

**Characterisation and Dialects in Dubbing: How
Dialects of British Characters Are Dubbed into
Finnish in the Animated Film *Chicken Run***

Sarah Tondeur
BA Thesis
Department of English
University of Turku
Faculty of Humanities
University of Turku
March 2025

The originality of this thesis has been checked in accordance with the University of Turku quality assurance system using the Turnitin Originality Check

Bachelor's Thesis

Degree Programme, Department: Department of English

Sarah Tondeur

Characterisation and Dialects in Dubbing: How Dialects of British Characters Are Dubbed into Finnish in the Animated Film *Chicken Run*

Number of pages: 23 pages

The purpose of this thesis was to study the different characterisation methods used to maintain the same perceived appearances of the characters in the Finnish dubbed version of the British animated film *Chicken Run* (2000). The main focus of this thesis was on the original British spoken dialects of the characters as a form of characterisation, and on the methods used to counterbalance the disappearance and changes of these dialectal elements in the dubbed version. The connotations and social values linked to the spoken dialects of these characters naturally affect how they are perceived, and so the same connotations must be evoked for the characters in the target language for them to be perceived in the same manner.

The research material in this thesis is the children's animated film *Chicken Run* (2000) by Aardman Animations, and its Finnish dubbed version. The analysis was done by comparing the spoken dialogues of the featured characters with the corresponding Finnish dubbed dialogues, and selecting those featuring the most significant characteristics of the featured dialects. The dialects featured in this film are Received Pronunciation (RP), the Yorkshire dialect, London Cockney and Scottish, as well as General American spoken by one of the characters. Both the selected dialogues and their dubbed counterparts are presented as examples in the analysis section.

The findings demonstrate that the characters whose dialogues present the most dialect-specific features have changed the most by their characterisations in the dubbed version. This is mostly due to the omission of certain dialect-specific elements in the translation, and to the changes in prosodic features such as pitch of voice and rapidness of speech. Although the spoken language of most characters was dubbed to Standard Finnish, there were some creative decisions made to maintain similar appearances in the characters. One of these decisions involved the use of elements of a target language dialect holding similar connotations to the dialect used in the original language.

The findings highlight the difficulty of maintaining the same appearance of a character created through their original dialect in dubbing. As can be seen in this film, dialects form an important part of a character through the connotations linked to them. The possible factors leading to certain decisions in the dubbed film may be linked to the social stereotypes of standard and colloquial spoken language, and on the audiovisual translation norms in Finland.

Key words: dubbing, dialect, characterisation, connotation

Table of Contents

1 Introduction	4
2 Theory and Background.....	6
2.1 Characterisation and Dialects in Dubbing.....	6
3 Materials and Method	9
3.1 Studies on Connotations of Dialects	10
4 Findings.....	12
4.1 Standard British English (RP): Ginger and Fowler	12
4.2 Yorkshire Dialect: Mr. and Mrs. Tweedy, Babs and Bunty.....	13
4.3 Scottish Dialect: Mac	16
4.4 London Cockney: Nick and Fetcher	17
4.5 (General American): Rocky	18
5 Conclusion	20
References	22

1 Introduction

As in books, characters in films are built to have traits and characteristics that make them distinctive and memorable even many years after being released. In films, many audiovisual strategies, such as the use of intonation, behaviour and dialects, can be used to get across a person's attributes and their significance to the film. These different features are what can be used for characterisation, which refers to "the way characters are created on-screen through features such as actor's performance, voice quality, facial expressions, gestures, camera-angles and soundtrack" (Bosseaux 2015, 1). In British film production, dialects are often used to build characters and make them distinctive from each other through the connotations linked to these dialects. When dubbing a film from one language to another, these features partly disappear or change, which directly leads to changes in how the characters in the film are perceived. So how can a character's original perceived appearance be maintained in dubbed films?

An important task for translators involves transferring a character's attributes to another language so that the viewers of the target language have the same experiences as those of the original language when watching the same film. This can be difficult, as the translator has the challenges of accommodating the norms and values of both cultures while also getting across the important messages conveyed by the original production. Dialects are particularly tricky, as there is no direct equivalent to a Scouse accent, for example. Thus, translators must use different strategies to make the character in the target language as similar as possible to the one in the original language. These indirect strategies can sometimes be seen in subtitles, but are more obvious in dubbing.

In this thesis, I will analyse the strategies of characterisation used to build and maintain the same appearance of characters in the Finnish dubbed version of the British animated children's film *Chicken Run* (Aardman Animations 2000). This film is set in Yorkshire and features many different dialects ranging from the Yorkshire dialect to London Cockney. This film features a diverse range of British regional dialects, each with their own connotations and stereotypes, which reflect directly on how the characters in the film are perceived. As these connotations change during the dubbing process due to the disappearance of the language-specific dialects, other strategies must be used to evoke similar connotations of these characters in the dubbed film. Thus, I will compare the characters and their dialogues featuring dialect-specific features

in the original version with those in the dubbed version, and reflect on the successfulness of the Finnish dub in maintaining the similarities of the characters' perceived appearances.

