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## Translating British Dialects: The Interplay Between Cockney and Cockney Rhyming Slang in *Lock Stock and Two Smoking Barrels* and *Snatch* and their Italian Dubbed Version

### Abstract

Considering screen translation as a transcoding process focused not merely on language transfer but also, and primarily, on socio-cultural transfer, language use and translation processes in films prove to be important vehicles in defining sociolinguistic identities and in conveying them to the audience. From this perspective, it is interesting to notice that, especially in the last decades, the varied stock of non-standard language that can be identified by geographical region as well as by social class has been increasingly exploited by film industry (Taylor 1998), proving to be particularly well-represented in contemporary British films, realistically depicting a society where the social stratification of dialects is still crucially relevant in defining linguistic and cultural selves (Cronin 2006).

Starting from these observations, this paper sets out to investigate the translation strategies relevant to Cockney and Cockney Rhyming Slang in the Italian dubbed version of Guy Ritchie's films *Lock Stock and Two Smoking Barrels* (1998) and *Snatch* (2000), verifying whether such non-standard varieties are either maintained, thus ascertaining that a certain degree of linguistic realism matches the target audience's expectations of standards of fluency (Baker 2004), or standardized and levelled out, thus overshadowing the importance Cockney and Cockney Rhyming Slang have as revealing indexes of the characters' socio-cultural identity.

### 1. Introduction

Considering screen translation as a transcoding process focused not merely on language transfer but also, and primarily, on cross-cultural transfer (Snell-Hornby 2012 [1995]), language use and translation processes in films prove to be important vehicles in weaving relations of

sociolinguistic and cultural identity and in conveying them to the audience, especially when it comes to language varieties that are deeply embedded in the regional and social context of the country/community in which they are spoken (Landau, Munnich, Doshier 2001). From this perspective, it is interesting to notice that, especially in the last decades, the varied stock of non-standard language that can be identified by geographical region as well as by social class has been increasingly exploited by film industry (Taylor 1998) and proves to be particularly well-represented in contemporary British films, where the widespread presence of regionalisms and sociolects aims at providing the audience with authentic linguistic settings (cf. Taylor 1998, 2006; Pavesi 2005; Ranzato 2010) in realistically depicting a society where the social stratification of dialects is still crucially relevant in defining linguistic and cultural selves (Cronin 2006).

Starting from these observations, this paper sets out to investigate the translation strategies relevant to Cockney and Cockney Rhyming Slang (hereafter CRS) in the Italian dubbed version of Guy Ritchie's films *Lock Stock and Two Smoking Barrels* (1998; hereafter *LSTSB*) and *Snatch* (2000; hereafter *SN*), where Cockney and CRS stand out as essential diegetic tools to strongly typify characters of low cultural and socioeconomic status, mainly belonging to the London criminal underworld. Indeed, *LSTSB* revolves around the characters of Eddy, a cardsharp, and his three friends Soap, Tom and Bacon, who decide to chip in £25,000 each to allow him to play in an illegal game run by one of the local villains, Hatchet Harry. However, Eddy does not realize that the game is fixed and he ends up owing Harry £500,000, with dire threats about losing his fingers one at a time if he does not pay within a week. Eddy and his friends discuss various completely illegal schemes to obtain the money and eventually decide to rob the gang of thieves, living next door, who themselves are planning to raid a clandestine drug growing operation which keeps all of its money in shoe boxes where they grow the cannabis plants. The scheme is simple enough but extreme chaos breaks out and Eddy and his friends try to find a way out before they too find themselves among the casualties. *Snatch* features a similar assortment of colourful

characters, including the pikey Irish Traveller Mickey O'Neil, Russian-Uzbek ex-KGB agent and arms-dealer Boris the Blade Yurinov, professional thief and gambling addict Frankie Four-Fingers and bounty hunter Bullet-Tooth Tony. This film contains two intertwined plots: one dealing with the search for a stolen diamond on the part of British, American and Russian criminals, the other with a boxing promoter, Turkish, who finds himself under the thumb of a sadistic gangster known as Brick Top.

In establishing a specific socio-cultural and linguistic framing within which linguistic processes seem to operate in screen translation, we will analyse the film scripts observing whether the Cockney and CRS expressions to be extensively found in the films' original version are, in their Italian dubbed version, either foreignized (Venuti 2008 [1995]), thus ascertaining that a certain degree of linguistic realism matches the target audience's expectations of standards of fluency (Baker 2004) and ensures their emotional involvement (Konijn, Hoorn 2004; Pavesi 2009; Valdeón 2008), or domesticated (Venuti 2008 [1995]), standardized and levelled out, thus overshadowing the importance Cockney and CRS have as revealing indexes of the culture that uses and produces them.

## *2. Linguistic variation on the screen*

As film language, preconceived and scripted so as to sound natural and spontaneous, is to give the audience the impression of real situations experienced by real characters, real language must be used in filmic speech, considered also in its non-standard aspects (cf. Taylor 1998, 2006; Ranzato 2010) as often typified by regional and social dialects. In this sense, linguistic variation, and dialectal speech in particular, prove to be key factors in localizing, characterizing and codifying film characters, and should therefore be taken into careful consideration when conveyed from a source to a target language; as Taylor states, «the translator and film dubber must be sensitive to the source language so as to be able to notice deviance and reproduce the same kind of differences in the target

language» (Taylor 1998: 219). This is one of the reasons why «the problem of the translatability of the linguistic varieties of a geographical, ethnic and social type is particularly felt in the field of audiovisual translation» (Ranzato 2010: 109).

