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NEGOTIATING CULTURAL DIFFERENCE THROUGH MULTILINGUALISM AND TRANSLATION IN THE WESTERN SET ALONG THE U.S./MEXICO BORDER

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Abstract

This paper brings together the concepts of frontier, translation and multilingualism in order to analyse the discursive construction of cultural identity in Western films set along the U.S./Mexico border region. Both the translation techniques employed during the process of filmmaking and the formulas used in the Spanish dubbing show that linguistic diversity, articulated through various (non-)translation mechanisms, implies the negotiation of the limits of cultural difference and has the capacity to reinforce or destabilise dominant ideologies around identity.

Resumen

Este trabajo pone en común los conceptos de frontera, traducción y multilingüismo para analizar la construcción discursiva de la identidad cultural en el wéstern ambientado en la zona limítrofe entre Estados Unidos y México. Tanto las técnicas de traducción llevadas a cabo en la fase de producción de las películas como las fórmulas empleadas en el doblaje para España muestran cómo la diversidad lingüística, articulada a través de diversos mecanismos de (no) traducción, implica la negociación de los límites de la diferencia cultural y tiene la capacidad de reforzar o desestabilizar ideologías dominantes en torno a la identidad.

Keywords: Border. Identity. Dubbing. Western. Multilingualism.

Palabras clave: Frontera. Identidad. Doblaje. Wéstern. Multilingüismo.

1. Introduction

The arrival of Donald Trump to the presidency of the most powerful country in the world has been shrouded in controversy. His promise to fortify the border with Mexico, his derogatory statements about immigrants, or the removal of Spanish-language content from the White House website have revived the debate on xenophobia, the rights of racial minorities in the United States and language policies likely to be enacted by the new president. It seems more than obvious that the cultural and linguistic diversity which characterise the United States are now facing one of their most fervent detractors. All doubts regarding the tycoon's position on multilingualism were dispelled by his fierce defence of a purely monolingual and monocultural nation: "I think that, while we're in this nation, we should be speaking English. Whether people like it or not, that's how we assimilate" (Katz 2015).

The place where Trump plans to build the wall, which has been the talk of the international media, is not just a mere geographic boundary, but one of the most mythical spaces in American history and culture.

In his book *The Significance of the Frontier in American History* (1894), Frederick Jackson Turner was one of the first historians to note the crucial importance of the frontier -in this case, referring to the line the was gradually moving westward - in the formation of the national idiosyncrasy and the cementing of typically American values, such as individualism and personal freedom. As Fojas (2008: 27) suggests, the symbolic power of the country's southern border can be equated to that of the western frontier mythologised by Turner. If the western fringe represented the possibility of expansion and conquest, the border with Mexico acts as a retaining wall, outlining the perimeter of the nation and promoting a patriotic sentiment based on the defence of territory and the reaffirmation of one's own identity by opposing and being hostile to outsiders who are often represented in a stereotypical and negative way.

Film is probably the cultural manifestation in which United States borders have played a more prominent role. The Western, a star Hollywood genre, would not be understood without them; nor without the contribution of the

various cultural translation and linguistic representation strategies which are used to project a certain vision of national identity and of the Other. O'Sullivan (2011: 130) documents some of the techniques employed for the treatment of indigenous languages in this type of film, and both the homogenizing tactics and the pursuit of greater realism by including subtitled fragments indicate that Westerns don't only deal with geographic boundaries, but also linguistic and cultural ones. It is, therefore, a very fertile genre for exploring linguistic heterogeneity, ideology and the ethics of representation, as well as the problems posed by translation, either within the work itself or in the international distribution phase.

Recognising the presence of linguistic mediation and translation formulas in original version cinema and taking it as a starting point entails a series of very significant methodological implications in the study of audiovisual translation. In the first place, it builds an unprecedented bridge between filmology and translation studies, which can benefit both disciplines. This is proven by the existence of research such as that of Kapsaskis (2017), which applies a translation-oriented approach to the critical analysis of a film production and shows how this approach can reveal formal, aesthetic and ideological aspects that go unnoticed when viewed from an eminently monolingual perspective. Kapsaskis' study can be seen in the context of a recent tendency to consider film productions as heterogeneous texts built on the foundations of linguistic plurality, be it visible or not in the filmed dialogue. Mamula and Patti (2016) affirm, as O'Sullivan (2011) did, that cinema has negotiated linguistic difference throughout its history, and advocate for expanding the boundaries of the study of multilingualism in this medium so as to allow the observation of what they call "multilingualism's work beyond the soundtrack" (O'Sullivan 2011: 2).

