but, ideally, one could resort to the range of slang terms that exists the target language. However, the conventions that govern audiovisual translation state that the TT must be as accessible as possible because the film has to be
MLE in Film: Comparing the translation into Spanish of *Ali G Indahouse* and *Attack the Block*.

marketable, and terms which cannot be understood by the general audience should be avoided. In the following paragraphs, I classify the slang terms and their translation according to three semantic categories.

There is a great deal more mention of violence in *ATB* than there is in *Ali G* because the characters find themselves in a much more violent environment, for they are being attacked by aliens and, on top of that, they are being chased by Hi-Hatz, a drug dealer. Table 1 provides examples and the equivalent TT texts.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ST</th>
<th>Explanation</th>
<th>TT</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Wanna get <em>murked</em>, innit?</td>
<td>To get killed</td>
<td>¿Quieres que te mate?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moses got <em>shanked</em> by a Dobby!</td>
<td>To get hit</td>
<td>¡A Moses le ha mordido el Elfo Dobby!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>You got <em>beef</em> now, Moses</td>
<td>To be in trouble</td>
<td>¿Te ha hecho pupita, eh?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>You bringin’ arms to me?</td>
<td>To be threatened with weapons</td>
<td>¿Queréis guerra conmigo?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Let’s get <em>tooled up</em>, blud!</td>
<td>To get ready to fight</td>
<td>¡Vamos a darnos un baño de sangre!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Walkin’ around expectin’ to get <em>jumped</em> any moment?</td>
<td>To be attacked</td>
<td>¿Esperarte ser atacado en cualquier momento?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The TT adapts all the slang terms in this category and replaces them with standard Spanish vocabulary. Whereas the meaning is preserved, the connotations of jargon terms are not. The exceptions are *hacer pupita*, which includes a diminutive and intends to make fun of the addressee, and *darnos un baño de sangre*, an idiom. None of these, however, belong to a specifically teenage-marked discourse.

In the field of crime, drugs and the police, the TTs show how slang terms in Spanish relating to these are more common in dubbed language (see Table 2).
MLE in Film: Comparing the translation into Spanish of *Ali G Indahouse* and *Attack the Block.*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ST</th>
<th>Explanation</th>
<th>TT</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Quick fam, before the feds come, innit (ATB)</td>
<td>The police</td>
<td>Tío, va a llegar la poli</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The feds is coming (<em>Ali G</em>)</td>
<td></td>
<td>Vienen los maderos</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moses got shifted by the feds (ATB)</td>
<td>To get arrested</td>
<td>A Moses le trincó la bofia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Them things attacked the bully van (ATB)</td>
<td>A police van</td>
<td>Esas cosas atacaron la furgo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>We jacked the van (ATB)</td>
<td>To steal</td>
<td>Estamos huyendo en la furgo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All that man ever does is blaze (ATB)</td>
<td>To smoke cannabis</td>
<td>Lo único que hace ese hombre es colocarse</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Is there any skunk? Yes (...) It’s the strongest super skunk (<em>Ali G</em>)</td>
<td>Cannabis</td>
<td>¿Hay algo de polen? Cogollos (...) Resulta que es la <em>hierba</em> más potente</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The use of slang in the TT is most probably due to the high frequency of crime-related audiovisual texts that are offered in Spanish media, which eventually entails the normalisation of these slang terms.