It is indeed a well-known fact that the task of transposing dialects is particularly challenging as it is often hardly possible to find, in the target context, convincing counterparts conveying the same connotations and stereotypical traits of meaning that the geolect or sociolect, often associated to cliché characters (Pavesi 2005), have in the source context. Notwithstanding this, as non-standard varieties are primarily used either to indicate local and cultural features or to highlight different social classes, a translator/adaptor should evaluate, first of all, which key dialect markers in the source language have to be rendered in the target language and, secondly, how these could be rendered, for instance by adopting specific morphosyntactic and lexical means (Pavesi 2005), e.g. the use of colloquialisms, neologisms, syntactically wrong expressions (Ranzato 2010: 112), to re-create, by way of compensation, in the target text, the same non-standard connotations of the original speech.

As far as the translation policies traditionally adopted by the Italian film industry are concerned, dubbed cinema in Italy seems to have opted so far for the standardization and neutralization of dialectal variants, agreeing on the perspective of untranslatability of specific dialectal linguistic contents (Ranzato 2010). The Italian dubbed versions of foreign films presenting non-standard language varieties thus often proves to be geographically unlocalised and socially unmarked, as the use, in the target text, of a standard variety replacing a dialect form in the source text tends to clean up the language, leveling all dialectal nuances and often also modifying the characters' portrayal.

### *3. Cockney and Cockney Rhyming Slang: a sociolinguistic overview*

Before analysing the dialogues of *LSTSB* and *SN* from both a linguistic and a translational perspective when Cockney and CRS are at stake, it

could be useful to briefly consider these non-standard varieties from a sociolinguistic point of view, in order to better understand the pragmatic functions they fulfil in the filmic contexts.

As far as the term Cockney<sup>1</sup> is concerned, it is important to point out that it has geographical, social as well as strictly linguistic associations. It was traditionally used to describe working-class Londoners and immigrants living in the poorest districts of the East End, though its associations underwent a series of changes throughout the centuries. In particular, whereas as an expression of disparagement and disdain it was referred, already by the 17th century, only to Londoners, during the 17th century the meaning of the word shifted from Londoners in general to those born within earshot of the Bow bells, i.e. the bells of St. Mary-Le-Bow church in Cheapside, in the city of London. And it was in the 18th century that the term was applied for the first time to the dialect spoken in the City by the common people of the streets as opposed to the polite pronunciation used among the higher classes. This is why it can be mainly considered as a means of social identification, solidarity and cohesiveness within specific groups (Eble 1996; Munro 1997), an aspect that clearly emerges in the films under study.

With regard to CRS<sup>2</sup>, one of Cockney distinguishing features, it dates back to the first half of the 19th century when it appeared as a secret form of wordplay mainly used within London lower classes (e.g. street sellers, merchants at local markets) in order not to be understood by the higher classes, as well as within London underworld, in particular among thieves and little criminals, in order not to be understood by the police (Franklyn 1961). Considering the current situation of CRS, Kirkpatrick

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<sup>1</sup> The *Oxford English Dictionary* authoritatively explains the term as originating from cock and egg (Middle English *cokeney* < *coken*, the old genitive of cock + ey, lit. cocks' egg), a medieval term referring to a small, misshapen egg supposedly laid by a cock (1362), and this original meaning was then broadened to be applied to anything odd and unnatural.

<sup>2</sup> Cockney Rhyming Slang consists of a binary expression that replaces a single word with which it rhymes. The origins of each individual rhyme are obscure and often impossible to trace, and the rhyming replacement is sometimes further abbreviated, making the expression even more obscure.

states: «[...] rhyming slang has not only survived the decades, but it is currently enjoying something of a revival [...] This is particularly true among young people who may feel attracted to its inventiveness and its irreverence. CRS tends to be at the opposite end of the spectrum from politically correct language» (Kirkpatrick 2001: 5).

This is the linguistic scenario we find in *LSTSB* and *SN*, which give us wonderful examples of colourful and lively modern Cockney and CRS expressions, extensively used not only to provide the films with a geographical context – i.e. London’s violent, working-class East End – but also to typify their characters – i.e. mainly criminals and drug dealers – from a socio-cultural point of view (Ranzato 2010: 116), contributing to assign a distinctive style to dialogues often characterized by high degrees of semantic opacity.

#### *4. Dubbing Cockney and Cockney Rhyming Slang*

The Cockney and CRS expressions pervading the films’ original dialogues are basically characterized by a lack of transparency that derives from their being so deeply embedded in a specific regional and cultural dimension; this inevitably creates problems in transposing them cross-linguistically and cross-culturally, as it is often difficult for a translator/adaptor to understand the pragmatic intention and the expressive strength implied in their peculiar phrases, and it is therefore even more difficult to transfer, both linguistically and functionally, textual elements that are instead strictly linked to the source language (Monti 2007).

What first of all emerges from a contrastive analysis of the original and the Italian dubbed version of *LSTSB* and *SN* is that different translation choices have been made for Cockney and CRS; though the line of demarcation between one translation strategy and the other is sometimes blurred and open to dispute, such techniques as standardization, naturalization through socio-cultural adaptation and pragmatic equivalence tend to prevail over the others.

