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TRABAJO DE FIN DE GRADO

Audiovisual Translation and Subtitling. Analyzing Humor in the Spanish subtitles of the TV Series 'The Office'.

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ABSTRACT

One of the effects of globalization is the ease with which any TV series or movie, regardless of its origin, can reach an almost infinite audience. This factor, coupled with the increasing demand for visual entertainment, makes audiovisual translation and subtitling the order of the day. Despite this, not everything is so simple, as cultural barriers are still present. This is why humor, despite being a universal language, has difficulties when it comes to translation. In this project, taking the American sitcom "The Office" as a reference, different aspects of humor translation will be analyzed, taking into account cultural references.

Key words: translation, audiovisual translation, subtitling, humor, cultural references, The Office.

RESUMEN

Uno de los efectos de la globalización es la facilidad que tiene cualquier serie o película de televisión, independientemente de su origen, para llegar a un público casi infinito. Este factor, sumado al aumento de demanda de entretenimiento visual, hacen que la traducción audiovisual y el subtitulado estén a al orden del día. A pesar de esto, no todo es tan sencillo, puesto que las barreras culturales siguen estando presentes. Es por esto, que el humor, a pesar de ser un lenguaje universal, tiene dificultades a la hora de ser traducido. En este trabajo de fin de grado, tomando como referencia la serie estadounidense "The Office", se analizarándiferentes aspectos de la traducción del humor, teniendo en cuenta las referencias culturales.

Palabras clave: traducción, traducción audiovisual, subtitulado, humor, referencias culturales, The Office.

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1 INTRODUCTION

Nowadays, globalization characterizes our society and our way of understanding the world. One of the results of this process is the spread of everything that we can imagine, such as, for instance, audiovisual materials. Since most of the population has access to different platforms on which films, documentaries, TV series, etc. can be enjoyed, it is compulsory to have something that guarantees that the communicative process is not broken. Here is where the translation process takes part in the game. Those audiovisual materials should not only be accessible in terms of distribution but also, have to be accessible in terms of language. For this problem, there are many solutions, and the most frequent ones are subtitling and dubbing.

As the film industry began to grow and some films started to become very popular, everyone –both filmmakers and audiences– wanted to make their material more accessible. As the main barrier was language, the idea appeared to replace the original sound with another recording in the appropriate language. This is how dubbing was born. But like everything in life, it also has a downside. Dubbing requires a previous translation, followed by a re-adaptation of the new text to the original image. This implied trying to match as much as possible the movements that the actors made when speaking to what the viewer would later hear. As this synchronization was sometimes too complicated and even too expensive, many began to consider developing another option. Subtitling was already in use, but differently; instead of placing the text at the bottom of the picture in sync with the images, it was placed between scenes. With this new way of dealing with subtitling and considering that it was a more efficient and less costly way for the film industry, the popularity of this method began to grow. (Bravo 2010)

As I mentioned previously, globalization and the spreading of audiovisual materials would be completely impossible without translation. Considering the aforementioned information, this dissertation aims to analyze how the American sitcom "The Office" has been subtitled, focusing on both the original English audio transcript and the Spanish subtitles. This TV series has been elected as the object of study both for its popularity and for the number of humoristic scenes full of cultural references.

The objectives that will be found in this dissertation are:

a. The first aim is to establish the theoretical framework to study in-depth the world of audiovisual translation. This step is necessary to establish the basis to analyze *The Office* Spanish subtitles.

b. To provide a context of the TV series that is going to be analyzed. It could be useful to better comprehend the analysis and obtain results.

c. Finally, a contrastive comparison between both the English transcription and the Spanish subtitles, will be provided. The English text corresponds to the transcription of the original version and the Spanish text corresponds to the subtitles. This comparison will analyzed the difficulties that a translator may encounter when translating cultural references and humor.

