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LINGUISTIC ATTITUDES IN TRANSLATIONS INTO SPANISH AND PORTUGUESE OF PYGMALION

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Abstract

The play *Pygmalion*, by the Irish author George Bernard Shaw, is a masterpiece of modern drama that has been adapted into several theatrical productions, in which themes related to class, social mobility and identity are explored. In this study, we will analyse the linguistic attitudes behind the selection of a prestigious variety and the choice of a standard variety in the translations of this play into Spanish and Portuguese, as well as the challenges faced by the translator to reflect in the target language the social differences that are established through the use of two diastratic varieties of the source language.

Keywords: Drama; Linguistic attitudes; *Pygmalion*; Shaw; Translation.

Resumen

La obra teatral *Pygmalion*, del irlandés George Bernard Shaw, es una obra maestra del drama moderno que se ha adaptado a varias producciones teatrales, en la cual se



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exploran temas relacionados con la clase, la movilidad social y la identidad. En este estudio, analizaremos las actitudes lingüísticas que están detrás de la selección de una variedad de prestigio y la elección de una variedad subestándar en las traducciones de esta obra teatral al español y al portugués, así como los retos a los que se enfrenta el traductor para reflejar en la lengua meta las diferencias sociales que se establecen a través del uso de dos variedades diastráticas de la lengua de partida.

Palabras clave: Actitudes lingüísticas; *Pygmalion*; Shaw; Teatro; Traducción.

1. Introduction

The play *Pygmalion*, by Irish author George Bernard Shaw, is a masterpiece of modern drama that has been adapted into several theatrical productions. It was first performed in German in Vienna in 1913, and the following year it was staged in London. Meanwhile, it was first published in print in the United States and then in the United Kingdom in 1914 (Goñi 2017).

Since then, in addition to being rewritten by the author on several occasions,¹ it has been adapted for the big screen in different versions, the first in 1938, produced by Gabriel Pascal. Shaw received the Oscar for best adapted screenplay for this cinematic version of *Pygmalion*, making him the first person to receive both this award and the Nobel Prize in Literature (1925). Film adaptations of *Pygmalion* continued throughout the 20th century, the most popular, well-known, and successful being the 1964 version starring Audrey Hepburn and Rex Harrison, entitled *My Fair Lady*. The play was also adapted into a musical and premiered on Broadway in 1956 under the direction of Alan Lerner. It has been translated, and continues to be translated, into multiple languages. So far in the 21st century, *Pygmalion* continues to be adapted into various theatrical and television versions worldwide.

The play, named after the Greek myth about the sculptor who falls in love with his own creation, tells the story, in five acts, of a phonetics professor named Henry Higgins, who sets out to transform Eliza, a Cockney flower seller, into a lady of society who speaks and behaves accordingly. *Pygmalion* explores themes of class, social mobility, identity, and, above all, the power of language in social interaction. The main characters in

1. Shaw rewrote the play several times; in 1941, he published his final version.

Pygmalion and *My Fair Lady* are similar, though with some notable differences in characterisation and motivation. In both versions, the protagonist is Henry Higgins, a brilliant but socially awkward phonetics professor, portrayed as a self-absorbed and insensitive scholar who treats Eliza as a scientific experiment. He is obsessed with his work and shows little interest in human relationships, which causes conflicts with those around him and with Eliza herself.

Eliza, on the other hand, is depicted as a determined and resilient young woman frustrated by her lower-class status and eager to improve her prospects. In *Pygmalion*, Eliza is motivated by a desire to overcome her social status and achieve greater security and financial independence. She sees Higgins' offer of education and refinement as an opportunity to escape poverty and gain social acceptance. In *My Fair Lady*, Eliza's motivations are more complex and emotional. She is driven by a sense of self-worth and a desire to prove to herself and others that she is capable of achieving more than society expects of her. Her relationship with Higgins is more nuanced and conflicted as she struggles to reconcile her admiration and gratitude for him with her growing sense of independence and self-respect.

One of the most significant differences between *Pygmalion* and *My Fair Lady* is the ending. In the former, the conclusion is open and ambiguous, leaving the characters' fate to the interpretation of the audience. After an argument, Eliza leaves Higgins and decides to marry Freddy, a young man who has been courting her throughout the play. The theatrical piece ends with the separation of Higgins and Eliza, and it remains unclear whether they will ever reconcile. In *My Fair Lady*, by contrast, the ending is more romantic and provides a clear resolution to the story. Eliza leaves Higgins and returns to her old life, but Higgins realises he has fallen in love with her and rushes to her home to declare his feelings. The film concludes with Higgins and Eliza reconciling and walking off into the sunset. This ending, predictably, has been criticised for presenting a simplified version of the complex relationship between the two characters.

Despite the differences between *Pygmalion* and *My Fair Lady*, both versions explore similar themes related to class, social mobility, and identity, as mentioned earlier. Both the play and the film challenge the idea that social class is fixed and immutable, suggesting that individuals can transcend

their class through education and effort. However, they also highlight the social barriers and prejudices that prevent people from reaching their full potential and examine the role of language and speech in shaping identity and social power.

As a phonetics professor, Higgins is acutely aware of the power of language in forming social identity and influencing social interactions and perceptions. He believes that social status is largely determined by speech and accent and that by teaching Eliza to speak like a lady, he can transform her identity and elevate her social status. However, both the play and the film also demonstrate how language can be a tool of oppression and discrimination, as Higgins uses his knowledge of phonetics to ridicule and demean Eliza and her lower-class accent.

What concerns us here is a topic related to language that permeates Shaw's work: the linguistic attitudes underlying the selection of a prestigious variety, which characterises Professor Higgins' speech, and the choice of a substandard variety, which defines Eliza Doolittle's speech. The focus of our investigation, as we will see later, is the translations and adaptations into Spanish and Portuguese in the Iberian Peninsula and Latin America, which, from the perspective of linguistic attitudes, have not received the attention they deserve.

Linguistic attitudes can be seen in Shaw himself but they can also be observed in the decisions made by those who translated *Pygmalion*, adapted it for theatre, film, and television, and those who dubbed or subtitled the cinematic versions from English. This is a broad universe encompassing texts, (re)translations, recreations, representations, and adaptations spanning over a century. We have segmented this universe, as will be seen later. We will focus on the printed versions rather than the filmography. However, later on, we will mention the 1979 adaptation by RTE due to its special characteristics.