#### 4.1 Standardization

One of the most common translation policies to be adopted in the Italian version of both films under study as far as Cockney and CRS are concerned is that of normalizing Cockney and CRS to fit the standard language norms (Galassi 1994); indeed, Cockney and CRS richness is often glossed over in favour of a flat, classless Standard Italian lacking any regional inflection (Nocella 2000), as our quantitative statistics will prove (see 5. *Conclusions*).

This can be observed, for example, in the instances of Cockney terms denoting specific types of currency, as is the case with “grand”, referring to “one thousand pound sterling” and mostly standardized as “*sterline*”, as excerpts (1), (2) and (3) from *SN* show:

- (1) Boris to Sol asking him to hold up a bookies

Boris	Fifty <b>grand</b> for half a day’s work.	<i>Cinquantamila <b>sterline</b> (“pounds”) per scomodarti mezz’ora giornata.</i>
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- (2) Punter to Brick Top after Mickey’s victory over Bomber Harris

Punter	Do you realize I’m fucking forty <b>grand</b> down? What’s the fucking crack?	<i>Ti rendi conto che ho appena perso quarantamila <b>sterline</b> (“pounds”) per colpa tua? Che cazzo è questa storia?</i>
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- (3) Boris to Sol at the Pawn Brokers

Boris	There’s ten <b>grand</b> .	<i>Sono diecimila <b>sterline</b> (“pounds”).</i>
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But it is in particular when CRS expressions are used that the films’ Italian dubbed versions prevalingly present the Italian standard equivalent of the

common term that, in English, is traditionally replaced by the CRS form, as can be observed in excerpts (4) and (5) from *LSTSB*:

(4) Tom to Nick The Greek at Tom's shop

Tom	Not when the price is two hundred pounds. And certainly it's not when you've got Liberia's deficit in your <b>sky rocket</b> .	<i>E no, quando il prezzo è duecento sterline no. E sicuramente no quando hai <b>in tasca</b> ("in your pocket") l'appannaggio del Principe Carlo.</i>
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"Sky rocket" is CRS for "pocket" and is standardized in Italian as "*tasca*" ("pocket").

(5) Bacon to Soap, Tom and Eddy after the robbery at their neighbours' house

Bacon	<b>Let's have a butcher's.</b> We've hit the jackpot, lads.	<i>Sì, <b>diamo uno sguardo</b> ("let's have a look") eh. Abbiamo fatto tombola, ragazzi.</i>
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"Butcher's" is the abbreviated form of CRS "butcher's hook", rhyming with "to look", here translated with the Italian standard verb phrase "*diamo uno sguardo*" ("let's have a look").

One scene of *LSTSB* significantly stands out as far as the use and translation of CRS are concerned; indeed, Barfly Jack's monologue when speaking about Rory Breaker is particularly rich with vivid CRS expressions that are mostly neutralized in Italian, as (6) illustrates:

(6) Barfly Jack to Tom at the bar

Barfly Jack	[...] A few nights ago Rory's <b>roger iron rusted</b> . He's gone down the <b>battle cruiser</b> to	[...] <i>Qualche sera fa la <b>TV</b> ("telly") di Rory <b>si è rotta</b> ("broke down"). Allora lui è sceso</i>
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<p>watch the end of the football game. No one's watching the <b>custard</b>, so he switches the channel. A fat geezer's <b>north</b> opens, and he wanders up and turns the <b>Liza</b> over. 'Now fuck off and watch it somewhere else'. He knows <b>claret</b> is imminent, but he doesn't want to miss the end of the game. So calm as a coma, picks up the fire extinguisher, walks straight past the <b>jam rolls</b> who were ready for action and plonks it outside the entrance. He then orders an <b>Aristotle</b> of the most <b>ping pong tiddly</b> in the <b>nuclear sub</b> and switches back to his footer. 'That's fucking it', says the geezer. 'That's fucking what?', says Rory, and he gobs out a mouthful of booze, covering Fatty. He flicks a flaming match into his <b>bird's nest</b> and the geezer's lit up like a leaking gas pipe. [...]</p>	<p><i>al <b>pub</b> ("pub") per vedere la fine di una partita che gli interessava. La <b>TV</b> ("telly") era accesa ma nessuno la guardava così lui cambia canale. Ora là c'era un tipo grosso, che senza aprire <b>bocca</b> ("mouth") va verso la <b>TV</b> ("telly") e ricambia canale. "Adesso vaffanculo e guardatela da un'altra parte", gli dice. Rory sente che tira <b>aria di rissa</b> ("air brawl") ma non vuole perdersi la fine della partita. Così calmo come uno in coma, prende un estintore, passa davanti agli <b>stronzi</b> ("arseholes") pronti a reagire e lo piazza davanti all'entrata. Dopodichè ordina un <b>Aristotele</b> ("Aristotle"), <b>il più tremendo di tutti i cocktail</b> ("the most terrible of all cocktails"), una vera <b>bomba alcolica nucleare</b> ("nuclear alcoholic bomb"), e rimette la sua partita. "Adesso basta, cazzo!", dice quello. "Adesso basta cazzo che cosa?", dice Rory, e gli sputa in faccia una boccata di bomba bagnandogli pure la giacca. Poi accende un fiammifero e glielo butta sul <b>petto</b> ("chest") e quello prende fuoco come un tubo del gas che perde. [...]</i></p>
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The contrastive analysis of the two versions highlights that, though most CRS expressions have been standardized in Italian, a few other translation strategies (i.e. socio-cultural adaptation, referential equivalence, paraphrase, substitution) have also been adopted to possibly compensate for the prevailing lack of the original Cockney flavour. To better understand the criteria followed by the translator/adaptor in these cases, we will briefly focus our attention on the translation choices made for each single Cockney and CRS expression at stake.

