



**Dubbing *The Wire***  
**Standardization through translation**  
**A critical analysis**

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## Information

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### Abstract

Descriptive and critical analysis of the American TV series *The Wire* of the English version and the Spanish dubbing on a linguistical level. I present the elements characterizing the African American slang and various examples of the main differences among the characters of the show. I analyzed and questioned the validity of the traits of the Spanish dubbing and I discuss whether the dubbing succeeds in reproducing the informality and the vitality of the original script by basing my study on research which has been carried out in this area and by presenting empirical examples from the show. Furthermore, I comment on translation strategies which have been followed or could have been followed in order to achieve a better result. I also present some insights into sociolinguistics which help understand the theoretical dimension and account for the linguistic choices made by the speakers on the TV show.

### Resumen

Análisis descriptivo y crítico de la serie televisiva estadounidense *The Wire* a nivel lingüístico de la versión inglesa y su doblaje al español. Se describen los elementos que caracterizan la jerga afroamericana, presentando múltiples ejemplos y las principales diferencias que existen respecto a los demás personajes que aparecen en la serie. Se analiza y se discute la validez de los aspectos del doblaje al castellano y se valora si se logra reproducir la coloquialidad y vitalidad del guion original partiendo de bases teóricas de las investigaciones que se han llevado a cabo en este campo y ejemplos empíricos extraídos de la propia serie. Además, se comentan otras

estrategias de traducción que se han empleado o se hubieran podido emplear para conseguir un mejor resultado. Asimismo, se ofrece una visión muy reveladora de conceptos de sociolingüística que contribuyen a la comprensión de la dimensión teórica y explican las opciones lingüísticas elegidas por los hablantes de la serie.

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## Presentation of the text

When I first began watching movies and TV shows in the original version in English, I was shocked at the style, the voices and the flow of their speech. At first, I thought I had been seduced by the authenticity of the original script, but quickly I realized there were actual differences between the English and the Spanish versions. I had never gone as far as attempting to analyze them in detail, but I presumed it would be an interesting exercise for my bachelor thesis.

I found the colloquial style most attractive, because the differences are very striking. Nevertheless, there are many interesting linguistic situations depending on the kind of speech act in question. We can break down the various speech acts into different categories: whether they are spontaneous conversation, the most genuine version, or whether they have been planned and thought through, normally accompanied by a more logical structure. On this note, if we take it to the television entertainment world, we have two separate categories at every end of the spectrum: shows without a script (low-profile reality shows) and well-planned shows (TV shows and films). There is a gray area consisting of a mixture of both, such as talk shows where there are general guidelines as to what subjects must be covered or as to what must be said. Additionally, we can break it down into two other categories: whether it has been recorded or not. Or even into three others: colloquial, standard and formal.

From all of these, I imagine the case of a reality show subsequently translated into Spanish must be very challenging for the translator — this might be the purest and most spontaneous form of recorded informal language in TV apt for translation.

However, there were several approaches to study the style in a given TV show, which I presumed would yield enough resources for comparison. I considered it would be best if I first analyzed the original language, then analyzed the target language and compared them to see which devices are used in order to let the audience know that they are listening to informal speech.

Much to my astonishment, these devices were completely different and produced me a different impression in each language. Therefore, the hypothesis I would like to put forward is that there are actual differences between the Spanish and the English versions which have an effect on the viewer's perception of the show and its characters.

In this case, I decided to choose an episode of a very successful American TV series called "The Wire", which pictures the Baltimore drug scene, seen through the eyes of drug dealers and law enforcement.

The reason for my choice is the peculiar language features of the way the characters in this series speak. I was looking out for differences between Standard English and the actual language used in *The Wire*. However, these differences are not representative of mainstream informal English, but they belong to a specific linguistic system found in the very heart of the language: it is the case of Black English, a variety of English I will further explore, closely linked with the African-American community.

One of the most significant aspects is the actual linguistic competence of native speakers when listening to the dialogues. Many native speakers cannot fully understand the language used by the drug dealers, so they tend to switch on the subtitles, especially in Britain, where this sounds even more unfamiliar.

The writers of the show quickly reacted to that and said by using subtitles you are missing the point, since they did not intend to make all dialogue accessible to everyone. One of the keys to the success of this show is the language in itself and its difficulties, as they said in an interview published in several newspapers such as *The Independent*, *The Guardian* or *the Telegraph*. The actors themselves had trouble dealing with the language and some of them even considered it annoying.

This whole controversy is clearly an issue for the translator, who is responsible for translating all this 'inaccessibility' or the comprehension hindrances in order to reproduce the style of the original text and render it into Spanish.

In this regard, instead of describing the mistakes of spontaneous spoken English, I will bring into focus this dialect and see whether its features have been properly rendered into Spanish and through which mechanisms. We will see whether the translator has been able to reproduce this inaccessibility in the Spanish version.

## Methodology

Categorizing style presents some difficulties because of the different criteria that might be used in order to classify and define the various styles. One may be unsure whether a statement should be characterized as rather informal or formal, therefore the distinction is not completely clear.

This subjectivity in the analysis may be the reason why we sometimes perceive huge differences between the style of a translation and the original, but I will try to set these differences aside and conduct an accurate analysis.

In order to do so, I will first take notice of all the main traits that define this dialect. I will describe them grammatically and I will offer the “correct” or “standard” version. I used these inverted commas because correct language is just a convention.

Once I have identified all the elements of the original script and offered their equivalents in mainstream English, I am going to do the same with the translation which, under my perspective, does not wholly adhere to the idea of “standard” Spanish or at least tries to give some flavor to the translation.

Then I will compare the devices used in both versions to mark this style of language to see where the main differences lie. Due to the extensive materials available, I decided to focus on just one episode, since I consider that it provides enough material for analysis.

## About the show

The Wire is a successful television series portraying the Baltimore drug scene. It was first aired in June 2002, and it ended in March 2009 on HBO. Its five seasons totaling sixty episodes were written by David Simon.

In Spain, the show was later broadcast on a paid TV channel called TNT with the name “The Wire — Bajo escucha” in 2008, where it achieved moderate success. Actually, the show was ending in the USA and the UK when it finally arrived in Spain, which may account for the different reception. Perhaps, the reduced success in Spain can be explained through other reasons, such as the translation or the lack of widespread knowledge of the drug scene in Baltimore.