Both *Ali G* and *ATB* have a considerable male presence, for most of the cast is made up of men who represent roles that are typically performed in films by male characters, such as saving the world from alien invasion (*ATB*) or their town from being wiped out (*Ali G*). The women, in turn, play minor roles. *Ali G* is an overall rude and politically incorrect character as the parody of a teenager he is, and the women are extremely sexually objectified. This leads to him using a variety of pejorative terms to refer to women, which are observed in Table 3.
Table 3. Slang concerning girls and sex in Ali G.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ST</th>
<th>Explanation</th>
<th>TT</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Everyone is calling me Julie a <em>slag</em></td>
<td>A woman who has many sexual encounters</td>
<td>Dicen por la tele que mi Julie es una <em>guarra</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>You tell that <em>slag</em>…</td>
<td></td>
<td>Dile a esa <em>lagarta</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>And we’s got too many <em>mingers</em></td>
<td>An ugly woman</td>
<td>Aquí lo que sobran son <em>cazos</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>That is a very sexist way to talk about <em>these bitches</em></td>
<td>Derogatory term to refer to a woman</td>
<td>Qué manera más machista de hablar de estas <em>guarras</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jennifer Lopez <em>lezzing off</em> with the big-thighed one in Destiny’s Child.</td>
<td>To engage in lesbian sex</td>
<td>Jennifer Lopez <em>haciéndose un bollo</em> con Pocahontas, con esos muslitos que tiene</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Later, sweetheart</td>
<td>Term of endearment</td>
<td>Nos vemos, <em>chochito</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Get some really fit woman to bring her <em>babylons</em> out for peace</td>
<td>A woman’s breasts</td>
<td>Que una chuqui enseñe los pezones por la paz</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Along the same lines as with crime-related slang, the dubbing in Ali G displays a wide range of vocabulary to refer to women in a derogatory manner. The term *babylons* is a word specific to Ali G’s speech and it is not found in real slang, or if it is, it has come to be used as result of this film1. *Babylon* is only one of the terms that Ali uses to highlight his appreciation of Rastafari culture; in the TT, however, all of them are altered and there is practically no mention of Rastafarians. For instance, in the ST Ali says “Remember, life is the most precious gift that Jah has given us” which is translated in the TT as “Recuerda, la vida es de lo bueno lo mejor, de lo mejor lo superior.” Rastafarian culture has not had the same presence in Spain as it has in other countries like the UK, so the dubbing team decided to delete it rather than include in-text translations or explicitations.

The examples of these three categories show that the TTs include Spanish slang words to convey colloquiality and teenage jargon. In the case of ATB, however, it seems that the translator has failed to put forward Spanish slang terms for violence and has preferred

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1 The online slang dictionary urbandictionary.com describes this use of the term, but it is attributed to Ali G.
standardisation. A strategy to compensate for lack of certain slang words in the TT, present in both films, is to introduce slang or informal language in other places, hence the frequent use of constructions such as molar, flipar or es una pasada in other scenes in the film. These are colloquial words which are in use among Spanish-speaking teenagers, but it would be worth researching what criteria is used to use certain words at such a high frequency and others less so. It is a complex issue to tackle because teenage language has such a short life span, and films, as commercial products, aim to be perceived as contemporary texts for as long as possible.

6.4. Swearing

Both films are an excellent source of variety for expletives, for neither of them are modest in using such vocabulary. In Ali G taboo language in the TT is made even stronger than in the ST, but it all contributes to the film’s general crudity and it stands out because it is supposed to. In the Spanish version of ATB, coarse language stands out in contrast to the general standard tone that is adopted throughout the film which, although it contains slang, is still mostly standardised. The following example (6), shows Mayhem and Probs (Caos and Problemas in the TT), two nine-year-olds who want to join in with the gang, but they are told they are too young.

(6) The gang is heading off to find the aliens and Mayhem and Probs want to join them (00:10:15).

| MAYHEM: Where you goin'? Let us come with you! |
| PROBS: Yeah Moses, let us roll with you! We’re bad boys! |
| YOUTH 1: Go away Reginald. This is big man business. You’re too tiny. |
| YOUTH 2: Yeah, get in touch with us when you’ve got your first pube. |
| PROBS: Go suck your mum! |
| YOUTH 1: Oooooh! |
| CAOS: ¿Dónde vais? ¿Podemos ir con vosotros? |
| PROBLEMAS: Sí, Moses, ¡dejadnos ir con vosotros! |
| JOVEN 1: Largo, Reginald, ¡esto es cosa de hombres! ¡Sois muy pequeños! |
| JOVEN 2: Sí, buscadnos cuando os salga pelusilla. |
| PROBLEMAS: ¡Tíos, que os folle! |
| JOVEN 1: ¡Ooooh! |
MLE in Film: Comparing the translation into Spanish of Ali G Indahouse and Attack the Block.

