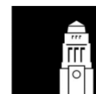

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The Representation of African American Identity on Screen for a Spanish Audience: A Multimodal Approach to the Dubbing of *Luke Cage*, *Bamboozled* and *Tropic Thunder*

Introduction

As Black History Months come around each year in the USA and UK, many cinemas, broadcasters and streaming services now prioritise feature films, documentaries, series and programmes that spotlight moments of Black history and explore the life experiences of Black people real and fictional. A great many of these have been made in recent years, as Black directors, scriptwriters and actors have started to command the artistic freedoms for which they have spent many decades calling. Many of these productions are from the USA and focus on African American characters and stories in order to examine specific collective concerns, such as slavery (*Emancipation*, Antoine Fuqua, 2022) and the intersections of race and class (sitcom *Black-ish*, 2014-2022), and/or to commemorate significant figures and forms of cultural expression, as in the biographical drama *Till* (Chinonye Chukwu, 2022) and the documentary *Summer of Soul* (Ahmir "Questlove" Thompson, 2021). Such productions may be of interest to a general audience, as attested by the broad critical acclaim and substantial commercial success that many of them have enjoyed. Yet they also perform a crucial role in reinforcing the ethnic identity and ingroup identification of those who identify as African American.[1] This can be for the simple fact that they prominently feature actors and characters of the same ethnicity,

[1] A clarification is required as regards my use of the term 'African American' in this article. While a recent Gallup poll suggests no overall preference for either 'African American' or 'Black' as terms of self-reference within this community in the USA (McCarthy and Dupreé 2021), for the purposes of my analysis I draw a distinction between the former as an ethnic category that exists on account of certain shared experiences resulting specifically from slavery and then segregation in the USA, and the latter as a racial category that encompasses the international community of African heritage, which may share comparable experiences as a result of similar systemic inequalities along racial or ethnic lines elsewhere (and to whom audio-visual productions featuring African American characters and actors may therefore appeal). The fact such experiences do not straightforwardly map from the African American context onto the wider Black context lies at the core of the complexities of translating audio-visual productions that I explore here.

because of the connections that viewers establish with such characters on account of having had similar experiences and possessing similar values, and by offering positive role models that boost one's concept of self (Behm-Morawitz 2022).

The global reach of e-commerce and streaming services means that many such audio-visual productions are now available at the click of a button to audiences beyond US borders, where they may possess marked appeal for members of the wider international Black diaspora given their potential for enabling ingroup identification along broader lines. Studies of the translation of films such as *Boyz n the Hood* (John Singleton, 1991) and series like *The Wire* (2002-2008) for non-English speaking viewers focus almost exclusively on how the linguistic variation of African American Vernacular English (henceforth AAVE) is dealt with. These analyses show how its lexical characteristics are often preserved, either by slang or colloquialisms to compensate – that "technique with which loss of meaning or style in an ST brought upon by translation is regained in the TT using devices that are characteristic of the TL" (Munday 2009, 174) – or by coined equivalents. Together these result in what Serenella Zanotti calls "slight socio-linguistic marking" (2011, 133), which in turn gives rise to what Sara Ramos Pinto labels more broadly a "pseudo variety" (2009, 292) of the sociolect in question. The precise nature of these varieties in the case of AAVE, and the extent to which they articulate a marked ethnic identity, differs according to the target language and sometimes the individual film, series or programme. Across a large corpus of films in German translation, Robyn Queen discerns an "urban dubbing style" (2004, 521) which combines both grammatical features and idiosyncrasies of pronunciation to create "an informal, youth-marked variety […] geographically located in a non-southern urban area of Germany and socially located outside of the middle class" (2004, 524). In the French translation of *Luke Cage* (2016-2018), Justine Huet observes an attempt to mark the language that certain African American characters

employ by recourse to the language of the *banlieues*, especially *verlan* (2020, 114-15). Zanotti borrows Queen's term to label the strategies employed in Italy (2011, 137), but also draws attention to the preservation of what she calls "ethnic specific appellatives" (2011, 135), a feature discerned in German by Queen but not explored any further (2004, 523). Likewise, in a corpus of nearly 20 films in Spanish translation, Beatriz Naranjo Sánchez identifies renderings – some calqued, some not – of what she calls "ghetto address terms" such as 'brother' and "gang address terms" such as 'G' (2015, 433-4). Alongside the preservation of certain phonological touches and the literal translation of multi-purpose AAVE slang such as 'ass' and 'shit', this creates what Naranjo Sánchez deems an "ethnically marked discourse, which may still maintain a recognizable black identity" (Naranjo Sánchez 2015, 420), and which she labels – drawing on Pavesi – "Afro-dubbese" (421).

Conversely, all these studies concur that the phonetic, prosodic and morpho-syntactic features of AAVE are attenuated using the standard variation of the target language, as is generally the case for sociolects in translation (Pavesi 2020, 159). In their analysis of three episodes of *Insecure*, for example, Méndez Silvosa and Bolaños-Medina show that only 30 of 354 uses of the phonological and morpho-syntactic aspects of AAVE in the original version were preserved in the Spanish dubbed version (2019, 42). Those analyses which also consider African American cultural references in dialogue demonstrate that they are often attenuated, too, by omission or domestication (Corrizzato 2012; Huet 2020, 108-10). Implicitly or explicitly, scholars suggest, such strategies compromise the productions' "crítica sociológica" [sociological critique] (Navarro Andúgar and Meseguer Cutillas 2015, 662) or their cultivation

of a “sentiment d’appartenance communautaire” [sense of community belonging] (Huet 2020, 120).[2]

The present article is based on the premise that AAVE and cultural references are more productively viewed as part of the larger-scale function of these audio-visual productions to create African American protagonists and a fictional world (with extra-diegetic features) with which African American viewers can identify along ethnic lines. Thus (ideally) ingroup solidarity is developed to contest real-life inequalities similar to those explored in such stories. These creations are grouped together here under the label ‘African American identity’. The term ‘representation’ encompasses how that identity may be articulated by means of characterisation (including language), and more broadly by means of other diegetic and extra-diegetic details. Only by approaching audio-visual productions in this way, I contend, can we better comprehend how this ethnic identity from outside the original target culture is represented for a different audience, and the new and/or unexpected meanings (including miscommunication) generated in translation. Such an approach also enables reflection on new strategies that might bolster the value that such productions hold for the international Black diaspora.

A multimodal approach to dubbing

This article adopts a critical perspectives on audio-visual translation that draw on the concept of multimodality. Its theoretical foundation is the co-text approach to meaning-making outlined by Elisabetta Adami and Sara Ramos Pinto in their examination of dialogues between multimodal studies and translation studies. The latter discipline, they note, has tended to view

[2] These and all subsequent translations of printed matter, as well as back translations of audio-visual productions, in this article are my own.

matters other than language as context: "In this approach, what is shown visually, for example, *is* (rather than *represents*), a certain phenomenon in the world, which may be more or less culture specific or shared" (2020, 74). In contrast, multimodal studies regards all images and non-verbal sounds as "co-text", that is, as "signs (in any mode and their combination) co-occurring with those that are the momentary focus of attention in a text" (2020, 73). A multimodal approach to the study of dubbing, therefore, entails considering all the various signs employed on screen, how these might function independently or together to particular ends in the original version (henceforth OV), and any differences in how these work in the dubbed version (henceforth DV).