This dissertation is structured in six different sections. Firstly, there will be a research part on theoretical aspects of audiovisual translation, and more specifically, subtitling and translation procedures. Regarding conventional subtitling, a deep study will be conducted about its general characteristics, display standards, the reading process of reading subtitles, and specific translation procedures, and how all of this can be applied to cultural references and humor. This study is going to provide a general overview of how subtitles are created following space and time limitations. Then, an analysis of the translation procedures, which includes those that are particularly important in subtitling, will be also provided with the purpose to develop the practical aspect of this dissertation.

The hypothesis will be provided in the third part, followed by the methodology. This section will help to understand the process of the results section. The fourth section comprises the contrastive analysis and the comparison between the transcription of the English original audio and the Spanish subtitles. Then, the fifth section will end with a conclusion of the most important findings and relevant aspects of the complete analysis. Finally, the bibliography used can be found in the sixth section.

2 AUDIOVISUAL TRANSLATION

There is a fundamental statement that has changed how studies are orientated, that is, language changes depending on the situation where it is produced. The different theoretical studies on linguistic variability had influenced the different perspectives on the teaching and acquisition of languages. Unfortunately, this phenomenon did not happen in Translation studies.

Audiovisual translation is just a branch of translation where two different channels of communication, acoustic and oral, are complementing each other (Delabastita, 1989:196). Regarding the acoustic channel, the predominance is undoubtedly occupied by the verbal narration, without, however, underestimating the information that is transmitted aurally by the soundtrack.

The translator is usually accustomed to a simple model of speech, so that attention is focused on the message itself. As for audiovisual translation, the translator must also consider the additional information conveyed: it is not possible to understand or translate the verbal narration without having also analyzed the audiovisual narration.

Audiovisual texts present certain characteristics, not only at a structural level but also based on the use of cohesive resources. Some of these resources would be:

- Audiovisual texts have a beginning and an end, regardless of whether the narrative is linear or not.
- Audiovisual texts are a coherent whole.
- The text is cohesive; the verbal narration corresponds to the audiovisual narration.
- Both narratives, verbal and visual, focus on the essential aspects to understand the message and the necessary information to follow the storyline satisfactorily.

Audiovisual translation is also characterized by its restrictions. Considering that the translator must seek an equally synthetic message in the target language, the difficulty is further compounded by having to synchronize the translation to the mouth movements of the source language (Fontcuberta, 1994: 225). But this is not the only restriction we can

find. All translators must be familiar with the differences between the two cultures since the way of conceiving or thinking about reality can be very different.

2.1 SUBTITLING IN AUDIOVISUAL TRANSLATION

The motion picture industry had to face the problem of how to deal with the verbal element in films, and how to address it to audiences who spoke different languages from the actors and actresses on the screen.

In 1927, the concept of 'the talkies' appeared, which implied that now the audience could hear the actors. There was now a problem that involved translation on the one hand but on the other hand that affected the industry of cinema. The sound becomes a barrier when distributing films into a foreign market, so it required a translation of the script and then rewriting it in such a way that the consonants and vowels corresponded as much as possible to the lip movements of the actors.

The cinema industry tried dubbing as a solution to the problem mentioned before, and in fact, it was rapidly established as the dominant mode of film translation (Bravo 2004: 210). Nevertheless, dubbing was too expensive and complex. Due to this, people from the industry began to consider bringing back written titles but inserting them in the lower part of the screen, between sequences. And that is how subtitles were born (subtitles -the product- and subtitling -the procedure-). In recent years, we have experimented a widespread of the satellite TV channels and the mass market of TV material; thanks to this, this method has proliferated.

Once we have reached this point, we can ensure that subtitling is a heterogeneous concept. There are different types of subtitling, which despite that had features in common, differ in some other aspects (whether it is bilingual/monolingual., open/closed, for the deaf, for language teaching purposes, etc.)

2.1.1   General characteristics

According to Reid (1991: 156), subtitling differs in three fundamental characteristics from other forms of language transfer:

- It does not make big changes in the original work, but it does reduce the field of vision for an essential component of any film
- It translates 'spoken' texts into written ones.
- The target text is substantially shorter than the source text.