Whatever may be the situation in Spain, it obtained excellent reviews from plenty of critics in English-speaking countries. For instance, in *The Telegraph*, we can read:

«No other series in history has attracted such critical praise, not least from the kind of high-minded cultural arbiters who would usually only watch a US crime drama with a peg on their nose. According to these critics, The Wire isn't merely the best thing on TV; it merits comparison with the works of Dickens and Dostoevsky.»

Even if the storyline is not crucial in order to understand the main points of this dissertation, since it is based on linguistic research, it might be useful to know the basics to fully comprehend the depth of the cast and the plot.

Each season focuses on one aspect of the enforcement of the law forbidding dealing with drugs and all the derived criminal offenses from different points of view. The first season — the one the episode I analyzed comes from — presents two sets of characters: the police department and the drug-dealers with the drug-addict customers and their bosses. The fights and operations between the police department on one side and the drug mafia on the other show the progress of the investigation as the department tries to come up with a method to arrest the offenders, which ultimately is through the use of wires.

The episode I studied sets the scene for the whole season. Detective McNulty attends the trial of D'Angelo Barksdale, a mid-level dealer accused of murder, the prosecution's star witness changes her testimony, so Barksdale is not convicted after all. After the trial, James McNulty gets into trouble because of his unjustified attendance. Meanwhile, D'Angelo is free to return to work, but he soon discovers he's been replaced.



## Analysis of the original language

In the script of the first episode of the Wire I noticed some differences and divergences from Standard American English. I presumed that these differences were mere grammar mistakes made by uneducated speakers; however, they turned out to be part of the grammar of a variety of English whose existence I was not aware of.

As Lisa Green —who has studied in depth African American English— states in her book: «Speakers of mainstream English identify the AAE uses as being different from general English, and they label them as ungrammatical uses of English that make African Americans sound unintelligent.» (Green, 2002: 34)

In my opinion, this false assumption should have an impact on the translation, because English speakers perceive this variety as something ungrammatical and inaccessible, belonging to an uneducated ghetto. I will discuss this more extensively later on.

There has been extensive research and literature analyzing the so-called Vernacular Black English (VBE) or African American English (AAE). The rules that govern this linguistic variation are not just some random deviations from mainstream English, but rather a coherent system in the core of the language.

I am going to analyze the differences between AAE and mainstream English by providing an overview with some examples and some background information:

### Syntax

#### Auxiliaries (special contractions)

Standard English only allows a few contractions, which speakers of mainstream English do not refrain from using. In AAE, the number of contractions that conform to its internal grammar is greater than in Standard English.

- I **ain't** going to no court.
- I **am not** going to any court.
  
- But **ain't** nobody going past that to shoot the nigger.
- But there **isn't** anybody [...].

- He **ain't** here.
- He **isn't** here
  
- You **ain't** got to do shit [...]. (*haven't, have not*)
- You **haven't** got to do shit [...].
  
- We **ain't** going no Lemon Street chumps here.
- We **aren't** going to the chumps at Lemon Street.
  
- *Ain't* can replace *haven't, am not* and *isn't*.
  
- He **could'a** just whipped his ass. (*could've, could have*)
- He **could've/could have** whipped his ass.

'a replaces *have* after modal verbs.

Apart from these contractions not found in Standard English, I have detected the more usual ones such as: 'll (*will*), 'd (*would*), 's (*is or has*), 'm (*am*). Other non-standards in the text are *gonna* or *gotta*.

### **Auxiliaries (missing auxiliaries)**

The auxiliary verb is dropped in the continuous present and in other tenses as we will see later on. However, there is a slight difference in when it is dropped (see aspectual markers). In Standard English it is compulsory to use the auxiliary verb *to be*.

- He *gonna* kill Snot [...].
- He **was** going to kill Snot [...].
  
- *So like he talkin' like he got somekind record deal, you know?*
- So he **is** talking like he **has** got some kind of record deal, you know?
  
- *He gonna get little Mike.*
- He **is** going to get little Mike.
  
- *Millennium been an' gone and we still messin' with Smith-Corona.*
- Millennium **has** been and gone and we **are** still messing with Smith Corona.
  
- *Everyone beefin'.*
- Everyone **is** beefing.

- *You gonna see.*
- You **are** going to see.

## Questions

The structure of questions in AAE could be regarded as a case of missing auxiliaries, since the auxiliary at the beginning of the question can be found in some emphatic contexts. In mainstream English, questions start with an auxiliary verb, the subject and the main verb in a process called inversion.

- He give you the shooters?
- **Did** *he give you the shooters?*
  
- You been down the hall lately?
- *Have you been down the hall lately?*
  
- Why he just throw that gun on my car like that?
- *Why **did** he just throw that gun on my car like that?*
  
- We taking the Benz?
- **Are** *we talking the Benz?*
  
- We got a DOB?
- **Have** *we got a DOB?*
  
- Something wrong?
- **Is** *something wrong?*
  
- Where you going?
- *Where **are** you going?*
  
- He say anything.
- **Did** *he say anything?*
  
- Eggy put testers out?
- **Did/Has** *Eggy put the testers out?*
  
- My uncle know about this?
- **Does** *my uncle know about this?*

- You feel me?
- **Do** you feel me?
  
- That it? ('is')
- **Is** that it?

Moreover, in mainstream English, this structure is different — the auxiliary verb signals the tense. In AAE, questions consist of just the subject and the verb, that is - the auxiliary verb is dropped. Since the structures of an affirmative sentence and a question are the same, questions are marked with a different pitch. Tense is deduced from the context.

### **Negative concord**

The so-called double negative in traditional English grammar is considered incorrect, although found in a great number of dialects. The approach adopted by traditional grammarians is that two negative words such as *not* and *nothing* in the same sentence make a positive. In these varieties, not only do we find cases of double negatives, but there can be several negative words in the same sentence with a negative sense.

- *I **ain't** going to **no** court.*
- I am not going to any court.
  
- *But **ain't nobody** going past that to shoot the nigger.*
- But nobody got to the point of shooting the nigger.
- 
- ***Don't** answer **no** phones.*
- *Don't answer any phones.*
  
- *You **ain't** have **no** problem, right?*
- You don't have any problem right?
  
- *Jail **ain't no** joke.*
- Jail is no joke.
  
- *He **ain't no** president.*
- He isn't any president.

## Missing articles

Even though I have not found much literature that describes this phenomenon specifically for African American English, I have noticed some instances where the definite article is dropped unexpectedly before some nouns.

- **[The]** Camera's behind a hole in the drywall [...].
- **[The]** Captain calls me at home last night, tells me to get in early and read over your shoulder.