In addition to the necessary emergence of linguistic diversity and translation in film theory, as well as the advantages this entails for a greater understanding of film representation dynamics, perceiving film productions as the end result of linguistic and intercultural negotiation processes, has direct repercussions on the analysis patterns applied to audiovisual translation. The translation of film as a culturally complex and dynamic phenomenon implies letting go of the notion that the act of translating is a binary process mediating between two homogeneous creations and instead reinforces the idea that translating involves immersing oneself in "a difficult and never-ending transaction between the uncertain poles of cultural difference" (Simon 1996: 165). Thus, our research approaches audiovisual translation, and more specifically dubbing, as a highly ethical task consisting in the renegotiation of identities and the reconfiguration of the shifting boundaries of cultural difference.

It could be argued that borders, along with languages, are the mechanisms that ultimately fix or destabilise the limits which determine where one's own cultural identity begins and ends. Filmmaker John Sayles, known for his advocacy of multilingualism and cultural diversity, puts it eloquently: "A border is where you draw a line and say 'This is where I end and somebody else begins'" (Sayles apud West & West 1996: 14). Throughout this article, with the help of the contributions of Sayles and other directors and screenwriters, we will attempt to bring together the concepts of border, multilingualism and translation so as to analyse some of the possibilities of identity representation and cultural difference in Westerns set in the area separating and uniting the United States and Mexico.

2. The border as a concept and filming space

The choice of the Unites States-Mexico border as the setting and central axis for a study of the construction of identities through film, multilingualism and translation is neither accidental nor arbitrary, but rather responds to a series of conceptual and methodological considerations.

If we take into account some of the main theoretical reflections carried out within the framework of *Border Studies*, a generic term usually encompassing all research aimed at deepening the understanding of borders as territorial, geopolitical or cultural entities (Wilson & Donnan 2012: 2), it is difficult to ignore the close links between the conceptualisation of border space and reflections on the phenomenon of translation, often understood in a broad and metaphorical sense. It is with good reason that López Ponz (2012: 144) gives a good account of these connections when he defines "the border as a space of translation and translation as a border activity", an approach shared by several authors such as Vidal Claramonte (2007), Godayol (1999), Sales Salvador (2004) or Martín Ruano (2003), for whom the analysis of transcultural narratives provides a way of delving into the conception of translation as a vital experience and an exercise in (in)defining identity.

2.1. The double sidedness of the border

One of the aspects commonly attributed to the border which inevitably refers us to translation is that of ambivalence. Although the subject is highly complex, two basic currents can be distinguished within the various approaches to the concept of frontier, which are not necessarily incompatible or mutually exclusive.

On the one hand, the border can be understood as a dividing line and demarcation tool whose main function would be to establish the limits between communities, nations or cultures. In this sense, on a more abstract level, its role would be to serve as a structural support for the categorisations and binary oppositions underlying much of western thought and naturalise the prevailing power relations at a given time and in a given context. Should we confine ourselves only to the geopolitical sphere, the border constitutes the differentiation criterion for the native/foreigner binomial; the same dialectic is meant to be tackled by translation, sometimes by means of formulas which reinforce and consolidate these dichotomies. Translation, like the border, "plays a vital role in the shaping of dominant discourses and public opinion" (Martín Ruano & Vidal Sales 2013).

On the other hand, we find the anthropological concept of liminality, introduced by Van Gennep (1909) and Turner (1969), which evokes a notion of the border as a place of transition, openness and ambiguity; that "third space" described by Bhabha (1994) in which indeterminacy and hybridity prevail. From this perspective, far from being an impassable wall through which difference is essentialised and reality is compartmentalised, the border becomes a space of encounter between cultures, identity negotiation and even of political clash; the ideal place from which to carry out heterogeneous and subversive discursive practices such as those proposed by the Chicana authors. Here translation appears as an ally in the representation of subjectivities detached from the hegemonic discourse on cultural identity, as an indispensable component of that interstitial state that transcends "the reifying effects of national identity" (Ashcroft 2009: 20).