I will begin this paper by introducing the concept of characterisation and the significance of characters' dialects on their perceived appearances, as well as the issues related to characterisation in dubbed films as the dialectal elements and the connotations linked to these disappear and change. In the Methods section, I will further explain my research material and methods. In this section I will also discuss some previous research on the connotations related to British and Finnish dialects, as this is important for understanding the possible decisions made for choosing certain dialects and variations of spoken language for the characters in both versions. After this, I will provide the findings of my analysis of the characters and their appearances, and finally conclude with possible explanations for the methods of characterisation used in the Finnish dubbed version.

2 Theory and Background

In this section, I will firstly introduce the concept of characterisation, as this is important for understanding the effects of translation on a character's appearance. Secondly, I will talk about the issues of translating dialects and the effects of dubbing on the methods of characterisation used to compensate for the loss or change of original dialect-specific features in characters. Unfortunately, there have not been many studies conducted on the translation of dialects in Finnish dubs, but there are notable points made in studies of other languages that can be used to understand and reflect on the dubbing decisions made in Finland.

2.1 Characterisation and Dialects in Dubbing

Before delving into the issues of translating characters' dialects in dubbing, we must first consider the concept of characterisation. In her book *Dubbing, Film and Performance: Uncanny Encounters*, Bosseaux (2015, 32) defines characterisation as "the way characters are created on-screen through actors' performance, speech, voice characteristics, facial expression, gestures, camera angles and character gaze". Thus, characterisation can be seen as comprising of everything that contributes to making a character stand out as their own, authentic self. Bosseaux (2015) emphasises that characterisation in films cannot be separated from the performance of actors, as the gestures, voice and body language of actors are what contribute to the overall nature of the character. In dubbed films, however, while most visual elements of characters are unchanged, the different aspects of characters' speech can vary largely, as the actors themselves are different and certain culture-bound elements of speech naturally disappear. In addition to this, Bosseaux (2015, 32) writes that although most of the visual elements stay intact, "the connotations of these semiotic signs may change from one culture to the next". Thus, the changes in both visual and auditorial connotations when dubbed to another language can at least partially lead to a character being perceived differently from the original film. This, in turn, leads to different strategies of characterisation that must be used to maintain a character's original authenticity.

Dialects are possibly the most difficult attributes of fictional characters to be communicated to another culture, as they are culturally tied not only to one country and its language, but also to a specific region in that country. A dialect forms an important and distinctive part of a person, and can be used in film-making as a means of characterisation. According to Hayes (2021, 5), people tend to have certain connotations regarding other people's identities as a result of their

dialects, and this is due to these dialects already possessing certain social values. Hayes (2019, 95) writes that connotations regarding dialects can be associated with factors such as geography, social class, uniqueness of a group or person and time. Therefore, dialects can form an essential part of a character's story and identity. But how can they be translated to another language?

Spanish films and television shows have in recent years been provided with English dubs by Netflix, and some dubs have featured a variety of British dialects to evoke similar connotations of the characters as in the original productions. As demonstrated in Hayes' research article (2021, 7—8), dialects perceived as 'upper-class' and 'lower-class' in Spain can be translated to dialects in Britain that are perceived in the same manner. In Finland, however, social connotations related to regional dialects are not as defined as in Britain. In addition to this, it may not be as acceptable in Finland to use a regional dialect as a substitute for a dialect in the original language. The effect of these factors can be seen in Maunuaho's master's thesis on the differences between the English and Finnish dubbed versions of the Moomins (2021, 106). She writes that the characters in the Finnish version only used neutral standard Finnish, whereas the English version used a range of different dialects. According to the Subtitling Recommendations for Finnish Subtitling (Language Specialists 2023, 24), the use of slang or dialects in translated subtitles must be considered carefully, as "[t]hey may not be universally understood in the target culture, and slang terms in particular may grow old quickly". However, certain expressions can be used throughout the translation to evoke an illusion of dialects and vernacular language (*ibid.*). In her master's thesis on dubbing, Haavisto (2006, 39; my translation) also points out that using a dialect in the target language to correspond to one in the original language may not be appropriate, since this could evoke new connotations in relation to the dialect in the target language.

Although the above norms and cultural factors can somewhat limit the strategies used to evoke similar connotations created through dialects in the target language, there are other, more acceptable strategies that can be used to make characters unique and distinguishable from each other. These strategies involve the use of prosodic features. Ranzato (2019) writes that the use of phonetic and prosodic features can in part atone for the loss of depth that the dialect has given to a character, and that these strategies can be seen especially in animated films. Thus, although dubbing from English to Finnish may not be as straightforward as vice versa due to different norms and cultural differences related to translation and dubbing, the utilisation of many different aspects of speech, such as intonation, wording and culture-specific expressions

can somewhat counterbalance the loss of features belonging to a character in the original language.

