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**Portrayal of Non-Standard English Varieties in the  
Media:  
A case study of Scottish, Indian and Chicano English**

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## **Abbreviations**

AAVE → African American Vernacular English

ChcE → Chicano English

IndE → Indian English

StE → Standard English

## Abstract

The representation of non-standard varieties has sometimes led to the identification of some sort of stereotypes with their speakers. Previous work has looked at the representation of some non-standard varieties from the social point of view, such as Isaacs (2010), Ramasubramanian (2005). However, few attention has been paid to the linguistic nature of these varieties and how accurate they have been portrayed in the media. In this piece of work, three non-standard varieties, namely Indian English, Scottish English and Chicano English have been analyzed from the linguistic point of view in different media products. The aim was to know whether those varieties that had been more researched on from the linguistic point of view would be better represented and whether phonological features would be more abundant than morphosyntactic ones in their representation. After analyzing a different film on each variety it was found out that the variety which had been most documented was indeed better portrayed in the film. Also phonological features were much more attested in the products than morphosyntactic ones. Results also showed deeply contrasting results between both types of features since the percentages of the representation of unique morphosyntactic features of the varieties were much lower than expected. Finally, this piece of work has contributed at gaining more knowledge about the way non-standard varieties are represented in the media and the compensation strategies that filmmakers use to make the audience aware of a distinct way of talking that is not the standard.

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**Keywords:** *morphosyntactic features; phonological features; Indian English; Scottish English; Chicano English; non-standard varieties; representation in media.*

## 1. Introduction

*Non-standard English* refers to those varieties of English that differ from the Standard with respect to the grammar and the phonology. They have been subject to the attribution of stereotypes by being considered “bad” English. Along the history of mainstream media, filmmakers have focused their attention on the representation of certain non-standard English varieties on the big screen. Because the media is considered to be a way of fostering credibility and engaging with reality one would think that directors would try to be as accurate as possible when representing the speech of the characters.

Although work on how different non-standard varieties have been portrayed in the media has been done (Isaacs 2010; Ramasubramanian 2005), not much attention has been paid to the purely linguistic features of these varieties. Therefore, the aim of this paper is a linguistic one, as it analyzes how accurate different non-standard English varieties are portrayed focusing on the following research questions:

RQ1: Will those varieties that have been more documented according to the literature be better represented in films than those that have been less researched?

RQ2: What kind of features (phonological vs. morphosyntactic) will be more abundant in the representation of different varieties?

It is hypothesized that those varieties that have been more documented from the linguistic point of view will be better represented because, as has been pointed out earlier, television media is a way of fostering reality. Therefore, because directors have more information on the different features that a given variety has, they will try to represent them as accurately as possible.

On the other hand, it is hypothesized that phonological features will be more abundant in the representation of the different varieties than morphosyntactic features

based on the negative reception that the latter have sometimes encountered (for further discussion see section 1.1).

## **1.1. Literature Review**

One of the non-standard English varieties that has been most researched regarding media representation is African American Vernacular English (AAVE). Isaacs (2010) focused on the speech of this variety to see how African Americans were portrayed in the media. However, in order to analyze whether television media introduced accurate features of the given racial group, he only assessed whether they spoke with an accent, without AAVE accent or whether they spoke clearly. No more detailed description was provided on the linguistic features that the characters used. Moreover, Ramasubramanian (2005) looked at the portrayal of another non-standard variety in the media, Indian English, which has not been as documented as AAVE has, as can be proved by looking at the literature. In order to look at the accuracy of character representation, their speech was taken into account. However, no accurate description of the linguistic features was provided again. Characters were divided between speaking broken English, accented Indian English or good English. The aim of both studies, then, was not to look at how the different varieties were portrayed, but to look at how different racial groups were depicted in the media and how these representations led to the construction of negative stereotypes.

Finally, as has been said from research on Hollywood movies, the representation of multilingual encounters including speakers of non-standard English gives way to a misrepresentation and stereotyping of the speakers of those varieties (Bleichenbacher, 2012). However, the features that have been used by film directors to give way to the negative stereotypes have not been further investigated.

On the other hand, the features that a variety is characterised by can be divided into morphosyntactic and phonological features. Non-standard syntactic features have been sometimes devalued as being bad English, whereas phonological differences are believed to be regional differences that are neither right or wrong (Milroy & Milroy, 1993). Donnell and Todd (1991) also argued that film directors in an attempt to emphasize their main characters in contrast to the minor ones, idealise their speech through the use of Standard English (StE). Thus, the former hypothesis was justified on the grounds that if directors do not want to be judged as writing bad English they will tend to place more realism on the phonology than on the syntax.

## **1.2. Description of varieties under study**

The given study took as the object of analysis Scottish English, it being considered one of the most documented varieties of English. The other two varieties were Indian English (IndE) and Chicano English (ChcE), which have been much less documented than the previous one. This was supported by the vast amount of research that could be found on Scottish English in comparison with the limited research that could be found on IndE and even less on ChcE.

With regard to IndE two types of grammar exist in India. At one end of the continuum we encounter Standard IndE which is extremely similar to StE except for some differences in the phonology. At the other end, there is Vernacular IndE, which shows strong identification with local communities and is the one used in lower functions. The features of Vernacular IndE are summarized below based on Bhatt (2004), Gargesh (2004) and Sailaja (2009). Morphosyntactic features (i-ii) are common to other non-standard varieties whereas features (iii-viii) are unique to IndE resulting from contact with local languages of India.

Feature	Phenomena
Monophthongization of diphthongs	FACE and GOAT vowel sets are realized as <i>Face</i> [e:]; <i>goat</i> [o:]
Post-vocalic /r/	Trilled /r/ is pronounced.
Non-aspiration of /p,t,k/	Non-aspiration of voiceless stops in syllable-initial position.
Merge of /v,w/	There is overlap between both consonants. They are produced as a labio-dental approximant /v/. <i>Power</i> realized as [pa:vər]
Realization of /θ, ð/	Non-existent. They are realized as: /θ/ → /t̪/ <i>thought</i> [t̪ot] /ð/ → /d̪/ <i>then</i> [d̪en]
Retroflexed consonants	/t, d/ tend to be retroflexed. <i>Certificate</i> realized as [sərt̪ɪfɪke:t̪] <i>London</i> realized as [lɒnd̪ən]

Table 1. Phonological features of Indian English. Gargesh (2004); Sailaja (2009)

Post-vocalic /r/ and retroflexed alveolar consonants are the features that suffer more variation. Null post-vocalic /r/ can be found as well as alveolar /t, d/. Variation can be found from speaker to speaker or in the same speaker depending on the context (Gargesh, 2004; Sailaja, 2009).