## Morphology

### Conjugation (simple present)

In AAE, the simple present is neutralized, that is, all persons are conjugated in the very same manner. As a consequence, no S is added in the third person singular as in Standard English. This is one of the main characteristics of AAE.

- Mike **come** back with the money.
- Mike comes back with the money.
  
- I don't know how it **work** in the towers.
- I don't know how it works in the towers.
  
- Life **be** that way.
- Life is that way.
  
- Give it that money feel, so it **don't** seem so white.
- Give it that money feel, so it doesn't seem so white.
  
- This **look** like money, motherfucker? Money **be** green. Money **feel** like money.
- This looks like money, motherfucker? Money is green. Money feels like money.
  
- This shit **happen** again, you off the money.
- If this shit happens again, you are off the money.

However, in some instances, we can observe these -s after verbs. There has been some controversy about their role.

A hypothesis to explain the -s dropping in the present tense suggests that the apparently random disposition of the -s and its absence in some cases is hypercorrection, that is, the speaker is aware they are forgetting this tense marker, so they add it to conform to the norm. The authors consider other hypotheses such as -s as an aspectual marker, verbal agreement marker (for some speakers) or a mere synchronic dialectal remnant or even narrative present marker, among others. As Bailey, Guy, Maynor and Cukor-Avila state in *The Emergence of Black English* (1973: 318):

«In sum, the facts we have presented here concerning the linguistic and extra-linguistic conditioning of verbal -s usage all militate in favor of the suggestion that present-tense marking via verbal -s was an integral part of the early black English grammar, insofar as this is reflected by the data we have examined. [...] The reasons for its disappearance, if it has indeed disappeared from contemporary VBE, must remain an open question.»

### **Conjugation (simple past)**

It is arguable that there is actually a distinction between the simple past and the present perfect, but in some contexts, a distinction is made, although in most situations AAE does not show any difference.

«Another difference between the AAE and general English auxiliary systems is [...] [that] these forms show that there is no observable distinction between the simple past and the present perfect verb forms. In other words, the simple past and present perfect are often identical in shape [...]; there is often no separate participle verb form such as *eaten*» (Green, 2002: 39)

- *I **gave** you \$20, man.*
- *I **did** it for that man and he do this.*
- I did it for that man and he does this.
- ***Seen** his ass drop it and shit.*
- I have seen/saw his ass drop it and shit.
- *I **ain't** never seen a white woman turn so red.*
- I have never seen a white woman turn so red.
- ***Thought** you **was** still locked up.*
- I thought you were still locked up.

In these sentences, we can see examples for very different situations. As I just mentioned, we cannot be completely certain that the verb forms *gave* and *did* are actually the past form of the verbs *give* and *do*. Maybe, what the speaker is referring to is rather *have given* or *have done*. We will have to take a guess according to the context.

Sometimes, the participle is used (a form which is involved in the construction of the present perfect, which consists of the auxiliary verb *to have* plus the participle) to indicate the simple past. In these cases, we cannot be sure what tense the speaker has in mind, either. We can see an example of that in the third sentence, where *seen* is used probably for *saw* or *have seen*.

Nevertheless, in some contexts, a difference is clearly made as we can see in the fourth sentence. In negative sentences, the auxiliary gives us a clue as to the tense used. Here, the structure of the sentence requires the past participle and we can see the auxiliary *ain't* replacing the mainstream *haven't*.

Besides, we can see that there is no inflection in the simple past either. *Was* remains the same regardless of the subject, whereas *were* is rarely used.

### **Aspectual markers**

In AAE there are several aspectual markers. The Encyclopædia Britannica defines aspect as a “reference to the nature of an action as described by the speaker—e.g., an event occurring once, an event recurring repeatedly, a continuing process, or a state”.

AAE as a language system has several devices to express different aspects, such as the particle *be*.

- You **be** saying that all the time and you right.

There is a subtle underlying difference between the form with *be*, which is incidentally invariable, and the form consisting uniquely of the participle with the *-ing* ending, which is the aspect. The form with no *be* equals to an ongoing action right now and the form with *be* emphasizes the idea of a habitual action. In mainstream Standard English, the simple present is used in these contexts, but in AAE there is a specific way to express this.

## Pronunciation

Here I am going to give a brief insight into the main features of the pronunciation of AAE, some of which are shared with Southern American English (Dillard, 1973: 307–312):

- **Vowels in General:** long i [ai] in Standard English is pronounced like a lengthened [aː].  
*Examples: right [raː(t)]*
- **Th-stopping:** Stopping of the voiced dental fricative, this phenomenon is found in the speech of most AAE speakers, especially at the onset of a word.  
*Examples: that [dæ(t)] they [deɪ]*
- **Th-fronting:** on the end of a word it is pronounced like an [f] (Standard English θ) and in the middle [v] (Standard English ð).  
*Examples: booth [buːf] with [wɪf] motherfucker [ˈmʌvəˌfʌkəː]*
- **Final r is dropped:** in some black dialects, the R is dropped at the end of a syllable.  
*Examples: guard [gɑːd], here [hiːɑ]*
- **Plural es, double s:** instead of inserting a support vowel to create the plural, in AAE the final S is lengthened.
- **Stress patterns:** the stress may be set on other words without carrying a special meaning or emphasis.
- **Greater vocal pitch**
- **Final velar sound dropping with -ing forms:** Because of the extension of this phenomenon among many varieties of English, it can not be longer considered agrammatical, but this form is usually replaced by -een or -in in AAE.



## Analysis of the translation

In the following analysis of the dubbed version of *The Wire*, we can see that in all of these examples the grammar errors made by the characters are systematically corrected in the translation as shown in the back-translation, the third part of every piece of dialogue. In spite of the fact that this is compensated in some cases through the use of other resources of colloquial speech, most instances remain unsolved, leading to a significant loss of markers of orality, which are necessary for viewers to correctly understand the tone of the show and its originally intended inaccessibility.

Even though this is undoubtedly colloquial speech, if we pay close attention to the examples in Spanish and the back translation in English, we can see that it is somewhat artificial coming from the mouth of the characters seen in the show. The range of registers and styles is drastically narrowed down to a standard language, thus the sociolinguistic variation is eliminated, since everyone talks the same way. As Deborah Rolph says in her thesis about subtitling:

“The Spanish subtitles display a tendency towards standardisation and a neutral, uniform, and formal register, resulting in the loss of sociolinguistic variation. The findings of the present research show a tendency towards the demonstration of a greater comprehension of both markers of orality and more general themes by those subjects viewing with subtitles in English, pointing towards the possibility that standardisation undermines the ability of subjects to correctly interpret markers of orality present in the dialogue and results in impaired general understanding of the film’s themes.” (Rolph, 2014)

Although I do not have the empiric evidence to prove the point made by Rolph in the case of dubbing, I think it is pretty clear that the same phenomenon takes place in this case with the examples provided. Even if, as the author points out, subtitles mean a great loss in terms of amount of orality markers, this loss in the case of film dubbing can be even greater, since the audience does not have the oral support that might give them a hint regarding the markers of orality, since they are not always replaced by other markers in Spanish.