2. Antecedents

The theatrical success of this work has an academic counterpart, as it has been the focus of study and analysis in numerous investigations. These studies have addressed various aspects: the contextualisation of the play

within Shaw's career as an innovative playwright in the British tradition; the changes undergone by the different versions of the play, which have gradually lost the original's social critique, transforming it into a romantic work; and the challenges that a piece like Bernard Shaw's presents to translation theory and practice, among others. *Pygmalion* has also recently been studied from a gender perspective. It is impossible to list all these precedents here, but we recommend reading Goñi (2017), which provides a valuable overview of this subject. Additionally, the journal *Shaw: The Journal of Bernard Shaw Studies* by the University of Pennsylvania is essential, as it includes several issues dedicated to *Pygmalion*.

Moreover, there have been several linguistic approaches to the play. For instance, it has been studied from a sociolinguistics perspective (Beardsmore 1970; Hamed 2021), from critical discourse analysis (Gallardo 2001), from pragmatics and dialogue theory, Bernstein's restricted code theory, and Grice's maxims (Qadha 2019).² Other analyses have examined the relationship between language and power (Pirnajmuddin & Arani 2010, among others). The play has also been analysed as a linguistic treatise that explains the relationship between language and society, valuing the role of phonetics, experimentation, fieldwork, and more.

However, as far as we know, the topic of linguistic attitudes underlying the translations of *Pygmalion* into Spanish and Portuguese has not been addressed. Therefore, this study constitutes an original investigation that allows us to delve into the relationship between prestigious varieties, stigmatised varieties, theatre, and society.

3. Language and Social Class

The relationship between language and social class has been a topic of interest for scholars for decades (Badwan 2021; Baus 2019; Bernstein 2019; Flores & Rosa 2018; Lippi-Green 2012; Lo 2020; Martin & White 2018; Peterson 2019; Piller 2020; Pitts & Gallois 2019; Rickford & King 2018). Language is a fundamental aspect of human communication and plays a crucial role in how individuals identify themselves and interact with others

2. Laborda Gil (2012) provides additional references to studies of *Pygmalion* in relation to linguistics.

within a complex system of hierarchical divisions based on income, education, and occupation—that is, within a society composed of different social classes. Language and social class are intrinsically linked, as language serves as a powerful indicator of class and is used to determine a person's socioeconomic level, educational background, and cultural heritage. Linguistic variation, which cuts across social classes, is evident in many forms, including vocabulary, pronunciation, and grammar, all of which can influence how speakers are perceived. Understanding the relationship between language and social class is essential to grasping societal dynamics and addressing social inequality and discrimination based on language use.

One of the central themes in both *Pygmalion* and *My Fair Lady* is the impact of language on social class (Dan & Rui 2017; Kumar et al. 2022; Nalliveettil 2020; Qadha 2019). In *Pygmalion*, the protagonist, Eliza Doolittle, is a working-class girl with a pronounced Cockney³ accent. She undergoes a transformation into a lady through intensive training in language and etiquette by Professor Henry Higgins. By mastering the English language, Eliza transcends her lower-class origins and aspires to enter the

3. Cockney is a working-class dialect of English spoken in some areas of London. It is characterised by a distinctive accent and vocabulary, and is often associated with a specific social identity and culture. Cockney has a long and complex history, evolving over time in response to changing social and cultural contexts. Specifically, it has its roots in the East End of London, where it emerged as a distinct dialect in the 18th century. Originally, it was associated with street vendors and the working classes, and it featured a strong accent and vocabulary influenced by Yiddish, Romani, and other languages spoken by immigrant communities in the area. Over time, Cockney became linked to a particular culture and social identity, and it has been celebrated in literature, music, and popular culture. As such, it has been a marker of working-class identity in London for centuries, associated with various cultural practices and values. Though its social status has been questioned—some view it as a symbol of social inferiority, while others celebrate it as a distinctive and authentic expression of London identity—academic research (Ciancia 2023; Cole & Evans 2021; Cole & Strycharczuk 2022; Ranzato 2019) has shown that speakers of Cockney are often stigmatised and discriminated in educational and professional contexts. The dialect is considered a barrier to social mobility. As a result, its future remains uncertain, but it is likely that its sociocultural significance will endure, reflecting the complex and dynamic relationship between language, social identity, and power in contemporary society.

upper strata of society. Similarly, in *My Fair Lady*, Eliza's character also comes from a working-class background, and her transformation into a lady is achieved through her mastery of language. However, in this version, the focus is on her acquisition of the "proper" British accent rather than solely the language itself. This underscores the importance of accent in social mobility and the maintenance of class boundaries. The use of language in both works also highlights the prejudices and stereotypes associated with different accents and dialects. In *Pygmalion*, the characters of Professor Higgins and Colonel Pickering view Eliza's Cockney accent as a marker of her low social status and lack of intelligence. Similarly, in *My Fair Lady*, Professor Higgins disparages Eliza's original accent and dialect, considering them inferior to the "proper" British accent. These attitudes emphasise the ways in which language can reinforce social divisions and perpetuate inequality.

4. Translations into Spanish and Linguistic Attitudes

4.1. *The Spanish Translations of Pygmalion*

There are numerous editions of the various Spanish translations of *Pygmalion*. In fact, Goñi (2017) dedicates a significant portion of her doctoral thesis to recovering and analysing information about the multiple Spanish versions of this play. The researcher identifies 86 editions of *Pygmalion*, published from the early 20th century by major Spanish-speaking publishing houses on both sides of the Atlantic (Aguilar, Bruguera, C tedra, Centro Editor de Am rica Latina, Hachette, Planeta, Seix Barral, Siruela, Sudamericana, among others). Buenos Aires and Madrid stand out as key publishing centres for Shaw's work, although his plays have also been published in Spanish in Mexico City, Bogot , and other cities.⁴

The first Spanish version is the adaptation made in Madrid into Castilian Spanish by Julio Brout  in 1919, based on the 1914 version. As Goñi (2018) notes, Brout 's translation was prepared for a theatrical

4. Goñi (2017) provides very useful information organised by name of the translator, publisher, publication year, and title under which each version of *Pygmalion* has been published in Spanish.

performance directed by Gregorio Martínez Sierra and was published after its staging. Broutá introduced Shaw's works to Spain, and his translations continue to be published today. Meanwhile, Argentine translator Floreal Mazía published another translation in 1952 through Sudamericana in Buenos Aires. These are the two translations we will analyse, as Broutá and Mazía's versions are the most widely recognised in the Spanish-speaking world.⁵ We have not included the 1985 translation by Juan Leita because, as Goñi (2017; 2018) clearly explains, it is based—albeit with errors—on Broutá's translation. Likewise, we excluded the 1943 version published in Argentina and translated by Ricardo Baeza. This text was intended for a Spanish audience during a time of paper scarcity due to the Civil War, and the translator chose a dialectal variety typical of the Iberian Peninsula, not Argentina. Goñi (2017:110) has demonstrated that this version is a variation of Broutá's text, an intracultural translation in which Baeza copied most of the original text while changing or modifying certain parts. For these reasons, we also opted not to include this translation in our analysis.