“Roger”, the abbreviated form of CRS “Roger Mellie” (i.e. the popular Viz cartoon character), rhyming with “telly”, i.e. a British slang word for “television”, is rendered into Italian with a referential equivalent, “TV”, which is the colloquial, abbreviated form of the standard lexeme “*televisione*” (“television”). It is interesting to notice that the same colloquial short form, “TV”, is used to translate two other CRS expressions for “telly” to be recognized in this scene, i.e. “custard”, short form of CRS “custard and jelly”, and “Liza”, short form of “Liza Minnelli”. In the latter case, the Italian version paraphrases the original “he wanders up and turns the Liza over” rendering it as “*va verso la TV e ricambia canale*” (“he walks towards the TV and changes the channel again”), thus explicitating a reference to the TV channel that is instead implied in English. “Iron rusted” is CRS for “busted” (i.e. “broken”), standardized in Italian as “*si è rotta*” (“it broke down”); similarly, “battle cruiser”, CRS for “boozer”, meaning “pub, bar; liquor store”, is rendered into Italian with its standard equivalent “*pub*”, a borrowing from English commonly used in Italian. “North”, the abbreviated form of CRS “north and south”, rhyming with “mouth”, is standardized as “*bocca*” (“mouth”) but the original expression “a fat geezer’s north opens...” is paraphrased as “*c’era un tipo grosso che, senza aprire bocca...*” (“there was a fat guy who, without opening his mouth...”) that conveys an opposite referential meaning. “Claret” is Cockney slang for “blood” (from the colour of this type of red wine), commonly used to express the sense of the verb “to broil”; the Italian version translates it as “*aria di rissa*” (“air brawl”), thus conveying a similar pragmatic meaning. “Jam rolls”, CRS for “arseholes”, i.e. “idiots”, is

rendered into Italian with its slang equivalent “*stronzi*” (“arseholes”), clearly characterized by the same disparaging connotations. “Aristotle”, CRS for “bottle”, as well as the name of a popular cocktail, is translated literally in the dubbed version as “Aristotele” though it is not commonly used in Italian. The phrase “ping pong tiddly” means “strong drink” as “ping pong” is CRS for “strong” and “tiddly” is short for “tiddly wink”<sup>3</sup>, CRS for “drink”; this expression is translated into Italian as “(*il più*) *tremendo di tutti i cocktail*” (“the most terrible of all cocktails”), and the idea that Aristotle is a very strong drink is further stressed by the translation of the expression “nuclear sub”, CRS for “pub”, as “*una vera bomba alcolica nucleare*” (“a real nuclear alcoholic bomb”), creating the same pragmatic impact on the target audience though omitting the reference to “pub”. A last instance of standardization can be observed when “bird’s nest”, CRS for “chest”, is translated with its standard equivalent “*petto*” (“chest”). As can be seen, the translation strategies adopted in this scene tend to at least partially neutralise the CRS forms so extensively used in the original version, mostly depriving the utterances of their original creative colourfulness (Perteghella 2002) though in some cases trying to assign the Italian terms the same expressive connotations.

#### 4.1.2 *Naturalization through socio-cultural adaptation*

Standardization sometimes also implies a process of naturalization through socio-cultural adaptation, according to which the textual relationships established in the source text are usually modified in the target text so as to adhere to the target context and norms (Toury 1995). In the audiovisual translation of *LSTSB* and *SN*, naturalization proves to be the tendency to make the dubbed version seem as natural as possible to the target audience; in particular, socio-cultural adaptation is realized whenever peculiar CRS expressions, which are neither used nor known

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<sup>3</sup> The term derives from the name of an indoor game, tiddly winks, played with sets of small discs, called winks, lying on a surface and whose objective is to cause the winks to land either on top of opponents’ winks, or ultimately inside a pot or cup.

outside the strict Cockney circle and do not exist in the target culture, necessitate some form of (also syntactic) re-creation to convey the same connotative meaning. This can be observed in excerpts (7), (8), (9) from *LSTSB* and (10), (11), (12), (13) from *SN*.