Beyond question, this raises a series of problems, mainly that viewers of the translation fail to identify and wholly understand the underlying characteristics of their speech and the differences among the characters.

The analysis method I opted for was the back translation, where the Spanish translation is translated back into English. This allows us to see what the main differences are and enable an easier comparison, which I will comment on the next section in detail.

## Syntax

### Auxiliaries (special contractions)

Original	He ain't here.
Translation	Que no está.
Back translation	He isn't here.

Original	You should'a been there.
Translation	Tenías que haber estado allí.
Back translation	You should'a been there.

Original	You ain't gotta do shit
Translation	-
Back translation	-

Original	He could'a just whipped his ass, like we always whip his ass.
Translation	Podría haberle zurrado la badana como hacíamos todos.
Back translation	He could've just beat him like we always did.

#### Comment:

As we can see, all contractions — ‘a, ain’t and gonna, for instance, as we will see later— are restored to their full form in Spanish. When back translating them, I tried to reflect the lack of colloquial contractions in the Spanish version. In some cases, the translator could do a trick to omit this linguistic feature which is difficult to deal with. An exception would be the second example, in which we would expect the conditional form *tendría*, but instead we have the more colloquial form *tenía* in this case.

## Auxiliaries (missing auxiliaries)

<b>Original</b>	Yo, you looking for Ronnie Mo, he uptown.
<b>Translation</b>	Si buscas a Ronnie Mo, está en el centro.
<b>Back translation</b>	If you're looking for Ronnie Mo, he's uptown.

<b>Original</b>	He gonna kill Snot.
<b>Translation</b>	Pero tuvo que matarlo.
<b>Back translation</b>	But he had to kill him.

<b>Original</b>	-Niggers crazy in there, yo. Eastside, Westside, everybody beefing. -You ain't got no problem, right?
<b>Translation</b>	-Aquí dentro los negros están locos. Este, oeste, todo el mundo se queja. -No tienes problemas, ¿verdad?
<b>Back translation</b>	-Black people are crazy over here. East, West, everyone is complaining. -You don't have any problem, right?

<b>Original</b>	Millennium been and gone and we still fucking around with Smith-Corona.
<b>Translation</b>	Es increíble, cambiamos de milenio y aún nos partimos los dedos con estos trastos.
<b>Back translation</b>	It's incredible; we changed millenium and we still struggle with this junk.

### Comment:

In these contexts, the deviation from Standard English is even greater. However, the Spanish version remains unchanged. All auxiliaries which were missing in English are

restored when translated. This is not compensated in any way, so the viewers miss out on the linguistic part.

I found the sentences above interesting because of other reasons as well: we can see other contractions such as *gonna* being standardized or swearwords such as *fucking* being softened. Furthermore, the verb to be is restored in both context: when introducing an adjective or indicating location.

## Questions

Original	We taking the Benz?
Translation	¿Nos llevamos el Mercedes?
Back translation	Are we taking the Mercedes?

Original	My uncle know about this?
Translation	¿Mi tío sabe esto?
Back translation	Does my uncle know?

Original	Where you going?
Translation	¿Adónde va?
Back translation	Where are you going?

Original	Eggy put out testers?
Translation	¿Eggy ha traído ya las muestras?
Back translation	Has Eggy brought the testers yet?

### Comment:

This particular structure is also standardized through the translation. I followed the standard structure (with the inverted auxiliary verbs at the beginning of the sentence) to translate it back, because there are no divergences whatsoever from the standard form in Spanish, in order to recreate the same effect in English.

## Negative concord

Original	I ain't going to no court.
Translation	No pienso ir a declarar.
Back translation	I'm not going to declare.

Original	Don't answer no phones, Bunk.
Translation	No contestes al teléfono, Bunk.
Back translation	Don't answer the phone, Bunk.

Original	We're not burning no lemon street chumps here. Feel me?
Translation	Porque aquí no tratamos con los mamones de Lemon Street. ¿Lo pillas?
Back translation	Because here we don't deal with dumbasses from Lemon Street. Do you get it?

Original	I'm saying, you know, jail ain't no joke.
Translation	Ya sabes que la cárcel no es ninguna broma.
Back translation	You already know that jail is not a joke.

### Comment:

This structure is not only widespread in AAE, but in many English dialects. Despite that, it is not accepted for more formal settings and styles. However, this colloquialism is lost when translated into Spanish, since there has not been any attempt to translate it.

## Other

Missing articles	
Original	Camera's behind a hole in the drywall.
Translation	La cámara está en la pared.
Back translation	The camera is in the wall.

## Morphology

### Conjugation (present)

Original	Mike come back with the money.
Translation	Mike vuelve con el dinero.
Back translation	Mike comes back with the money.

Original	I mean, I don't know how it work in the towers.
Translation	Verás, no sé cómo coño lo haríais en las torres.
Back translation	I mean, I don't know how you fucking did it in the towers.

Original	This look like money, motherfucker? Money be green. Money feel like money.
Translation	¿Esto te parece dinero, gilipollas? El dinero es verde. El dinero tiene tacto de dinero.
Back translation	Does this look like money, you asshole? Money is green. Money feels like money.

**Comment:**

This particular conjugation of the present tense is corrected i.e. adapted to the Standard language. We can see in the second example that the informalism is compensated with a swearword. However, in most cases, the Standard version has been used.

**Conjugation (past)**

<b>Original</b>	I did it for that man and he do this.
<b>Translation</b>	He sido legal con él y él me lo paga así.
<b>Back translation</b>	I've been legit with him and he pays me back like that.

<b>Original</b>	Hi, Bubbs. Thought you was still locked up.
<b>Translation</b>	Hola, Bubbs. ¿No estabas en chirona?
<b>Back translation</b>	Hello, Bubbs. Weren't you locked up?

<b>Original</b>	I ain't never seen a white woman turn so red.
<b>Translation</b>	Nunca había visto a una blanca ponerse tan colorada.
<b>Back translation</b>	I'd never seen a white woman turn so red.