Consequently, as Reid (1991: 156) points out, there are three actions performed in subtitling. Theoretically, they are independent of one another, but in practice, they are simultaneous and close related:

- The information is transposed into the target language.
- The source text is abridged.
- The oral code is transposed into a written code.

2.1.2   Display standards

To make it as easy as possible for the audience to read the subtitles, the industry has established a series of conventions accepted by the professionals. Some of the principal norms are:

- Each subtitle must not be longer than two lines.
- It is recommendable to limit each line to 40 characters, and each subtitle to a total of 70 characters.
- Each subtitle should remain on the screen for five or six seconds.
- Major sentence constituents should not be split. However, if splitting cannot be avoided, suspension points should be used at the end as the sign that the sentence continues at the next title.
- Worlds should not be written entirely in capitals in subtitles that represent dialogue because capitals are usually reserved for the translation of signs and other elements.

- Italics are used for voice-offs, likewise they are used for the translations of songs, letters, etc.
- A short dash is used at the beginning of an utterance to mark a change of speaker.
- To save space, abbreviations are used when possible and numbers are written in figures.
- Perfect synchrony is demanded between the subtitles and their corresponding images.

2.1.3 The reading process

When people are watching a subtitled film, they are requiring their brains to process several information systems simultaneously. One of the main principles of subtitling that a translator has to bear in mind is the speed at which the audience can read. As we said before, around five or six seconds would be enough, because it is what most people need to read comfortably; we have to remember that their eyes and minds have not only to read the subtitles but to process the image.

2.2 TRANSLATION PROCEDURES

As far as we have discussed, audiovisual translation has some conditions and constraints that need a whole range of task-specific procedures. The three main ones and the ones that will be the focus of this dissertation are text reduction, chunking, and when several characters speak at the same time.

2.2.1 Text reduction

As Bravo suggests, the target text in translations for subtitles is usually shorter than the source text, because it has to conform to the special restriction imposed as well as it has to avoid the danger of visual and information overload on viewers.

Fortunately, it is possible to condense a text without losing its communicative content. This premise relies on several empirical studies that have proven that languages generally possess several mechanisms for expressing the same idea. This idea can be exemplified by

thinking about text messages through mobile phones, where the text is reduced as much as possible, but the meaning is maintained.

The procedure that a translator has to follow would be, first, carefully analyzing the content and the nature of the text and then, interpreting it. Once the meaning is completely understood, it is possible to cut out everything that the subtitler considers is not essential for understanding the audiovisual work, both because it can be rewritten shorter or because the information on the screen is providing enough context.

Despite all of this, it is crucial to keep in mind that it all must be done without making the subtitle texts grammatically incorrect or incomplete.

2.2.2 Chunking sentences and their constituents between subtitles

For a better understanding of the text, it is preferable to maintain it as a single syntactic and logical unit, according to Bravo. But he also points out that, if it is not possible, it should be two or more complete shorter ones. In that way, the content can be understood, the sentences can be easily read, and the viewers would not be overloaded.

Ivarsson (1992: 96) explains that seeing a subtitled film is a very different experience from reading a book because you do not have the opportunity of turning back to previous pages; the eyes are busy performing several complex tasks at the same time that the minds are processing a lot of information at high speed.

As Bravo mentions, the golden rule is to avoid at all costs diving into lexical or syntactical components of a single sentence constituent between subtitles.

2.2.3 Several characters speaking at once

There is a specific scenario when the work of translating audiovisual text can be complicated, that is when several characters are speaking at the same time.

Regarding this problem, the dialogue may go faster due to two different situations: on the one hand, if the characters happen to speak very quickly, and on the other hand, if several

people are speaking at the same time. Moreover, if there is some kind of discussion, the dialogue tends to go even faster.