Feature	Example
Null arguments (sub/obj pro-drop)	<i>He said that <b>pro</b> would come tomorrow</i> <i>A: Is he in his office?</i> <i>B: Sorry, <b>pro</b> left just now only</i>
Null expletive subjects	<i>Here <b>pro</b> is not safe to wait</i> <i><b>Pro</b> rained yesterday only</i>
Inversion/ adjunction in <i>wh</i> -questions. They only move the <i>wh</i> -phrase to the left-periphery. No inversion in Yes/No Questions	<i><b>What he</b> has eaten?</i> <i><b>You will</b> come?</i>
Invariance in tag questions	<i>You have taken my book, <b>isn't it?</b></i> <i>You said you'll do the job, <b>isn't it?</b></i>
Focuser "only". Used to express the presupposition-assertion structure of an utterance	<i>He will buy over there tickets <b>only</b></i> <i>These women wear everyday expensive clothes <b>only</b></i>
Topicalization. Any constituent in the clause can be topicalized	<i><b>Yesterday</b>, I went to see a movie</i> <i><b>In the park</b>, the bombs were placed</i>
Use of progressive with static verbs	<i>I am <b>liking</b> it</i> <i>You may be <b>knowing</b> it</i>

Omission of definite and indefinite articles <i>a/an, the</i>	<i>What is wrong with <b>pro</b> watch?</i> <i>We had group <b>pro</b> decision</i>
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Table 2. Morphosyntactic features of Indian English. Bhatt (2004); Sailaja (2009)

Regarding feature (i), pro-drop of subjects and objects occurs depending on the formality of the context. Therefore, intra-speaker variation can be found depending on the context.

Concerning Scottish English, speakers in Scotland also move along a continuum from Broad Scots to Standard Scottish English. Speakers situate themselves at some point on a continuum and move along it according to the contextual situation. A lot of research has been done in an attempt to represent this variety from a linguistic point of view. For the purpose of this paper, a summary of the most prominent non-standard features of Scottish English, especially those closer to the Broad Scots variety is provided in the following tables. The summary is based on the works by Miller (2004), Stuart-Smith (2004) and Milroy and Milroy (1993). Morphosyntactic features (i, vi, xii) have been attested in other non-standard varieties, whereas the remaining ones are unique to Scottish English.

Feature	Phenomena
/u/-fronting	High fronted vowel in the GOOSE/FOOT set. It is realized as [u̟]
Pronunciation of /ɪ/	Opening of /ɪ/ into [ɛ̃]
Scottish Vowel Length Rule (SVLR)	Vowels are phonetically long before voiced fricatives, /r/ and at word boundary. The vowel in <i>breathe</i> is longer than in <i>brief</i>
Pronunciation of /a/, /ɔ/	The vowels in the TRAP/PALM/BATH set are realized as /a/. The vowels in the LOT/ THOUGHT/ CLOTH set are realized as /ɔ/
Monophthongization of diphthongs	They are usually all monophthongized. FACE/GOAT → /e/ SQUARE → /er/ OUT → /ʊ/
Retention of post-vocalic /r/	Post-vocalic /r/ is retained
Pronunciation of /s, z/	Apico-alveolar place of articulation

/t/- glottalling	Non-initial /t/ is realized with a glottal stop, e.g. <i>bottle</i> , <i>butter</i> [ʔ]
Pronunciation of /x, ɲ/	[x] pronounced for /k/ as in <i>loch</i> [ɲ] pronounced for <wh> as in <i>what</i>
Pronunciation of /θ, ð/	Both consonants are realized as voiceless dental fricatives [θ]
l-vocalization	/l/ is generally vocalized in coda position <i>Milk</i> realized as [mɪɹk]

Table 3. Phonological features of Scottish English. Stuart-Smith (2004)

Feature	Example
Regularization of past tense and past participle forms	<i>Sellt</i> ( <i>sold</i> ) <i>Tellt</i> ( <i>told</i> ) <i>Took</i> ( <i>taken</i> )
Regularization between singular and plural nouns	<i>Wifes</i> for <i>wives</i> <i>Leafs</i> for <i>leaves</i>
Pronouns <i>Yous/ yous yins</i> > <i>you</i> (pl) <i>Us</i> > <i>me</i> with <i>give</i> , <i>show</i> , <i>lend</i> <i>Hisself</i> , <i>theirselves</i> > <i>yourself</i> <i>Two selves</i> > <i>ourselves</i> <i>Myself</i> > <i>me</i> or <i>I</i>	<i>Can you lend us a quid?</i> <i>Me and Jimmy are on Monday our two selves</i> (=by ourselves) <i>Myself and Andy changed and ran onto the pitch</i>
<i>Thae</i> ( <i>those</i> ) > <i>them</i>	<i>Thae cakes was awfy dear</i> (= <i>These cakes were very dear</i> )
Adverbs. They do not add <i>-ly</i> to create adverbs	<i>They drove on real good</i> <i>Drive slow</i>
Number agreement. Plural subject nouns combine with <i>is</i> and <i>was</i>	<i>There's no bottles</i> <i>Is there any biscuits left?</i>
Negation. Use of the particles: - <i>No</i> , <i>not</i> - <i>Nae</i> (added to modals and do) - <i>Amn't</i> (found in tag questions)	<i>She's no leaving</i> <i>You can no come to the party if you dinnae want tae</i> <i>I'm coming with you, amn't I?</i>
Modals - <b>MUST</b> → conclusion not obligation - <b>NEED</b> → main verb - <b>CAN'T</b> , <b>CANNOT</b> , <b>CANNAE</b> → lack of permission - Double modal verbs in clauses	<i>This mustn't be the place</i> <i>Need you leave immediately?</i> <i>You have to can drive a car to get the job</i>
Use of past tense to express perfect tense	<i>The electrician just phoned</i>
Conditionals: replacement of past tense verb by <i>would</i> + <i>verb</i> , and plusquamperfect by <i>would</i> + <i>have</i> + <i>participle</i>	<i>If she would come to see things for herself</i> <i>If she would have come to see things for herself</i>

Direct questions: Use of <i>how</i> instead of <i>why</i> Use of <i>whereabouts</i> instead of <i>where</i> Use of <i>what time..at</i> instead of <i>when</i> Use of <i>what</i> instead of <i>which</i>	<i>Susan, how's your ankle? I can't walk on it I think. <b>How?</b></i> <i><b>Whereabouts</b> did you see him?</i> <i><b>What time</b> does it finish <b>at</b>?</i> <i><b>What book</b> have you been buying?</i>
Indirect questions have the same word order as direct questions	<i>I can't remember now <b>what was the reason</b> for it</i> <i>You sort of wonder <b>is it</b> better to be blind or deaf</i>
"e" found in tag question and imperatives. Also found at the beginning of declaratives to form tag questions.	<i>Has he <b>e</b>?</i> <i><b>E</b> Harry supports Celtic?</i>
Use of <i>the</i> with nouns denoting institutions, illnesses and periods of time	<i><b>the day</b> (today)</i> <i>they are at <b>the kirk</b> (the church)</i>
Use of "ken" for <i>you know, you see</i>	<i><b>Ken</b> John Ewan-he breeds spaniels</i> <i><b>Ken</b> there's big estate there</i>

Table 4. Morphosyntactic features of Scottish English. Miller (2004); Milroy & Milroy (1993).