**Comment:**

In Spanish there is a more complex verbal paradigm and the verb forms are all in their standard version. So are the aspectual markers, which disappear.

<b>Aspectual markers</b>	
<b>Original</b>	You be saying that all the time and you right. But I'm saying though, I mean the shit y'all pulled with that security lady.
<b>Translation</b>	Tienes razón, tengo que empezar a pensar más. Siempre lo dices y tienes razón. Pero te digo una cosa, lo que hicisteis con la tipa de seguridad.
<b>Back translation</b>	You're right, I need to start thinking more. You always say it and you're right. But let me tell you something, what you did with the security chick.

## **Pronunciation**

In terms of pronunciation, I could not hear the slightest deviation from the standard language. This was quite shocking after hearing the different accents and intonations in the show. In English, the viewer can figure out straight away what sort of a background a particular character has. The Spanish pronunciation is clear and well spoken. This has several implications: the viewer does not struggle to understand what they say. I will discuss this issue more extensively later.

## **Vocabulary**

The use of swearwords is widespread in both languages. We can find some drug-related words such as *jaco* (slang for heroin, in standard Spanish *heroína*) or *crack*. The research work done in this area in both languages is remarkable.

Although it is difficult to quantify and analyze scientifically, we can see in some sentences I used as examples that the range of vocabulary is broader in spite of the attempt of the screenwriters to make the characters sound uneducated.



## Comparison

After a quick comparison of the back translations with the original script, we can draw the conclusion that the product of the whole translation process is much plainer than it was originally conceived. As a result, all characters sound alike. The original script of *The Wire* is colorful, varied and diverse: people from different backgrounds speak in different ways.

As Jonathan Jones from *The Guardian* points out (2009): «The Wire is scarcely the first American television show or movie to relish the striking argots of cops and robbers - bada bing, let's go to work - but it might be the most systematic and subtle in its observation of the way shared vocabularies define groups and structure worlds.»

Language is clearly one of the most celebrated elements of *The Wire* and as such we should try to preserve its essence in the translation. However, the translator followed a strategy which meant using standard Spanish as the target language without any variations at all, hence the original effect is lost.

The fidelity to the language of part of the drug dealing world and its authenticity are the result of the screenwriters' hard work, which succeeds in underlining the differences among the various communities in the core of a society. Not only does this happen in artificial television scripts, this also happens in spontaneous speech. Every language variety is embedded in a community and an individual may change their way of speaking according to the setting. This is part of the study of sociolinguistics.

**«The central theme of sociolinguistics is variety. To the observer, language presents itself as a seemingly infinite variety of forms, but this variety is patterned. That is, there are restrictions on choices between coexisting varieties.** For instance, English words like *fast* have, in standard British pronunciation, a long vowel [a:]. If you want to sound a bit archaic, or Australian, you can pronounce it with a short [a], and in some American varieties it borders on [æ]. Such fine-tuning has to do with preferences and social norms rather than structural rules, which is not to say that it is random. **Quite the contrary, in the absence of patterning we would be unable to recognize speakers for what they are. Speech varieties are powerful markers of group membership.**» (Coulmas, 2006:10)

Variety is what we find in English and monotony in Spanish.

From a linguistic point of view, in English there are two worlds, two realities. They are obviously stratified. On the one hand, the AAE community shown in the program deals

with drugs and has had very little or no education, therefore their grammar, vocabulary and syntax is poor as it is perceived by the viewership. In fact, it is just another dialect which has not earned the prestige and the approval from society as a valid form of speaking. This produces a certain impact on the viewer. They instinctively and immediately think they belong to some sort of marginalized ghetto. Their language may vary according to the people they are dealing with (other befriended sellers? Rivals? Customers from a similar or a different background?), but the bottom line is that they are all pigeonholed into the same box of “uneducated speech”, so far-fetched for most of the people that they even need subtitles to make sense of what they are saying.

On the other hand, the police department is also portrayed, but in a different manner, which shows the working environment from an insider perspective. The group is quite heterogeneous: different genders, races, ages, status and backgrounds, but they all come off as normal educated American citizens far from their opposite set of characters of the show who work and live in a shifty place. The use of English of the police department conforms to the rules considered a part of the standard language despite it being highly informal with a few grammar mistakes such as an occasional double negative or some colloquial contractions. The viewer does not interpret this as a lack of education, but rather as its being a part of their everyday life in a close-knit working group in a relaxed atmosphere, where jokes, teasing and risqué personal remarks are allowed.

In spite of all this, there are more formal settings where a higher style of language is required: how they speak in court, when the boss calls someone in, etc. In these situations, all characters switch to a more accurate English, with a wider range of vocabulary, more complex sentence structures in line with the strictest grammar. Tension and anger is shown through a more frequent use of swearwords and aggressive talk.

Even if planned speeches —which have previously been written down and in this case even mimicked— cannot reach the actual depth of spontaneous informal language, *The Wire* does a great job in recreating these two radically opposed environments.

Truth be told, the translation of this series is very challenging, since consciously using ungrammatical structures in the target language would be very risky and not accepted by the whole viewership. This slang may be perceived as somewhat bizarre and the translator might be tempted to think that this would diminish the quality of their work. Besides, taking such a decision on a macro-textual level implies sticking to it throughout the whole length of the TV show. Once you are in, there is no way out.

Although many obstacles are present in the text, we cannot omit this linguistic duplicity. That is its gist and we just cannot erase it. On the one side, the drug-dealers in the dubbed show speak in clear European Spanish. Their voices sound young and their pronunciation and their articulation of all the sounds is flawless. It would be nonsense for a Spaniard to turn on the subtitles, they speak better than most people! Their grammar is not dubious, but well-constructed and well-used. Their vocabulary may be informal and rude language may be frequent, but it is most certainly correct and well documented on the official Spanish dictionary of the Real Academia Española (the Royal Spanish Academia, the respected institution which codifies the norm of Spanish).

Even though contractions and shortenings are very frequent in both languages, the Spanish translator did not take advantage of their importance and role as orality markers to highlight informal speech and the translation text is free from this informal-language specific feature.

On the other side, if we take a look at the language used in the police department, we can hardly find any differences whatsoever: they also speak colloquial yet correct Spanish. The thing is that in English both communities speak informal language but in different ways. However, in Spanish, one of these ways is lost and therefore they wind up speaking the same; we just have one informal Spanish, whereas in the original there are two informal “Englishes” so to speak.

As a consequence, I believe it is very clear in this case that the translation fails to accomplish one of its duties and that is to produce a similar effect on the target audience so they can watch it as the English viewership did. The Spanish viewers have to infer from the signs given in the motion picture what the situation is all about, not in the language. Even though the translation still works, it is a considerable loss.