We also did not include the translation by Miguel Cisneros, from 2016. The author, as he himself explains, neutralises the linguistic variety because he believes it is not possible to translate language varieties. He argues that it is the responsibility of the directors and actors to adapt the work to the specific linguistic features based on the textual annotations (see these translational criteria in the introduction to Cisneros' own translation 2016, and also in Cisneros 2023). Therefore, this translation is not included in the analysis presented here.

We have analysed different editions of Julio Broutá's translation (published between 1919 and 1985 by Espasa-Calpe in Argentina, Aguilar in

5. Additionally, it is worth noting that Goñi (2022) compared the translations of Julio Broutá (1919) into Cheli and Floreal Mazía (1952) into Lunfardo. The author argues that the common feature between the original text and the translations is that both Cockney, Cheli, and Lunfardo were (and are) non-prestigious, stigmatised varieties of language. Goñi employs the methodology of the TRACE group (Translation and Censorship, from the University of León and the Basque Country), "which uses the replica or utterance as the basic element to compare the original with the two different versions." The analysis unfolds at four levels: preliminary, macrotextual, microtextual, and intersystemic. Although this is an important study, it does not address the linguistic attitudes of the translators, an aspect we do explore here.

Madrid, and Seix Barral in Colombia). Since all of them are essentially identical, they can be considered as one version, which we will refer to here as *trans. J.B.* On the other hand, Floreal Mazía's 1952 translation, published by Sudamericana in Buenos Aires, has different editions, but they are essentially the same (including those translations that do not explain who the translator is but can be identified as Mazía's after comparison with the Sudamericana version). We will refer to this version as *trans. F.M.* In both cases, these appear to be reprints rather than new editions.

The original version consists of a preface, followed by five acts with one scene each, and an epilogue. This is the version translated by Broutá. The version translated by Floreal Mazía includes some changes Shaw made to the original text.

4.2. Analysis

In both translations, the variety of Spanish considered prestigious (i.e. the speech that characterises Higgins, Pickering, Higgins' mother, and the Eynsford Hill family) is, as expected, associated with what is traditionally considered standard speech. What is interesting is that there do not seem to be significant differences between the prestigious varieties chosen in both cases. The specific choices made by each translator do not appear to be explained by different attitudes toward the prestigious variety; they seem to be personal decisions made by the translator. For example, in *trans. J.B.*, "a pebble on the beach" is translated as *una piedra en la calle*, "to blackmail me" is translated as *para hacerme un chantaje* and "to make the girl conceited about herself" is translated as *que la hagan presumida a la chica*, while in *trans. F.M.*, the translations are *un guijarro en la playa*, *para extorsionar* and *que la joven se envanezca*.

This fact is particularly significant because the translations do not reflect the pluricentric nature of Spanish, i.e. they do not demonstrate the coexistence of standard features that are not uniformly recognised or valued across all Spanish-speaking communities. Both translations reflect a linguistic attitude that values a single prestige norm. In this regard, the chosen prestige norm is closely associated with the dialect of Madrid. In fact, some of the grammatical features chosen in *trans. F.M.* do not

correspond to standard Argentine Spanish. For instance, the use of the present perfect tense, the synthetic future tense, the use of *hombre* as a vocative, or expressions like ¡vaya!. These linguistic features, which have a distinctly Iberian imprint, indicate a positive attitude in *trans. F.M.* toward the variety of Spain, which is perceived as more prestigious in general and especially in the context of drama.

In comparing the Spanish versions, the identification of two distinct standard dialectal varieties is quite exceptional. This can be seen at the lexical level, where *trans. J.B.* uses *autobús* and *trans. F.M.* uses *ómnibus*. But this is an isolated case and does not extend to broader differences.

It is important to remember that the issue surrounding any translation of *Pygmalion* into Spanish—and also into Portuguese, as we will explore in depth later—is strongly tied to how the varieties to be translated are established. This presents a key difference from the English language, where, at least during Shaw’s time, the varieties chosen to mark sociolinguistic stratification were clearly identified: Received Pronunciation (RP) was perceived as the prestigious variety, and Cockney was viewed as the stigmatised variety.

In Spanish, as mentioned earlier, there are no major complexities in choosing the standard variety for Higgins’ speech. However, there are substantial changes in the translators’ choices when it comes to representing the non-prestigious or non-standard variety. This non-prestigious variety appears in the Spanish translations of *Pygmalion* in the speech of Eliza Doolittle, Alfred Doolittle, and some minor characters who appear in Act I. In Broutá’s translation, it is the variety often associated with Andalusia, something that was typical of the theatre of the time. In Mazía’s translation, it corresponds to a variety associated with the working-class speech of Buenos Aires, which partly originates from Lunfardo. In both cases, it is a speech that transgresses the linguistic norm and is identified with popular speech.⁶ This choice reflects the linguistic attitudes of Broutá, Mazía, and

6. Lluch Edo (2016) analyses Julio Broutá’s translation (1919): at the grammatical level, he distinguishes between conjugation and “incorrect uses” of verb tenses. Regarding pronunciation, he examines the “elision of letters in words.” He also discusses the instances of *laísmo*, *yeísmo*, and *dequeísmo* found in the text. Additionally, he comments on some spelling mistakes and the vocabulary.

their contemporaries towards these varieties. We will examine the features selected to represent these non-standard varieties in the translations of *Pygmalion*.