The regularization drift shown in feature (i) involves past tense being regularized with *-ed* suffix, then *sellt* is *sell+ed* (*ed* → *t* after *l* and *n*), in contrast, past participles are regularized by using the past tense, regular or irregular forms of the given verbs, giving the example of: *take - took - took*.

Finally, ChcE is a variety of English spoken by Mexican Americans. They have acquired it as their first language, simultaneously with Spanish or in elementary school. Not so much research has been done from the linguistic point of view, which poses a difficulty when trying to establish the boundaries of its features. Nevertheless, the following non-standard features are the ones that the majority of authors agree to be the most defining of ChcE. Morphosyntactic features (i-x) are also common to other non-standard varieties and mainly involve reduction processes and negation. The remaining features are believed to be unique to ChcE. This summary is based on Fought (2003) and Santa Ana & Bayley (2004):

Feature	Phenomena
Fronting of /a/	Fronting of the vowel, it being more similar to the Spanish [a] <i>Talk</i> realized as [t <sup>h</sup> ak]

Vowel reduction	Less frequent vowel reduction. There is little centralization of /u/ and /i/ in unstressed syllables: <i>Together</i> realized as [tʰuɡeðəɪ] <i>because</i> realized as [bikəz]
Pronunciation of /θ/, /ð/	Interdental fricatives have apico-dental place of articulation. /θ/ and /ð/ are pronounced as [t̪ d̪] <i>Something</i> realized as [səm̪t̪ɪn] <i>Then</i> realized as [d̪en]
Consonant cluster reduction	Final consonant cluster reduction and other loss of consonants. <i>Last week</i> realized as [læs wik] <i>Met some</i> realized as [mesəm]

Table 5. Phonological features of Chicano English. Fought (2003); Santa Ana & Bayley (2004).

Feature	Example
Regularization of irregular verbs	<i>When she <b>striked</b> me with that...</i> <i>It was in the apple that the witch had <b>gave</b> Snow White that wasn't poisonous</i>
Variable absence of 3 <sup>rd</sup> sg -s	<i>If somebody <b>come</b> and <b>push</b> me</i>
Variable use of <i>is</i> and <i>was</i> with plural subjects	<i>And the <b>people</b> that live here <b>is</b> ...</i> <i><b>They was</b> like, you know little girls</i>
Frequent use of negative concord	<i>I <b>didn't</b> see <b>nothing</b> no more</i> <i>You really <b>can't</b> do <b>nothing</b> about it</i>
Use of <i>ain't</i> with present <i>be</i> and <i>have</i>	<i>It <b>ain't</b> okay, but...</i> <i>My name <b>ain't</b> exciting either.</i>
<i>Don't</i> used with singular and plural nouns	<i>She <b>don't</b> like it here in the courts and my dad well I'm not sure cause he <b>don't</b> live with us.</i>
Occasional use of zero copula	<i>...they <b>is</b> like, "you speak a little bit weird"</i>
Focuser <i>like</i>	<i>She was <b>like</b> a real thin lady</i> <i>So Nora <b>like</b> she was kind of <b>like</b> free, independent</i>
Quotative <i>go, be like, be all</i>	<i>Then some girl <b>goes</b> "eh they jumped you right?"</i> <i>She's <b>all</b>, "J., you better tell me".</i>
Zero subject pronouns	<i>I moved the door. <b>Pro</b> locks from the inside</i>
Use of <i>would</i> in <i>if</i> -clauses	<i>If I <b>woulda</b> been a gangster, I <b>woulda</b> been throwing signs up.</i> <i>If Thurman Thomas <b>wouldn't</b>'ve dropped those fumbles, then the Bills <b>woulda</b> won.</i>
Reported speech. Use of <i>tell</i> to introduce	<i>I <b>told</b> Elinore: "I that your brother?"</i>

Table 6. Morphosyntactic features of Chicano English. Fought (2003); Santa Ana & Bayley (2004).

Feature (x) has often been attributed to the influence of Spanish, as it is a pro-drop subject language. However, this correlation has been proved wrong, as most of its speakers acquire both languages from birth and it is also a feature attested in other non-standard varieties. Therefore, more research on other features of ChcE needs to be done in order to confirm this (Santa Ana & Bayley, 2004: 389).

To sum up, by analyzing the most recurrent features from the three varieties in the films selected, the two research questions formulated in the Introduction will be answered. This will allow us to discover which variety is better portrayed and what type of features are more potentiated by film directors.

## 2. Methodology

In order to evaluate the accuracy of the portrayal of the three varieties, an analysis on a different film on each variety was made where features described in the previous section were contrasted to excerpts from each product. The films being analysed were *Slumdog Millionaire* (2008) for IndE; *American Me* (1992) for ChcE and *Trainspotting* (1996) for Scottish English. The search of morphosyntactic features was conducted by analysing the scripts of the films and the search of phonological features by analysing the audiovisual resources.

Films were selected based on three criteria, namely, (i) the amount of appearance of speakers of the given varieties throughout the movies, (ii) the background of the characters, and (iii) the amount of dialogues among speakers of the same variety. Films had to show characters belonging to the working or lower classes because, as stated before, they are the ones that use more non-standard features. Also, dialogues were held among speakers of the same variety, as the fact of speaking to speakers of StE would

affect their speech.

40 minutes of speech from each movie were analyzed. The analysis contained different native characters of each variety to see how the different features were potentiated, whether they were characteristic of the speech of one character or whether they remained constant across characters. Also, the scenes selected belonged to different parts of the movies so that consistency could be checked. Finally, following Walshe’s (2009) methodology for film analysis, the features summarized in the Introduction were classified as occurring or not in the different products. Examples of each morphosyntactic feature that was attested in the products were provided as well as a phonetic transcription of a selection of excerpts from each film. A distinction between unique and common morphosyntactic features of each variety was kept, as it will be fundamental to see which variety was best portrayed.