3 Materials and Method

As described above, films dubbed from another language to English may feature a range of different dialects to correspond to the dialects used in the original film through their connotations, whereas in Finnish dubs it is common for the spoken language of characters to be standardised. There are many reasons for this, such as the differences in the popularity of dubbing and the target audience. In Finland, dubbed films are commonly aimed at children, so using Standard Finnish makes it easier for children to understand the dialogue. In addition to this, it may not be acceptable to translate a dialect directly to one in another language (Haavisto 2006, 39; my translation). These different factors affect and may also limit the methods of characterisation used in dubbed films, especially when the character is mainly built around a dialect and its connotations. However, as described in the above section, methods such as prosody and individual dialect-specific phrases can be used to evoke perceived sameness in a dubbed character.

In this thesis, I will analyse the characterisation methods used for the characters in the Finnish dubbed version of the British animated children's film *Chicken Run* (Finnish: *Kananlento*) and compare the successfulness of the dubbed version in maintaining the same identity and nature of these characters originally created through their British dialects. To describe the plot in short, it is a film about chickens imprisoned in an egg farm in Yorkshire who must think of an escape plan before getting eaten by the owners. The film is rich with a variety of British dialects, with one of the protagonists also speaking General American English. It has been dubbed to Finnish by Jarkko Cairenius and directed by Kari Tamminen. As my method of analysis, I collected dialogues from all characters featuring significant phrases and features of speech typical to a specific dialect in the original English version, and then compared them to the same dialogues featured in the Finnish dubbed version. The comparisons will be presented in the Findings-section along with possible explanations on the decisions made in the dubbed version, and on how these decisions reflect on the characters' appearances. In the next subsection, I will introduce the role of connotations and attitudes on different dialects, as this is significant for understanding the reasons for choosing specific dialects for characterisation in the original version of *Chicken Run*, as well as the decisions made in the Finnish version.

3.1 Studies on Connotations of Dialects

In order to properly understand the relationship between the dialects and the characterisations featured in *Chicken Run*, as well as the significance of the audiovisual decisions on the characters' spoken language made in the Finnish dubbed version, we must first be aware of the connotations linked with these dialects. Overall, there are four different British dialects featured in *Chicken Run*: Received Pronunciation (RP); London Cockney, the Yorkshire dialect and Scottish. Through their connotations, each of these dialects affect the perceptions of the characters speaking them. Thus, before moving on to describing the appearance of the characters in both versions, I will briefly introduce some studies conducted on the connotations of dialects.

Studies on people's connotations of dialects are typically done through perceptual dialectology, which can be defined as "the study of non-linguists' perceptions of dialects and dialect variation" (Montgomery 2022, 160). The methods of perceptual dialectology can include, for example, tasks of mapping out perceived dialect areas and evaluating dialects based on voice samples. Dialects can also be evaluated through different factors, such as humour, warmth, and likeability. In Hiebert's (2015) survey study on perceptions of humour in dialects, participants evaluated three different dialects in terms of level and type of humour. These dialects were derived from the US, the south of England and Scotland. The American dialect was evaluated as less humorous than the two other dialects. Additionally, the southern English speaker was judged to have witty humour, whereas the Scottish speaker's humour was estimated to be more goofy. As most of the participants in the study were American, Hiebert (2015, 32) highlights the role of preconceived stereotypes for the two non-American dialects, as "the majority of contact with these other two dialects would come from media sources such as movies and television". As can also be seen in children's animated movies, giving characters a variety of dialects that may not be so familiar to the audience can evoke perceptions of humour. Furthermore, the use of dialects for this purpose may also strengthen the audience's preconceptions of these dialects and their speakers.

In addition to humour, connotations of dialects can be evaluated through other traits. For example, in the first part of Hiraga's (2005) study on the attitudes of British people towards dialects in the US and Britain, he found that Received Pronunciation (RP) was rated highest in terms of status, whereas a dialect from rural West Yorkshire was rated highest in terms of solidarity. Hiraga (2005, 299) writes that standard dialects are usually rated high in status as

well as aesthetic qualities, which could either be due to them being perceived as inherently pleasant-sounding, or to the fact that people of higher social status typically possess these dialects. In contrast, British dialects spoken in urban areas were rated lower for both status and solidarity, a possible explanation for this being that “urban dialects are associated with the pejorative image of working-class society and therefore are rated lower than rural dialects” (Hiraga 2005, 301). A possible explanation for the high solidarity rating for the West Yorkshire dialect is that “[p]eople living in towns classically have a romanticised nostalgic view of the countryside and the country way of life” (ibid.). Thus, this study demonstrates that connotations of social status can heavily influence the perceptions of dialects and their speakers. However, it is important to note that as this study was conducted twenty years ago, the perceptions of certain dialects may have somewhat changed. Despite this, some of these findings may be relevant to the possible connotations of the characters and their dialects in *Chicken Run*, as the film was released in 2000.