Furthermore, a "co-text approach" recognises that specific knowledge is required on the part of the audience to understand the various signs that together make up the text. This demands we question the implicit assumption of language-focused contextual approaches to translation "that boundaries in shared uses of semiotic resources such as image or music match linguistic boundaries/communities" (Adami and Ramos Pinto 2020, 75). To help identify what needs to be translated, therefore, Adami and Ramos Pinto propose three levels at which meaning operates, adapted from social semiotics. Firstly, there is the representational level, for which the audience's cultural and semiotic knowledge is necessary, for example, to "identif[y] a given gesture or object" from the real world or to decode a sign which has "no natural resemblance with the world" (2020, 80). Secondly, there is the "social meaning" which is understood only by those who possess the requisite "socially shaped semiotic knowledge" (2020, 80) to interpret, for instance, a particular design of dress. The third level is "diegetic meaning", which "result[s] from the intermodal relations established between the different modes" (2020, 81). To analyse the representation of African American identity by means of characterisation or a diegetic and extra-diegetic whole, therefore, AAVE needs to be understood as just one resource

in the communication of meaning along with mise-en-scène, para-verbal signs, written language and other sounds, which together produce the diegetic meaning of 'African American'.

A multimodal approach to characterisation has already been mapped out and put into practice by Charlotte Bosseaux. In her analysis of one episode of *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*, Bosseaux shows how the titular protagonist is constructed through language, speech inflections, facial expression and body language, shot type and so on, and how the dubbing process (translation of dialogue, the voice talent's vocal characteristics and performance) together with visual features give rise to "some differences in the way Buffy comes across in English and French" (2015, 163). Furthermore, she later argues that the "vocabulary and voices [employed in the French dubbed version of the same episode] do not fit the original actors' bodies or convey Buffy's and Spike's personalities" (2015, 185). Yet the characterisation here is that of an individual, rather than their ethnic identity. Bosseaux's study does encompass looking at how the British identity of Giles and Spike (including their accent) is rendered in the French dubbed version (2015, 186-207). Yet the Britishness which Bosseaux examines is an individual trait that positions each of them as 'other' to characters from the USA (and a US audience), and not part of the representation of more collective matters. Ethnic marking is among the concerns of Laurena Bernabo's analysis of the Latin American Spanish dubbed version of *Glee*, but only as regards voice, not as part of a multimodal approach. Jenna Ushkowitz's performance of Asian American character Tina Cohen-Chang in the original involves "a breathy quality that acoustic analysts attribute to Chinese and Korean Americans more than other groups" (Bernabo 2021, 1302) but which is absent from Mexican actress Liliana Barba's performance as Tina in the dubbed version. As regards the dubbing of African American character Mercedes Jones, Bernabo simply states that she "could have been performed in ways that reaffirmed her racial

difference, similarly to the original, but was not" (2021, 1305), with no reference to how it was done in the original and how it might have been achieved in the dubbed version. Given its focus on group identity rather than individual characterisation, my multimodal analysis of character is not so granular as Bosseaux's of *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*, but instead considers those features of voice and vocal performance, bodies and body language, costume and dialogue which refer to paradigms of African American identity in the real world, particularly insofar as they enable critical reflection on contemporary African American male identity.

My analysis of the co-textual representation of African American identity also extends beyond characterisation into the production as a whole (that is, its fictional world and extra-diegetic elements) that other components of audio-visual productions, such as soundtrack and cultural references, help create. These are crucial for ingroup identification, given that the ability to recognise and interpret certain signs can strengthen perception of belonging to a distinct group. Therefore, while Adami and Ramos Pinto might imply that these features require translation in their study, I argue that this function and the audience of a translation need to be given due consideration when devising translation strategies.

I engage with these multimodal matters in analyses of three audio-visual productions which tackle African American issues and the politics of race in the USA head on, as well as their dubbed versions for a Spanish audience. I focus first and foremost on *Luke Cage*, a superhero series within the Marvel Cinematic Universe that streamed originally on Netflix and then passed in early 2022 to current licence-holder Disney. Described by its showrunner Cheo Hodari Coker as "a deep dive into Black culture" and "a Trojan horse with which you can introduce a host of other issues" (in Leon, 2017), the series "directly confronts what it means to be black in America" (McMillan 2020, 470), capitalising in particular on the resonance of

its eponymous hero's bullet-proof skin in the Black Lives Matter era. I show that the virtual neutralisation of AAVE impacts less on characterisation, the series's examination of African American masculinity, and its potential for ingroup identification than a purely linguistic approach might suggest, and that the miscasting of voice talent and vocal performance detract more significantly from such matters. To shed further light on the nuances afforded by a multimodal approach to characterisation in translation, I also analyse *Bamboozled* (Spike Lee, 2000) and *Tropic Thunder* (Ben Stiller, 2008), two films in which performative aspects of African American (male) identity are mined as a source of dramatic conflict. The first is a satire of "the continuing but unacknowledged consequences of minstrelsy and mimicry in the United States as a postcolonialist slave society" (Barlowe 2003, 1); the latter features a method actor's use of blackface as part of its "meta-satire of Hollywood narcissism" (Sargent 2017, 1400). I then pay close attention to translation of the n-word as part of characterisation in all three audio-visual productions and their various examinations of African American (male) identity. This linguistic matter is considered at best superficially in the aforementioned studies, but I believe the intrinsic power of the word and its various translations require a detailed analysis of their own here. Finally, I examine those other co-textual features that contribute to creating a degetic and extra-diegetic environment familiar to African American viewers in *Luke Cage* and *Bamboozled* (the appropriation of which is parodied in *Tropic Thunder*) in order to attract and engage such an audience. This includes consideration of how the appeal of such audio-visual productions for an Afro-Spanish audience is impacted by choices made when dubbing such productions for a Spanish-speaking audience, such as the decision not to translate song lyrics. I end by proposing an approach to practical translation that eschews an exclusively national and linguistic focus in favour of one that targets an Afro-Spanish audience and is mindful of what this demographic might bring to the act of viewing.