Eliza's speech is what is described as "yeísta" in *trans. J.B* and *trans. F.M.*: *cabayero* (for "caballero"), *ramiyete* (for "ramillete"), and *yamaré* (for "llamaré").⁷ It is not represented as a sound with "rehilamiento", a typical feature of Rioplatense Spanish. The reason for this decision may be due to the fact that its graphic representation may have been considered too difficult.

Seseo, which is an important element of the Cheli, Lunfardo and Andalusian varieties of Spanish, is not marked in either of the two translations.

The aspiration of /s/ is highlighted in *trans. F.M.*, especially in Eliza's speech. This aspiration is represented by substituting the letter "s" with an apostrophe or an "h" (e.g. *lohpie'* for "los pies", *ahpeto*⁸ for "aspecto", *unah flore'* for "unas flores", *doh penique'* for "dos peniques"). In this text, only the aspiration of the sibilant sound is recorded; no case of elimination is reported. In contrast, in *trans. J.B.*, there is no aspiration, and the deletion of "s" is exceptional.

In *trans. J.B.*, the deletion of the intervocalic -d- is very common, as seen in words such as *estropeás* (for "estropeadas"), *honraa* (for "honrada"), *quita* (for "quitado"), *venio* (for "venido") and other contexts such as *naa* ("nada") or *toas* ("todas"). In *trans. F.M.*, this deletion is much more limited, occurring, for example, in *toavía* (for "todavía"), but not in participles.

In both texts -d is elided at the end of words. In *trans. J.B.* *usté* alternates with *usted* and the -d is dropped in *verdá* ("verdad") and *diznidá* ("dignidad"); the only -d dropping in *trans. F.M.* occurs in the word *usté*. Additionally, in *trans. J.B.* the letter "d" is substituted with "z", as in *saluz* ("salud") or *diznidá* ("dignidad"), reflecting a sibilant pronunciation typical

7. In Broutá's translation (*trans. J.B.*), this feature is not systematic. The word *caballero* also appears.

8. This involves the dropping of the cultured consonant group.

of some varieties of Spanish from Spain, but not from Río de la Plata or other Latin American varieties.⁹

Up to this point, we can say that, in general terms, Broutá's translation (*trans. J.B.*) is characterised by a feature typical of the Andalusian variety: the elision of -d-. However, aspiration or deletion of /s/ is not recorded, as might be expected. In Mazía's translation (*trans. F.M.*), aspiration of /s/ is reported, but the deletion of /d/ is uncommon. Both translations deviate from the standard norm, but they do not align completely in how that deviation is expressed. In terms of linguistic attitudes, we can say that different features are chosen to visualise the non-standard variety.

On the other hand, apocope is found in *trans. J.B.* in forms such as *pa* ("para") and *ca* ("cada"), and the elision of phonemes within words like *ties* ("tienes") and *ustes* ("ustedes"). In *trans. F.M.*, we find the apocopated form of "para" and the elision of phonemes in words like *sentá* ("sesenta"), *necito* ("necesito"), and *denvueltoh* ("desenvueltos"). In *trans. F.M.*, unlike Broutá's, the insertion of phonemes within words is recorded, as seen in cases like *augeradable* for "agradable".

Regarding liquid sounds, elision and substitution are observed. In *trans. J.B.*, elision appears in *paece* ("parece") or *fuas* ("fuera") and substitution in *quedrá* ("querrá"). In *trans. F.M.*, /r/ is not elided, but it changes position within words: *tartando* ("tratando"), *tártara* ("tratará"). In *drecho* ("derecho"), the removal of a vowel results in a consonant cluster at the beginning of the word. Additionally, in this text, a liquid sound—combined with the vowel /i/—substitutes /s/ in *balitante* ("bastante").

The simplification of cultured consonant clusters is very common in both texts: in *trans. J.B.*, we have *coación* ("coacción"), *ojezto* ("objeto"), *correztamente* ("correctamente"), *leciones* ("lecciones"), and in *trans. F.M.*, we find *sinifica* ("significa"), *ónibuh* ("ómnibus"), *lesiones* ("lecciones"), *sesta* ("sexta"). In this Argentine text, the letter "z" does not replace a consonant in these contexts as it does in *trans. J.B.*, as seen previously in the case of *diznidad*.

9. For more information about this feature in the Spanish of Madrid, see Molina Martos (2016), among others.

Vowels may be elided in different phonetic contexts. They are dropped in *trans. J.B.* in *ventrÍloco* (“ventrÍloco”), *l’oye* (“lo oye”), *entéres’usté* (“entérese usted”) and in *trans. F.M.* in *ruinado* (“arruinado”), *d’un* (“de un”), *viese’na oportunidad* (“viese una oportunidad”), *m’enseñe* (“me enseñe”), *todo’l* (“todo él”) and *vivid’ay* (“vivido ahí”). In general, these are cases of vocalic simplification typical of oral speech. In *trans. J.B.*, there is also substitution of /i/ for /e/ in *vesita* (“visita”) and of /e/ for /o/ in *pronuncian* (“pronuncian”) and *pronunciación* (“pronunciación”). In *trans. F.M.*, /o/ becomes /u/ in *tengu’inconveniente* (“tengo inconveniente”) and *tuayas* (“toallas”), a characteristic of popular speech of Rioplatense Spanish.

On the other hand, the syntactic characterisation of the florist’s speech is not particularly striking. However, there are differences between the two translations. In *trans. J.B.*, the florist exhibits *laísmo* (*la pisan un callo*), a feature that, although generally accepted, does not correspond to the standard cultural norm of Spain. It is, moreover, a phenomenon foreign to the Rioplatense variety. In *trans. F.M.*, the conditional is conjugated in a non-standard form: *habería* (“habría”) and *tendería* (“tendría”).