### 3. Results

#### 3.1. Morphosyntactic features

The following tables show which morphosyntactic features were attested in the different products. The distinction between unique and common features has been kept, as well as an example of each feature that was attested in the data. Table 1 contains the features of IndE attested in *Slumdog Millionaire*. Table 2 contains the features of Scottish English attested in *Trainspotting* and Table 3 contains ChcE features found in *American Me*.

	Feature	Occurring	Example
<b>Common to other varieties</b>	Null arguments (sub/obj pro-drop)	YES	Salim: “ <b>Pro</b> Left a message at reception. <b>Pro</b> Waited weeks for you in Nagpur.”
	Null expletive subject	YES	Jamal: “As you can see. <b>Pro</b> was completed on schedule in top class fashion.”

<b>Unique to IndE</b>	Inversion/ adjunction in <i>wh</i> -questions. No inversion in <i>Yes/No</i> Questions	NO	
	Invariance in tag questions	NO	
	Focuser “only”	NO	
	Topicalization	NO	
	Progressive with static verbs	NO	
	Omission of definite and indefinite articles <i>a/an, the</i>	YES	Constable Srinivas: “ <b>Pro</b> Suspects absconded: two males, early teens, one female, early teen.”

Table 7. Instances of IndE features attested in *Slumdog Millionaire*

The only features that were attested in the product were null arguments and the omission of articles. These were attested in the speech of different characters and appeared throughout the whole film. However, there were instances in which articles and arguments were overt. This depended on the formality of the context. When characters spoke to non-native Indians they pronounced them. Also, even though there were no instances of non-inverted structures in Yes/No questions, there were examples of truncation in questions as in: “Javed: “You killed him?””. This phenomenon also showed variation depending on the context. On the contrary, *Wh*-questions were always well-formed and there was variance in tag questions as it is the case in StE.

	<b>Feature</b>	<b>Occurring</b>	<b>Example</b>
<b>Common to other varieties</b>	Regularization of past tense and past participle forms	NO	
	Number agreement. Plural subject nouns combine with <i>is</i> and <i>was</i>	YES	Begbie: “ <b>There’s</b> young couples.”
	Indirect questions have the same word order as direct questions	NO	
<b>Unique to Scottish English</b>	Regularization between singular and plural nouns	NO	
	Pronouns	YES	Sick boy: “How are you feeling since you came off the skag? For <b>myself</b> , I’m bored.”
	<i>Thae (those) &gt; them</i>	NO	

	Adverbs. They do not add <i>-ly</i> to create adverbs	NO	
	Negation. Use of the particle <i>no</i>	YES	Begbie: “I’m <b>no</b> looking for trouble.”
	Double modal constructions	NO	
	Use of past tense to express perfect tense	NO	
	Conditionals: replacement of past tense verb with <i>would</i> + verb	YES	Sick Boy: “If she’d shag one punter from Edinburgh, she’d shag the fucking lot of us.”
	Direct questions. Use of <i>What</i> instead of <i>which</i>	YES	Woman: “ <b>What</b> do you see as your main strengths?”
	“e” found in tag question and imperatives.	YES	Renton: “What the fuck are you on these days e?”
	Use of <i>the</i> with nouns denoting institutions, illnesses, periods of time	YES	Tommy: “It’s <b>the</b> great outdoors.”
	Use of “ken” for <i>you know</i> , <i>you see</i>	YES	Begbie: “You <b>ken</b> me.”

Table 8. Instances of Scottish English features attested in *Trainspotting*

Regarding the use of negative particles, there were only attested instances of the particles *no* and *not*, which were found in the speech of different characters. Also, only non-standard forms of pronouns *myself* were found and *you* was sometimes used to refer to the possessive *your* (see Appendix A). Double modal constructions and the use of *need* as a main verb were not attested. Regarding direct questions only instances of *What* used instead of *Which* were attested. The use of *the* with nouns denoting institutions and the structure involving conditionals were not as potentiated as the use of “e” in tag questions and number agreement between plural nouns and singular verb forms, which appeared throughout the film in the speech of several characters.

	Feature	Occurring	Example
<b>Common to other varieties</b>	Regularization of irregular verbs.	NO	
	Variable absence of 3 <sup>rd</sup> sg -s	NO	
	Variable use of <i>is</i> and <i>was</i> with plural subjects	YES	Paulito: “ <b>This is the homeboys.</b> ”
	Frequent use of negative concord	YES	Santana: “I <b>didn’t</b> think <b>nothing.</b> ”
	Use of <i>ain’t</i> with present be and have	YES	Big Happy: “He <b>ain’t</b> Mexican, ese.”
	<i>Don’t</i> used with singular and plural nouns	YES	Ronnie Little: “ <b>He don’t</b> know nothing.”
	Occasional use of zero copula	YES	Santana: “Where <b>o</b> you vatos from?”
	Focuser <i>like</i>	NO	
	Zero subject pronouns	YES	Santana: “ <b>Pro</b> thought I knew it all.”
Quotative <i>go, be like, be all</i>	NO		
<b>Unique to ChcE</b>	Use of <i>would</i> in <i>if</i> -clauses	YES	Santana: “I was thinking maybe if you could, if you <b>would wanna</b> help me.”
	Reported speech. Use of <i>tell</i> to introduce questions	NO	

Table 9. Instances of ChcE features attested in *American Me*

All the features that were attested remained constant throughout the film in the speech of several characters. Subjects were dropped quite often. Also, there was frequent use of negative concord, as well as use of *ain’t* in negative sentences. On the contrary, the use of *would* in *if*-clauses was not consistent and the example in Table 9 was the only one attested. Also, it is worth noting that characters showed abundant use of Spanish vocabulary when they referred to objects or addressed other characters. Some examples are as follows: *ese, orale, vámonos, ruca, de volada, hombre, vato*. The use of *tell* and quotative verbs was also not attested.

A summary of the results obtained from each variety is provided below in the form of pie charts.