Characterisation and African American male identity

From the very opening scene of *Luke Cage*, the series explores the issue of African American masculinity through characterisation. Here, in the Harlem barbershop owned by Henry 'Pop' Hunter (Frankie Faison), the audience is introduced to protagonist Luke (Mike Colter) and a number of secondary characters (see Appendix). The broad characterisation of Pop, Luke and nearly everyone else in the barbershop as Black is accomplished visually by the (perhaps deceptively obvious) fact that the cast can be seen on screen, while their characterisation more specifically as African American men is indicated not solely by their use of AAVE in OV (as the linguistic approach of the aforementioned studies implies), but by the Harlem setting indicated by the title sequence (see below for more on the opening credits), the establishing shot of the street where the barbershop sits, and the opening conversation about basketball team the New York Knicks. More specifically, a tension is established from the very beginning between thirty-something Luke and a brasher, younger model of African American masculinity epitomised by cocksure wannabe rapper Shameek (Jermel Howard). In OV, this is in part rendered linguistically by Shameek's much more routine use of AAVE in comparison to his older, more level-headed interlocutors Luke and Pop. Shameek's dialogue is littered with examples: appellatives such as 'B' and 'negro',[3] the zero copula grammatical structure, and phonological touches such as 'bruh'. In DV, these instances of AAVE are mostly attenuated by means of Standard Peninsular Spanish, a strategy applied throughout the dubbed version of the series. Yet Shameek's personality and youth is also rendered visually by the signs of fashion (his hairstyle, earrings and tattoos) and body language (his restless movements and constant

[3] Here and henceforth in this article, these homographs in English and Spanish are distinguished by the use of italics for the Spanish word. In using the calqued appellatives '*negro*' (and 'hermano' elsewhere) in the series, the translation employs a strategy for the dubbing of dialects that Christos Arampatzis labels "[c]reación discursiva" [discursive creation] (2013, 99), which involves creating a new meaning for an existing word that is not used to such an end in the target culture.

grimacing). These contrast vividly with Luke's collectedness, ironed work shirt, and smooth-shaven head. Thus, something similar occurs in *Luke Cage* to what Bosseaux identifies in the French version of *Buffy the Vampire Slayer* as regards Spike's Britishness:

> Spike may have lost his signature accent in translation, but he still has his emblematic black coat. And maybe this is where the main difference between monosemiotic texts (such as books) and polysemiotic texts (like films) lies; the visuals will always be there in a dubbed film to remind us that we are watching a translated product and also help us make sense of the whole of the performance. (2015, 220)

In addition to these visual signs, characterisation is also generated by voice and vocal performance. As Bosseaux states in her survey of the academic study of dubbing, "we are not only dealing with words but also with paralinguistic elements and prosodic features such as intonation, rhyme, timbre and volume" (2018, 55-6). The importance of this for the characterisation noted above can be heard in the fact that Shameek in OV pronounces 'th' in 'there' and 'that' using a harsh version of /ð/ (close to but not quite /d/), in contrast to the softer /ð/ sound with which Pop and Luke pronounce words such as 'they'. The standardisation in DV of these indicators of generational belonging do not affect characterisation because Shameek can not only be seen on screen, but also heard. Using the eleven criteria that Bosseaux lists as necessary for the description of voices (2019, 224) shows that Shameek, both in OV and DV (Roger Isasi-Isasmendi), possesses a more high-pitched, less throaty voice and uses a wider pitch range than his older interlocutors, even if Shameek's/Howard's nasality in OV is absent from DV.

The characterisation of the series's titular protagonist by means of voice is particularly crucial. In OV, Cage's/Colter's voice is a soft and breathy baritone, gently authoritative in both its limited pitch and volume range. This a subtle element of his self-characterisation, as Cage

strives to avoid being stereotyped as an ‘Angry Black Man’. His endeavour in this regard forms part of the series’s exploration of African American masculinity, a matter then explored more explicitly through his deliberation in the opening episodes over whether to use his superpowers. Yet this nuance is absent from the European Spanish version, in which Cage’s voice is dubbed by voice talent Alfonso Vallés. Over a long career, Valles – whose voice is classified on Spanish dubbing database www.eldoblaje.com as “grave” [deep] - has dubbed several actors with bass voices, both Black (African American Richard T. Jones, Black Briton Nonso Anozie and Beninese-American Djimon Hounsou to name but three) and white (such as Dave Bautista, Roy Thinnes and Michael Wincott). Therefore, Cage’s voice in DV is gravelly and significantly deeper than it is in OV. There is also an appreciable difference between the age of Colter (b. 1976) on screen, and the voice his character is given in the European Spanish dubbed version, which sounds closer to that of a Spaniard in his sixties. Indeed, Vallés was born in 1960, and audiences in Spain can age his voice, since they have grown up with it (in various episodes of *Murder, She Wrote* in the early 1990s, for example). This slippage is a particularly salient example of what Bosseaux labels the “uncanny” (2015, 80-1; 2019, 222) effect created by the practice of dubbing between the body of the actor and the voice supposedly produced by it. The fact that Vallés has provided the voice on numerous occasions for Black actors who have mid-range voices, such as David Harewood, Hakeem Kae-Kazim and Mykelti Williamson, suggests that dubbing casting directors pay little attention to the actual characteristics of the voice to be dubbed or how it is employed by the actor in a particular role. Instead, they assume that Black (male) voices are simply deeper and more guttural. From “the tendency of African Americans (or African American males, at least) to show a lower overall fundamental frequency […] and significantly lower harmonics-to noise ratios [i.e. greater hoarseness] than do European American males” (Thomas and Reaser 2004, 62-3), they deduce that “there are [...] features [of speech] which belong to a whole community and not only to individual

speakers" (Estebas-Vilaplana 2014, 182). Such a focus on the ethnicity of the actor to be dubbed rather than on their individual vocal performance, is in line with Daniel Meyer-Dinkgräfe's highly problematic comment that a 'good' dubbing voice "tends to match the appearance of the original actor more than the original actor's voice" (2006).

The importance of voice as part of characterisation in order to examine African American male identity, and the problems this poses for the dubbing process, are thrown into relief by analyses of *Bamboozled* and *Tropic Thunder*. Both films call attention to the performative aspect of this identity by featuring characters in blackface. In *Bamboozled* this takes the form of the satirical minstrel television show that protagonist Pierre Delacroix (Damon Wayans) creates in an attempt raise awareness of the continuing limitations placed on, and stereotyping of, African American characters on screen at the end of the millennium. DV standardises the (exaggerated version of) AAVE found in OV, but the grotesque representation of African American characters in this show remains visually in the extravagant facial expressions, bodily movements and behavioural traits of the minstrels Mantan and Sleep n' Eat, roles for which the African American characters of Manray (Savion Glover) and Womack (Tommy Davidson) are seen to black up using burnt cork. This outlandish characterisation is also rendered at an audio level: just like Manray/Glover and Womack/Davidson in OV, the voice talents in DV employ a much shriller, more nasal voice, and a wider pitch and volume range when dubbing the minstrel performance.[4] In *Tropic Thunder ¡una guerra muy perra!*, the Spanish dubbed version of *Tropic Thunder*, the blackface performance of Kirk Lazarus (Robert Downey Jr.) as African American Staff Sergeant Lincoln Osiris, while virtually imperceptible at the level of dialogue on account of standardisation, remains visually and is also rendered orally by voice

[4] It has not been possible to find the names of the voice talents involved in the dubbing of *Bamboozled* for a peninsular Spanish audience.