One of the main causes is firstly the lack of equivalents in Spanish for many of the abbreviations and shortenings in English. Secondly, the lack of an equivalent dialect of the language. And thirdly, the dangers or the fear of not sticking to Standard Spanish. Introducing regionalisms or deliberate mistakes may seem inappropriate for a professional translator.

These shortenings belong to the so-called oral markers which help us figure out what sort of context we are in and they give the script a certain liveliness and personality in spontaneous speech. However, all these systematic corrections that were made when translating the script into Spanish have not been compensated with other devices to reflect the informalisms and the different features of African American English, which are

present in the original script. We can see this in the case of subtitles, which would be similar to the analysis we are carrying out in this dissertation:

«Non-standard grammatical structures are a regular feature of English subtitles, reflecting the non-standard variants of grammar in the dialogue. However, in line with established practice this is not reflected in the Spanish subtitles. [...] An analysis of the corpus identified that much of the linguistic variation present in both the dialogue and the English subtitles is indeed standardised in the Spanish subtitles.

Lack of equivalents in the Spanish language for many common words in the colloquial register, e.g. “yeah”, “aye”, “gonna” etc. may account for much of the reduction in quantity of markers of orality.» (Rolph, 2014 : 220)

That could be one of the reasons why we get this impression. Another reason would be the unorthodoxy of using vernacular language in dubbed motion pictures, since seldom do we hear that kind of language when watching a film. It is as if translators had some strict guidelines that prevent them from using vernacular Spanish and its multiple applications. This unwritten law forbidding the usage of these forms is a convention that has been established through tradition, which would fall into the category of Moore’s naturalistic fallacy: it is good not to use too informal forms because nobody uses them. However, is there actually a good reason why we cannot use them apart from tradition? Perhaps we need to set a precedent so that translators in the future can use them without giving to it any more thought resulting in a more accurate translation in terms of similarities with the styles used in English.

Another issue that might have led to this outcome is the lack of an equivalent dialect, since in Spain there is not a well-established black community with these habits which has developed its own dialect. I will discuss this further in the next section.

## Other strategies

Until now we have only seen what the translation team has done in their version of the translation. There are other approaches which could have been adopted in order to translate the text.

There are strict rules when dubbing a film: lip synchronization and adjusting the length of the cues to the speed of the mouth are very challenging, but do not necessarily exclude the possibility of using the strategies I will discuss.

As we will see, the approach used in the translation of *The Wire* consisting of using an adequate standard version of the language (standardization) is favored by many authors and translators who consider it the most suitable alternative. In my opinion, it is worth taking a look at other possibilities that are at our disposal.

For example, replacing African American English with a specific Spanish dialect would not probably be a good idea, since we would create a nonexistent relation between the African American community and the Spanish speaking community we had chosen.

Nevertheless, there are ways of making up for this linguistic loss, which, to me, the translator has not taken full advantage of. For instance, as Vinay and Darbelnet present in their very influential work for translators, *Stylistique comparée du français et de l'anglais*, a translation technique which could prove itself useful in cases like *The Wire*. It is called compensation:

«Compensation can therefore be defined as the technique which maintains the tonality of the whole text by introducing, as a stylistic variant in another place of the text, the element which could not be rendered at the same place by the same means. This technique permits the conservation of the integrity of the text while leaving the translator complete freedom in producing the translation.» (Vinay and Darbelnet, 1995 : 199)

I think compensations would have been a key element in this translation in order to constantly remind the viewer (and simultaneously the listener) that the language used in the show is very colloquial and distanced from its standard form. If the translator cannot opt for too informal contractions, then their effect should be shown elsewhere. In this translative approach, the equivalence of the sense perceived by both audiences prevails over other elements of the translation:

«Método interpretativo-comunicativo (traducción comunicativa). Método traductor que se centra en la comprensión y reexpresión del sentido del texto original conservando la

traducción la misma finalidad que el original y produciendo el mismo efecto en el destinatario; se mantiene la función y el género textual. Abarca la traducción equifuncional y homóloga de Nord; está relacionado también con lo que Reiß y Vermeer (1984) denominan *equivalencia* (que diferencian de *adecuación*)» (Hurtado, 2001: 252)

The fact is that the English-speaking viewer hears what they consider uneducated speech and the Spanish viewership misses out on all these oral markers. These oral markers are paramount to indicate the sociolinguistic variation where the scenes are set. The quality of the grammar of the judges, lawyers and the drug dealers is practically the same. The language, correctness and pronunciation in the court are almost equal to the language, correctness and pronunciation used at a shooting or at a fight, leaving out some of the occasional swearing, which could be seen as a form of compensation if the English version lacked it. The essence, or just the sense, is missing.

As I briefly discussed, there are three main reasons that account for this. But I think one of the main problems here is the 'unusualness' in Spanish dubbing of non-standard abbreviations and expressions. Even though we often hear "gonna" instead of "going to" in films in English, it is rather rare for us to hear the common contraction "pa" instead of "para" in motion pictures in Spanish. It would probably be considered inappropriate.

There is a riskier strategy to follow when translating a non-standard variation of a language. The original language has a great deal of connotations associated with it: such as background, economic and cultural level, region and so forth. This strategy consists of finding a dialect or a linguistic variation in the target language which shares at least some of these connotations. A perfect match with all corresponding features is virtually impossible, since every speech community is unique because it is practically unimaginable to find an identical group.

This has some obvious problems, the biggest one being the nonexistent link that is being established between two communities from two different countries. This may come off as somewhat artificial, but so does a standardizing translation. I thought it would be interesting to take into account what other strategies are at our disposal when dealing with such texts.

One good point that Alison M. Rittmayer (2009 : 9) makes in her article based on the paper named '*Du hast jar keene Ahnung*' about dubbing movies in German whose original version contained non-standard speech, such as African American English, she states: «Robin Queen describes that this translation is not performed along racial lines,

but rather focuses on the use of AAVE [African American Vernacular English] in urban, working-class settings, and a connection between the use of AAVE and street life.»

At first I considered this strategy wrong, because it establishes a false connection between two groups. However, this relation or rather the coincidences are real, even if they are not identical —some of the features are shared indeed in this *'urban, working class setting'*. That is why I no longer think of this approach as something completely erroneous.

In this case, they use the language of a similar social segment within the German society in Berlin or nationwide, the *Berlinisch* and the *Jugendsprache*. Of course there might be huge contrasts between the African American community and the Berlin urban working-class, but some of their characteristics may be the same and, more importantly, may sound the same to the audience.