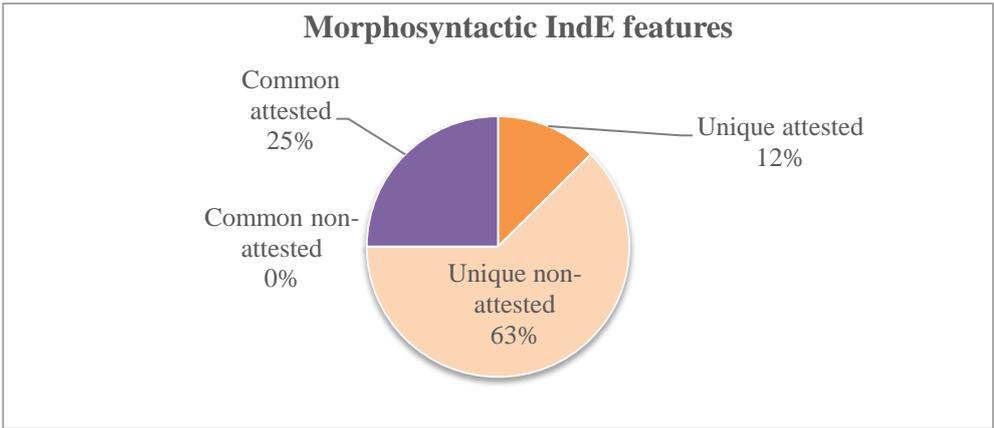


Figure 1. Chart of results of morphosyntactic IndE features

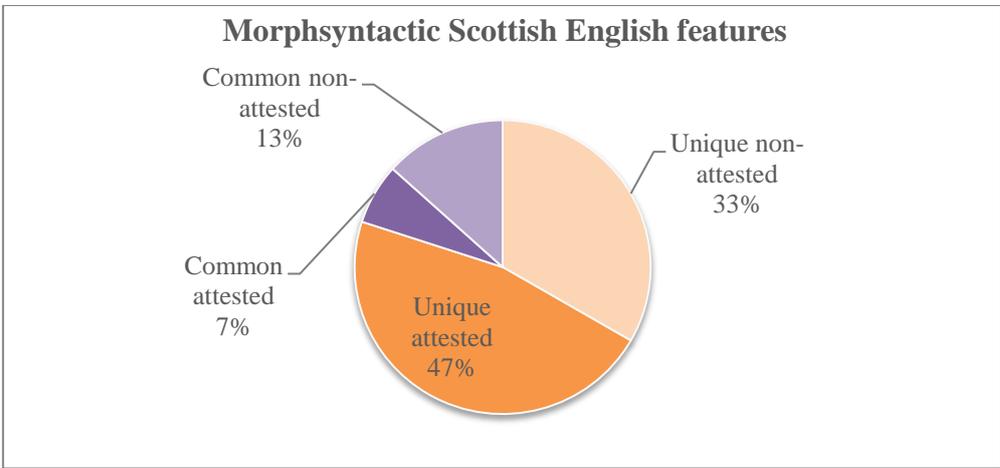


Figure 2. Chart of results of morphosyntactic Scottish English features

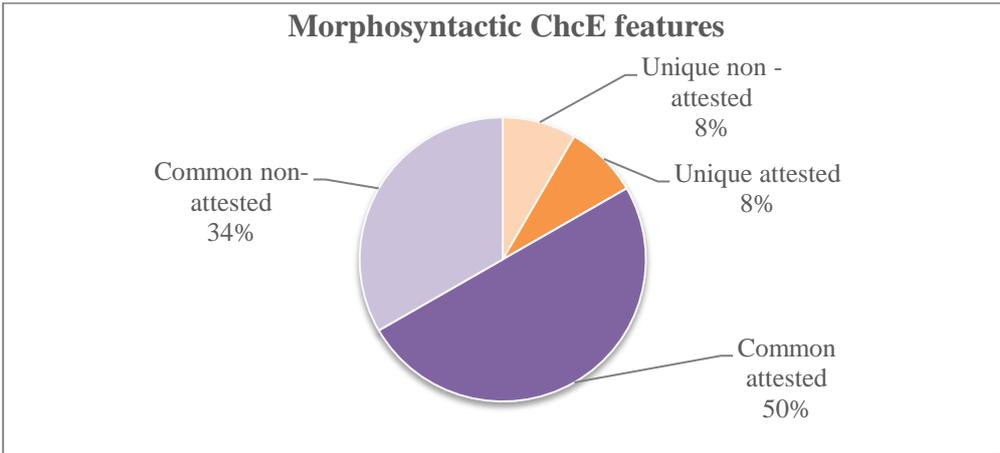


Figure 3. Chart of results of morphosyntactic ChcE features

The following figures display the percentage of use of morphosyntactic features attested in the three products. We can see that, as a whole, 58% of ChcE features (Fig.3)

were attested in the data, 54% of Scottish (Fig. 2) and 37% of IndE (Fig.1). However, results kept the difference between unique features and common features because a higher percentage of representation of unique features would indicate that more attention had been paid to the morphosyntax of that particular variety. Taking this view, the results show that 47% of unique features were attested in Scottish English, followed by 12% in IndE and, finally, 8% in ChcE (see Appendix C for a detailed classification of the features).

### 3.2. Phonological features

The following section contains 3 tables, one for each non-standard variety, with a short excerpt and a translation of each with the different phonological phenomena that were attested in the products.

Excerpt	Example	Feature
<p>Inspector: “You puzzle me, Slumdog. Admitting murder to avoid a charge of fraud is not exactly clever thinking. Now, why would you do that?”</p> <p>[jʊ 'pʌzl mi 'slʌmdɒg   əd' mɪtɪŋ 'mɜ:də tə ə 'vɔɪd ə 'tʃɑ:dʒ əv 'frɔ:d ɪz nɒt ɪk 'sæktli 'klevə 'tʃɪŋkɪŋ   nəʊ 'waɪ vʊd jʊ 'dʊ 'dæt ]</p>	<b>Admitting</b> – [əd' mɪtɪŋ]	Retroflexed/d/
	<b>Murder</b> – [' mɜ:də]	Retroflexed /d/
	<b>Avoid</b> - [ə' vɔɪd ]	Labio-dental approximant realization of /v/
	<b>Thinking</b> – [' tʃɪŋkɪŋ]	Pronunciation of <th>
	<b>Would</b> – [vʊd]	Labio-dental approximant realization of /w/
<p>Salim (kid): “I am the elder. I am the boss. For once, you do as I say.”</p> <p>[ai əm dɪ 'eldə   ai əm dɪ 'bɒs   fɔ 'wʌnz jʊ dʊ əz ə 'se:]</p>	<b>That</b> – [' dæt]	Pronunciation of <th>
	<b>The</b> – [dɪ]	Pronunciation of <th>
	<b>Elder</b> – [' eldə]	Retroflexed /d/
	<b>Say</b> – [' se:]	Monophthongization of diphthong /ei/

Table 10. Phonological IndE features found in *Slumdog Millionaire*

All phonological features described in the Introduction were attested in the data in the speech of different characters. Variation in the realization of post-vocalic /r/ as

well as retroflexed consonants was found inter- and intra-speakers. It was also noted that some characters who were played by different actors (kid and adult counterparts) produced more retroflexed /t, d/ and post-vocalic /r/ as kids, whereas their adult counterparts sounded more British. This could have been done to reflect that when they were adults they were more literate and therefore this could have influenced their speech.