talent Alejandro García. As regards the former mode, a news report early on shows images from the controversial skin pigmentation and hair transplant procedures that method actor Lazarus underwent before the start of the film shoot within the film. Thus his performance in blackface is made clear, even for viewers of DV unfamiliar with one of Hollywood's biggest stars. In terms of voice, Downey Jr. in OV adopts a guttural voice for his performance as Lazarus/Osiris, based on the association of Black men with deep voices (which, as argued above, also determines the casting of Alfonso Valles in the role of Luke Cage) and screen embodiments of a certain African American hypermasculinity, such as 1970s blaxploitation hero Shaft (Richard Roundtree). Likewise, in DV, Alejandro García as Lazarus/Osiris employs a louder, tenser and gruffer voice than that which he uses to dub Downey Jr. in *Salidos de cuentas*, the European Spanish version of *Due Date* (Todd Philips, 2010). Even so, the racial dynamic of Lazarus's performance as Osiris is made explicit in DV by means of dialogue. In OV, African American rapper-cum-actor Alpa Chino (Brandon T. Jackson) mimics Lazarus/Osiris's voice on hearing the latter's spirited description of the food he is about to prepare, saying: "Hell yeah! That's how we all talk. 'We all talk like this, suh! Yes, suh! Yeah, get some crawfish and some ribs'". In DV, Chino (Juan Antonio Soler) employs a slightly deeper voice to say "¡Ey! ¿Así hablamos los negros? '¿Los negros hablamos así, eh? ¡Sí, señor! ¡Ey! Pillo unos cangrejos y unas costillas de cerdo. ¡Sí! ¡Ey!'" [Back translation: "Hey! Is this how we black people speak? 'We black people speak like this, huh? Yes, sir! Hey! I'll get some crabs and pork ribs. Yes! Hey!'"]. This matter is made explicit later, when Chino's question in OV about why Lazarus/Osiris is "still doin' this Chicken George shit" (a reference to the character in series *Roots*) is translated in DV as "¿Por qué sigues hablando como un negrata?" [Back translation: "Why are you still speaking like a n****?"].[5] The nature and extent of

[5] While I discuss the use of the n-word and its translations below, quoting its variants as used in the original versions in full, I refrain from using this term myself in my back translation here.

Lazarus's vocal performance as Osiris is highlighted towards the end of the film when the character drops his façade and speaks in his real voice. In both OV and DV, his general pitch rises and he uses a narrower pitch range, he no longer speaks in loud, rapid bursts but more relaxedly, and his voice is less throaty. The only significant difference between the vocal performances of Downey Jr. and García as the 'real' Lazarus is that the former is more nasal, since his character is Australian (a relatively trivial detail in the film which remains in DV as a spoken reference only).

Bamboozled also employs the performative aspects of African American male identity to explore its intersection with class. The Ivy League-educated Delacroix's struggle to conform to dominant (working class) models of African Americanness – and African American masculinity more specifically – is in part rendered visually: his stiff body language, hand gestures and sober yet sophisticated dress sense (fine suits and shirts in black, purple and red) mark him out as very different from other African American characters in the film. In OV, the racial dynamics of Delacroix's outsider status are stated explicitly in comments made about his voice. From the very opening scene of OV, the voice of Delacroix/Wayans is striking: it is nasal, reedy and clipped; he pronounces and enunciates differently from AAVE; and the rhythms of his voice likewise sound peculiar. Indeed, such is his failure to conform to a (stereo)typical African American male voice that he is rebuked by his stand-up comic father Junebug (Paul Mooney): "And one more thing. Nigger, where the fuck did you get that accent?". Delacroix's avoidance of AAVE and his use of 'standard' English grammar and vocabulary also makes him stand out among his African American contemporaries in OV. Decisions made in the dubbing process in this regard lead to differences in his characterisation between OV and DV, and therefore in their representation and examination of African American identity. While AAVE is mostly neutralised as in *Luke Cage* and *Tropic Thunder*

¡una guerra muy perra! (which entails that Delacroix's linguistic orthodoxy is no different from the Spanish spoken by other African American characters), virtually no use is made in the dubbed version of *Bamboozled* by the voice talent to distinguish Delacroix's voice from those of his peers in any of the sonic categories identified by Bosseaux (2019, 244). Granted, the voice talent attempts to render Delacroix's strange speech rhythms in DV, but these come across as hesitancy. His voice in DV thus becomes – as Nolwenn Mignant has described the levelling of actors' voices in French dubbing – "the neutral voice of a man in his late thirties" (2010, 722). In view of this, his father's aforementioned admonishment in DV refers not to his voice but to his clothing: "Y otra cosa, negro: ¿de dónde has sacado ese jodido aspecto?" [Back translation: "And another thing, black man: where did you get that fucking look from?"].

The n-word

Many of the features of African American (male) identity, it has been shown above, are mostly retained in the dubbed versions of *Luke Cage*, *Bamboozled* and *Tropic Thunder* by means of voice (although not unproblematically, as in the casting of Alfonso Valles as Luke Cage), through vocal performance, by compensation (Junebug's reference to Delacroix's clothing), by explicitation in dialogue (Chino's question to Lazarus), or visually (because these are audio-visual productions). The attentuation of AAVE, therefore, does not compromise their sociological critique as others have argued, or give rise to differences in character insofar as they represent African American identities and enable an examination of those identities. However, the use of the n-word as part of AAVE poses a particular set of problems in audio-visual translation, given that it is a highly contentious matter within the African American community, and for this reason the cause of disagreement between characters in *Luke Cage*, *Bamboozled* and *Tropic Thunder* as part of their engagement with the politics of race in the

USA. The way in which translators have dealt with this intrinsically linguistic issue, I show below, has changed over time.

On most occasions in *Luke Cage* and *Bamboozled*, the n-word is used in conversation between African American characters as “a term of self-reference” (Rahman 2012, 138), even if written or transcribed with –er rather than the more common –a in the latter’s script and subtitles for the deaf and hard of hearing. This “second variant” (Rahman 2012, 138) or “soft n-word” (Nwoko 2018) is that which Junebug employs in *Bamboozled* to address his son Delacroix, as cited above. Nearly always this and other racial slurs in Lee’s film and *Luke Cage* are rendered in dubbed versions using the neutral term *negro*, as in *The Wire* (Navarro Andúgar and Meseguer Cutillas 2015, 654 and 659). The same term is often employed when the hard n-word (to use Nwoko’s other label) is used in *Django Unchained* (Martínez Sierra 2014-2015, 87-8). In *Luke Cage*, this is exemplified repeatedly during a conversation on the roof of the club owned by chief antagonist Cornell “Cottonmouth” Stokes (Mahershala Ali) about Chico’s death:

OV	DV	Back translation
Tone [to Stokes]: Turk calls me. Tells me he saw Chic’ at the shop, slippin’. I came and ask you if it was importan’ if the nigga was breathin’. […]	Tone: Turk me ha llamado, y me ha dicho que ha visto a Chico en la barbería escabulléndose. Te he preguntado si te importaba que el pringao siguiera con vida. […]	Tone: Turk called me and told me that he has seen Chico in the barbershop getting away. I asked you if you minded whether the loser stayed alive. […]

Tone: Niggas need to know you don't rob Cottonmouth. […] Turk: Y'all Harlem niggas are off the hook.	Tone: Los negros deben saber que no se le roba a Cottonmouth. […] Turk: Los negros de Harlem estáis chalados.	Tone: Black people must know that you cannot rob Cottonmouth. […] Turk: You Harlem blacks are crazy.