2.2. The U.S./Mexico border: a complex and asymmetrical scene

The US/Mexico border is a multidimensional and problematic territory of great historical, social and political complexity, which is both a container dam and an arena for intermingling and hybridisation. Jiroutová (2014) provides a faithful reflection of this paradox when she attributes two seemingly contradictory qualities to the border: elasticity and inflexibility. The border stretches to the point of permeating all aspects of American culture and its institutions, yet it remains an immovable threshold that cross-border subjects must constantly transit. As well pointed out by Kaminsky (2001: 92), the border separating these two countries is in turn conceived as the liminal space described by Gloria Anzaldúa in her work *Borderlands/La Frontera* and as an extremely politicised territorial limit presided over by conflict, violence and asymmetries

of power, similar to the metallic wall portrayed by María Novaro in her film *El jardín del edén* (1994).

But Novaro's film is only one of hundreds of productions that, throughout film history, have depicted the border from different perspectives and approaches, both in Latin America and in the United States. Within the North American cinematic tradition, border films are considered one of the oldest genres,[1] and in the so-called golden age of Mexican cinema, the country's northern border was also a recurring theme.

As already mentioned, what is remarkable about the concept of the border is its ambiguous and contradictory nature, as well the fact that it embodies multiple historical and cultural meanings that are difficult to rationalise. Aware of this, Kaminsky (2001: 93) highlights the capacity of film of bestowing coherence and definition to the border space:

> Narrative and visual art, here fused in film, take on some of the functions of ritual in creating coherence out of the confusion at the border. Just as ritual organizes behaviour during a transitional phase when otherwise there are no rules of comportment, the visual and narrative art of film organizes the territory of the border and what goes on in the space where the U.S. and Mexico bleed into each other.

This sort of metaphor of cinema acting as a cartographer is particularly apt when we add multilingualism and translation to the equation. To gain a better understanding of the way in which the seventh art configures the space of the border and articulates the identities that take part in it, it seems necessary to add yet another element to the array of visual and narrative techniques, a very significant factor, systematically overlooked by film theory until recently: linguistic difference[2].

1. Assigning the genre label to border cinema is somewhat controversial and, according to Fojas (2008: 12), may be too ambitious. However, in this context we use it to refer to the term "border cinema", which encompasses all those films that share the same geographical and symbolic referent, which can be approached from different aesthetic conventions such as those of the Western, *film noir* or *thriller*, among others.
2. As Mamula & Patti (2016: 2) rightly point out, with the exception of Ella Shohat and Robert Stam's article "Cinema After Babel: Language, Difference, Power", published in 1985, most of the research focusing on the relation between linguistic difference and cinema has emerged in the last two decades.

3. The western border and its rewritings

As already anticipated in the introductory section, the Western is the frontier genre par excellence in American cinema. The Old West is its most representative location, but it is not the only geographical context to which it can be related. In the history of the genre, we find a great variety of Westerns set in Mexico or on the southern border of the U.S., such as those that recreate the historical episode of the Battle of the Alamo. In addition, the area around the frontier with the neighbouring country has been the setting in which American icons such as the border patrol or the Texas *rangers* have crystallised (Fojas 2008: 28).

At the same time, perhaps due to its connection with the idea of edges and margins of territory, this genre can be defined, just like the border, in terms of a physical space and a theoretical concept, and it is intimately linked to the same conflicts, dialectics and power relations tackled by the translation process on a daily basis. Its relationship with travel, conquest, the (dis)encounter between different and, above all, unequal cultures in terms of power could explain why it is not too complicated to find examples of linguistic plurality and translation (or the significant absence of it) in film productions of this type. It is no coincidence that in films in which the border embodies a mythical space, with profound symbolism, translation is used as a discursive tool in the construction of narratives about identity and otherness. As Vidal Claramonte (2012: 100) states, the border offers an ideal atmosphere for the use of language and, by extension, translation, as an instrument of power:

> The border is an area of contact and hospitality, a social space where cultures meet, clash with each other, but also intertwine, often in tremendously asymmetrical relations of domination and subordination: that is why that is that space where language is used as an instrument of power.

Another aspect to be taken into account in the analysis of the representation of identity in Westerns is the fact that it is a genre that has traditionally been built on dichotomies such as civilisation versus wilderness, hero versus villain, or Americans versus indigenous populations, mainly Native Americans and Mexicans, whom it has often characterised in a reductionist and stereotypical way. Therefore, authors such as Baugh (2012: 102) claim that the Western and its popularity have been key factors in reinforcing cultural, racial and also gender discrimination, due to the roles commonly assigned to female characters.

