

## The Influence of Screen Translation on Creative Audiovisual Writing: A Corpus-Based Approach

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**Abstract :** The popularity of American cinema worldwide has contributed to the development of sociolects related to specific film genres in other cultural contexts by means of screen translation, in many cases eluding norms of usage in the target language, a process whose result has come to be known as 'dubbese'. A consequence for the reception in countries where local audiovisual fiction consumption is far lower than American imported productions is that this linguistic construct is preferred, even though it differs from common everyday speech. The iconography of film genres such as science-fiction, western or sword-and-sandal films, for instance, generates linguistic expectations in international audiences who will accept more easily the sociolects assimilated by the continuous reception of American productions, even if the themes, locations, characters, etc., portrayed on screen may belong in origin to other cultures. And the non-normative language (e.g., calques, semantic loans) used in the preferred mode of linguistic transfer, whether it is translation for dubbing or subtitling, has diachronically evolved in many cases into a status of canonized sociolect, not only accepted but also required, by foreign audiences of American films. However, a remarkable step forward is taken when this typology of artificial linguistic constructs starts being used creatively by nationals of these target cultural contexts. In the case of Spain, the success of American sitcoms such as Friends in the 1990s led Spanish television scriptwriters to include in national productions lexical and syntactical indirect borrowings (Anglicisms not formally identifiable as such because they include elements from their own language) in order to target audiences of the former. However, this commercial strategy had already taken place decades earlier when Spain became a favored location for the shooting of foreign films in the early 1960s. The international popularity of the then newly developed sub-genre known as Spaghetti-Western encouraged Spanish investors to produce their own movies, and local scriptwriters made use of the dubbese developed nationally since the advent of sound in film instead of using normative language. As a result, direct Anglicisms, as well as lexical and syntactical borrowings made up the creative writing of these Spanish productions, which also became commercially successful. Interestingly enough, some of these films were even marketed in English-speaking countries as original westerns (some of the names of actors and directors were anglicized to that purpose) dubbed into English. The analysis of these 'back translations' will also foreground some semantic distortions that arose in the process. In order to perform the research on these issues, a wide corpus of American films has been used, which chronologically range from Stagecoach (John Ford, 1939) to Django Unchained (Quentin Tarantino, 2012), together with a shorter corpus of Spanish films produced during the golden age of Spaghetti Westerns, from una tumba para el sheriff (Mario Caiano; in English lone and angry man, William Hawkins) to tu fosa será la exacta, amigo (Juan Bosch, 1972; in English my horse, my gun, your widow, John Wood). The methodology of analysis and the conclusions reached could be applied to other genres and other cultural contexts.

**Keywords :** dubbing, film genre, screen translation, sociolect

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