To solve this, according to Bravo, there are two main solutions. As was previously mentioned in 2.1.2 section, a dash can be used to indicate that a different character is starting to speak. This method had the advantage of making the switches very clear, but it also has the disadvantage of reducing the amount of space available on each title. However, it is not easy for viewers to process that the dialogue is spoken by more than one character. Moving on to the second solution, different colors can be used to represent each person in the dialogue. This would solve the problem of not differencing who is speaking at the moment, although it is not very convenient because it is more information for the brain to process what is happening. Despite this, this is the main method used in television.

2.3 AUDIOVISUAL TRANSLATION PROBLEMS

2.3.1   Humor

Despite the problems and difficulties that a translator may encounter when translating subtitles, some only appear in specific contexts. Humor is present in a great amount of audiovisual content, and even the most serious film may have a humorous touch.

As it has been said, nowadays society had undergone a process of globalization pushed along by the mass media. This provoked the integration of different cultures and the spread of diversity. Nevertheless, there are certain areas resistant to this process that remain unique to a given culture.

According to Bravo (2002: 202), humor can be considered an important phenomenon deeply rooted in a cultural substratum, frequently captive of its language and culture (*culture* understood in the anthropological sense of the term).

Humor is usually channeled through a series of linguistic resources including polysemy, proverbs, idiomatic expressions, or metaphors. In addition, the translation is always completely dependent on the image.

For translators to be successful, their main goal should be able to make the TL audience laugh at the same time that the SL audience does. If the distance between the TL humor and the SL humor is huge, it would be the responsibility of the translator to rewrite the script to provoke laughter in the audience.

At this point, we agree with Rowe (1960: 116), who asserts that «The intensity of the audience reaction to a comic line is far more important than any literal fidelity to the original sense. A funny line is intended to get a laugh. If it fails to do so when translated into a foreign tongue, then the translation has failed, whatever its literary excellence or fidelity to the original»

2.3.2 Cultural references

Every audiovisual work, both films, and TV series contains an amount of information about the country in which it has been produced and the location in which the plot is performed.

The connection between the content and the contextual reality from which it comes cannot be marginalized or ignored during the translation process under no circumstances. If translating were nothing more than putting together a sequence of words, the job of the translator would be a simple matter.

Essentially, there are two main basic elements: on the one hand, the image which provides the visual cultural context, and which is inalterable; and, on the other hand, the different languages in which the script may be translated, that has their particularities and represents different expressions of each culture.

The main important difficulties a translator may encounter can be summarized in the followings: if there is a specific connotation in the SL that does not exist in the TL, or if in the SL there is a reference to a cultural icon that does not exist in the TL.

It is true that due to globalization there is a great amount of knowledge shared worldwide; despite this, in many instances, the cultural reference may be lost on the audience of the TL. The translator has to be very careful because that piece of information may help to

advance the plot or can be useful for character development, so it demands of the translator a high level of both knowledge and creativity.

2.3.3   Dialects and accents

Dialects and accents represent another important problem for the translator. It is well known that dialects and accents can provide a wealth of information about the speaker, particularly concerning social standing and regional characteristics. If the audience can read between the lines, language can help to understand the speaker's origin, social class, or even ideology.

It is known that those who occupy positions of political and economic power tend to speak the dialect of the «Establishment»; in contrast, those who belong to the working class tend to have accents that are associated with less social prestige and that place them outside the circles of power.

3   HYPOTHESIS AND METHODOLOGY

3.1 HYPOTHESIS

In this undergraduate dissertation, the following hypothesis will be tested:

1. The main problem when translating humor appears when the text does not rely upon general knowledge.
2. Many cultural references will be lost in the process of translation.
3. The translator will reinterpret the SL to maintain the comic moments even if it implies a drastic change in the TL.

3.2 METHODOLOGY

The original version of the sitcom *The Office* is in American English. As it was very successful when it was first broadcast in 2005, its chapters have been both dubbed and subtitled into several languages.

The reasons why I decided to analyze this particular TV series revolves around its popularity and its well-recognized sense of humor. Nowadays, despite that the emission of

this series ended in 2013, it is available on platforms such as Prime Video, which belongs to the American company Amazon. This platform, particularly, has millions of subscribers and it is one of the most used webs to watch TV series and films. Moreover, due to this popularity, this series is available in different languages, and it is accessible and easy to change from one to another quickly if the user needs to.