Table 1. Transcription of excerpt from original and dubbed versions of *Luke Cage*, ep. 2 "Code of the Streets" (48m33s-51m25s) and back translation.

This approach differs from that taken in the French version of the series, which omits the term or replaces it with a non-racial term in most cases (Huet 2020, 119-20). Moreover, the use of a neutral term in Spanish differs from how the soft n-word is routinely translated in the films and series studied in German and Italian. In the German version of *Boyz n the Hood*, Queen notes that two uses of the soft n-word by Doughboy (Ice Cube) and Dooky (Dedrick D. Gobert) to address one another are left as "nigga" and translated as "*neger*" respectively. While such decisions go unremarked upon by Queen, both give rise to very different understandings in comparison to the original film: the latter term is the German equivalent of the hard n-word while only a German audience familiar with US rap would likely understand the vocative use of the former. In a survey of similar films dubbed into Italian, Zanotti notes that "[w]ords such as *amico*, *negro* and *fratello* [...] are used almost interchangeably" (2011, 135) when any ethnic specific appellative is employed. Like Queen, Zanotti does not comment on the fact that the second of those terms has been, since the 1990s, "indubbiamente un termine problematico: occorre tenerne conto" [undoubtedly problematic: it must be taken into account] (Faloppa 2012) and might therefore be deemed offensive in the way certain other appellatives are not

(and that it translates directly as the hard variant of the n-word). Neither does she draw attention to the fact that the patently derogatory term "*negracci*" is used in an earlier stretch of dialogue quoted to illustrate how the target text deals with phonetic features of AAVE (2011, 135). It is likely this term which Corrizzato identifies in the Italian dubbed version of *Bamboozled*, although she does not name it (2012, 117).

While the general neutralisation of the soft n-word in the dubbed versions studied here does not affect meaning, at certain moments dramatic conflict hinges on the use of the word. In the aforementioned conversation between Junebug and Delacroix in *Bamboozled*, the tensions between (working class) father and (university graduate) son manifest in disagreement over use of the soft n-word (see Rayman 2004, 138-9). In OV, a brief conversation surrounding the appropriateness of such a term follows Junebug's admonishment of the way Delacroix speaks. By employing the neutral term *negro* at this point in DV, the original meaning is lost. Consequently, confusion is created by the fact Junebug and his son debate such a neutral term as if it were problematic in some way, and Junebug's response to his son's question is simply omitted (given that his head drunkenly lolls downwards at this moment, preventing the viewer from seeing any indication that he is speaking):

OV	DV	Back translation
Junebug: And one more thing. Nigger, where the fuck did you get that accent?	Junebug: Y otra cosa, negro, ¿de dónde has sacado ese jodido aspecto?	Junebug: And another thing, black man, where did you get that fucking look from?

Delacroix: Why do you always use that word 'nigger' so much? Junebug: I say the word 'nigger' a hundred times every morning. Keeps my teeth white.	Delacroix: ¿Por qué utilizas la palabra 'negro' tan a menudo? Junebug: [Not translated]	Delacroix: Why do you use the word 'black' [person] so often? Junebug: [Not translated]

Table 2. Transcription of excerpt from original and dubbed versions of *Bamboozled* (59m37s-59m54s) and back translation.

The same problem occurs earlier in the film during a disagreement about white appropriation of the soft n-word and of African American culture more broadly. When Delacroix pitches his idea of a minstrel show to producer Dunwitty (Michael Rapaport), the latter's white entitlement in OV is depicted by his use of the n-word and AAVE, characterisation that is not rendered in DV because the former is replaced by "*negro*" and the latter is attenuated (as elsewhere in the film).[6] The use of "*hermano*" is the sole indication in linguistic form of the ethical issues raised by Dunwitty's treatment of Delacroix, but the general impression created for the audience of DV is one of confusion over Dunwitty's attitude and Delacroix's visualisation of how he would like to react to his producer's white privilege:

OV	DV	Back translation

[6] Similar neutralisation of the n-word in the mouths of white people is found at other points of DV: the parody commercial for "Timmi Hillnigger" (an allusion to the widely circulated allegation in the mid-90s that designer Tommy Hilfiger had made racist comments) and the outrageous embracing of the n-word by the studio audience of the minstrel show towards the end.

Dunwitty: I’ve got a bunch of pasty-ass white boys and girls. […] If the truth be told, I probably know niggers better than you. Don't go getting offended by my use of the - quote, unquote - N-word. I have a black wife and two biracial kids so I feel I have a right. […] Tarantino was right. “Nigger” is just a word. If Ol’ Dirty Bastard can use it every other word, why can't I? Delacroix: I would prefer if you did not use that word in my presence. Dunwitty [in a scene from Delacroix’s imagination]: Oh really? Nigger, nigger, nigger, nigger. Delacroix [angrily shaking Dunwitty]: Whitey, whitey, whitey, whitey!	Dunwitty: Aparte de ti, sólo tengo un puñado de chicos y chicas de culo blanco. […] Y la verdad es que conozco a los negros mejor que tú. Espero que no te ofendas porque habitualmente utilice la palabra “negro”. Mi mujer es negra y tengo dos hijos mulatos que son estupendos. […] Tarantino tenía razón: “negro” es sólo una palabra. Y si ese bastardo la usaba tan a menudo, ¿por qué yo no? Delacroix: Yo preferiría que no lo utilizaras en mi presencia. Dunwitty: ¿En serio? Negro, negro, negro, negro. Delacroix: ¡Blanco, blanco, blanco, blanco!	Dunwitty: Apart from you, I only have a handful of girls and boys with a white arse. […] And the truth is I know black people better than you. I hope you do not take offence by my habitual use of the word “black [person]”. My wife is black and I have two mixed-race children who are great. […] Tarantino was right: “black [person]” is only a word. And if that bastard used it so often, why can’t I? Delacroix: I would prefer that you not use it in my presence. Dunwitty: Really? Black [person], black, black, black. Delacroix: White [person], white, white, white!

Table 3. Transcription of excerpt from original and dubbed versions of *Bamboozled* (7m21s-7m58s) and back translation.