However, the last few decades have seen the emergence of what is now generally considered a Western sub-genre, which includes a series of productions that use elements of the structure, aesthetic conventions and prototypical characters of the classical model as a means of deconstructing some of the imperialist and ethnocentric ideological precepts that formed the basis of the classical Western. Leaving their approach to linguistic difference aside, it would be possible to consider these cinematographic manifestations as divergent translations, in the style of those that Pérez L. de Heredia (2016) detects in television fiction in terms of gender stereotypes. We are referring to the so-called revisionist Western, which is currently on the rise, as evidenced by recent examples such as the acclaimed films *The Revenant* by Alejandro González Iñárritu or *The Hateful Eight* by Quentin Tarantino, both released in 2015[3].

Although perhaps less popular and of less impact, Westerns set in the territories bordering Mexico have also been the subject of contemporary rewritings characterised by the subversion of certain ethnic or cultural differentiation by implicitly exposing social issues such as US immigration policies. This is the case of films such as *Lone Star* (John Sayles 1996) or *The Three Burials of Melquiades Estrada* (Tommy Lee Jones 2005).

A detailed analysis of the role played by linguistic differences throughout the one-hundred-year history of Western films would undoubtedly be an overly ambitious goal. However, the extensive filmography set on the southern border of the United States or centred on the cross-border journeys to Mexico made by Hollywood stars such as Clint Eastwood, Humphrey Bogart or, more recently, Tommy Lee Jones, offers us several examples of the use of the language of the Other, i.e. Spanish, with which to illustrate possible consequences of multilingualism for the representation of cultural difference and racial identities on the border.

In order to provide some reflections on the claim that "translation enters the picture even before a film is subtitled, dubbed or voiced-over" (O'Sullivan 2011: 13), we introduce three films related to the United States-Mexico border and analyse, in each of them, a specific aspect of their combined use of English and Spanish and the role played by translation in each production.

3. See also in this regard the analysis by Gómez Castro and Pérez L. de Heredia (2015) of the intersemiotic rewriting that takes place in *Brokeback Mountain* (Ang Lee 2005), one of the most relevant contemporary reinterpretations of the Western.

4. The non-translation of Spanish in *The Treasure of the Sierra Madre*

The Treasure of the Sierra Madre (1948), directed by John Huston, is a film set in 1920s Mexico and starring three American characters (played by Humphrey Bogart, Tim Holt and Walter Huston) who embark on a journey to the city of Tampico in search of gold. Like most American films of its time, the border crossing from north to south is depicted as a straightforward, uneventful journey that is often, as is the case here, not even filmed. This contrasts with the odyssey usually involved in the return trip on the same route, but in the reverse direction: "attempts to go *El Norte* from the other side are usually shown as being much more difficult and requiring getting through a much less penetrable barrier" (Dell'Agnese 2005: 209).

Despite this film being very close to the conventions of the classic Western, the portrayal of Mexico is not unilaterally negative. While it is true that it features some of the stereotypical figures frequently employed in Hollywood's depiction of the Other, such as Mexican bandits, it also gives prominence to a number of other Hispanic characters rendered in a more amiable manner. Arguably, in a sense, there is a greater diversity of nuance than can be seen in other classic sketches with respect to the representation of minorities.

One aspect that stands out in the film is the use of Spanish by actors of Mexican origin. A considerable amount of the dialogue was filmed in this language, probably with the intention of achieving greater ethnographic realism. The relevance of this "heterolingualism" (Meylaerts 2006) for the symbolic construction of identity in this film is only matched by the importance of the total absence of subtitles in the film. With the exception of a few occasions in which the only North American character capable of communicating in Spanish acts as an interpreter for his compatriots, and despite the extent and communicative relevance of the interventions that take place in this language, the dialogue filmed in Spanish remains untranslated for the English-speaking viewer.

Both the fact that the only variety of translation present in the film is the consecutive interpretation by an American character - something that inevitably alludes to a process of cultural assimilation through a kind of ventriloquism carried out by culturally dominant subjects - as well as the denial of translation for the rest of the discourse uttered by the Mexican characters - which establishes a considerable distance from the Other - are two key factors in the management of cultural difference that the film reveals, but they are not the only ones.

The choice of this way of conveying multilingualism also determines some important aspects of the script and the style of filming. Because of the viewer's inability to understand much of the dialogue, the film focuses on the action, the non-verbal information and the paralinguistic elements of speech. For some critics, this strategy could not have been more successful: "[t]he decision to play all of the Spanish dialogue without subtitles was a wonderful idea, because the translation was not needed to understand the meaning" (Lippe 2009). But from the point of view of a critical analysis focused on cultural representation, it could be studied to what extent a greater emphasis on body language and aspects such as the volume and intonation of the voice can lead to a caricaturisation of the characters expressing themselves in the foreign language.