(7) Rory Breaker to Nick the Greek after the discovery that Nick's friends stole his cannabis

Rory	[...] I know you couldn't have known my position, 'cause you're not that stupid that if you did, you wouldn't have turned up here scratching your arse, with that 'what's going on' air look slapped on your <b>chevy chase</b> . But what you do know is where these people live. [...] Now, Mr <b>Bubble and Squeak</b> ... you may enlighten me.	[...] <i>Deduco che non sapevi quale fosse la mia posizione perché se l'avessi saputo non saresti stato tanto sciocco da venire qua grattandoti il sedere con <b>quella faccetta pallida</b> ("pale little face") da 'Scusate, non ho capito che cazzo è successo' e gli <b>occhi da pesce lessso</b> ("googly eyes"). Però quello che sai è dove abitano quelle persone. [...] <i>Avanti, mio caro Signor <b>palla di lardo</b> ("fat ball")... ora puoi illuminarmi.</i></i>
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"Chevy chase" is CRS for "face", derived from the name of Cornelius Crane 'Chevy' Chase, a famous American comedian, writer, television and film actor; the Italian version adapts this culture-specific item to the Italian context translating it as "*faccetta pallida*" ("pale little face") and adding the noun phrase "*occhi da pesce lessso*" ("googly eyes"), not to be found in the original version, in order to reinforce the connotative meaning of the CRS form. "Bubble and Squeak" is CRS for "Greek" (referring to a British dish made with the shallow-fried leftover vegetables, e.g. potatoes, cabbages, Brussels sprouts, from a roast dinner); the Italian noun phrase "*palla di lardo*" ("fat ball") succeeds in recreating the image of a very fat

person presented in the original version though deleting the CRS reference.

(8) Tom to Nick the Greek when buying arms from him

Tom	Range? I don't wanna blow the arse out of this country, granted, but I don't want anyone blowing a <b>raspberry</b> at me either. I want to look...fucking mean.	<i>Gittata? Guarda che io non voglio far saltare il culo a tutto il paese ma non voglio neanche che <b>facciano saltare il mio di culo</b> ("blow my arse out"). <i>Io voglio sembrare minaccioso.</i></i>
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“Raspberry” is short for “raspberry tart”, CRS for “fart”, rendered into Italian through a paraphrase conveying a pragmatic meaning that in this case turns out to be stronger than the original one and based on the repetition of the expression “*non voglio far saltare il culo*” used in the first part of the sentence to translate “I don’t wanna blow the arse out”.

(9) Nick to Tom at Tom’s shop

Nick	All right, all right, <b>keep your alans on</b> . [...]	<i>Va bene, <b>che fai, ti incazzzi</b></i> (“what are you doing, getting pissed off?”) [...]
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Also the expression “keep you alans on” belongs to CRS, as “alans” is the abbreviated form of “Alan Whickers”, meaning “knickers” and referring to Alan Whicker, a famous British journalist and BBC broadcaster; the original phrase undergoes a syntactic change as the English imperative form is replaced by an Italian rhetoric question, “*che fai, ti incazzzi?*” (“what are you doing, getting pissed off?”), connoted by the same expressive force of the CRS one.

(10) Tony to Mullet inquiring about the robbery at the bookie

Tony	Better not be telling me <b>porky pies</b> .	<i>Parla schietto, non si capisce un cazzo</i> (“Speak clearly, you cannot understand a fucking word”).
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“Porky pies” is CRS for “lies” (derived from the name of a traditional British meat pie consisting of roughly chopped pork and pork jelly sealed in a hot water crust pastry, normally eaten cold as a snack or as part of a meal); the Italian version rephrases the original expression as “*Parla schietto, non si capisce un cazzo*” (“Speak clearly, you cannot understand a fucking word”), assigning it a different referential meaning possibly in order to stress the unintelligible Cockney accent used in the scene by Mullet, Tony’s interlocutor.

(11) Tommy to Brick Top’s henchmen after saving Turkish from them

Tommy	I’ve got the gun, son. I think it’s you who should behave. What? You want to see if <b>I’ve got the minerals?</b>	<i>Io ho la pistola, piccolo, siete voi che dovete comportarvi bene. Che c’è? Vuoi vedere se <b>sono veramente carico</b></i> (“I’m really charged up”)?
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(12) Turkish to Tommy at Boris’ house as they try to get a new gun

Turkish	My God, Tommy, you certainly <b>got</b> those <b>minerals</b> .	<i>Mio Dio, Tommy, ma allora <b>sei carico</b></i> (“you are really charged up”) <i>davvero</i> .
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In (11) and (12) “(to have got the) minerals” derives from CRS “family jewels” (pronounced “jawls”), i.e. “testicles”, intended in its metaphoric meaning of “having courage”. The explicit reference to courage is omitted in the Italian version as the verb phrases “*sono veramente carico*” (“I’m really charged up”) and “*sei carico*” (“you are really charged up”) paraphrase the original expression simply highlighting the fact that Tommy is ready to fight.

(13) Tom to Sol after an alcoholic night

Tom	You’d take a pain in the arse for <b>air miles</b> .	<i>Tu accetteresti problemi anche per un <b>buono pasto</b></i> (“a luncheon voucher”).
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“Air miles” is CRS for “piles” but the Italian version replaces it with the noun phrase “*un buon pasto*” (“a luncheon voucher”), creating a rather unusual expression that conveys a different referential meaning and assigns milder connotations to the whole sentence.