The most important syntactic difference between the two versions is that, in some passages of *trans. F.M.*, the verb is repeated at the end of the sentence, i.e. the text employs “reverse speech” or “sandwich speech”¹⁰; *Soy ’na buena chica, soy*; *Tendría que’vergonzarse, tendría*; *Yamaré la policía, yamaré*; *Ehtá chiflado, ehtá*, etc. This is a feature typical of the Rioplatense variety of Spanish (although it can occur in other varieties with different pragmatic values) and is a manifestation of social belonging. However, according to Saab (2011), it is viewed disparagingly in Argentina, associated with “cosas de bailaneros, chorros y bosteros”, and, in general, with

10. Saab (2011) states: “Para un gramático, una construcción capicúa se describe superficialmente como un esquema cuya forma básica responde al patrón V (verbo) FRASE V (verbo). Puede ser respuesta a preguntas parciales, a respuestas sí/no e incluso puede ocurrir en inicio de discurso (...). This involves “un tipo de movimiento de predicado a la periferia izquierda de la oración, cuyo resultado más notable es la pronunciación de dos copias del mismo verbo y con un marcado descenso entonacional de la última (...). Este carácter capicúa o sánguche de duplicación verbal es posible si los verbos involucrados están en una relación de antiadyacencia, y codificarían simplemente un énfasis en la oración”.

speakers who have little education.¹¹ In a way, it replaces the tagging that occurs in the English version—such as *I'm a good girl, I am*—even though it does not have exactly the same sociolinguistic and pragmatic values. In the case of *trans. J.B.*, resorting to this reverse speech to translate this tagging demonstrates the translator's linguistic attitude toward these popular structures. In *trans. J.B.*, this feature cannot be recovered, and the structures used, such as *Yo soy una muchacha honrá, ¿entiende?*, do not convey the pragmatic and social value that the tagging displays in English.

At the lexical level, Eliza's Spanish clearly deviates from standard Spanish in both texts and varies between the texts. In *trans. J.B.*, one of Eliza's first interventions is the following: *¡Anda, pasmao! ¡Vaya con el señorito cegato! ¡Nos ha amalao el cuatro ojos! ¡Ay, qué leñe!* From here, a series of popular words and expressions follow, some of which belong to a substandard variety of Spanish: *De modo que al trigo; No me sale del moño; Como dicen en el "Tenorio"; Ya estoy ya escama' hasta las cachas; Anda, chúpate ésta; Ruperta, A mi, ¡plin!* Also, *este señor está guillado* (for "este señor está chiflado"), *cogorza* (for "borrachera"), *la secreta* (for "la policía secreta"), etc. In *trans. F.M.*, fewer popular expressions appear and Eliza's linguistic characterisation is mainly given on the phonetic level. However, we can still highlight: *Ehtá chiflado, ehtá; Usté's un gran valentón, es'eh; and yo digo que el que lo birló es el que la hizo espichar*, etc.

In Act 3, where Eliza describes the death of her aunt, expressions and colloquialisms particularly stand out. In *trans. J.B.*, we find (with the original in English below):

A mí no me la dan con queso, Metieron la pata hasta el corvejón,
Le hicieron la pascua en grande, Arramblaron con todo, Más que la teta
de su madre, Acostumbrado a la bala rosa, Agarraba cada melopea q' Dios
tiritaba, ¡Pa chasco! ¡Nipis!

[So they said, But it's my belief they done the old woman in, Somebody
pinched it; and what I say is, them as pinched it done her in, Gin was
mother's milk to her, Drank! My word! Something chronic, He'd poured

11. Note by Johana Holt in *La Diaria*, June 24, 2022, "Hablaste en capicúa, hablaste":
<https://ladiaria.com.uy/cultura/articulo/2022/6/hablaste-capicua-hablaste/>

so much down his own throat that he knew the good of it, Walk! Not bloody likely]

In *trans. F.M.*, the following expressions are used to describe the aunt's death: *le hicieron clavar el pico* (for "they done the old woman in") and *el que lo birló es el que la hizo espichar* (for "somebody pinched it; and what I say is, them as pinched it done her in")—these are typical expressions of popular Rioplatense Spanish and Lunfardo.

In this scene, we find "prestigious" or even affected diction: Act 3 unfolds, and Eliza has had enough language lessons with Professor Higgins. While her pronunciation is careful, her vocabulary is not. In fact, the translator has to make a decision regarding the English word *bloody*: in *trans. J.B.*, it is rendered euphemistically as ¡*Nipis!*, that means "no" or something similar to "I don't want to." In *trans. F.M.* it is rendered as *cuernos* (horns). This translation is accompanied by the following note from the translator:

En el original, Not bloody likely. Bloody es un intensivo vulgar, considerado como altamente incorrecto en la conversación en sociedad; de ahí la sensación, que en castellano sólo podría ser producida por un expletivo de más grueso calibre. (N. del T.)

[In the original, Not bloody likely. Bloody is a vulgar intensive, regarded as highly incorrect in social conversation; hence the sensation, which could only be conveyed in Spanish by using a much stronger expletive. (N. of T., own translation)]

Furthermore, if we look briefly at the 1979 television adaptation of *Pygmalion* by RTE, we see that both the florist and her father were played by Argentine actors (Marilina Ross and Luis Politti, respectively), who use language typical of the Argentine lower classes, some of which has its roots in Lunfardo. In Eliza's lexicon, we find nouns like *despelote*, *laburo*, *guita*, *jeta*, *curda*, and verbs such as *afanar*, *espichear*, *rajar*, *carburar*. She refers to her father as *el viejo*, who uses words like *mina*, *pibe*, *guita*, *patrona*, and *sopapo*. The pronunciation and intonation of both characters also match those of non-standard Rioplatense varieties of Spanish: seseo, yeísmo rehilado, the aspiration of -s, the simplification of cultured consonant clusters, apocopes, etc. Alfred Doolittle's speech uses voseo: *no me saqués la lengua*; *sos*, etc. However, they also use forms distant from Rioplatense popular speech,

such as the preterite perfect tense and the synthetic future.¹² Interestingly, in this adaptation, the prestigious variety is Spanish from Madrid, while the stigmatised variety is spoken by people from the other side of the world, from the Rioplatense region.

5. Translations of *Pygmalion* into Portuguese and Linguistic Attitudes

5.1. *The translations of Pygmalion into Portuguese*

In our study, we analysed six translations of *Pygmalion* into Portuguese, three of them published in Portugal (PP) and three in Brazil (PB), specifically: (PP1) *Pigmalião: análise da peça de Bernard Shaw, precedida da respectiva tradução portuguesa* (1962), translated by Marina Lopes Prieto, Coimbra: Edição de autor; (PP2) *Pigmalião. Romance em cinco actos* (1972), translated by Fernando de Mello Moser, Lisbon: Edições Verbo; (PP3) *Pigmalião* (1987), translated by Mário de Abreu, Mem Martins: Publicações Europa-América; (PB1) *Pigmalião. Comédia em cinco atos* (1964), translated by Miroel Silveira, Rio de Janeiro: Editora Delta;¹³ (PB2) *Pigmaleão. Um romance em cinco atos* (2005), translated by Millôr Fernandes, São Paulo: L&PM; and (PB3) *Pigmalião* (2021), translated by Júlio Emílio Braz, São Paulo: Ciranda Cultural Editora.