Although the dialects spoken in Finland are not as heavily linked to social class as British dialects, there is some variation in attitudes towards Finnish dialects. In Palander’s (2007) study on the effect of regional background on the youth’s connotations of Finnish dialects, the perceptions of regional dialects varied with people living in the south near Helsinki and those in North and South Karelia. The findings indicate that those in the Helsinki region evaluated the Eastern Finnish dialects as more rural, or rustic. However, Palander (2007, 49—50; my translation) also writes that “to a person living in the core of Helsinki the dialect of the neighbouring city Vantaa can sound rural, if it does not include the same slang terminology as one’s own spoken language”. In contrast, people living in both regions rated the dialect spoken in Helsinki as a standard dialect, but the people from the regions in Eastern Finland also used words related to perceived rudeness, aggressiveness and arrogance to describe the dialect (Palander 2007, 45—46). Thus, Finnish dialects also hold their own connotations and stereotypes, and the contrast between perceptions of rural and urban dialects can be seen with both British and Finnish dialects, as well as the heightened stereotypes for the dialects more unfamiliar to oneself. These findings can help to reflect on the possible dialect choices made for the characters in both the British and Finnish version of *Chicken Run*. Next, I will move onto the next section, where I will introduce the characters in the film and present the findings of my analysis.

4 Findings

Here, I will provide my most significant findings regarding the characterisation methods used in the Finnish dub to counterbalance loss and changes of the original dialectal features of the characters in *Chicken Run*. This will be done by providing examples of dialogue from the original language, followed by the corresponding dubbed dialogue. Below each example, I will provide a description of the decisions made by the translator for the dubbed version. I will explain the extent to which the dubbed dialogue differs from the original, and how the decisions affect the characters' appearances. As this thesis is limited in length, I will not be able to provide examples of every character. However, I will provide a description of each character and their characteristics of speech in both languages, and the examples will focus on my most significant findings featuring dialect-specific speech. I will analyse each character and their dialect separately and conclude by reflecting on these findings.

4.1 Standard British English (RP): Ginger and Fowler

The first dialect presented here, RP, is spoken by the protagonist Ginger, who is portrayed as a caring, determined, and energetic hen who will do anything to escape the chicken coop and save her friends. Her voice is characterised with a higher pitch and a relatively fast rhythm of speech, and although she speaks with a standard variety, she uses abbreviated words such as *can't* and *doesn't*. These features of Ginger's speech also contribute to her characteristics of liveliness and determination. Another character who speaks RP is one of the side characters, Fowler, who is portrayed as a much older rooster and a veteran mascot for the Royal Air Force. He is characterised as more knowledgeable and assertive, but also as stubborn and 'stuck in his ways'. Fowler speaks in a more sophisticated manner and pronounces and emphasises words more precisely. His speech can be linked with the manner in which older 'posh' sergeants typically speak in films. He also uses some slang and terminology used in the British military, which further strengthens his appearance as an experienced veteran.

Both characters are dubbed to Standard Finnish. As these dialects in both languages are of the standard variety, the connotations linked to these dialects are likely to be closest to each other regardless of language. These connotations may include perceptions of correctness and higher status, as discussed in section 3.1. above. The characters in both the original and the dubbed version seem to correspond to each other, which, in addition to the similarity of these dialects, is also due to both the prosodic features of the Finnish voice actors and the slight differences in

speech between these two characters in Finnish. In the dubbed film, Ginger also speaks slightly more casually than Fowler, whereas Fowler is more grammatically correct and precise in his pronunciation. However, Ginger's voice is slightly more high-pitched than in the original, making her appear younger in the dubbed film. Fowler uses military-related phrases and slang in both versions, and the semantic aspects of the dubbed dialogue mostly correspond to the original. This could be due to the lack of dialect-specific words and slang usually encountered with region-specific dialects, which would be difficult to transfer to another culture and language. Here is an example of Fowler's use of military-related terminology, with the Finnish translation below.

(1) Absolutely outrageous! Asking a senior officer to share his quarters, and with a non-commissioned yank no less!

Kerrassaan hävytöntä! Pyytää nyt ylempää upseeria jakamaan punkkansa, ja vieläpä tuollaisen asennoitumattoman jenkin kanssa! (27.00)

Here, both the original English dialogue and its Finnish counterpart correspond to each other rather accurately in terms of semantic meaning. In addition to this, the voice actor in the Finnish dub uses a very similar sounding voice as in the original, which helps maintain Fowler's appearance as an old, experienced veteran. Thus, these two characters and their dialects were likely the easiest to translate, as they do not use many dialect-specific phrases. As can also be seen in the above example, Fowler's British military-related terminology was translated successfully by using military terminology used in Finland, maintaining his identity as a former RAF 'officer'.