5. John Sayles and the dense translation approach

As a counterpoint to John Huston's decision of not translating in *The Treasure of the Sierra Madre*, it is worth mentioning the vision on multilingualism and translation of one of the contemporary filmmakers who have devoted part of their work to rewriting the Western. John Sayles is among those North-American directors who have experimented with this genre so as to alter some of its most deeply rooted ideological canons. Due to his commitment to hybrid identities and the relativisation of the frontier, as well as his rejection of the dominant formulas of racial differentiation, one of his most celebrated films (*Lone Star*) is considered a cinematic adaptation of the Chicano theory and its literary manifestations (Fregoso 2006: 398).

This modern Western revisits the cross-cultural conflict between Anglos and Chicanos in Frontera, a small Texas town, and systematically uses multiple narrative tropes that seek to disrupt the boundaries of cultural difference, allowing the director to articulate a social denunciation of immigration and racial discrimination in the United States. According to Mains (2004: 257), this film:

> challenges efforts to locate and place characters on only one side of the border, and instead illustrate[s] the means by which places and identities travel with people across (representational and material) borders and are constantly being discursively reproduced and contested.

Sayles' argument is reinforced by an exercise in decentralisation of Anglo culture - the Mexican characters acquire greater visibility than usual - and by his particular use of bilingualism, for, as Miller (2003: 125) states, Sayles'

criticism "comes within a positive argument for binational multilingual aesthetics", which has led to his work being labelled "transamerican cinema".

One of the keys to understanding the importance given to linguistic diversity in film is to observe the way in which it is imagined and projected during screenwriting. In many cases, the introduction of a foreign language in film and television is done through a mere reference in descriptive paragraphs or a cue, within lines of dialogue, of the language to be spoken by a given character. This can be seen as an indication that the aim often pursued through multilingualism is no more than the creation of a sense of rupture with the familiar and alienation between the characters and the audience (Díaz Cintas 2011: 216). In the case of *Lone Star*, despite being an American production, written and directed by an English-speaking filmmaker, what stands out is the fact that the dialogue filmed in Spanish has its literal correlate in the original script and its respective English translations appear in a secondary position, enclosed in square brackets. This detail could be framed within the exercise of cultural and linguistic decentralisation that the film aims to implement, by placing the minority language in the foreground:

> YOUNG MERCEDES: ¡No puedo ver la orilla! [I can't see the bank!]
> ELADIO: (off- screen) Aquí! ¡Venga por aquí! [Over here! Come this way!]
> (Sayles 1996)

Contrary to what could be observed in the previously analysed film, in *Lone Star* the fragments in Spanish do appear adequately subtitled. In this respect, it is worth highlighting the director's own opinion on this mode of translation and the way he wishes it to be practised: "Some of the story will be received through subtitles. I didn't want those subtitles to be as reductive and inaccurate as usual" (Ryan 1998: 198).

John Sayles seems to formulate a critique of the conventions and restrictions of subtitling linked to the search for legibility and synchronisation, and consciously transgresses them. This position is reminiscent of that of some film and audiovisual translation theorists who, as Pérez-González (2015: 115) points out, see these limiting norms as a way of naturalising the dominant discourse or narrative structure or of carrying out a biased and unethical representation of otherness:

> Various film scholars have noted that such conventions, with their emphasis on readability and synchronized sound, 'naturalize a dominant, hierarchically unified worldview' (Minh-ha 1992: 207) that, in turn, imposes the hegemonic structure of the Hollywood narrative and provides 'corrupt' representations of otherness (Nornes 1999).

Sayles may have shared the objections expressed by these authors and therefore his commitment to the use of Spanish and to what we could call "dense" subtitling, alluding to Appiah (2000) and Hermans (2003), may be a reflection of the director's recognition and vindication of cultural and linguistic diversity in the United States. After all, the filmmaker expresses himself in these terms in regard to the cultural and linguistic map of the United States: "English-speaking culture is just one of many cultures. It has become the dominant culture or subculture in certain areas, but it's a subculture just like all the others. American culture is not monolingual or monoracial. It's always been a mix" (Sayles quoted by Girgus 2002: 42).