Probs utters a very strong offensive slur for such a young boy, but the gang find it funny rather than intimidating. This specific insult can be considered, according to Ljung’s (2011) taxonomy, an “unfriendly suggestion”, as well as a “ritual insult”, because it involves insulting the addressee’s mother which, in turn, places it under “the mother (family) theme” and also “the sexual activity theme”. It seems that there is a tendency for male teenagers to use the mother theme (colloquially called “yo’ mama” jokes), and there are examples of this in both films (see example (2)). Although the mother theme is widely used in Spanish taboo language (as in *me cago en tu madre*), it is not so common to combine the mother theme and the sexual activity theme (“Chúpasela a tu madre” is not used in Spanish and would not be deemed coherent). However, the aim of insults is to place the stress on the perlocutionary effect of the utterance (the reaction of the listener); in other words, to create an impact. The translation of such constructions must focus on the effect of the insult, hence the functional translation in this extract.

It is said that in the translation process of audiovisual texts, taboo language is often toned down or neutralized. In this specific instance, however, I believe the choice of the abusive remark for the TT is equal in perlocutionary force, despite losing some creativity, which is perhaps what is most surprising about it (coming out of a child’s mouth). The insult in the TT is more widespread in Spanish teenage speech, but it is strong enough.

The general tendency throughout ATB is to maintain the youths’ crass language: *fuck* is often translated to *joder* and its variants and, as an adjective, it is translated to *putos*. In example (7), it is clear that Ali G follow a similar pattern:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Example (7)</th>
<th>Ali is shown the marihuana and pornography held in customs. fucking off (00:36:04).</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Ali:</strong> Well, I is gonna have to to compile me report now, so <strong>if you wouldn’t mind fucking off.</strong> Customs Police Officer: Certainly, Sir.</td>
<td><strong>Ali:</strong> Bueno, ahora tendré que elaborar mi informe así que, <strong>machote, que te den por el culo.</strong> AGENTE DE ADUANAS: Desde luego, señor.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
In the ST there is a clash between a mitigator that indicates a polite request “if you wouldn’t mind” and the expletive used to indicate what is requested (“fucking off”). This is a source of humour or sarcasm which is lost in the TT. Again, the TT uses a vocative to make the utterance more forceful. The use of “que te den por el culo” is certainly equivalent in force although it might not be in sarcasm.

6.5. Culture-specific items

The use of cultural referents in texts of fiction is never arbitrary. They are inserted in the text to delineate characters and to create the fictional world they live in: it is a way of establishing a network of references where the audience can place the narrative. The translator must then decide which sections of the network they want to transfer to the target text, and which are better left behind or altered. The strategies to do this are multiple, but most scholars agree on two tendencies: foreignizing, or prioritising the references to the source culture, and domesticating, or prioritising the understanding of the target audience, even if it places the verisimilitude of the fictional reality at stake.

In the case of these films, there are many cultural referents from entertainment which are popular among teenagers, such as videogames and cartoons. In both texts they are used in contrast to the tough image the characters want to portray, so as to remind the audience that they are in fact still young and innocent in many ways. The manner of dealing with the references in translation, however, is radically different: in ATB they are all maintained (foreignized), and in Ali G practically all of them are adapted (or domesticated).

It is to be expected that a great deal of the culture-specific items in ATB be repeated, because they also belong to the teenage Spanish cultural system, as “both the source and target cultures belong to the same cultural macrosystem (the West)” (Lorenzo & Pereira, 2003, p. 289). For instance, Harry Potter character Dobby; the Play Station game Fifa; anime Naruto;
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or Nintendo game Pokémon: these are all names that Spanish teenagers are familiar with (or were in 2011). On the other hand, it is not so clear that newspaper names such as The Guardian or The Sun should be in the Spanish collective consciousness (see example (8)).