Regarding the Spanish audience, *The Office* can be watched in the original version, with English subtitles, with Spanish subtitles, or dubbed in Spanish. The focus of this dissertation would be to analyze the Spanish subtitles since they have the proper quality to do so.

The analysis has been carried out by watching consciously the first season of this TV series with the original audio and the Spanish subtitles, looking for potential fragments interesting enough to be analyzed. The most common problems that translators encounter frequently can be found within the selection of examples. It is important to mention that all of them are useful because they deal with aspects mentioned in the theoretical part. Consequently, the fragments are illustrative of the different categories covered in the 2.3 section.

The practical analysis of the examples will be organized in the following tables:

TABLE 0	
Season 1, chapter X	
ORIGINAL VERSION	SPANISH SUBTITLES

To organize the tables as clearly as possible, each of them will have an identified number. The chapter information will introduce the chapter and the season, even if all of them belong to the first season. Moreover, if some context is needed to comprehend what is happening in the extract, it will be added. Finally, it will be provided both the original English version and the Spanish subtitles.

After each table, a commentary on the most relevant aspects of each dialogue will be found. I will be discussing both the problem presented and the techniques used by translators to solve it, always with respect and without discrediting their work. The translation process is complex, and it is difficulted even more when dealing with aspects related to the culture of each language. Sometimes there is no possible way to remain faithful to the original text, just as sometimes creativity is capable of achieving the impossible.

4   SUBTITLING THE OFFICE

4.1 SINOPSIS

The Office is a 20 minutes-long sitcom produced by the Deedle-Dee Productions and Reveille Productions in association with NBC. It is based on the BBC series "The Office" created by Ricky Gervais and Stephen Merchant and developed for the American television by Greg Daniels. The pilot was first broadcast on television in 2005 and was emitted until 2013.

The show's main protagonists are Michael Scott, Dwight Schrute, Jim Halpert, and Pam Beesly, and the plot focuses on the day-to-day lives of the employees of the Scranton branch of Dunder Mifflin Paper Company. The oblivious Regional Manager Michael Scott perceives himself as "a friend first, entertainer second, and boss third". He is completely unaware that his co-workers would only seldom agree. Michael's offensive jokes turn his employees off rather than make them laugh.

Oblivious Regional Manager Michael Scott sees himself as "a friend first, entertainer second, and boss third". Michael is entirely unaware that his co-workers would only seldom agree. Michael's offensive jokes turn them off rather than make them laugh. Although a fictional show, it is shot in documentary format with characters often acknowledging the presence of the cameras and using talking head segments. This format is sometimes called a mockumentary.

4.2 CONTRASTIVE ANALYSIS

This section will analyze the translation problems that the translators of *The Office* have encountered during the process and what solutions they have opted to solve. This analysis will be divided in three different categories, the same ones that can be found within the section 2.3: humor, cultural references, and dialect and accents.

Despite the fact that those three categories revolve around humor, both cultural references and dialects and accents will compile more concrete examples while humor itself will be useful to group a more varied number of fragments.

4.2.1   Humor

As commented before, humor is one of the key elements of the sitcom *The Office*. However, as it is explained in section 2.3.1, humor is a complicated field for translators, even though nowadays it is worldwide spread due to globalization. The type of humor presented in this series relies on different aspects, always with its characteristic acid tone, but in this section, the analysis will be dealing with a more general type of humor.

TABLE 1	
Season 1, chapter 1	
ORIGINAL VERSION	SPANISH SUBTITLES
Michel: Packman.	Michael: Hola, Packman.
Todd Packer: Hey, you big queen.	Todd Packer: Hola, amor mío.
Michael: Oh, that's not appropriate.	Michael: Déjalo, no es el momento.
Todd Packer: Hey, is old Godzillary coming in today?	Todd Packer: Oye, ¿no iba a pasarse hoy la vieja Gozilla?
Michael: Uh, I don't know what you mean.	Michael: No sé de qué me hablas.
Todd Packer: I've been meaning to ask her one question. ***Does the carpet match the drapes?*** Michael: Oh, my God! Oh! That's... horrifying. Horrible. Horrible person	Todd Packer: Quería hacerte una preguntita. ***¿Tendrá teñido el felpudo?*** Michael: Oh, Dios mío. Es horrible. Un tipo… horrible

Table 1. Example of modulation.