Excerpt	Example	Feature
Spud: “What is important is that I am, right?”  [wa? ɛ̃ɪ ɪm 'pɔ:tənt ɪʒ ðæt 'aɪ 'am rɪxt]	What – [waʔ]	/t/-glottalization
	Is – [ɛ̃ɪʒ]	Pronunciation of <i> and apico-alveolar place of articulation of /s/
	Right – [rɪxt]	Pronunciation of <i> and of the digraph <gh>
Begbie: “Picture the scene. I’m playing like Paul fucking Newman by the way... but at the end of the day I’m the cunt with the pool cue.”  ['pɛktʃər ðə 'sɪn   am 'pleɪɪŋ lɪk 'pɔl fʌkɪŋ 'nju:mən ba ðə 'weɪ bʌt ə ðə 'end əv ðə 'de: am ðə 'kʌnt wɪθ ðə 'pʊl 'kju:]	Picture – [pɛktʃər]	Pronunciation of <i> and post-vocalic /r/
	I’m - [am]	Pronunciation of diphthong /ai/
	Like - [lɪk]	SVLR- shortening of diphthong /ai/ before a voiceless sound
	Paul - [pɔl]	Neutralization of LOT/THOUGHT/CLOTH vowel set
	By – [ba]	Pronunciation of diphthong /ai/
	Way – [we]	Pronunciation of diphthong /ei/
	Day – [de:]	Pronunciation of diphthong /ei/ and lengthening of vowel due to SVLR.
	With – [wɪθ]	Pronunciation of <th>
	Pool – [pʊl]	/u/-fronting
Tommy: “She told me where to go and no fucking mistake.	Where – [ˌmɛr]	Pronunciation of <wh>

[...] I can find out for myself.” [ʃə tɔld mɪ ‘mɛr tʊ ‘gɔ ŋ nɔ ‘fʌkɪŋ mɪs’tɛk   aɪ kən ‘faɪnd ət maɪ’sɛʃ]	No – [no]	Pronunciation of diphthong /ou/
	Mistake – [mɪs’tɛk]	Pronunciation of diphthong /ei/
	Myself – [maɪ’sɛʃ]	/l/- vocalization

Table 11. Phonological Scottish English features found in *Trainspotting*

All features described in the Introduction were attested in the data. All features remained constant throughout the film and characters, except for two that were more difficult to attest, namely /l/-vocalization and the realization of <wh> as [ʌ].

Excerpt	Example	Feature
Young Santana: “But I think we oughta let him in; show him the way, you know?” [ ‘bʌt aɪ ‘tɪŋk wɪ ‘əʊtə ‘letɪm ɪn   ‘ʃəʊɪm ɔ̃ə ‘weɪ ju ‘nəʊ ]	Think – [tɪŋk]	/θ/ realized as /t/
	Wi – [wi] In – [ɪn]	Little vowel reduction of /i/
	The – [ðə]	/ð/ realized as /d/
	You – [ju]	Little reduction of /u/
Adult Santana: “What went down in Compton was wrong, ese.” [ wat ‘wen daʊn ɪn ‘kɑmptən wəz ‘rɑŋ ese ]	What – [wat]	Fronting of vowel /ɑ/
	Went – [wen]	Final cluster reduction

Table 12. Phonological ChCE features found in *American Me*

Again, all features were attested in the data. However, more variation was found intra- and inter- speakers. Vowel reduction was sometimes not well defined as well as fronting of /ɑ/. Nevertheless, the features kept appearing along the film (see Appendix B for more transcribed data from the three varieties).

#### 4. Discussion

We ended the Introduction by postulating that after analyzing the described morphosyntactic and phonological features of the three varieties in the products we

would be able to answer research questions 1 and 2. Let us remind the reader of the specific questions.

First, RQ1 inquired whether those varieties that had been more researched on from the linguistic point of view would be better represented in the studied films, as it would be easier for scriptwriters and film directors to obtain information about them. We established that Scottish English was the most widely researched variety, followed by IndE and finally by ChcE. This was assumed on the vast amount of quantity of research that could be found on the former and not that much on the other ones. After analyzing the data, there is an indication that the hypothesis was supported.

Even though the charts show contrasting results if we show the percentage of use of attested features as a whole (Chc, 58%; Scottish English 54% and IndE 37%) it is important to develop further the reason why a distinction between unique and common features was kept. The representation of unique features ensures that filmmakers took into account language in order to represent a variety. On the contrary, the introduction of features that are also common to other non-standard varieties does not ensure that filmmakers were trying to portray that variety in an accurate way, but it could be possible that they introduced some features that happened to appear in a vast amount of non-standard varieties so that the language did not sound completely Standard. Hence, if we considered the representation of unique features a determining factor to say that a variety had been better represented than the other ones, we can conclude from the charts that Scottish English was better represented than the other two varieties, as it was the variety that had a higher percentage of unique features being attested in the data. Then we could establish a continuum by having Scottish English as the one that was best portrayed with 47% of unique features being attested, followed by IndE with 12% and finally 8% in ChcE. This correlates with the amount of attention that had been paid to

each variety from the linguistic point of view, which supports our initial hypothesis.

Moreover, ChcE and IndE have considerably low percentages of unique features being represented. It is interesting to point out some of the techniques filmmakers used in order to represent better those varieties. Compensation strategies were attested in which a high use of Spanish vocabulary was found in *American Me*, as well as several scenes in native Indian languages in *Slumdog Millionaire*. Then, the use of native vocabulary could be accounted for the low portrayal of morphosyntactic features in those products. Filmmakers could have thought that introducing native words would be enough to represent the variety as being non-standard.

The identity of the writers of the scripts was also checked in case some of the results obtained could be inferred from that. The scriptwriter of *Trainspotting*, is a Scottish man, which may account for the fact that we have a considerable amount of morphosyntactic features being attested. Also, the fact that the film is an adaptation of a book from a Scottish writer could have contributed to that. However, *Slumdog Millionaire*'s scriptwriter is also an Indian man and this seems not to have been remarkably transmitted in the text. Finally, *American Me*'s scriptwriters do not have a Chicano origin, which may account for the low portrayal of unique morphosyntactic features in the product. However, these inferences are not determining factors as there is not a direct correspondence between nativeness of scriptwriters and accuracy of portrayal of features.