(8) The gang discuss what they should do with the alien (00:13:17).

| DENNIS: We’re gettin’ rich off that, you know, ‘cos we discovered it. | DENNIS: Nos vamos a forrar. Lo hemos descubierto nosotros. |
| PEST: eBay fam. | PEST: Lo venderemos por eBay. |
| BIGGZ: Alert the media. Exclusive rights to the highest bidder! | BIGGZ: Avisaremos a la prensa. Exclusiva para el que más pague. |
| MOSES: The Sun, fam. The Sun believes anything. | MOSES: El Sun tío. El Sun se cree todo. |
| PEST: Nonono, The Sun’ll just dress it up like one of them page three girls, bruv. | PEST: Nono, el Sun simplemente lo vestirá como una tía. |
| DENNIS: You wanna call The Guardian, blud. If it’s a proper paper then people will believe it. | DENNIS: Mejor al Guardian. Si es un periódico serio la gente se lo creerá. |
| JEROME: Tabloids pay more money bruv. | JEROME: Tío, los tabloides dan más pasta. |
| BIGGZ: You can’t call the paper. The FBI will confiscate it off us. | BIGGZ: Pasando de periódicos, el FBI lo confiscaría! |
| DENNIS: FBI? This is England fam, there ain’t no FBI. It’s Section Six or somethin’ innit... | DENNIS: FBI? En Inglaterra no hay FBI. Está la Constitución o algo así. |
| MOSES: We need an expert to verify that thing, you know... | MOSES: Necesitamos que lo examine un experto... |
| BIGGZ: Look in the yellow pages and look for them, like those scientist people who know about all them meteor things... | BIGGZ: Mira en las páginas amarillas, algún científico de esos que saben sobre de meteoritos. |
| DENNIS: Yellow pages? What, under ‘A’ for Alien?!? | DENNIS: Claro, tío, el A de alienigena. |
| JEROME: We need a lawyer boy. A manager or something. | JEROME: Necesitamos un abogado, un representante o algo. |

Keeping all the references in this scene entails that a lot of the information is lost in translation: the target audience probably does not recognize the reputation of these two newspapers, nor why The Sun would want to dress the alien up as a girl. Moreover, although Dennis also gets confused about the British Secret Service in the TT, the Constitución has little to do with the MI6. Finally, the translator could have made the most of the fact that there is an equivalent in Spain of the TV contest Britain’s Got Talent called Tienes talento, and translated the play on words for “Alien, tienes talento”.

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The domestication of culture-specific items in the dubbing of *Ali G* is certainly its strong point. Comic duo Gomaespuma took most of the references and replaced them with references to the Spanish context. And not only that, but they also inserted extra references to create intertextuality (example (9)) or to salvage satire (example (10)). In doing so, however, the references to hip-hop or Rastafari culture, which are numerous, are removed, despite them constituting an important part of Ali’s personality. Examples include rappers Tupac and Biggie, or the aforementioned Jah².

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>(9)</th>
<th>Ali is tied to a pole semi-naked and attempts to get an erection in order to impress a girl (00:18:39).</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

| **Ali:** Grow, **Biggie**, grow. I has gotta get a semi lob-on. Jennifer Lopez, Jennifer Lopez. Jennifer Lopez lezzing off with the one from Destiny’s Child with the big thighs. | **Ali:** **Crece, Carlitos, crece. Arranca por Dios, Carlos.** Jennifer Lopez, Jennifer Lopez, Jennifer Lopez haciéndose un bollo con Pocahontas, con esos muslitos que tiene. |

In example (9), Ali says something which reminds the Spanish viewer of the famous sentence uttered by Luis Moya in 1998 at the World Cup Rally GB, as Carlos Sainz’s engine failed just metres away from the finish line: “Trata de arrancarlo, Carlos, por Dios”. Of course, it would be unthinkable for a British young man like Ali to know where the sentence comes from, or that it has since penetrated the Spanish language, but the inconsistency is forgotten because the whole dubbing follows the same pattern. In the same excerpt, “the big-thighed one in Destiny’s Child” is replaced by Pocahontas. The R&B group Destiny’s Child were relatively known in Spain in the early ‘00s, but still Gomaespuma universalise and change it to *Pocahontas*, a character made popular by Disney. There are many references to cartoons in the TT (*The Lion King* character Mufasa, or Digimon, among others) which do not appear in the ST, as a way of making the character more naïve and childish than he already is in the ST.