The internal conflict generated by use of the soft n-word is made manifest on a couple of occasions in *Luke Cage* by means of its translation not as the neutral *negro* but as *negrata* as in the aforementioned translation of Chino's question to Lazarus/Osiris in *Tropic Thunder ¡una guerra muy perra!*. The first example occurs in the opening episode, when Mariah Dillard expresses her aversion to Stokes's use of the term. As noted by Huet (2020, 117), this disagreement helps characterise Dillard, who is of the generation that grew up during the Civil Rights and Black Power eras as well as a councilwoman, even if such characterisation (and representation of African American identity) is lost in the French version by use of a less loaded term. The second instance is in part also a generational issue (between the thirty-something reformed convict Luke Cage and the boyish African American who points a gun at him), as well as being located within a dispute about Black history and empowerment. The first part of this conversation, shown initially as a pre-title sequence in the second episode, hinges on the young man's vocative use of the soft n-word and Cage's consequent irritation at such a term being used outside a building with such an important name. The conversation is then seen in its entirety at the end of the episode. Here Cage explains who Crispus Attucks was, and draws parallels between Attucks's resistance to British troops at the beginning of the American Revolution and Pop's death earlier in the episode, which has triggered his own decision to confront crime and corruption in Harlem. This change of attitude, from non-intervention to using his superpowers, is in part witnessed when he dares his young antagonist to shoot him. But it is encapsulated immediately after by his own use of the soft n-word, which he speaks through gritted teeth in close-up. Its rendering in DV likewise lends marked emotional force to

the episode’s climax, even if the Spanish word requires movements of the mouth that prevent Alfonso Vallés from saying it literally through gritted teeth as in OV:

OV	DV	Back translation
Young man: What’re you doin’ here, nigga? [Luke does not answer immediately] I’m not gonna aks [sic] you again.	Young man: ¿Qué haces aqui, negrata? No te lo preguntaré otra vez.	Young man: What are you doing here, n****? I will not ask you again.
Luke: Young man, I’ve had a long day. I’m tired. But I’m not tired enough to ever let nobody call me that word. You see a nigga standin’ in fron’ of you? ‘Cross the street from a buildin’ named after one of our greatest heroes? [Crispus Attucks]	Luke: Muchacho, he tenido un día difícil. Estoy cansado, pero no lo suficiente para permitir que me nombren con esa palabra. ¿Ves a un negrata delante de ti? ¿En frente de un edificio que se llama como uno de nuestros mayores héroes?	Luke: Kid, I have had a difficult day. I am tired, but not enough to allow me to be called by that word. Do you see a n**** in front of you? In front of a building named like one of our greatest heroes?
[…]	[…]	[…]
I ain’t layin’ back no more! You wanna shoot me? Do it. Pull the trigger, nigga! I ain’t got all night!	¡No pienso esconderme nunca más! ¿Quieres dispararme? Hazlo. Aprieta el gatillo, negrata, no tengo toda la noche.	I don’t plan to hide any more. Do you want to shoot me? Do it. Pull the trigger, n****, I haven’t got all night.

Table 4. Transcription of excerpt from original and dubbed versions of *Marvel's Luke Cage*, ep. 2 "Code of the Streets" (54m49s-56m20s) and back translation.

The term "*negrata*" used in DV was clearly chosen by the translator on account of its similar ambiguity. On the one hand, its use was considered as an option for the hard n-word by the translator of *Django Unchained* (2012) but ruled out for being "demasiado moderno" [too modern] (Martínez Sierra 2014-2015, 94) given the time period in which the film is set, and because the translator deemed it "demasiado peyorativo" [too derogatory] (2014-2015, 94). Indeed, the term is often employed in Spanish journalism when reporting on controversies surrounding the hard n-word in the USA. Nevertheless, it is also claimed that the term was coined within the nascent Afro-Spanish rap community in the 1990s, much as African American rappers have reclaimed the (soft) n-word. One of the most important names in early Spanish hip-hop, Frank T - born in Zaire (now Democratic Republic of Congo) and raised in Spain since the age of two – uses "*negrata*" in "El tiempo de los intrusos" on his 1998 album *Los pájaros no pueden vivir en el agua porque no son peces*. In a 2010 interview with me, he suggested the term was employed among practitioners of gangsta rap in Spain (Green 2011, 173), and it seems to have been embraced by Afro-Spanish drill and trap artists more recently, as exemplified by Moha the B, on tracks such as "Negrata" (2019) and "Spain" (2020), and by Cyril Kamer on "Somos" (2020). It seems, therefore, that European Spanish possesses a term that straddles the line between the hard and soft n-words and which is therefore used as a racist insult and an empowering epithet, making it an ideal term for the translator when the source of conflict within the African American community. That the same term was used frequently in the Spanish subtitles of *Bamboozled* raises the possibility that *negro* was preferred in the dubbed version to better synchronise lip movements.[7]

[7] The same decision appears to have been made as regards the sole use of the n-word in the original version of *Tropic Thunder*, when Alpa Chino describes Kirk Lazarus as a "koala-huggin' nigger". In the subtitles, this is

Ingroup identity: context and co-text

In all three audio-visual productions examined, the task of translation is approached as one which involves dialogue only, in line with standard "[p]rofessional practice [which] does not consider the potential need to translate meaning nonverbally expressed" (Adami and Ramos Pinto 2020, 79). In the dubbed version of *Luke Cage*, the lack of consideration to the meaning of cultural context and co-textual elements has an immediate impact on the communication of the series' *raison d'être* and its interpellation of a particular racialised viewer, both of which are made clear in OV well before any dialogue is spoken.

From the very opening credits, the series assumes an intimate knowledge of African American culture on the part of the audience. After shots of Central Park and a Broadway street sign (images that signify New York City in general for any audience with a knowledge of Western culture in the contemporary globalised world), the title sequence swiftly proceeds to locate the action more precisely in Harlem by including a shot of a platform sign at Harlem-125 Street subway station. Less explicit signs – which are therefore more likely to be understood only by viewers with a knowledge of African American history – follow: the iconic street sign for Lenox Avenue / Malcolm X Boulevard (co-named in 1987 after the Civil Rights leader) and the neon sign of the Apollo Theater (so closely associated with Harlem's Black community and the site of performances by many major African American artists). Additionally, as Samuel McMillen notes (2020, 468), the theme tune which accompanies these images draws on the sounds of the blaxploitation film genre, particularly Isaac Hayes's "Theme from *Shaft*" (1971).

rendered as "canguro negrata", but as the more personal (but not racial) "paródico embetunado" [man in parodic blackface] in DV. This is despite "*negrata*" being used in DV to explicitate the racial dynamics of Chino's frustration with Lazarus's blackface performance in OV, as shown above.

The cultivation of an African American audience becomes more overt at the end of the title sequence, just one example of how *Luke Cage* does this through music. On the fade to black, the (extra-diegetic) spoken-word intro of "Dap Walk" (1972) by Ernie and the Top Notes, Inc. is heard. Its third and fourth lines removed to ensure bandleader Ernie Vincent's plea is made more succinctly still, these words explicitly address a disillusioned young (and male) African American audience before a horn fanfare kickstarts its funky tune and a fade-in to the Harlem street where Pop and Luke work:

> Hey, get up, brothers!
>
> Don't sit up there with your head hanging down,
>
> There's something I want to say to you.