4.2 Yorkshire Dialect: Mr. and Mrs. Tweedy, Babs and Bunty

As the setting in the film is located in Yorkshire, the majority of the characters speak with a strong Yorkshire dialect. These characters are the two side characters Babs and Bunty, and the antagonists who own the farm, Mr. and Mrs. Tweedy. Babs is portrayed as a naïve and friendly hen who loves knitting. She speaks with a very shrill voice, which further enhances her perceived innocence and friendliness. Bunty, on the other hand, is an older cynical and grumpy hen who does not take well to Ginger's escape plans. She has a low-pitched voice and uses witty sarcasm. Mr. and Mrs. Tweedy are also portrayed in a different manner from each other, although they both speak the same dialect. Mr. Tweedy appears to be a clumsy and dim-witted man who often gets manipulated by his wife. He speaks with a low voice, and his speech

sometimes deviates from the standard grammatical norms (e.g. ‘I told you they *was* organised!’). Mrs. Tweedy appears more intelligent, but also spiteful, and most of the malicious plans regarding the chickens are initiated by her. Although she also has a Yorkshire accent, her speech is very grammatically correct, and she does not use words specific to that region. Her voice is low and quite monotone, which may also reinforce her nature as very calculated and sly.

In the dubbed version of *Chicken Run*, features of Finnish South-Western dialects can be observed in many instances in the Finnish dub with Mr. Tweedy, who originally speaks with a strong Yorkshire dialect and features some utterances that differ from the grammatical norms in English. For example, he often uses the word *Mää* instead of *mä*, which is colloquial Finnish for the pronouns *I* or *me*. In her thesis, Eriksson (2023, 7–8) lists the most common characteristics of the South-Western Finnish dialects, originally described by Lyytikäinen et al. in their work *Suomen murrekirja* (2013, 17–19). In the South-West, the stretching of short vowels is typical (Eriksson 2023, 7, my translation), as can be seen in the following dialogue of Mr. Tweedy.

(2) It’s all in **me** head.

Mää kuvittelen. (14.26)

Here, the prolonged vowel in Finnish is used to correspond to the pronoun *me* used instead of *my*. This decision is an example of the possible translation methods for dialects discussed in section 2.1, as it demonstrates the utilisation of individual dialectal characteristics to evoke similar perceptions of spoken dialect in the dubbed film. The next example shows how another feature used in the South-West of Finland is used for Mr. Tweedy’s dialogue.

(3) **I know** just the one.

Tierän just yhren. (49.03)

In this example, the trilled r is used in place of d, which can be heard in the South-West region in Finland (Eriksson 2023). Although the example dialogue in English does not feature any dialect-specific phrasing, the continued use of Finnish South-Western elements of dialect can compensate for the loss Mr. Tweedy’s Yorkshire accent, that is, the manner in which he pronounces words typical to that specific region. Furthermore, as the regional dialects in both

countries are located in more rural areas, the connotations linked to these dialects are likely to be more similar.

As for Mrs. Tweedy, who also has a Yorkshire accent, her dialect has been dubbed into Standard Finnish. Apart from her different pronunciations, she does not use any abbreviations or dialect-specific words. In terms of prosodic features such as intonation and tone of voice, her character in the dubbed film sounds very much like in the original. The same can be seen with Babs' character. Overall, Babs uses colloquial Finnish and speaks with a shrill voice in the dubbed version, which makes her character appear very similar to the original. Bunty, on the other hand, uses more old-fashioned English words in some instances that are mostly used only in the North of England, such as *tripe*, or *plodging*. In the dubbed version, Bunty speaks Standard Finnish with some more general old-fashioned words and phrasing, as can be seen in this next example.

(4) In all my life, I've never heard such a fantastic **load of tripe!**

En ole koskaan kuullut **moista pötyä!** (18.05)

Here, the saying *load of tripe* is a common saying in the North of England. The word *tripe* literally refers to the entrails of an animal that was a popular source of food in the North. In the Finnish dialogue, the underlined words *moista pötyä* are used, which means the same thing, but is perhaps closer to the phrase *such poppycock*. The word *pöty* can also refer to food, which makes this a suitable word-choice for the word *tripe*. The next example is from a scene where the chickens begin dancing to some music, and the dialogue refers to Bunty's reaction to Rocky dancing. Here, the word *plodging*, which literally means wading through shallow water, is used as a slang word in some regions in Northern England.