The first and biggest issue faced by any translator of *Pygmalion* into Portuguese directly relates to the central theme of our work, which is how to establish linguistic variation. While in the English language the two

12. In 1975, the Argentine film *La Raulito* was released, directed by Lautaro Murúa, with a script by Juan Carlos Gené and Martha Mercader, and starring Marilina Ross, who would later portray Eliza. In *La Raulito*, Ross played the title character, a street girl, a fan of the Boca Juniors soccer club, who had a very difficult life. The film, in which the protagonist used words like *chupar*, *rajarse* and *laburar*, was a great success when released in Spain. Raulito would aspirate the /s/, and her speech evoked the substandard Spanish of Buenos Aires. Perhaps the success of the use of non-prestigious Spanish in the televised version of *Pygmalion* (RTE, 1979) is based on a resonance with the character of Raulito.

13. This translation is also an adaptation of the play, as, instead of being set in London, the action is moved to Rio de Janeiro, and the names of the characters are adapted to Brazilian onomastics: Henry Higgins becomes Henrique Mascarenhas, Colonel Pickering becomes Coronel Guimarães, Eliza Doolittle becomes Elisa Garapa, Alfred Doolittle becomes Alfredo Garapa, etc.

varieties used to mark this variation are firmly established and characterised (RP, as the most prestigious variety, and Cockney, as the most stigmatised), in Portuguese there are no equivalents. Therefore, the asymmetry between linguistic variation in English and Portuguese becomes a difficult problem to resolve. For this reason, Shaw's translators have been forced to unilaterally establish their particular visions of linguistic variation in their own language, providing us with an excellent framework to study and deepen our understanding of linguistic attitudes toward variation in Portuguese.

Regarding the prestigious variety, in Portuguese there is no such variety, at least not one that is commonly accepted, as is the case in English: "Furthermore, I would add, there is no Portuguese accent associated with such high social prestige as is the standard pronunciation of British English, RP. This makes it even more interesting to see what solutions were found for the translation of these varieties" (Assis Rosa 1994: 321). Generally speaking, we can say that each Portuguese-speaking country has its own concept of what constitutes the socially prestigious variety. Thus, "for European Portuguese, the standard in terms of both pronunciation and dialect is identified as 'variedades faladas pelas camadas cultas das regiões de Lisboa e de Coimbra'" [the varieties spoken by the educated classes in the regions of Lisbon and Coimbra] (Ferreira et al. 1996: 484). However, it is important to note that this standard is not applicable outside Portuguese borders. In fact, translations made in Brazil do not follow this variety, as the country also has its own prestigious varieties of Portuguese, which are clearly differentiated from the Portuguese standard.

With this in mind, we can establish as a norm that the prestigious variety of the Portuguese language is one that consistently follows the features and characteristics of the most refined Portuguese, namely, that which is used in the literary works of the time. In fact, it is the Portuguese that corresponds to the language spoken and written by the most educated classes in the capitals of each country. Thus, in Portugal, it corresponds to the Portuguese of Lisbon, while in Brazil, it corresponds to the Portuguese of Rio de Janeiro (the capital of the country from 1808 to 1960, when it was moved to Brasília).

Regarding Professor Higgins' speech, the grammatical differences¹⁴ found between the analysed translations of *Pygmalion* are exclusively national in character. That is, while in Portugal they use the Portuguese standard, in Brazil, they use the Brazilian standard. The differences between the two are easily perceptible to any speaker of the language and are limited to general issues, such as the presence or absence of the definite article before the possessive adjective, or the clitic or proclitic placement of unstressed pronouns, as in *sua mãe* (PB); *a sua mãe* (PP) and *lhe mandou* (PB); *mandou-lhe* (PP).

5.2. Analysis

As we have already stated, the attitudes shown by the translators of the six editions of *Pygmalion* analysed in this work clearly demonstrate that there is no variety in the Portuguese language that can be unanimously considered to carry the highest social prestige. Therefore, each country limits itself to considering the variety spoken by the most cultured and educated classes of its capital as the prestigious one.

Where the translators must express their personal attitude toward linguistic variation is in the translation of Eliza Doolittle's speech. Just as with the prestigious variety, there is no variety in Portuguese that can be considered, in a generalised sense, as stigmatised:

De facto, na nossa língua não existe nenhum falar que seja tão comunicativo na sua difícil inteligibilidade, nem que seja do mesmo modo aceite como susceptível de acarretar discriminação social, ou pelo menos grave preconceito (Moser 1984: 223).

The attitudes shown by the translators reveal that there is no dialectal or diastratic variety in the Portuguese language that is unanimously considered stigmatised. Therefore, each translator is compelled to search their own repertoire for linguistic features that they would consider characteristic of a person with a low educational level. In general, we can say that

14. Obviously, at the lexical level, it is also possible to find differences between the translations from Brazil and Portugal, but this is something we consider common to any other international language, so we do not deem it appropriate to delve further into it.

the speech that reproduces characteristics of oral language from the lower classes, distanced from the conventions of written language, is seen as a “dialecto empobrecido, que, tendo abandonado a língua escrita, convive apenas com as manifestações orais” (Cintra & Cunha 1984: 4).

Few translators openly discuss this issue, but the words written in the preface by Fernando de Mello Moser, who translated the 1972 Portuguese version, are quite enlightening:

The dialectal features of Cockney, which the author explores extensively in this play, have no systematic equivalent in our language from a phonetic point of view, although partial similarities may be found in certain speech varieties of the Metropolis and the Adjacent Islands. However, given the need for a uniform, coherent, and intelligible criterion for most readers, the translator opted, for the speech of Eliza Doolittle and the other characters from her social background, to use a colloquial variety of Portuguese that, like the original, would express social distance rather than regionalism. (Shaw 1972: 15, own translation).