The audience interpellated by this intro may well have been drawn to *Luke Cage* because of many reports and recordings of deaths of African Americans (often men) at the hands of US law enforcers in the media at the time. As cast member Simone Missick noted in interview, Eric Garner was killed in Staten Island (victim of a prohibited chokehold used by a NYPD officer) when the first season was shooting (Leon 2017). Ernie Vincent's lyrics remain untranslated in DV, as a result of which no attention is drawn to the potential interest of what the series "want[s] to say" for Afro-Spanish viewers. The decision not to translate song lyrics also means that the Spanish-speaking audience is not made aware later in the same episode of the allusion to African American male identity in Raphael Saadiq's "Good Man" (2011), which the artist performs live at Stokes's Harlem Paradise club, or of the history of oppression of African Americans in "Misrepresented People" (2000), composed and performed by Stevie Wonder during the opening credits of *Bamboozled*.

Given Paul Gilroy's mention of the centrality of music in transnational Black identity (1993, 75), it is unsurprising that not just lyrics, but also the aesthetics of the soundtracks of *Luke Cage* and *Bamboozled* are of crucial importance in their reaching out to an African American

audience. Both rely on such an audience's familiarity with the songs and sounds of African American musicians, its knowledge to identify (for example) the southern R&B sounds of Ernie and the Top Notes, Inc., as part of a culture to which they belong. *Luke Cage* and *Bamboozled* also celebrate and/or explore African American identity by visual means. On the one hand are the cultural references, such as the image of Brooklyn rapper Notorious B.I.G. that occupies pride of place on the wall of Stokes's office (an image made iconic by the fact it was shot three days before Notorious B.I.G.'s murder), and the montage of blackface performances and grossly stereotypical representations of African American figures from US film and television that closes *Bamboozled*. Cage's choice of superhero costume in the series possess a particular social meaning for an African American audience: instead of the original comic book character's yellow shirt and tiara, on the screen Cage opts for a hoodie – an item of clothing loaded with meaning for African American men (Elan 2021) – for the showdown at which he reveals his superpowers towards the end of the first episode.

The use of audio-visual content together is exemplified half-way through the third episode. Cage's storming of the Crispus Attucks Building, where Stokes stores guns and the profits of his drug dealing, is soundtracked throughout by Staten Island rap collective Wu-Tang Clan's "Bring Da Ruckus" (1993). Lyrically, the song is suitably confrontational for such a violent scene: the title repeated several times in each chorus with the interpolated adjective "motherfuckin'". Sonically, too, the track possesses the "radically dissonant pitch combinations" that, for Adam Krims, "connote hardness" (2000, 72) in East Coast hip hop of the 1990s. The Wu-Tang Clan's fashion line also resonates in the yellow lining of Cage's hoodie, the hood of which he wears up throughout the fight. Such a combination of costume and music – which contrasts markedly with a similar marquee fight scene in the second episode of sibling series *Daredevil* (2015-2018) – might be noticed by a general audience, but it

possesses a particular potency for African American viewers, especially as Cage's hoodie becomes increasingly ridden with bullet holes as he battles his way through the building interior.

The ingroup identification enabled by such musical and visual references is likewise one of the functions of cultural references in dialogue. In the dubbed versions of *Luke Cage* and *Tropic Thunder*, these are omitted, replaced with a more generalised term, or domesticated. Such a strategy might seem justified as regards passing verbal references, such as the mocking comparison of Cage to boxer Floyd Mayweather Jr. by local gangster Koko in the showdown towards the end of the first episode in *Luke Cage*, and of Lazarus/Osiris to 70s and 80s sitcom character Benson by Chino in *Tropic Thunder*. But together in *Luke Cage* these African American cultural references are important for characterisation and the creation of a diegetic and extra-diegetic whole with which its audience can identify. The problems posed for translation by such references are best demonstrated by the ways the Spanish dubbed versions of *Bamboozled* and *Tropic Thunder* deal with references to sitcom *The Jeffersons* (1975-1985), a series about the titular African American family's move from Queens to Manhattan but which never reached Spain. In the dubbed version of *Bamboozled*, a white scriptwriter's nostalgia for the sitcom and one of its catchphrases (George Jefferson's use of "Weezy" to refer affectionately to his wife Louise) is retained without explicitation. As a result, the audience of DV is unable to pick up on how the scriptwriter here harks back not to an early case of African American enfranchisement on screen (which is what he believes he is doing), but to what has been described as "the Age of the New Minstrelsy" (MacDonald 1992, 182), a development "accepted by the dominant white power structure […] because the lead black male character was not perceived as a threat" (Rhym 1998, 61). In *Tropic Thunder ¡una guerra muy perra!*, the reference to the sitcom is domesticated: Lazarus/Osiris's recitation of lines from its theme

song about moving up the social ladder are replaced by Alaska and Dinarama's paean to difference "A Quién Le Importa" (1986). Thus Lazarus/Osiris's (unwittingly revealing) allusion to racial integration as part of his self-characterisation as African American, and Chino's consequent fury, are deracinated.

Conclusion

A multimodal approach to dubbing (and, more generally, translating) audio-visual productions shows how an exclusive focus on dialogue is insufficient, both in the practice of translation and in academic studies of it. Approaching television programmes and films as multimodal texts and non-verbal signs as co-text demands that practitioners of and/or researchers on translation recognise that the audience's comprehension of meaning depends on its cultural and semiotic knowledge to interpret aspects such as intonation and costume. This is not simply at the level of nation-state, as assumed by translations that focus on dialogue exclusively; when considering productions like *Luke Cage* and *Bamboozled*, we also need to consider how these productions deliberately address an audience that identifies along lines of ethnicity, and which may possess (and wish to actively develop) cultural and semiotic knowledge as part of their concept of self along ethnic lines. This targeting of a specific audience may be to foster debate around issues particular to that group, as can be seen, for example, in A. C. Fowler's reflection on *Luke Cage*'s representation of black (police) on black violence (2016). Such productions also endeavour to build and/or consolidate ingroup identification. These objectives are scarcely facilitated in their dubbed versions.