² The translation and naturalisation of culture-specific items in *Ali G* is also discussed by Botella Tejera (2006).
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In other scenes, culture-specific items from Spain are introduced simply to make the film more relatable to the TT audience, as can be seen in example (10):

(10) Ali and Ricky C attempt to rap in the car (00:09:26).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>English</th>
<th>Spanish</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ali: I is feelin’ it. You rocking it?</td>
<td>Ali: Ay, que me da. ¿A ti te da?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ricky C: I’m feelin’ it.</td>
<td>Ricky C: A mí me pone.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ricky C: I’m doin’ it.</td>
<td>Ricky C: Está viniendo.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ali: I’m feelin’ it.</td>
<td>Ali: <strong>Iker Casillas</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ricky C: I’m kissin’ it.</td>
<td>Ricky C: ¡Qué maravilla!</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Apart from creating a TT that is closer to the audience, there is the added value of the absurdity of a boy from the UK talking about Spanish footballer Iker Casillas. In this case, inconsistency between the oral and visual channels plays in favour of the TT.

6.6. MLE and style-shifting

MLE and the characters who speak it are depicted in these films as a portrayal of otherness: as teenagers they embody counter-culture by definition, but in the case of *ATB* they also belong to an ethnic minority as well as a marginalised group due to their social class. Otherness cannot be made clear without the presence of other characters who symbolize the norm. It is represented in *Ali G* by the Members of Parliament, other politicians, and the media, and in *ATB*, by Sam, the nurse, Brewis, the university student, and the police.

It is interesting how many of these characters try to imitate the protagonists’ speech in some way or another: they shift style to make the social gap between themselves and the teenagers narrower, to both save and threaten face (i.e. to appear either friendlier or more intimidating). By doing so, they are acknowledging their difference. Considering that the linguistic distance between varieties is not as noticeable in the TT, these changes in style are a true challenge.
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In *ATB*, Sam is scared of the teenagers because they have mugged her only minutes before, but her flat is the first place the gang finds refuge from the aliens. Of course, she wants nothing to do with them. In order to make them leave and make herself appear less vulnerable, she uses a series of swear words as intensifiers. The gang, although not scared in the slightest, are surprised at her choice of words, for it clashes with who they expect her to be (example (11)).

| (11) Sam attempts to make them leave, threatening to hit them with a guitar (00:38:25). |
|---------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------|
| **SAM:** Get out of my **fucking** flat! | **SAM:** ¡Fuera ahora mismo de mi casa! |
| **DENNIS:** Shut up... | **DENNIS:** ¡Cierra el pico! |
| **SAM:** I said get out! | **SAM:** ¡He dicho que fuera de mi casa! |
| **MOSES:** Yo, snitch, calm yourself. This ain’t about you no more. | **MOSES:** Tía, cálmate, ¿vale? la cosa ya no va contigo. |
| **SAM:** If you come anywhere near me I swear I’ll scream this **fucking** block down! | **SAM:** ¡Como os acercéis a mí, gritaré hasta que se entere todo el puto bloque! |
| (…) [The gang tells her there are more important things to worry about.] | (…) [The gang tells her there are more important things to worry about.] |
| **SAM:** Whatever the **fuck** they are, they’re not **fucking** aliens. | **SAM:** Me da igual qué **coño** sean, no son alienígenas. |
| **DENNIS:** You swear too much, man. | **DENNIS:** ¡Dices un **puñao** de bababrotas! |
| **PEST:** Yeah, you got a potty mouth, man. | **PEST:** Sí, pareces una camionera. |

The first and last *fucking* are left out in the translation, possibly due to isochrony restrictions, which makes some of the force of Sam’s utterances fail in the TT. It is unclear in the dubbing why Dennis and Pest are so surprised and feel like they have to remark on her swearing, although she is visibly enraged.