The common feature of Eliza Doolittle’s speech in the six editions analysed is the wide range of vocalic and consonantal alterations she makes in all types of words: (PP1) *Ora deixe lá ver o que escreveu / Dous ramos de violetas botadas p’rá lama!*; (PP2) *Atão, pra que é que vossemecê se pôs a ‘screver o que eu dezia? / Se num m’agradar, num fico cá, pois atão. E num consinto que ninguém me bata. Eu num pedi pra ir ao palácio ...*; (PP3) *Sei tão bem como vossemecê canto custam umas lições! / numa loja de flores imbez de ser bendedeira numa esquina ...*; (PB1) *Por que é que a madama não deu mais melhor educação pra êle?*; (PB2) *Dirvagá cum a loça, Ferderico. Num inxerga não, hõmi? / Qui inducação, qui modos, nossa sinhora. Cincos burquês de mangnólias artolados na lama*; (PB3) *Qui topera, esse Ferderico, num é? E, pra piorá, uma vaca braba, derrubando tudo aqui qui encontra pela frenti! I agora? / A madama bem que puderia tê dado mior inducação pr’êle, num, é, não?*

These six editions also share the characteristic of portraying Eliza’s speech as omitting various phonemes, in almost all types of words: (PP1) *Dous ramos de violetas botadas p’rá lama!*; (PP2) *Atão, pra que é que vossemecê se pôs a ‘screver o que eu dezia? / Pois o qu’eu disse é verdade*; (PP3) *Sei tão bem como vossemecê canto custam umas lições! / Eu sou tão séria como calquer senhora*; (PB1) *E vou pagá, não pense que não / ... tá aprendendo francês...*;

(PB2) *Mãe boa, hein, qui insina êssis modus pru filho / bota as fror tudo no artolero i corri sim nim pargá. A madama vai pargá. A madama vai pargá meus prijuízo? / Quim é qui tá enganano a sinhora? Chamei êli di Fredinho ô di Carlinho cumu si farla prum istranho quano si qué sê argradávi; (PB3) Oia pr'onde anda, seu mané! / Que vô fazê? As flô tudo esbagaçada. E agora? Como vô rancar grana dos granfa?*

One of the differences we find between the Portuguese and Brazilian editions is that in the latter, the translators attribute number agreement errors to Eliza Doolittle, a feature we did not find in any of the Portuguese editions analysed: (PB2) *A madama vai pargá meus prijuízo? / Tenho dereito di vendê minhas fror onde quizé, a num sê na carçada; (PB3) As flô tudo esbagaçada / Bem, pra cumeçá, podia pagá meus prejuízo. A madama vai pagá us meus prejuízo?*

However, the most notable differentiating feature between the Portuguese and Brazilian editions lies at the lexical level. On one hand, the former attribute to Eliza some words or expressions that could be considered non-standard or spontaneous, such as in (PP2) ... *inda ter de gramar sustos e enxovalhos*, and in (PP3) *Oraïessa!* However, it is in the Brazilian editions that there is an abundance of such words and expressions, whether ungrammatical, spontaneous, or specific to slang from lower social classes, to characterise Eliza's uncultured speech: (PB1) *Por que é que a madama não deu mais melhor educação pra êle? / O danado caiu em cima de mim, me esmolambou com as flôres e deu o pira; (PB2) Poucha! Compra uma fror di mim, Coronér; (PB3) Oia pr'onde anda, seu mané! / Como vô rancar grana dos granfa? / Não pesco neça! / Tu não me tapeia no preço, não.*

6. Self-Corrections, Linguistic Corrections and Metalinguistic Comments

Towards the end of the play, Eliza's linguistic attitude towards her own speech is very different from that in the first act. She is no longer a person who speaks her variety without prejudice, as she did when selling flowers in Covent Garden, nor is she a person trying to learn a variety she considers prestigious. Now, Eliza, after attending Higgins' lessons, is aware of the way she speaks and self-corrects. This is what happens in *trans F.M.* when she

says: *Pero no soy el polvo que usted pisa. Lo qu'he hecho ... (Corrigiéndose.) Lo que he hecho no lo hice por los vestidos y los taxis.*

However, while Eliza corrects herself in this instance, she does not allow Higgins to correct her. She owns her speech, and Higgins is no longer her teacher; he no longer has power over her. In Act 5, in *trans. J.B.* we read:

Elisa (mirándole fieramente): ¿Casarme yo con Pickering? ¡Ni que me hubiese vuelto demente!

Higgins (con suavidad): ¿Demente?

Elisa: (perdiendo la paciencia y levantándose): Hablo como me da la gana. Ya no es usted mi profesor.

In *trans. F.M.* Higgins also corrects Eliza in Act 5. This time the correction occurs on the syntactical level:

Eliza: Y está más cerca de mi edad de que él ...

Higgins (dulcemente): Que él, no “de que él”

Liza (irritada): ¡Hablaré como se me ocurra! ¡Ya no es mi maestro!

LIZA ... and you're nearer my age than what he is.

HIGGINS [gently] Than he is: not “than what he is.”

LIZA [losing her temper and rising] I'll talk as I like. You're not my teacher now.

In the Portuguese translation PP2, the syntactical correction made by Professor Higgins also exists, though the text includes very different phrases:

Liza (*voltando-se para ele, furibunda*): *Eu não casava consigo, se me pedisse; e está mais perto da minha idade do que ó que ele está.*

Higgins (*mansinho*): *Do que ele está; não do que ó que ele está.*

Liza (*descontrolando-se e erguendo-se*): *Falo como me apeteecer. Já não é meu professor.*

LIZA [*looking fiercely round at him*] *I wouldn't marry YOU if you asked me; and you're nearer my age than what he is.*

HIGGINS [*gently*] *Than he is: not “than what he is.”*

LIZA [*losing her temper and rising*] *I'll talk as I like. You're not my teacher now.*

In the Brazilian translation PB2, the correction made by Professor Higgins (who in this version is named Henrique Mascarenhas, as previously stated) is as follows:

Elisa (voltando-se e fitando-o com ar bravo): Nem com você eu me casaria, mesmo que você me pedisse. E, no entanto, a diferença de idade entre nós é bem menos grande.

Henrique (delicadamente): Menor, e não “menos grande”.

Elisa (perdendo a paciência e levantando-se): Eu falo como quiser. Você já não é mais meu professor.