A more productive strategy for the translation of such productions, therefore, begins with a reconsideration of the form and function of audio-visual translation and of its basic terms (Adami and Ramos Pinto 2020, 78-9). Of paramount importance here is the 'target audience'

for whom the translation is produced. Translating specifically for members of the Black diaspora necessitates firstly a greater cultural awareness on the part of translators, not only to ensure correct identification of cultural references (such as Dunwitty's reference to Wu-Tang Clan member Old Dirty Bastard in *Bamboozled* cited above) and uses of the n-word, but also to display greater sensitivity in the dubbing process. Netflix is beginning to contend with the racial politics of dubbing (see Romano 2020) by creating a more ethnically diverse pool of voice talents to ensure greater community representation on screen: in Spain, well-known Afro-Spanish rapper El Chojín recently dubbed Chicago-born rapper Common in the series *Bookmarks* (the episode 'Common reads *Let's Talk about Race*') and Timothy Ware-Hill in *Cops and Robbers* (Arnon Manor and Timothy Ware-Hill, 2020) for the streaming giant. Secondly, translations for such a target audience need to move beyond an exclusive focus on dialogue and occasional instances of written language, and the assumption that non-verbal resources are universal context, to consider meaning in all modes of communication. Such an approach to productions that represent African American identity would recognise the appeal that they hold for many members of the larger Black diaspora, and bear in mind the cultural and semiotic knowledge such an audience may already possess (as regards, for example, music) in an increasingly globalised world. As regards context and co-text that fall outside that knowledge, rather than seeking equivalence, however, a constructive translation strategy would recognise how members of the Black diaspora might also watch such productions to acquire cultural knowledge to build or consolidate their sense of community belonging. Headtitles, subtitles, pop-up balloons and other more interactive resources on streaming platforms (such as the X-Ray feature on Amazon Prime Video) might be employed to this end. In this way, translators might be able to create a "translation tradition" (Adami and Ramos Pinto 2020, 82) that does not deracinate its context and co-text.

Such a strategy is increasingly necessary given that African American writers and directors are beginning to address more global Black issues by means of films set in Africa, such as *Black Panther* (Ryan Coogler, 2018), its sequel *Black Panther: Wakanda Forever* (Ryan Coogler, 2022), and *The Woman King* (Gina Prince-Bythewood, 2022). Such productions have been hugely popular with African American audiences: 36% of those purchasing tickets for *Black Panther: Wakanda Forever* on its opening weekend were African American, more than double the percentage than for other Marvel films (Whitten 2022). Studies have also shown how such films empower African American youth in particular when compared to their peers of other ethnicities (Allende-González et al. 2020). The drive to make this and other benefits available to members of the international Black diaspora needs to underpin translation strategies moving forward, strategies that contend with the multimodal nature of such productions and the function of such aspects for this demographic.

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Appendix

Transcriptions of excerpt from original and European Spanish dubbed versions of *Luke Cage*, ep. 1. (“Moment of Truth” (1m36s-3m26s) and back translation. In this transcription, aside from a couple of occasions, I refrain from creating phonetic features of OV for ease of comprehension. (I do, however, explore a number of these details in my analysis of this sequence). DV translated and adapted by Alex Fusté of Your Key Services and directed by Juan Miguel Valdivieso at Deluxe 103 Studios.

OV	DV	Back translation

Pop: They lose 65 games only to end up with the fourth pick in the draft. Did they tank that shit on purpose?	Pop: ¿Han perdido 65 partidos sólo para elegir cuartos en el draft? Coño, ¿se han dejado barrer a propósito?	Pop: Did they lose 65 games only to pick fourth in the draft? Fuck, did they let themselves be trashed on purpose?
Shameek [pointing to shop's profanity rule]: Read the words, Pop. Right there on the wall.	Shameek: Lee lo que pone allí, Pop. Justo allí en la pared.	Shameek: Read what it says there, Pop. Right there on the wall.
Bobby: Brother's got a point, Henry. Much as I hate to admit that.	Bobby: Tiene razon, Henry. Aunque deteste admitirla.	Bobby: He is right, Henry. Although I hate to admit it.
Shameek: That's right. Pay up.	Shameek: Exacto. A pagar.	Shameek: Exactly. Pay up.
Pop: You're right. You're right. I shouldn't have cursed. My bad, Lonnie.	Pop: Vale, tienes razón. He dicho una palabrota. Mea culpa, Lonnie.	Pop: Okay, you are right. I swore. I was wrong, Lonnie.
Lonnie: S'okay, Pop.	Lonnie: No pasa nada, Pop.	Lonnie: It's all okay, Pop.
Shameek: What's they record this year anyway, like?	Shameek: A ver, ¿cómo han acabado la temporada? ¿Lo sabéis?	Shameek: Well, how did they finish the season? Do you know?
Pop: 17 and 65.	Pop: Sólo 17 victorias.	Pop: Only 17 victories.
[…]	[…]	[…]
Bobby: What they need to do is fire Phil Jackson.		

	Bobby: Lo que tendrían que hacer es despedir a Phil Jackson.	Bobby: What they would have to do is sack Phil Jackson.
Pop: Wai'mi. Phil Jackson ain't out there playin' no more.	Pop: ¿Qué dices? Phil Jackson ya no juega.	Pop: What rubbish. Phil Jackson no longer plays.
Shameek: Phil Jackson overrated, B.	Shameek: Phil Jackson está sobrevalorado.	Shameek: Phil Jackson is overrated.
[…]	[…]	[…]
Pop: Phil ain't no Pat Riley.	Pop: Phil no es Pat Riley.	Pop: Phil is not Pat Riley.
[…]	[…]	[…]
Shameek: Even punk-ass Derek Fisher got more rings than Pat Riley.	Shameek: Hasta el mamón de Derek Fisher tiene más anillos que Pat Riley.	Shameek: Even the cock-sucker Derek Fisher has more rings than Pat Riley.
Pop [hearing Shameek curse]: Uh-um.	Pop: Eh-eh.	Pop: Uh-um.
Shameek: Yeah, yeah, yeah.	Shameek: Ya, ya, ya.	Shameek: Yes, yes, yes.
Luke: 'Cause the Knicks played like men when Pat Riley was head coach. Oakley and Ewing went hard in the paint. Plus Anthony Mason and John Starks? Drive the lane, you	Luke: Los Knicks jugaban como hombres cuando Riley era su entrenador. Oakley y Ewing daban caña en la zona. ¿Y Anthony Mason y John Starks? Allí nadie se atrevía a cruzar la zona botando.	Luke: The Knicks played like men when Riley was their coach. Oakley and Ewing got stuck in in the key. And Anthony Mason and John Starks? There nobody dared cross the key bouncing [the ball].

might go home in a body bag.		
Pop: All right, now. I heard that.	Pop: Tienes más razón que un santo.	Pop: You are more right than a saint.
Luke: Later, with all that Instagrammin' - "let's all max contract on the same team together" - bullcrap passin' as competition nowadays...	Luke: Hoy en día, la única competencia consiste en esas chorradas de subir el salario al máximo a Instagram.	Luke: Nowadays, the only competition consists of that nonsense of raising one's salary to the maximum on Instagram.
[…]	[…]	[…]
Chico: Now pay up, Luke. You said "bullcrap"	Chico: A pagar, Luke. Has dicho "chorradas".	Chico: Pay, Luke. You said "nonsense".
Luke: "Bullcrap" ain't a curse, man. I don't curse.	Luke: "Chorradas" no es un taco. Yo no digo tacos.	Luke: "Nonsense" is not a swearword. I don't swear.
Shameek [mimicking]: "I don't curse." You don't cut hair either, negro. Like, really, wha' do you do up in here, bruh?	Shameek: "Yo no digo tacos". Tampoco cortas el pelo, negro. En realidad ¿qué es lo que haces aquí, eh?	Shameek: "I don't swear". You do not cut hair either, black man. In reality, what is it that you do here, eh?