The peculiar translation choice illustrated in (13) leads us to observe that, in both *LSTSB* and *SN*, many Cockney and CRS expressions are often translated through inventive paraphrases as well as imaginative neologisms, sometimes specifically created for the filmic contexts and therefore not particularly likely to be heard within real interactional contexts, as excerpts (14) from *LSTSB* and (15), (16) from *SN* further show:

(14) Tom to Nick the Greek asking him to place the weed Eddy and the others will steal from their neighbours

Tom	It’s all completely <b>chicken soup</b> .	<i>Senti, è una cosa tranquilla come la <b>pastina in brodo</b></i> (“a thing quiet like soup with pasta”).
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“Chicken soup” is a Cockney idiomatic expression meaning “acceptable; fine; legitimate”; it is often used as an equivalent of the term *kosher*, i.e. “genuine”, one of the many words Cockney borrows from Yiddish and also referred to food that is permissible to eat under Jewish dietary law such as chicken soup, i.e. a famous *kosher* starter. The Italian translation “*una cosa tranquilla come la pastina in brodo*” (“a thing quiet like soup with pasta”), though taken from the same semantic field of the original expression, is not particularly effective as it is not commonly used in Italian at a colloquial level.

(15) Brick Top to Turkish and Tommy after being told that Gorgeous George won’t fight in the box match as Mickey hurt him

Brick Top	Put a lead on her, Turkish, before she gets bitten. Do you want to get bitten, sweetheart? Make sure your man goes down in the fourth. You understand me now, don’t you, Turkish? You’re on thin-fuckin-ice my <b>pedigree chums</b> and shall be under it when it breaks. Now fuck off.	<i>Tienila a bada, Turco, prima che qualcuno la morda. E tu non vuoi che ti mordano, vero tesoruccio? Fai in modo che il tuo uomo vada al tappeto al quarto round. Mi hai capito sicuramente, non è vero, Turco? State camminando sulle uova, miei piccoli <b>bastardi col pedigree</b> (“bastards with a pedigree”), e io sarò lì dentro quando si romperà. Ora, andate a farvi fottere.</i>
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“Pedigree Chums” is 1960s CRS for “come/cum”, slang for “semen”. It is formed on the name of a famous branded dog food and one of its common slang meanings is “best friends”, also often used sarcastically to emphasize the weakness of a relationship. In this case, it could be considered as a play on words used with a violent undertone hinting that, according to Brick Top, Tommy and Turkish could soon become pet food. The Italian version assigns the English expression a different



connotation, translating it as “*bastardi con il pedigree*” (“bastards with a pedigree”), which sounds odd and out of context as no explicit reference to the meaning of the original phrase is included.

(16) Tony to Avi making inquiries about the robbery at the bookies

Tony	Bookies? Pass us the <b>blower</b> , Susi. [...]	<i>Sala scommesse? Passami il <b>chiacchierone</b> (“chatterbox”) Susan. [...]</i>
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“Blower”, London slang for “telephone” (from the ‘speaking tube’, down which one blew to attract a person's attention prior to having a conversation through it), is translated here with a colloquial term, “*chiacchierone*” (“chatterbox”), which is never used in Italian with this meaning and therefore renders the Italian sentence quite strange and unnatural.

A further interesting example of a particularly creative process of socio-cultural adaptation is to be found in *LSTSB*: when Eddy warns his partner Bacon, selling stolen goods in the street, that the policemen are arriving, he uses the term “cozzers”, a blend of “copper” and “rozzar” (both slang words for British police), typically to be heard in the south of England as uttered by thieves and delinquents to label policemen on patrol, as can be seen in (17):

(17) Eddy to Bacon

Eddy	Bacon, <b>cozzers!</b>	<i>Bacon, le <b>cozzze</b> (“mussels”)! </i>
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The Italian version translates “cozzers” as “*cozzze*”, a weird choice as the Italian word is commonly used either in its meaning of “mussels” or in its slang meaning of “very ugly woman” but never as a reference to a

policeman. This could lead the target audience astray, as the Italian neologism, possibly based on a sound assonance, has nothing to do with the original Cockney meaning.

As excerpts (14), (15), (16), (17) illustrate, in some cases the Italian adaptation is liable to create difficulties in understanding on the part of the Italian viewers, who could ask themselves what the characters really intend to say. On the other hand, a positive outcome of these unusual translations could be that the Italian version achieves an exotic effect which gives the measure of a cultural distance, as the audience hears a linguistic variety so far from the standard that it sounds unlocalized and therefore, to some extent, “foreign” (Ranzato 2010: 120).

In *SN*, certain culture-bound references are also rendered, in the Italian dubbed versions, by means of generalization (cf. Pedersen 2005), as can be observed in excerpts (18) and (19):

(18) Tommy to Turkish at the Amusement Arcade

Tommy	Who <b>took the jam out of your doughnut?</b>	<i>Ma che hai? Chi ti ha rubato la marmellata</i> (“Who stole your jam”)?
Turkish	You <b>took the fuckin jam out of my doughnut</b> Tommy. You did.	<i>Sei tu che hai rubato la mia cazzo di marmellata</i> (“You stole my fucking jam”). <i>Tu me l’hai rubata.</i>

“To take the jam out of one’s doughnut” is an idiomatic expression meaning “to spoil one’s fun”; in Italian the reference to doughnut, a type of fried dough confectionery particularly popular in the UK and the USA, is replaced by a general reference to “*marmellata*” (“jam”).

(19) Mickey to Turkish at the gypsies’ campsite

Mickey	Save your breath for cooling your porridge.	<i>Risparmia il fiato per la minestra</i> (“Save your breath for soup”).
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“To save one’s breath to cool one’s porridge” is another well-known idiom meaning “to mind your own business”, which is generalized in the Italian version as the culture-bound reference to “porridge” is replaced by “*minestra*” (“soup”), conveying the same connotative meaning though the expression is rarely used in Italian interactional contexts.