Second, RQ2 inquired which kind of features would be more abundant in the portrayal of the different varieties. Following Milroy and Milroy (1993) it was hypothesised that phonological features would be more abundant than morphosyntactic ones due to the negative connotations that were attributed to the latter ones. The hypothesis was supported since the results showed that all phonological features

described in the Introduction were attested in the three varieties by 100% in comparison to the lower percentages of morphosyntactic features. Actually, there is a considerable high difference between the portrayal of both kinds of features (100% vs. 47% in Scottish English; 100% vs. 12% in IndE; 100% vs. 8% in ChcE). What is more, Donnell and Todd (1991)'s statement that main characters are represented through StE could be corroborated in *Slumdog Millionaire*. Whereas Jamil and Latika, the two main characters, have a lot of non-standard features when they are kids, their speech converges to a more RP-like when they grow older since they become the heroes of the movie. That distinction could not be accounted for in the other products, as characters were portrayed through the same speech throughout the film.

Finally, the fact that some morphosyntactic features were not attested in the data does not necessarily mean that characters would not produce them. This is the case, for example, of ChcE features (ix) and (xii). Constructions that involve *tell* in reported speech and quotative verbs are more common of indirect speech which is not that much used in films where direct speech is more prominent.

## **5. Conclusion**

This essay aimed at analyzing how three different non-standard varieties of English, namely Scottish English, IndE and ChcE, were represented linguistically in three different movies, one for each non-standard variety, to see whether the variety that had been more researched on from the linguistic point of view would also be better represented in a media product. Our first hypothesis, namely that the more widely studied variety would be the more accurately represented, was supported by showing that Scottish English was the variety with the highest amount of morphosyntactic features being attested followed by IndE and ChcE. Our second hypothesis argued in

favour of having a higher amount of phonological features being portrayed in contrast to morphosyntactic ones. This was also supported by our results, since all phonological features that were expected to be found in the movies were attested and not all morphosyntactic ones were, showing a considerable difference. Finally, this essay has provided a greater insight in the way non-standard varieties of English are portrayed in the media only looking at the linguistic dimension. We have also seen that when very few features were attested, filmmakers made use of native vocabulary so that the audience could infer where the characters came from.

To conclude, lines for further research would include analyzing other media products that portrayed the same varieties to see if they are portrayed in the same way, since we could only analyze one film per variety due to time constraints. It would also be interesting to analyze other non-standard varieties which have more unique features and see if they are more potentiated, as ChcE, for example, had very few unique features in contrast to Scottish English and IndE. A final suggestion would include comparing the portrayal of a variety in different media products by native and non-native producers and scriptwriters and see if it would be an important variable to take into account. It seemed not to be a determining factor as far as this piece of research is concerned, but a systematic comparison could give different results.

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## Appendices

### Appendix A. Complete set of morphosyntactic features attested in the varieties

#### INDIAN ENGLISH

##### - Examples of truncation

Javed: “You killed him?”

Jamal: “Javed Mehta? The Gangster from our slum? You work for him?”

Door-keeper: “There's supposed to be a dishwasher being delivered. Know anything about that?”

##### - Null arguments

Maman: “Hello again, Jamal. Salim. **Pro** never forget a face. Especially one that I own.”

Salim: “**Pro** can't take that risk, Maman.”

Arvind: “What is **pro** on it? The pictures.”

Salim: “**Pro** bought it. Now, I'm going to have to throw this beauty in the sea.”

Salim: “Maman's boys were after us. **Pro** had to skip.”

Salim: “**Pro** left a message at reception. **Pro** waited weeks for you in Nagpur.”

Inspector: “**Pro** thought you might need a lift, Sir.”

##### - Omission of definite article

Jamal: “And this, Lady and Gentleman, is \_\_ burial place of Mumtaz.”

##### - Other non-standard sentences

Salim: “Musketeers \_\_ coming through.” → no copula *be*

Inspector: “I'll give you five hundred rupees if you just admit it. You go home, I go home. Everybody \_\_ happy.” → no copula *be*

Jamal: “for his wife who was maximum beautiful woman in the whole world.”

Jamal: “This is the princess Diana seat.”

Jamal: “And **everywhere was building**, building.”

Commissioner of police: “Prem Kumar himself- a man of great standing and integrity- said the kid was a liar and a cheat. **What more** do you need?”

- **Indian words:** *kurta, chutiyé, bhen chod, bhai, mader chod, chi-wallah, Amitabh-ji*

### SCOTTISH ENGLISH

- **Pronouns**

Sick Boy: “Have you got it in **you** sights?”

Man 1: “There’s no need for you to get **you** “foot in the door.””

- **Number agreement**

Begbie: “**Nobody move.**”

Sick Boy: “So he realizes what he’s done and **get** very fucking nervous.”

Renton: “There’s final **hits.**”

Sick boy: “**There’s** plenty of other **things.**”

Sick boy: “**There’s better things** that the needle.”

- **Negation**

Renton: “This cunt’s **no** trying.”

Renton: “We’ll **not** be getting caught.”

Begbie: “It’s **no** our fault.”

Spud: “Would **not** say no, would **not** say no.”

Sick boy: “Well I’ve **not** brought them.”

- **Questions**

Renton: “**What age** are you?”

- **“e” and “sure”**

Tommy: “**Sure** it was Wednesday morning.”

Spud: “We’ve touched on a lot of subjects, a lot of things to think about, for all of us **e.**”

### CHICANO ENGLISH

- **Is + pl subjects**

Paulito: “**It’s the letters** you wrote me.”

- **Negative concord**

Young J.D “We **don’t** need to **nothin’**.”

Ronnie Little: “He **don’t** know **nothing**.”

Waiter: “We **don’t** need **no** trouble.”

Prisoner: “I **ain’t** seein’ **nobody**.”

- **Ain’t**

Prisoner: “I **ain’t** seein’ nobody.”

Young Santana: “Chale, **ain’t** no barrios in here man.”

Little Puppet: “I **ain’t** gonna crash.”

J.D.: “We **ain’t** many, nut we’re crazy.”

Santana: “**Ain’t** nobody talking when I’m talkin’ fellas.”

J.D.: “There **ain’t** no fuckin’ Italians in East L.A.”

Santana: “They **ain’t** the only ones.”

- **Don’t + pl noun**

Paulito: “Looks good, **don’t** it?”

Neto: “He thinks his **shit don’t** stink.”

Little Puppet: “Homes, **Paulito talk** about you.”

- **Cero copula**

Little Puppet: “What \_\_\_ you laughing at, punk?”

- **Zero subjects**

J.D: “**Pro** feels good, ese.”

Paulito: “**Pro** said it was like poetry.”

Santana: “**Pro** took me a while to see it.”