(5) Look at him, **plodging** around like a –

Katos mokomaa, **keinuttaa noita lanteita** kuin – (43.00)

In the Finnish version, Bunty uses the phrase *swinging those hips* instead of *plodging*, as there is no equivalent slang meaning for *plodging*. The phrase *Katos mokomaa* is a more old-fashioned manner of saying *Look at that/him*. As demonstrated, the translations for Bunty's dialogue are rather accurate and maintain the impression of an older lady who speaks with an old-fashioned style, although the translators have had to go around the phrases used specifically in the North of England. In sum, her spoken dialect in the Finnish version is Standard Finnish

with elements of old-fashioned standard language, which characterises her as part of older generations who may commonly be perceived to speak in a more correct manner. In addition to this, the wittiness and sarcasm of Bunty's remarks throughout the film were maintained rather successfully, and her pitch and rhythm of speech also correspond to the voice in the original film.

4.3 Scottish Dialect: Mac

The Scottish dialect is spoken by one of the side characters, Mac, who is portrayed as a very intelligent hen who helps Ginger with the technical side of their escape plans. Her dialect is very thick, and Rocky sometimes finds it difficult to understand her. She also speaks with a very rapid pace and a low voice. In her dialogue, Mac sometimes uses phrases and words very specific to the Scottish dialect. Although she also speaks at a rapid pace and uses the same technical terms in the Finnish version, the dialect-specific phrases have been omitted completely, as can be seen in the following example.

(6) And sprained the anterior tendon connecting your radius to your humerus. I gave her a wee bit of a tweak, **Jimmy**, and wrapped her up.

Ja muljautit alemman kinnerjänteen joka yhdistää värttinäluun olkaan, muljautin sen paikalleen ja kietaisin sen kääreeseen. (20.40)

In this example, the name *Jimmy* is commonly used to refer to any male stranger in Scotland, as this used to be a very popular name in the country. In the Finnish dub, however, this dialect-specific phrase is omitted completely, as there is likely no counterpart for this reference in Finland. Furthermore, in the next example, Mac uses the word *hen*, which is used in Scotland to refer to any female.

(7) Thrust! I went over my calculations, **hen**, and I forgot the key element missing is thrust!

Työntö! Summasin figuurit uudestaan yhteen ja kekkasin meiltä puuttuvan työnnön tyysti! (36.52)

In the Finnish dub, the word *hen* is also omitted, but some Finnish colloquial words are added to Mac's dialogue. She uses the word *tyysti*, which is another word for *completely*, whereas the word *kekkasin* is a colloquial way of saying *keksin*, meaning *I found/discovered*. These word choices could be a result of attempting to make the Finnish dialogue correspond to the original

in length and duration of speech, as well as adding some spoken colloquial elements to replace the omitted word specific to the Scottish dialect. Overall, Mac's dialect in the Finnish version can be identified as Standard Finnish. Although this dialect choice is likely due to the translation norms in Finland regarding children's films and the limits of using regional dialects, the standard variety in Finnish may also be used to evoke perceptions of sophistication and intelligence. However, Mac speaks in a very high-pitched voice in the dubbed film compared to her original voice, which may in turn lead to her character being perceived as much younger, and even childish. In sum, Mac's character seemed to change most drastically in the dubbed version of the film, which may reflect the difficulty of getting across the same connotations in Finnish that are linked to the Scottish dialect.

4.4 London Cockney: Nick and Fetcher

The two side characters portrayed as rats, Nick and Fetcher, are featured as working-class businessmen who are always making deals with the chickens in turn for food and other rewards. Both characters are featured speaking London Cockney. The Cockney variety can be found in many children's films (e.g. the sharks in *Finding Nemo*) as well as adult-oriented films (e.g. the trolls in *The Hobbit*), and is a popular dialect used in film-making for the purpose of comedy as well as creating contrast between lower-class and upper-class characters. According to Ranzato (2018), "the Cockney character is often narratively contrasted to others of a superior social class, and of how the voice of the Cockney is used to portray characters of dubious moral standing". This can also be seen with Nick and Fetcher's characters, as they are portrayed as two shabby rats with slightly questionable methods of making business. Out of the two characters, Nick is characterised as more clever, and sometimes says individual phrases in foreign languages, such as French and Spanish, perhaps to emphasise his cleverness and worldliness. In the original version of the film, the two characters use many phrases typical for London Cockney slang. In the following example, just before the credits, Nick and Fetcher debate about 'the chicken or the egg' question, during which Fetcher uses a Cockney slang word:

(8) No, that's **cobblers**.

Älä ny **hullujas** puhu. (01.19.19)

The word *cobblers* is a Cockney slang word for nonsense, and is derived from the Cockney rhyming slang phrase *cobbler's awls*, which rhymes with the word *balls* (another word for

testicles). The Finnish dialogue is very colloquial, and can be roughly translated to *Don't be crazy*. The Finnish word *hulluja* is very similar to the word *cobblers*, as it can also refer to nonsense. In the next sentence, the word *caper* is used by Nick to refer to ridiculous activity, in this case the chicken's attempt to fly in order to escape the farm:

(9) What's this caper, **love**?