#### 4.1.3 Pragmatic equivalence

Another approach that has been sometimes adopted in the translation of Cockney and CRS in the Italian dubbed version of *LSTSB* and *SN* is aimed at establishing functional equivalence between the original and the dubbed dialogues through «the replacement of a text in a source language by a semantically and pragmatically equivalent text in the target language» (House 1997: 31). More specifically, pragmatic equivalence implies the substitution of source terms with words or phrases in the target text that are likely to have a similar impact on the audience, without necessarily involving the same propositional meaning but recreating the same expressive nuances (cf. also Newmark 1988). In the films under study, many Cockney and CRS expressions are indeed translated by means of Italian slang and colloquial equivalents chosen primarily for their pragmatic force, as excerpts (20) and (21) from *LSTBS* clearly illustrate.

(20) Eddy to Soap when planning the theft of their neighbours’ money

Eddy	Soap, stop being such a mincer.	<i>Soap, smettila di fare la checca paurosa</i> (“fearful pansy”).
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“Mincer”, London slang for a homosexual man, is translated as “*checca paurosa*” (“fearful pansy”), a colloquial phrase that functions as a referential equivalent of the original term and has the same pragmatic impact on the target audience.

(21) Tom and Soap in Dog’s van after the robbery at their neighbours’ house

Tom	Jesus. That wasn’t too bad, was it?	<i>Beh, non è andata tanto male, vero?</i>
Soap	When the <b>bottle</b> in my arse has contracted, I’ll let you know.	<i>Abbi pazienza, appena mi si rilassa il <b>buco del culo</b> (“arse hole”), te lo dico.</i>

“Bottle” is the short form of “bottle and glass”, CRS for “arse”, rendered into Italian with an equivalent slang noun phrase “*buco del culo*” (“arse hole”).

Also many Cockney terms referred to currency are often translated, in both films, with Italian colloquial equivalents. This is the case with “quid”, Cockney slang for “one pound sterling” (used with unchanged plural form following a cardinal numeral) and mostly rendered in Italian as “sterle” (the colloquial short form of standard “sterline”), whose possible equivalent in English could be the non-existent lexeme “sterles”, a morphological variant of “sterling” resulting from a process of back-clipping (plus the plural suffix) similar to that applied to the Italian word, as shown in excerpt (22) from SN:

(22) Gypsy kid to Tommy asking the man to give him some money if he wants him to go and get Mickey

Kid	The five <b>quid</b> you are going	<i>Le cinque <b>sterle</b> (“sterles”) che mi</i>
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	to pay me.	<i>devi.</i>
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The term “sterle” is used in Italian to translate two other denominations of currency, i.e. “grand”, Cockney for “one thousand pound sterling” (also sometimes standardized, see 4.1), as can be observed in (23) and (24) from LSTSB and (25) from SN:

(23) Tom voice-over talking about the illegal card games run by Hatchet Harry

Tom	You see it’s not easy to take a seat at this card table; the amount of money involved has to be a hundred <b>grand</b> upwards and there is no shortage of punters.	<i>Non è facile riuscire ad avere un posto a questo tavolo da gioco. La posta va dalle 100.000 <b>sterle</b> (“sterles”) in su e c’è sempre chi fa la fila per giocare.</i>
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(24) Harry to Barry asking for information about Eddy

Harry	Where did he get a hundred <b>grand</b> ?	<i>Dove ha preso le 100.000 <b>sterle</b> (“sterles”)?</i>
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(25) Turkish to Tommy asking him to go and buy a new caravan at the gypsies’ campsite

Turkish	You’ve got 10 <b>grand</b> and it would be nice to have change.	<i>Ti do diecimila <b>sterle</b> (“sterles”) e mi piacerebbe vedere un po’ di resto.</i>
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and “monkey”, i.e. “500 pounds” (possibly originating from the 500 rupee note that has or had a monkey on ), to be found in excerpt (26) from LSTSB:

(26) Little Chris to John when trying to collect a debt

Little Chris	He's not poor! He's got over a <b>monkey</b> just in his wallet! Fuckin' hell, John, you always go round with that in your pocket?	<i>Non è povero! Qui nel portafoglio ci sono <b>500 sterle</b> ("500 sterles")! Ehi, fottiti, John, vai sempre in giro con tanta grana?</i>
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Some of the most effective instances of Cockney and CRS expressions translated by means of slang and colloquial pragmatic equivalents can be observed in the Italian dubbed version of *SN*; excerpts (27), (28) and (29) show that the Italian forms succeed in transferring, in the target text, the same level of informality of the Cockney and CRS expressions though often failing to reproduce their inventive liveliness.

(27) Sol to Bad Boy Lincoln talking about artificial diamonds

Sol	A moissanite is an artificial diamond, Lincoln. It's <b>Mickey Mouse</b> . Spurious. Not genuine. And it's worth...fuck-all.	<i>La moissanite è un diamante artificiale, mi capisci? È una <b>patacca</b> ("junk"), Lincoln. È spurio, non genuino. E il suo valore è... un cazzo di niente.</i>
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"Mickey Mouse" is used in Cockney slang as an adjective meaning "fake, second rate, of poor quality" and it is here rendered into Italian as "*patacca*" ("junk"), a colloquial connotative equivalent having the same pragmatic force of the original Cockney expression though lacking its humorous effects.