6. Translation and Hospitality in *The Three Burials of Melquiades Estrada*

In *The Three Burials of Melquiades Estrada*, the last of the examples we have collected, Tommy Lee Jones, the film's director himself, plays Pete Perkins, the foreman of a Texan ranch located in a small town near the Mexican border. During one of his regular workdays, he encounters Melquiades Estrada, an undocumented Mexican immigrant on horseback, who is wandering around in search of a job that would allow him to survive on American territory and remain hidden from the eyes of "la Migra"[4]. Pete offers him a job on his ranch and, thus, begins a close friendship that comes to an abrupt end the day Mike Norton, a new border patrol agent recently arrived from Cincinnati, accidentally ends Melquiades' life. As the local authorities stand idly by, due to their reluctance to charge an agent for the murder of an undocumented immigrant, Pete decides to take the law into his own hands. As soon as he discovers the culprit behind his friend's death, driven by the victim's wish expressed while still alive - to be buried in Jiménez, his hometown - Pete kidnaps Mike and forces him to dig up Melquiades' body and carry it with him on an arduous journey across the border, which will bring about both character's personal transformation.

The staging of the border crossing into Mexico as a long and stormy journey, reminiscent of those made by the "wetbacks" in order to emigrate to the United States, is the first of the film's many strategies for deconstructing the classical Western. In it, the border is presented as a liminal space and contact zone (Pratt 1992: 6), where transculturation, intermingling and hybridisation revoke, invalidate and underline the historicity of identity markers such as

4. Slang term for the United States Border Patrol.

nation or language. The film allows itself to explore a notion of identity as something permeable, by mixing cultural codes and combining different elements from each side of the border that portray it as a terrain (un)defined by cultural contact. By constantly resorting to paradox and role reversal - it is the border patrol agent who, dressed in Melquiades' clothes, ends up becoming the migrant who must cross to the other side on a calamitous journey - the film disrupts the hierarchy of power and blurs the boundaries between the familiar and the strange, between the legitimate and the illegal.

The screenplay for *The Three Burials of Melquiades Estrada* was written by Guillermo Arriaga entirely in Spanish and, after passing through the hands of several translators, among whom was Tommy Lee Jones, the film was shot mostly in English, though with a considerable amount of dialogue in Spanish. Jones (2006) himself recounts the writing process as follows: "Guillermo wrote the screenplay in Spanish and had it translated by somebody he often works with. I hatched a plan to hire two other translators so I would have three English translations before I began to put together my own".

The result of this series of rewrites was a bilingual text, translated in a deliberately partial and selective manner. Kitses (2006: 14) says that the insistence on the use of English and Spanish throughout the film responds to an attempt to achieve a certain linguistic and cultural parity in its representation of the border. For this purpose, the film makes use of other resources such as the soundtrack, a balanced combination of country music and Latin sounds equally represented. However, the truth of the matter is that, as Delabastita and Grutman (2005: 17) point out, the significance of a multilingual text is not a question of quantity, but rather of the qualitative function performed by linguistic plurality within the overall structure of the work. Therefore, within our analysis of the representative power of linguistic difference, it is worth paying special attention to a specific fact that is truly significant and revealing.

Tommy Lee Jones decided not to translate the whole of Melquiades and Pete's conversations into English through the actors' voices, but through subtitles. As in *The Treasure of the Sierra Madre*, this decision regarding (non-) translation is clearly politically and ideologically charged, although with quite different consequences. The film thus moves away from the general tendency of the canonical frontier Western, which usually employs linguistic variety according to a logic of domestication of the English-speaking white character, who expresses himself in English, and foreignisation of the minority characters. Here the binary opposition between the native and the foreigner is diluted, disrupting the power structure linked to this distinction and dignifying the

Spanish language and the figure of Hispanic characters, who have traditionally occupied a subordinate position in cinema: "While the classic Western's Anglo protagonist traditionally established a patriarchal, vertical relationship with his younger, minority companion, here this model is subverted in favour of a more harmonious and horizontal friendship" (Torres 2009: 4).

In *The Three Burials of Melquiades Estrada*, it is the American character who adopts the language of the foreigner, the immigrant, and not the other way around, therefore overturning the cultural hierarchy that often finds its ultimate expression in the imposition of the dominant language. Adopting Derrida's (2000) concept of hospitality, it could be said that Pete, in this case the host, welcomes the immigrant Melquiades in his own country, but is, in turn, welcomed by the immigrant in his mother tongue, in an exercise of deterritorialisation of language and democratisation of intercultural relations.