Despite not using the same parameter —in English, race; and in German, a particular class—, the audience can actually hear the difference in the dubbed version, which was one of the main objectives of the authors. Even if the relation that arises may not be genuine, in most cases, it does not have to be that important. I think it is more important to maintain the effect.

Nevertheless, importing a specific regional dialect is more dangerous, because it has a great deal of connotations linked to the way of life of said region. For instance, using the Andalusian dialect to translate AAE film would probably go too far. The Spanish audience would not understand the link between the African American Community and the Andalusian dialect. It would not make much sense, since those communities do not necessarily share any common elements.

Consequently I decided to check out the German versions of the show and this strategy was not followed in the German dubbing, so both the German and the Spanish translation team opted for a similar strategy, but with a slight difference about some of the choices made by the translator.

I found a quite interesting interview with one of the translators of the German version who also directed the whole dubbing process and came across with the same problems as the Spanish translators, Frank Schröder:

«Worauf man bei Synchron sonst noch achtet, ist eine reine Sprache. d.h. keine Rachenlaute, nasale Laute, „Spuckeklacker“ etc.. Es wird vornehmlich drauf geachtet, dass so etwas nicht passiert oder dass solche Aufnahmen nicht genommen werden.

Doch bei dieser Serie haben wir so etwas in Kauf genommen. Die Slums, die Ghettos, das auf-der-Straße, das sollte nach Möglichkeit authentisch rüberkommen: Dass die Leute halt nicht sehr sauber, sehr fein sprechen. Die können dann auch mal – ich halte jetzt mal ein bisschen die Nase zu – hier und da nasaler sprechen, manchmal Spuckeklacker haben – eben nicht so sauber sprechen, damit es rüberkommt.»

In English: «Normally when dubbing we strive for a clean language, i.e., no nasal or pharyngeal sounds or stuttering etc. We try very hard to avoid such pronunciations and recordings. But we made an exception for this show. The slums, the ghettos, the street slang, it should all come off as something authentic as long as it's possible. The voices don't sound that clean and accurate. They could –closing their nose a little now and then— speak not that correctly so it produces the intended effect.»

In this interview, the translator mentions other strategies they used in German that I would have liked to see in the Spanish translation. For instance, they make widespread German grammar mistakes on purpose (they use the dative instead of the genitive) and in a more relaxed pronunciation, they omitted certain letters (*nich'* instead of *nicht*). German drug slang and words are not missing either.

As I said before, the Spanish translation does include some drug slang, but those widespread grammar mistakes and this relaxed pronunciation are just not there.

We shall take a look at an even more controversial approach, which would consist of inventing a dialect especially for the show. In this case, it would be a specific dialect for an imaginary native black community within the Spanish society in the hypothetical case that there had ever been one. This would be a very creative exercise, since the translator would have no constraints whatsoever as long as the translation creates the same effect on the Spanish watchers, while sticking to the rules of informal language.

This approach is praised and criticized by different authors. For instance, Lawrence thinks of it as a good idea under some conditions:

«Lawrence's advice, therefore, was to avoid both cheap solutions and to try to invent a new dialect, coined in German words but free from any reference, from any flavor of a special region, yet preserving the flavor of some sort of relaxed, uncitized, untutored mode of speaking». (Ulrike Ascherman, 1995 : 130)

Whereas other authors strongly advise against using it, such as Landers:

«Any rendering of SL [source language] dialect that consciously or unconsciously evokes TL [target language] dialects is probably self-defeating. Whether or not it 'reads



well', it still falls short of the original by introducing an element markedly different from that in the SL.

More calamitous still is the *invented* dialects [...]. An invented dialect [...] is almost certain to be both ephemeral and off-putting to all but most forgiving and open-minded readers.» (Clifford E. Landers, 2001 : 117-118)

Reaching the poignant conclusion:

«Summing up, dialect is always tied, geographically and culturally, to a milieu that does not exist in the target-language setting. Substitution of an 'equivalent' dialect is foredoomed to failure. The best advice about trying to translate dialect is: don't»

So what other options do translators have at their disposal? Since these approaches would be so extreme and transformational, we should opt for a subtler way. I think the translator should have picked a more colloquial version of the language, in a similar way the German translator did with commonplace grammar mistakes found in the mainstream Spanish informal language and a more relaxed pronunciation.

## Sociolinguistic insights into AAE

As we all know, society is stratified in many ways according to different parameters such as class, income, ethnic group, background or sex. These differences become apparent in many social interactions: how we act, how we socialize with others, how we are treated and, first and foremost, how we speak.

Since these differences are present not only in behavior and lifestyle, but also in language, we can observe different linguistic classifications according to all these parameters that define the individuals. This is all studied by sociology.

Every social group has developed a series of features that make it unique and distinct to all other variations of that language. This is known as a variety.

«If one thinks of ‘language’ as a phenomenon including all the languages of the world, the term variety of language (or just varieties for short) can be used to refer to different manifestations of it [...] What makes one variety of language different from another is the linguistic items that it includes, so we may define a variety of language as a set of linguistic items with similar social distribution.» (Hudson, 1980 : 23-24)

Again, this is studied by sociolinguistics. This science establishes principles in order to study language varieties. Due to the high number of parameters that determine the main traits of our speech and their endless combinations, we can easily and quickly reach the conclusion that there is an infinite number of ways of speaking according to many factors. Speech is an individual act, hence the term *idiolect*.

However, as different as idiolects can be, individuals tend to come together in certain environments and contexts and, as a result, their idiolects share some characteristics, creating the concept of “speech communities”, which may be to varying degrees different to other varieties, such as the African American Community. Labov explains it like this: «Members of a speech community do share a common set of normative patterns even when we find highly stratified variation in actual speech.» (Labov, 1973 : 192)

There is the widespread belief that all Afro-Americans speak the same way, but that is not true, since this kind of speech is associated with a certain background and in the reality we can find numerous exceptions.

Sharing linguistic elements is not just inertia and a result of cohabitation, but an effort to empathize with others. This is generally called *solidarity*, which is defined as following:

«It concerns the social distance between people —how much experience they have shared, how many social characteristics they share (religion, sex, age, region of origin, race, occupation, interests, etc.), how far they are prepared to share intimacies, and other factors.» (Hudson, 1980 : 122)

Therefore, using a common language, one can reduce the distance between two individuals, which eventually creates a close-knit community within a society with specific linguistic patterns. The new members or the younger generation have to take on these solidarity rules if they are willing to step into this community. At first, it can be a conscious effort for integration.