Another noteworthy example of style-shifting is the case of Brewis, a posh university student who ends up getting caught up in the adventure. He makes a very obvious effort to shift style as can be seen in example (12).
The gang is discussing what to do with the creature, when Brewis joins in the conversation (00:14:02).

**BREWIS:** Jokes, man, jokes... Actually, I did this zoology module at uni. Primatology, mammalogy, all that shizzle. That thing in there don't belong to no taxon I've ever studied.

(...)

**BREWIS:** Wa’s gwanin?

**YOUTH 1:** Ai, move, blud!

**YOUTH 2:** Allow it, allow it, allow it.

The gang is not impressed by Brewis’ performance: in the first place, because of the slang he uses (“jokes, man” and “all that shizzle”) and the double negation, but the highlight of this fragment is his attempt at fist-bumping Biggz as he uses a Jamaican Creole form of greeting “Wa’s gwanin” (from “what’s going on?”). In the TT, Brewis’ greeting and his body language do not combine at all, for “encantado” is a formal way of greeting, and a fist-bump is associated to urban culture.

There is another scene in *ATB* where Hi-Hatz, the drug dealer, comes out of the lift in the block covered in blood after being attacked by an alien. Brewis bumps into him and is terrified, and Hi-Hatz simply says “You better get the next one, blood”. “Blood” or “blud” is used here as a vocative, but the dubbing says “Mejor espérate al siguiente. Sangre.” which does not make sense (although he is indeed covered in blood). Instances like these lead one to think that the translators perhaps did not work with the visuals when translating but worked only with the script, which is not uncommon in the industry. Despite their efforts, in audiovisual translation the audio has to be considered together with the image, and not doing so can result in incoherencies like these ones.

As far as *Ali G* is concerned, the barrier between speakers of MLE and the establishment is more rigid, and style-shifting only happens when they are intoxicated (Ali spikes some tea that is meant for diplomats which makes them all relax and forget their manners). In the TT, on the other hand, the MPs utter expressions that completely clash with their expected register.
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For instance, Deputy Prime minister David Carlton says “Bring him [Ali] in” and “It’s been a pleasure meeting you”, but in the Spanish film he says “Tráigamelo, coño” and “Ala machote, que te den”. The Prime Minister also says things like “Va a haber ondonadas de hostias”, which in the ST is “Armageddon is breaking out. Help!”. This technique in Gomaespuma’s *Ali G* is not accidental. Another layer of absurdity is created on top of the film’s general ridiculous narrative and dialogue, which adds humour to the text.
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7. Conclusions

The work at hand has aimed to shed light on the translation of a variety of English with very specific features, for it displays specific geloectal traits, but also cronolectal, and social characteristics. This entails that the translation has to deal with dialectal traits, as well as social and age-group features, which is far from an easy task. Although the films have many elements in common, they are observed as very different texts in their dubbed versions. This is probably due to the priorities in translation and TT production.

*Ali G Indahouse* is a completely absurd comedy and, stripped of gags and humour, the film is left with a very simple storyline. Moreover, the jokes are based on the identity of the main character, which is largely reflected in the way he speaks: the way he pronounces words, and the cultural referents he uses in his jokes. A traditional translation for the dubbing into Spanish would most probably have resulted in a completely unoriginal film. By commissioning the dubbing to an established comedy duo like Gomaespuma, the dialogue acquired its own personality. The analysis of its translation shows that it is a dubbing defined by replacing dialectal traits in the ST with scattered non-standard pronunciation (Czennia’s second strategy), adding a great deal of vocatives, and introducing many slang words and even adding new ones. The translation of swearing is also not a problem, which defies the alleged censuring of taboo language in dubbing. It can be said that, linguistically, they manage to adapt Ali’s idiolect into the Spanish language without having to resort to a specific dialect.