7. The challenges of dubbing Spanish into Spanish

So far, we have looked at some of the infinite forms that linguistic heterogeneity may take in cinema productions about the United States-Mexico border and observed that, in essence, both translation and the absence of translation can work, in this context, as effective tools in the discursive construction of identity. We will now proceed to examine some notable characteristics of the versions of the cited films distributed in Spain, so as to shed some light on the formal and, more importantly, ethical and ideological challenges of translating texts as complex as these.

7.1. The Treasure of Sierra Madre

The dubbing of the Spanish dialogue for the version distributed in Spain of T*he Treasure of the Sierra Madre* is notable for its intermittency. As a general rule, the strategy for fragments filmed in Spanish consists in maintaining the original track; however, due to the appearance of code changes and the presence of certain metalinguistic and cultural allusions, occasional interventions from the dubbing actors are used as stop-gap solutions to solve linguistic restrictions (cf. de Higes Andino 2014: 273), such as the presence of English and Spanish in the intervention of the same character. This generates a series of leaps of perception on the spectator's side, which can undermine the credibility of certain Mexican characters. In the following example, the segments in which the voice of the original actors is maintained in the target text are underlined:

Example 1. *The Treasure of the Sierra Madre* (01:07:14)

	MT	OT
BANDIDO MEXICANO	Vengan acá todos. Vengan a ver esta palomita que me encontré en su nido. Está echadita.	*Vengan acá todos. Vengan a ver esta palomita que me encontré en su nido. Está echadita.*
SOMBRERO DORADO	Oiga, señor.	*Oiga, señor*. We are *Federales*. You know, the mounted police.
DOBBS	Si son de la policía, a ver las insignias.	If you're the police, where are your badges?
SOMBRERO DORADO	¿Cómo dice? Nosotros no tenemos. No las necesitamos. No hay razón para que yo le enseñe ninguna insignia apestosa.	Badges? We ain't got no badges! We don't need no badges. I don't have to show you any stinkin' badges!
DOBBS	Cuidado con acercarse.	You'd better not come any closer.
SOMBRERO DORADO	No sea tonto, hombre. No vamos a hacerle ningún daño. No hace falta que sea tan maleducado. Denos su rifle y le dejaremos en paz.	*No sea tonto, hombre*. We aren't trying to do you any harm. Why don't you try to be a little more polite? Give us your gun and we'll leave you in peace.
DOBBS	Lo necesito para mí.	I need my gun myself.
SOMBRERO DORADO	Tire esa chatarra hacia acá y le prometo que seguiremos nuestro camino.	Oh, throw that ol' iron over here. We'll pick it up and go on our way.
DOBBS	Váyanse donde quieran, pero sin mi rifle.	You go on your way without my gun and go quick!
SOMBRERO DORADO	Vámonos p'atrás. Atrás todos.	*Vámonos p'atrás. Atrás todos.*

As this sample shows, the Mexican characters are able to express themselves in both Spanish and English and, as mentioned above, at least one of the American protagonists is fluent in Spanish. However, as is usually the case in dubbing, due to the limitations imposed by the rules regarding the way it is performed, this capacity for intercultural and intralinguistic communication goes unnoticed in the dubbed version of the film. The bilingual interventions are subjected to the homogenising power of translation, with the added circumstance of white characters' speech being standardised and that of the Mexicans being represented by an accent that in the dubbed fragments is emulated by Spanish dubbing actors, thus exacerbating the cultural distance between the

two groups as there is no linguistic intersection whatsoever in the Spanish version.

7.2. Lone Star

The situation described in the Spanish version of *The Treasure of the Sierra Madre* does not completely resemble the dubbing tactic employed for bilingualism in *Lone Star*. In the case of Sayles' film, the standardisation strategy is applied equally to all characters, regardless of their origin or nationality, resulting in a completely linguistically uniform film. The following example shows the elimination of regionalisms in a Mexican character in order to adapt the dialogue to the peninsular Spanish used throughout the film:

Example 2. *Lone Star* (00:05:30)

	MT	**OT**
AMADOR	Que alguien me pase el compact disc. Dádmelo, venga.	Somebody hand me the CD player. Dámelo, pendejo.

It is clear that linguistic standardisation ignores many of the objectives Sayles pursues by using multilingualism: to decentre his audience, to disrupt language and to represent a polyphony that denounces the discriminatory *English-only* ideology. However, by avoiding the use of foreignising techniques, the dubbing of *Lone Star* avoids the risk of incurring in the selective othering that can be found in similar films, such as the following one.