«The speech community is not defined by any marked agreement in the use of language elements so much as by participation in a set of shared norms; these norms may be observed in overt types of evaluative behaviour and by the uniformity of abstract patterns of variation which are invariant in respect to particular levels of usage.» (Labov: 1972 : 120)

From all of this, we can infer that language is actually a part of everyone's identity. We speak the way the people we identify ourselves with speak. Thus it is vital to respect these differences, even in translation.

Robert la Page also wrote about the concept of solidarity and idiolect and reasoned why an individual decides to speak in a certain manner:

«Each individual creates the systems for his verbal behaviour so that they shall resemble those of the group or groups with which from time to time he may wish to be identified:

- a. he can identify the groups,
- b. he has both opportunity and ability to observe and analyse their behavioural systems,
- c. his motivation is sufficiently strong to impel him to choose, and to adapt his behaviour accordingly,
- d. he is still able to adapt his behaviour.»

Language is an indivisible part of identity and as such one's idiolect must be adapted to the targeted linguistic community. Language is a partly conscious choice which eventually becomes subconscious.

In the case of study - that is, a script - the writers mimic these differences so the audience knows the relationships among the characters and their social group.

We think it is safe to assume that the normal audience demographics just get in touch with a few social groups and as such are not therefore used to the others, therefore they will most certainly notice the differences between the drug-dealer community language and the police's.

One of these variations is called the standard version of a language; or rather the *Standard*, with a capital S, almost a language by itself. It is partly constructed, but oftentimes it is just one of the varieties of the language which has been raised to a prestigious position within society. It is supposed to be the neutral form and the common form of communication.

A dialect goes through a long process until it eventually becomes a standardized language. Hudson describes it like this (32-33):

1. Selection: a particular variety is selected as the one to be developed into a standard language. It can be important in the political or commercial center or just an amalgam of varieties.
2. Codification: an academy writes dictionaries and grammar books to fix the variety, so that everyone agrees on what is correct. The population learns it during their education.
3. Elaboration of function: it is used in politics, education, science, literature...
4. Acceptance: the language has to be accepted by the relevant population as the variety of the community —usually, in fact, as the national language. It works simultaneously as a unifying force and as a symbol of its independence.

This process may take place in different countries that share their language. And the concept “pluricentral languages” comes into play. Pluricentral languages such as English (for example, in the US and the UK) or Spanish (in Spain or Mexico) have more than one standard version due to their large geographical extension, because in different regions a local variety was raised to this prestigious status.

Nevertheless, everyone is exposed to the Standard form of their language, except for some cases of isolated ghettos, which may not give the individuals the opportunity to get in touch with other speakers. But, leaving out this odd case, the greatest part of the population and, in this case, the viewership are used to Standard English as the common form of communication in our stratified society.

Any intended deviation from this variety of language is almost instantaneously picked up by the viewership and the whole array of connotations, prejudices and assumptions

linked to this speech community unfolds. That was the goal the screenwriters were striving for: a close recreation of this language and the effect it would trigger on the audience.

## Conclusions

In this dissertation I tried to accomplish several things:

First of all, I wanted to show and prove empirically why the original and the target languages came off as different to me. Not only did I look for testimonials from other people who have discussed the language used in the text, but I also came up with a system to analyze it. I have seen and proven that the original language differs from Standard English and, after presenting some literature in this area, I could explain the main characteristics of this variety, usually known as African American English. These linguistic features are relevant in their linguistic and sociolinguistic dimensions, since we have to take this double effect onto the translation to reflect it properly.

Secondly, it is interesting from a linguistic point of view that English native speakers have difficulties understanding the dialogues. In spite of this fact, the Spanish texts present no difficulties whatsoever as I discussed in the comparison section. The Spanish viewership has to pick up on elements other than orality markers in order to understand the depth of the differences between the sociolinguistic background of the characters, which, despite the comprehension problems suffered by the English viewership, play a crucial role in recognizing and differentiating both communities with all the connotations and prejudices that exist. These two levels of informal language reduce the distance from fiction to reality.

I accomplished this by developing a method of analyzing the original language and observing its main differences with Standard English and then going on to comparing it with the translation. Since it is impossible to compare two different languages, I applied the back-translation method in order to elucidate the differences in the style of the language. I came to the conclusion that they were not the same and I explained the reasons. I thought it would be appropriate to include some insights in sociolinguistics since it accounts for the linguistic choices made by the characters of the show - although it is mimicked speech originating from a written script. Sociolinguistics helped me understand several things about the usage of language: how it came to be, why differences exist, what these differences mean, how a variety can shape identity with its associated connotations and how a variety comes to be the neutral Standard form.

Next, I did some research in other methods which are used to translate texts which present similar difficulties, especially in the fields of translation studies and dubbing. These methods were practically not taken into account in the dubbing of this TV show. Among others, I talked about compensations, the use of another dialect, introducing

features of widespread informal Spanish peculiarities or using Standard language and commented why each of these is better or worse, explaining their pros and cons.

I must restate that this is a very complex issue and oftentimes in translation there is no right or wrong. However, I do think a larger effort could have been made in order to render these differences into Spanish. There are various approaches at our disposal in order to reinforce and strengthen the effect that African American English produces in the viewership in this particular setting. In Spanish, we simply must assume that all these connotations are conveyed through another unknown mechanism or just by the whole situation per se.

Nevertheless, one of the conclusions I drew from the whole research is that the fear of diminishing our own work as translators holds us back from using a language which would be more appropriate and realistic even if it sounds less correct. This is one of these cases where incorrect is correct. I wanted to present some evidence that supports my view that dubbed movies in Spanish in general sometimes differ significantly from the original.

I do not think it would be a bad idea if more features of informal language were to be introduced in the language used in films and television shows. Audiences are accustomed to hearing only standard language forms which exclude the spontaneity and flexibility of informal language, rendering the resulting dialogue much simpler and further away from the way it was meant to be.

Looking back to the hypothesis I suggested at the very beginning, I think I provided enough evidence to prove my hypothesis stating that the Spanish version is standardized when compared with the original in English. However, a significant improvement is difficult to bring about due to numerous reasons. Therefore, after analyzing all the information and the research I carried out, I think the translators' work is acceptable yet with significant room for improvement.

Finally, I found the research very interesting since it allowed me to learn more about several topics such as African American English, their culture, the stratification of language within societies, several new approaches in translation etc. It helped me develop tools for analyzing language and translations and forming my own opinion.

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