What these corrections have in common is the reaction they provoke in Eliza. Her attitude toward language and toward Higgins is one of independence: she speaks as she wants, not as Higgins tells her to speak. She is no longer the “obedient” Eliza we knew; she no longer repeats the corrections Higgins makes, as if she were in a language class. Remember, for example, that in *trans. F.M.*, when Eliza had pronounced *qu'esah pantuflas*, Higgins corrected her saying *Que esas pantuflas*, and Eliza had repeated it with bitter submission, as shown in the play: *Que esas pantuflas*. A similar situation occurred in *trans. J.B.*: Eliza uses the apocope *pa* for *para usted*, Higgins reacts—in a thunderous voice—*Para usted*, and Eliza, almost docilely, responds by repeating what Higgins says: *Para usted*. At the end of the play, Eliza does not allow herself to be corrected, and even less does she repeat what she is corrected on as if she were a child obeying her teacher. As her attitude towards Higgins changes, her attitude toward language changes as well, and vice versa.

On the other hand, there is a metalinguistic comment at the end of the play, which provides information about an explicit linguistic attitude: prestigious speech is associated with the speech of royalty. In *trans. F.M.*, Eliza says at the end of the play: *Una anciana acaba de decirme que hablo exactamente como la reina Victoria. / An old lady just told me that I speak exactly like Queen Victoria*. In the Portuguese PP2 translation, we find the same association, i.e. the same linguistic attitude on the matter, as Eliza's phrase was translated the same way: *Uma senhora de idade acabou de dizer-me que falo exactamente como falava a rainha Vitória*. Higgins' goal, for Eliza to speak the Queen's English, has been achieved. But in the process, Eliza learned much more than just a prestigious variety of a language: she learned to reject the person who taught it to her.

7. Final Considerations

The study of the translations of *Pygmalion* has allowed us to examine the linguistic attitudes present in the choices of Spanish and Portuguese varieties used to represent a character that belongs to the cultural elite, Professor Higgins, and a character of humble origins, Eliza. The translators, or those who adapted Bernard Shaw's famous play, had to choose a variety of Spanish and Portuguese that they considered high (prestigious) and another that they considered low (non-standard). First, we saw that there is relative consensus on the choice of the first but not on the second, both in Spanish and Portuguese.

In many cases, to translate the stigmatised speech of Eliza, the translators did not resort to a specific variety but rather to a set of traits associated with non-standard varieties. The choice of this set of traits reflects the linguistic attitudes of the translator towards those substandard features. This strategy creates a certain complicity with the audience, who will perceive the combination of traits as a realistic and representative form of lower-class speech.

As Hatim and Mason (1995: 61) state, "The translation of *Pygmalion* must therefore seek to bring out Eliza's socio-linguistic 'stigma', a communicative slant which, incidentally, should not necessarily entail opting for a particular regional variety and could as effectively be relayed through simply modifying the standard itself."

Translators into both non-standard Spanish and Portuguese choose alterations at different linguistic levels. Most of these changes are found at the phonetic and lexical levels, which carry clear sociolinguistic markers easily identifiable by the audience. The substandard features in syntax and morphology play a lesser role.

Shaw's linguistic choices in characterising his characters reflect the marked stratification of British English at the time. As it is well known, the stratification of Spanish and Portuguese is different: in these Romance languages, there is no conceptual equivalent to RP and the distance between high and low varieties is not the same as the distance between RP and Cockney. The languages of the lower classes are not necessarily identified as a specific variety and do not have a name. However, their features are

given a name, such as “dropping the -s”, a characteristic that permeates Eliza’s speech in all the Spanish translations. In the Portuguese translations, one of the common features of Eliza’s speech could be considered similar, as it also involves the loss of sounds, particularly the omission of vowels and even entire syllables, as in *tá* (instead of “*está*”), which is considered a purely oral trait and outside the cultured register in both Portugal and Brazil.

In both Spanish and Portuguese, linguistic prestige is often associated with geographic varieties. Thus, Spanish from Madrid is considered more prestigious than Andalusian Spanish. Therefore, the Iberian version combines Professor Higgins’ Madrid speech of with Eliza’s Andalusian-influenced speech. However, it is important to note that the traits identified as Andalusian are also linked to the lower classes in Madrid. In this sense, to describe the non-standard, a diastratic variety is chosen that shares many traits with a diatopic variety, the Andalusian one. Moreover, this variety, in Madrid theatre, has its own identity: *Cheli*, a language “invented” by Carlos Arniches. Regarding the Portuguese translations, the variety considered the most prestigious corresponds, similarly, to that of the educated classes in the capital, such as Lisbon in the Portuguese translations or the historical capital, Rio de Janeiro, in the Brazilian translations.

Moreover, it is worth remembering that varieties of Latin American Spanish are not necessarily chosen to characterise Shaw’s characters, even in the *Pygmalion* versions translated into Latin American Spanish in Latin America. The prestigious variety is typically the Spanish of Madrid, regardless of the origin of the translation. In fact, in one of the adaptations we examined, the prestigious variety is Madrid Spanish, while the stigmatised variety is that of speakers of a non-standard variety from Buenos Aires. In this case, the two varieties that coexist on stage do not belong to the same geographical region in the Spanish speaking world.

Regarding the Portuguese translations analysed, national varieties specific to each case are chosen. Therefore, the linguistic prestige of each variety can be considered quite different, as previously indicated.

Each of Shaw’s translators has characterised some of his characters in a very personal way, completely different from how Shaw himself characterised them, which represents almost an overstepping of their role. The most

notable of them is undoubtedly Miroel Silveira, who not only translated but also adapted the play to take place in the city of Rio de Janeiro, changing the names of all the characters accordingly. Furthermore, he went as far as eliminating scenes (such as the last scene of Act 3) and giving the characters lines and interventions that did not exist in the original, and, it should be noted, were not found in any of the known translations.

Future studies of translations of *Pygmalion* into other languages could contribute to the discussion of linguistic attitudes. These studies could investigate whether translators appeal to specific varieties or adopt individual, even different, criteria. This would shed light on their linguistic attitudes in representing what they consider standard versus non-standard, linguistically prestigious versus stigmatised. In this way, the complex relationship between attitudes, prestigious varieties, stigmatised varieties, theatre, and society could be further explored.

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