Mikä on homman nimi, **pulu**? (30.33)

In the Finnish dialogue, the phrase *homman nimi* is used instead of *caper*, which is Finnish colloquial slang for *What's going on?*. Using terms of endearment, such as *love*, is also common for the Cockney dialect. This has been maintained in the dubbed dialogue, where *pulu*, which means *pigeon*, is used for the same purpose. As can be seen from the above examples, Nick and Fletcher's characters use an abundance of phrasing specific to their spoken dialect. Overall, their utterances were dubbed into a more colloquial form of Finnish when talking to each other, but when trying to strike deals with the other characters, their speech turned into a more Standard form. In addition to this, Nick also uses foreign words and phrases, usually in French, which may be a means for his character to show that he is intelligent or open-minded. These utterances, as well as Nick's use of words of endearment, were maintained in the Finnish translation. However, the stereotypical connotations typically related to the London Cockney dialect (such as working-class and untrustworthy businessmen) seem to partly disappear in the translation, making both characters appear more as professional middle-class salesmen. This could also reflect the differences between Finland and Britain in social classism, where it is not as defined in Finland at least in terms of dialects.

4.5 (General American): Rocky

Although the focus of this thesis is mainly on British dialects, there are some significant points to be made about the co-protagonist in the film, Rocky, who speaks in a General American dialect. He appears as an overconfident, lazy rooster who later evolves into a heroic and selfless character. In the original film, he stands out from the rest of the characters due to his dialect and place of origin, and this can be noticed when the hens ask him where he is from in the beginning of the film, for example. Although there are dialect-specific and colloquial elements featured in many of the other characters' dialogues in the Finnish version, their spoken dialects were still rather formal, highlighting the use of Standard Finnish throughout the film. In contrast, Rocky's dialect differed from the other characters through the use of a much more

casual form of Finnish, making his character more distinguishable from the others. This is a notable decision, as making the character appear as a foreigner of a country of the same language is not as obvious in the Finnish language as it is with the globally extended language English. Additionally, as the General American variety helps characterise Rocky's character as more laid-back and casual, the extensive use of colloquial Finnish can similarly highlight these features. Next, I will conclude by further reflecting on these findings, as well as on the possible limitations and future research suggestions regarding this interesting topic.

5 Conclusion

To summarise the findings made above, the dialectal diversity that can originally be found in *Chicken Run* in part fades in the Finnish dubbed version due to cultural and language-related differences, as well as the standardisation of the spoken language of the characters. This, in turn, leads to the changes in the connotations linked to the characters through their dialects, calling for alternative characterisation approaches to preserve the similarities between them. Overall, the characters with regional dialects who use the most dialect-specific language are those whose appearance differ the most in the dubbed film. Thus, the original appearance of these characters created largely through their dialects are the most altered. In contrast, the characters who originally speak with a standard dialect mostly maintain their original appearance, as their spoken language does not feature dialect-specific elements and are dubbed directly to the standard dialect in the target language. However, some characters feature dialectal and colloquial elements that help maintain their original characterisations. For example, Mr. Tweedy, who originally has a Yorkshire dialect, is characterised in the dubbed version with elements of South-Western Finnish dialects. As these dialects in both languages and countries are considered more rural, the possible connotations linked to these dialects may in part be similar to each other. As for the prosodic features, there are some significant differences in the dubbed version with some characters, perhaps due to the limit of voice actors in Finland compared to Britain, as well as the elements of prosody specific to a dialect at least partially disappearing through dubbing and being replaced by the features of prosody that are characteristic of the Finnish language.

There are some possible reasons for the standardisation of the spoken dialogue in the Finnish dubbed version. As previously discussed, translators must be careful when including slang terms and dialect-specific phrases in audiovisual translations, as some part of the target audience may not understand these (Language Specialists 2023). This is especially true in the case of children's films. However, although the film is also originally aimed for children, there are many words and phrases from different regions of Britain that young children may not supposedly be able to understand. These factors could indicate either that the average target audiences are different in age (older children or adults watching in the original culture) or that there are stricter norms related to children's films in Finland. On the other hand, the purpose for using a variety of different dialects for this film could originally be purely for humoristic

purposes rather than for the audience to understand every word, as children may perceive dialects different to their own as funny (cf. Hiebert 2015).

It is also worth noting that the use of standard language with some characters may have been a conscious choice of characterisation, and not only a question of following translation norms. As explained by Hiraga (2005), standard dialects also hold their own connotations and are commonly linked to higher social status and favourable aesthetic qualities. This could in part be the reason for originally characterising Ginger, the protagonist of the film, with Received Pronunciation, as she is featured as the character with the most significance in the film. The connotations of higher status can also be seen with Fowler's character, as he is portrayed as an older 'war hero', and the use of RP along with its connotations of upper-class may further emphasise Fowler's status and respectableness. Although the contrast between dialects in terms of social status is not as defined in Finland, using another standard dialect may evoke similar perceptions of these characters. Additionally, the use of standard language for the older characters, as well as the ones portrayed as more intelligent, may also be linked to the connotations related to speaking in a 'proper' manner. These factors may be the reason for using mostly Standard Finnish for Bunty's and Mac's characters. On the other hand, as the characters featuring the least dialectal and colloquial variation were the female characters overall, it could be concluded that some decisions are linked to the stereotype that women tend to speak more correctly than men. Thus, there are many possible explanations for the decisions of characterisation made in both versions of *Chicken Run*, whether they are the translator's conscious choices or norms of audiovisual translation.