(28) Doug the Head to his daughters referring to his cousin Hand

Doug	He's a big <b>mucker</b> in New York.	<i>È un grosso <b>papavero</b> ("big shot") a New York.</i>
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“Mucker” is a colloquialism meaning “friend” (probably deriving from the Irish phrase ‘mo chara’, i.e. ‘my friend’), here translated as “*papaverò*”, applying the slang meaning of the Italian word of “big shot, bigwig”.

(29) Brick Top to Punter after Mickey’s victory over Bomber Harris

Brick Top	Listen, you fucking fringe, if I throw a dog a bone... I don’t want to know if it tastes good or not. You stop me again whilst I’m walking and I’ll cut your fucking <b>jacobs</b> off.	<i>Senti, brutta cacatina, se tiro un osso a un cane non voglio sapere se è buono o no. Fermami un’altra volta mentre cammino e ti stacco quelle due <b>cisti</b> (“cysts”) inutili che ti pendono in mezzo alle gambe.</i>
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“Jacobs” is the short form of the popular CRS expression “Jacob’s Crackers” (i.e. a famous brand of crackers), referring to “knackers”, itself a popular British slang term for “balls, testicles”. The Italian version translates it as “*cisti*” (“cysts”), using a pragmatic equivalent that is even more offensive than the original one as it clearly refers to the small size of Punter’s testicles.

In some cases pragmatic equivalence is also rendered by means of morphological variants of Italian standard lexemes, as we can observe in excerpt (30) from *SN*:

(30) Mickey to Gorgeous George

Mickey	You’re not going anywhere, you thick <b>lump</b> .	<i>Tu non vai da nessuna parte, <b>zecca</b> (“tick”) pelata.</i>
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“Lump” derives from the CRS expression “lump of lead”, meaning “head”, and is translated into Italian as “*zecca*” (“tick”), a morphological alteration of the standard term “*zucca*” (colloquialism for “head”) recreating, in this case, the deviation from the norm typical of the Cockney dialect spoken by Mickey, the Irish pikey, though the referential meaning of the Italian term is completely different.

#### 4.1.4 Omission

The last translation strategy adopted in the films under study, though with just a few cases to be recognized in *SN* only, is omission, entailing the elimination in translation of some dialectal forms with the result of neutralizing their regional or social connotations. The most interesting cases of omission to be observed in the film’s Italian dubbed version regard two regionalisms, the interjection “oi” and the term of endearment “bubbee”, as can be seen in excerpts (31) and (32):

(31) Turkish to Charlie

Turkish	[...] <b>Oi</b> , what’s happening with these sausages Charlie?	[...] <i>Da dove vengono queste salsicce, Charlie?</i>
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“Oi” is Cockney slang for “hey”, an interjection particularly associated with working class and originally used either to call attention or as a challenge, depending on the speaker’s tone and abruptness. Its absence in the Italian version decontextualizes the scene from its original socio-cultural background and fails in assigning the character his specific sociolinguistic identity.

(32) Avi to Franky



Avi	You did a good job, <b>bubbee</b> . Don't go screwing it up, all right?	<i>Sì, hai fatto un ottimo lavoro. Vedi di non sputtarlo.</i>
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“Bubbee”, the Yiddish term for “grandmother”, is one of the many terms Cockney borrows from Yiddish; it is a morphological variant of “bubby”, a blend of “buddy” and “baby”, and it is used in Cockney to refer either to a significant other, who is both your best friend and your romantic interest, or to a brother; the Italian version omits the term thus losing the ironically affectionate connotation implied in the original scene.

### 5. Conclusions

As our analysis has so far illustrated, when the translation of Cockney and CRS in the Italian dubbed version of *LSTSB* and *SN* is at stake, the general tendency is for them either to be standardized (with 25 occurrences covering 40% of the total 62 items) or to be domesticated through socio-cultural adaptation (with 21 occurrences covering 33% of the total). Such translation policies tend to lessen the force of the original dialogues, mostly failing to recreate, in the dubbed versions, the authentic sociolinguistic picture that the original versions instead portray, though in some cases all the same succeeding in reproducing the Cockney and CRS expressions’ connotative meaning.

Notwithstanding a predominant neutralization of the films’ original local and social flavor, an interesting aspect that nevertheless emerges from our study is that some Cockney and CRS expressions are also rendered through colloquial pragmatic equivalents (with 16 occurrences covering 25% of the total items) that, though devoid of any regional or social connotation, actually create pleasant effects of exoticism; indeed, the Italian translators/adapters play with the potential of the target language – and in particular with its standard lexicon often creating inventive paraphrases and uncommon neologisms – in such a way as to come up

with imaginative expressions achieving the effect of an unlocalized variant of the standard language (Ranzato 2010: 120), however artificial it could sound.

Our case study therefore essentially proves that though the translation of regionalisms and sociolects often re-expresses foreign cultural values in terms of what is familiar to the target culture, both from a general point of view and in the two films under discussion, it also often succeeds in recreating the appeal of diversity, inventing a sort of new language that, in some way, makes the target audience aware of the ‘otherness’ portrayed on the screen.

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