7.3. The Three Burials of Melquiades Estrada

The dubbed version for Spain of the last film analysed, *The Three Burials of Melquiades Estrada*, attempts to account for the bicultural aesthetic that characterises the film by resorting to dialectal variation, i.e., by combining peninsular Spanish and Chicano Spanish. Once again, however, linguistic restrictions take their toll on the dubbing. Faced with the incongruity of the characters arbitrarily changing dialect, the linguistic representation strategy applied is based on the same criteria and distinctions that the film originally rejected: race, nationality, the border as a dividing line. As in the case of *The Treasure of the Sierra Madre*, although in the original version the same character can speak both English and Spanish depending on the communicative situation, in the dubbed version the American characters express themselves unilaterally in peninsular Spanish, while the Mexicans also form their own linguistically

homogeneous group. Therefore, we encounter intralinguistic translations such as the following:

Example 3. *The Three Burials of Melquiades Estrada* (00:20:15)

	TM	**TO**
MELQUIADES	Pinche niñito de papi. Dice que es un ranchero solo porque le compraron este rancho. Pero ya quisiera verlo aquí rompiéndose la madre.	Pinche niñito de papi. Dice que es un ranchero solo porque le compraron este rancho. Pero ya quisiera verlo aquí rompiéndose la madre.
PETE	Ah, estás cabreado porque la única mujer que has tenido desde hace mucho tiempo es esta. El sábado te invito a Midland.	Ah, estás de mala solo porque desde hace rato la única mujer que has tenido es esta. El sábado te invito a Midland.
MELQUIADES	No, hombre, si voy a Midland me agarra la migra.	No, hombre, si voy a Midland me agarra la migra.
PETE	No te pasará nada, hombre. ¿Te dan miedo las mujeres? ... ¡Agustín, cierra ya esa puerta!	No te pasa nada o qué. ¿Te dan miedo las mujeres? ... ¡Agustín, cierra la *goddamn* puerta!

As we can see, in this "dubbing" into Spanish, different strategies are used for each character. Melquiades' Spanish is reproduced unchanged, and the dubbing actor imitates his accent and intonation. In Pete's Spanish, on the other hand, everything that deviates from peninsular Spanish is discarded, obviously, the accent as well, which becomes identical to that applied to the rest of the subjects in his country. The use of European Spanish activates in the spectator a process of identification with the whole collection of Anglo-American characters, while the linguistic foreignisation resulting from the non-translation of Chicano Spanish when used by Melquiades isolates and cloisters the immigrant within the category of the different. These translation strategies give way to the following paradox: the character who spoke his mother tongue in the original version becomes a foreigner in the eyes of the Spanish audience, and the one who spoke a learned language now appears as a native legitimised by the use of the common language (Bourdieu 1991), so that the native/foreigner binomial is recomposed according to the dictates of the predominant ideology. In the end, the accent is nothing more than "how the other speaks" (Lippi-Green 1994:

165) and, by speaking as the Other, Melquiades automatically returns to the position of subordination from which Jones would have wanted to rescue him.

8. Frontiers of translation: a space for ethical reflection

In this paper, we have been able to observe some of the formulas through which translation participates as a key agent in the cartographic design of the frontier in film narratives. Linguistic plurality, articulated through translation mechanisms, not only redefines a territory, but also the cultural differentiation dynamics projected by cinema. The analysed examples of dubbing give us a further clue on the matter, as they show how audiovisual translation, far from transferring cultural material from one pole to another, reconfigures the boundaries of identity through strategies of linguistic homogenisation and segregation.

According to Ferrari's (2010) interpretation, dubbing consists of the relocation of the cultural representations of certain ethnic groups by means of modification and adaptation to the set of cultural stereotypes of the receiving context. She has in mind a series of North American television products when she argues that such representations are translatable precisely because they never cease to be clichés (ibid.: 3), which enables their univocal transfer. Does this mean that, when dealing with productions that defy cultural stereotypes and represent identity in a non-normative way, audiovisual fiction becomes untranslatable?

In our opinion, the challenges posed by film works such as those studied in this article call for a rethinking of traditional models of audiovisual translation. The boom of multilingual cinema in recent decades has already initiated a process of transformation in the HST industry, leading to the abandonment of traditional patterns such as the dubbing/subtitling duality. The universe of possibilities is now wider, and must be put at the service of the cosmopolitan and transnational visions of identity triggered by the new cultural dynamics of a globalised world.

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