- **No inversion in questions**

Man: “Want some grilled cheese, ese?”

Santana: “You get your coffee?”

- **Consistent use of Spanish words:** ese, orale, vámonos, ruca, de volada, hombre, vato

## Appendix B. Phonetic transcriptions of excerpts from the films

### INDIAN ENGLISH

**Inspector:** A little electricity will loosen his tongue.

[ə lɪtl ɪlek'trɪsɪtɪ wɪl 'luːsn ɪz 'tʌŋ]

**Inspector:** So. Were you wired up? A mobile or a pager, correct? Some little hidden gadget? No? A coughing accomplice in the audience? Microchip under the skin?

[ˈso wɜr ju waɪəd ʌp mə'baɪl ɔː ə 'peɪgə ə 'kʌfɪŋ ə'kəmplɪs ɪn dɪ 'ɔːdɪəns | 'maɪkrəʃɪp ʌndə də 'skɪn]

**Jamal:** The Taj Mahal was built by the Emperor Khurram for his wife Mumtaz who was maximum beautiful woman in the whole world. When she died, the Emperor decided to build this five star hotel for everyone who wanted to visit her tumb.

[də 'tʌtʃ mə'hɑ:l wəz bɪlt baɪ dɪ em'peɪə kə'ɪʌm fər ɪz 'waɪf məm'tɑːz | hu wəz də 'mɑːksɪməməm 'bjʊtɪfʊl 'wʊmən ɪn dɪ 'wɔ:l | ən wen ʃɪ 'daɪd dɪ 'empeɪə dɪ'saɪdɪd tə 'bɪlt dɪs 'faɪv stɑː 'ɔtel fə 'evɪwʌn u 'wʌntɪd tə 'vɪzɪt ər tu:m]

What is it? Some hotel hu? [wʌt ɪz ɪt sʌm ɒtel hə]

**Inspector:** My wife is giving me hell, I've got a desk full of murderers [...] And you. So why don't you save us both a lot of time?

[mɪ 'waɪf ɪz 'gɪvɪŋ mɪ 'hel | aɪv gɒt ə 'desk fʊl əv 'mʌɪdəʊəz | ən ju |so 'waɪ dɒnt ju 'se:v əz bɒt ə 'lɒt əv 'taɪm]

**Inspector:** Get him down, tidy him up, for God's sake

[get hɪm daʊn | tɪdɪ ɪm ʌp fə gɒds se:k]

Latika: (kid) I thought you'd forgotten.

[aɪ 'tɒt juːd fə'gɒtən]

**Jamal (teenager):** “Why does everyone love this program?”

[wai dəz ‘evriwʌn ‘lʌv ðis ‘prɒgrəm]

**Latika (teenager):** “Walking to another life”

[‘wɔ:kɪŋ tə ə’nʌðə ‘laɪv]

### SCOTTISH ENGLISH

**Renton:** “It was awful” [ət]; “Take Sick Boy for instance” [sɛk] – KIT vowel

**Renton:** “so who else?” [so wʊ ‘eɪs] – /l/-vocalization

**Renton:** “so what’s the point you’re trying to make?” [mek]- monophthongization of diphthongs

**Tommy:** Yes, but then she finds out I’ve got a ticket for Iggy Pop the same night.”

[ai | bʌ? ‘den fə ‘faɪnds ʊt av go ə’ tɪkət? fər ‘ɛɡɪ pop ð ‘sem naɪt]

**Sick Boy:** “you’ve got it, and then you lose it, and it’s gone for ever”.

[juv ‘go? ɛ? | den ju ‘lʌs ɛ? | ɪ ɛts ‘gɔn fər’ever]

**Renton:** “without heroin, I attempted to lead a useful and fulfilling life as a good citizen”

[wɪθaʊt ‘herɔɪn ai ə’temptɪd tə li:d ə ‘ju:sfʌl ɪt ‘fʌlfɪləŋ laɪf əz ə ‘ɡʊd sɛtəzən]

### CHICANO ENGLISH

**Adult Santana:** “I had no clue what they’d been through. It was a mystery. But to be 16 in ’59 staying away from home even if I didn’t have a dime.”

[aɪ həd nəʊ ‘klu: wʌt ðeɪd bin ‘tru | ɪt wəz ə ‘mɪstəri | bʌt tu bi sɪx’ti:n in fɪfti’naɪn  
‘steɪn əweɪ frəm ‘həʊm ɪvən ɪf aɪ dɪdn hæv ə daɪm ]

**Little Puppet:** “ I don’t need to be cool”

[aɪ rən ni:d tu bi ku:l ]

## Appendix C. Results of the morphosyntactic features analysis

### INDIAN ENGLISH

	Unique	Common	Attested		N° of features	Percentage
Null arguments		x	YES	Unique attested Unique non- attested Common attested Common non-attested	1	12
Null expletive		x	YES		5	63
Inversion wh-Q	X		NO		2	25
Tag questions	X		NO		0	0
Focuser <i>only</i>	X		NO		<b>8</b>	<b>100</b>
Topicalization	X		NO			
Progressive with static verbs	x		NO			
Omission of articles	x		YES			
	6	2				

### SCOTTISH ENGLISH

	Unique	Common	Attested		N° of features	Percentage
Regularization of verbs		x	NO	Unique attested Unique non-attested Common attested Common non-attested	7	47
Regularization between sg and pl	x		NO		5	33
Pronouns	x		YES		1	7
Demonstratives	x		NO		2	13
Adverbs	x		NO		<b>15</b>	<b>100</b>
Number agreement		x	YES			
Negation	x		YES			
Modals	x		NO			
Past to express perfect	x		NO			

Conditionals	x		YES
Questions	x		YES
Indirect questions		x	NO
"e"	x		YES
<i>the</i> + N	x		YES
Use of "ken"	x		YES
	<b>12</b>	<b>3</b>	

## CHICANO ENGLISH

	Unique	Common	Attested		N° of features	Percentage
Regularization of verbs		x	NO	Unique attested	1	8
Variable absence of 3sg		x	NO	Unique non-attested	1	8
<i>is/was</i> + pl		x	YES	Common attested	6	50
Negative concord		x	YES	Common non-attested	4	34
<i>Ain't</i>		x	YES		<b>12</b>	<b>100</b>
<i>Don't</i> + sg		x	YES			
Zero copula		x	YES			
Focuser						
<i>like</i>		x	NO			
Quotative <i>go, be like</i>		x	NO			
Zero subject pron		x	YES			
<i>Would</i> in <i>if</i> -clauses	x		YES			
<i>Tell</i>	x		NO			
	<b>2</b>	<b>10</b>				