His pronunciation and choice of slang, however, is not what makes the dubbing of *Ali G* something worth mentioning. It is the naturalisation of its culture-specific items that creates a film interesting to watch in Spain. The inconsistency that is created from the dubbed scripted and the visuals is everything but a drawback for the TT, because it simply contributes to the comical film it is designed to be. In order to increase the hilarity, the characters who represent
MLE in Film: Comparing the translation into Spanish of *Ali G Indahouse* and *Attack the Block*.

Formality and use standard English in the ST suddenly come up with absurd remarks that belong to a lower register in the TT. This defies all expectations that the Spanish audience has of dubbing; if *Ali G Indahouse* is a satire about British society, I would dare say that Gomaespuma’s version of the dialogue is a satire of dubbing.

On the other side of the spectrum is *Attack the Block*, a film produced nearly ten years later which provides a much more faithful rendering of authentic MLE. In the TT most of the dialectal features are disregarded: the pronunciation is standardised, and the number of vocatives is reduced considerably. Some of the more usual slang in dubbed texts is used, but most of it is also generalised. Lastly, the culture-specific items are all maintained as they are in the ST and, as far as style-shifting is concerned, the strategies do not manage to convey a shift in style like the ones in the ST. It can be said that doing away with the L3 or the variety in the TT impedes style-shifting. All in all, although some teenage language is conveyed through slang and swearing, the dubbing overall follows a pattern of standardisation, and follows Czennia’s fifth strategy: standardisation of dialectal features but use of orality markers of the TL.

The intervention of comedians (Gomaespuma) to dub a comedian (Sacha Baron Cohen) proves to be a productive technique. The presence of an external agent leads to the prioritisation of Delabastita’s comic function of Ali’s speech: making the audience laugh is the main aim of this translation, and by defying register and dialect conventions, Gomaespuma compensate for the possible drawbacks of dubbing such a text. It would be interesting to consider what would have become of *Attack the Block* had some teenagers from Spanish urban areas been asked for advice on its translation. The use of varieties in dubbing, however, can sometimes provoke offended reactions from the audience, who do not want their variety being stereotyped. It is evident that, over the years, the dubbing industry has created traditional conventions which are
difficult to break away from, and can only be done so in extreme cases where humour is paramount like in *Ali G*.

The risk that was taken with *Ali G* is not applied to *Attack the Block*, among many reasons, because the latter is not a comedy per se, but a sci-fi film. However, there is an element of absurdity in a group of teenagers having to face an alien invasion alone, and the film is replete with comic instances. The choice of dubbing strips it of this comical element because the standardisation of the language makes the audience associate it to other films in the genre of sci-fi or action, which do not have the same element of satire.

Of course, technical constraints have been considered in this analysis, and they can account for some of the choices. Nevertheless, the question must be raised as to whether synchronisation is truly such an unbreakable convention, considering that the audience is always willing to participate in the suspension of linguistic disbelief. Moreover, an element of authorship in the dubbed text seems to contribute to a more elaborate dubbed version. Perhaps improving working conditions for agents involved in the translation and dubbing process, especially actors, could lead to higher prestige in the industry and, in turn, dubbed films could acquire a more personal style and could more safely defy conventions and a tradition which homogenises film language.

All in all, I consider that in the dubbing of varieties and, more specifically, youth style, a freer translation can compensate for the loss of information that translating entails. This project has attempted to provide a description of the translation of language varieties in audiovisual texts, but hopefully further research into dubbing practices will lead to new approaches which will definitely contribute to the study of language variation in the field of Translation Studies.
8. Bibliography


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MLE in Film: Comparing the translation into Spanish of *Ali G Indahouse* and *Attack the Block*.


**Audiovisual references**