The limitations of this thesis are many due to its limited length and scarceness of similar studies that could be used to better support the discoveries presented here. Furthermore, this thesis is limited to only one children's film released over twenty years ago, and the norms and processes of dubbing may be different in today's film production. Further research on this topic may help to provide more insight into the issues related to dubbing and cross-cultural translation overall. Studying the dubbing processes used for adult oriented films may produce more interesting findings, as the adult audience does not need a standard variety of language as much for comprehension. It may also be interesting to study the effects of dubbed films on the connotations of the audience in the target culture as opposed to that of the original culture. In conclusion, characterisation in dubbed films is far from uncomplicated, as characters are built through much more than merely the words spoken by them.

References

- Bosseaux, Charlotte. 2015. *Dubbing, Film and Performance: Uncanny Encounters*. Bern, Switzerland: Peter Lang AG, International Academic Publishers. Accessed 19 February 2025. <https://doi.org/10.3726/978-3-0353-0737-5>.
- Chicken Run*. 2000. DVD. Directed by Peter Lord and Nick Park. Aardman Animations.
- Eriksson, Venla. 2023. "Jaa Turun murre? Suomen fiksuin koirarotu siis: Suomi24-keskustelupalstalla esiintyviä murrekäsityksiä ja -asenteita lounaismurteista." BA Thesis. University of Tampere.
- Haavisto, Laura. 2006. "Media, murre ja kääntäjä: Afrikkalaisamerikkalainen englantti Spike Leen elokuvassa *Clockers*." MA Thesis. University of Tampere.
- Hayes, Lydia. 2019. "An Interdisciplinary Approach to Studying Linguistic Variation in Audiovisual Texts: Extrapolating a Synergy of Neuropsychology, Semiotics, Performativity, and Memetics to Translation Studies." *Syn-Thèses*, no. 9–10: 90–107. Accessed 18 October 2024. <https://doi.org/10.26262/st.v0i9.7631>.
- . 2021. "Netflix Disrupting Dubbing: English Dubs and British Accents." *Journal of Audiovisual Translation*, 4, no. 1: 1–26. Accessed 18 October 2024. <https://doi.org/10.47476/jat.v4i1.2021.148>.
- Hiebert, Miranda. 2015. "Dialects and Perceptions of Humor: Dialectal Stereotypes." *Schwa: Language and Linguistics* 2: 27–35.
- Hiraga, Yuko. 2005. "British Attitudes towards Six Varieties of English in the USA and Britain." *World Englishes* 24, no. 3: 289–308. Accessed 27 February 2025. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.0883-2919.2005.00411.x>.
- Montgomery, Chris. 2022. "Perceptual Dialectology." In *Research Methods in Language Attitudes*, edited by Ruth Kircher and Lena Zipp, 160–182. Cambridge University Press. Accessed 28 February 2025. <https://doi-org.ezproxy.utu.fi/10.1017/9781108867788>.
- Language Specialists. 2023. "Quality Recommendations for Finnish Subtitling." Accessed 11 November 2024. <https://kieliasiantuntijat.fi/fi/kieliasiantuntijatyossa/ammattisaannosto-ja-lainsaadanto/>.
- Lyytikäinen, Erkki, Jorma Rekunen, and Jaakko Yli-Paavola. 2013. *Suomen murrekirja*. Helsinki: Gaudeamus.
- Maunuaho, Kaisa. 2021. "Translating Animated Moomins – Differences and Translation Strategies in the Finnish and English Dubs." MA Thesis. University of Jyväskylä.
- Palander, Marjatta. 2007. "Alueellisen taustan vaikutus murrekäsityksiin." *Virittäjä* 111, no. 1: 24–55. Accessed 1 March 2025. <https://journal.fi/virittaja/article/view/40541>.

- Ranzato, Irene. 2018. "The Cockney Persona: The London Accent in Characterisation and Translation." *Perspectives* 27, no. 2: 235–251. Accessed 14 October 2024. <https://doi-org.ezproxy.utu.fi/10.1080/0907676X.2018.1532442>
- . 2019. "Talking Proper vs. Talking With an Accent: the Sociolinguistic Divide in Original and Translated Audiovisual Dialogue." *Multilingua*. 38, no. 5: 547–562. Accessed 29 September 2024. <https://doi-org.ezproxy.utu.fi/10.1515/multi-2018-0122>.