In this first example, we see how there are a series of predetermined phrases for certain humorous situations, which, despite the fact that in each language they are expressed differently, the sense and meaning can be transposed from one language to another without losing the essence of what is being conveyed. In the case of English, it is perhaps a more subtle metaphor, while in Spanish it is much more obscene. This may be due to the cultural difference between the United States and Spain, and the conservative hints that each culture has or does not have.

In this case the translator's task is simple since in the TL there is already an expression for translating the SL. Although the translator could indeed translate it literally (¿La alfombra hace juego con las cortinas?) because it could be understood by the audience by the context itself, the touch of bawdy humor that characterizes this series would be completely lost.

TABLE 2	
Season 1, chapter 1	
ORIGINAL VERSION	SPANISH SUBTITLES
Jan: So do you think we could keep a lid on this for now? I don't want to worry people unnecessarily. Michael: No, absolutely. Under this regime, it will not leave this office. *[zips his lips] Like that.*	Jan: ¿Podemos mantener esto en secreto por ahora? No quiero que la gente se preocupe son motivo. Michael: No, por supuesto. Conmigo al mando, esto no saldrá de la oficina. *Chitón*

Table 2. Example of compensation.

Conversely, it can sometimes occur as in this example, that the TL has a richer vocabulary than the SL. While the original audio remains a simple gesture, the subtitles accompany this movement with a 'chitón', a word that captures this simple expression and also adds a touch of humor.

The translator could have limited himself to a literal translation because the image finishes giving the audience the necessary information to understand what is happening, but by adding that word, he greatly enriches the translation.

TABLE 3
Season 1, chapter X

ORIGINAL VERSION	SPANISH SUBTITLES
Michael: Attention all Dunder Mifflin employees, please. We have a meeting in the conference room, ***ASAP.***	Michael: Aviso para todos los empleados de Dunder Mifflin. Tenemos una reunión en la sala de juntas ***ahora mismo***

Table 3. Example of adaptation.

Finally, the TL may not have as much variety as the SL. In this case, the use of 'ASAP' helps to describe Michael's personality, who despite being the boss always tries to appear modern and jocular, so this term helps to define his personality.

When translators have to face this, they may encounter a problem. There is no exact equivalent in Spanish, so the translator has chosen to simply translate the meaning of this expression as literary. The objective of conveying the message is achieved, but there is a part of the character's identity that is lost in a certain way.

TABLE 4
Season 1, chapter 1

ORIGINAL VERSION	SPANISH SUBTITLES
Michael: And yeah, Jim this is the time to stop putting Dwight's personal effects into ***Jell-O.*** Jim: OK. Dwight, I'm sorry, because I have always been ***your biggest flan*** Michael: [Laughing] Nice. That's the way it is around here. It just kind of goes round and round. Ryan: ***You should've put him in custardy***	Michael: Sí. Y Jim, no es el momento de meter los efectos personales de Dwight en ***gelatina***. Jim: Vale, Dwight, lo siento. Es que yo siempre he sido ***tu mayor flan***. Michael: ¡Qué bueno! Así es como nos las gastamos aquí. Esto es un no parar, no parar. Ryan: ***Yo que tú lo castigaba sin postre.***

Table 4. Example of modulation.

In this excerpt, being a string of puns related to desserts, the fact of not translating all of them -as it happens with 'gelatin'- does not cause the humorous effect to be lost, it does not affect it at all. As we can see, 'flan' is written in the same way in both the SL and the TL, so a literal translation is possible, and the same meaning is maintained. On the other hand, 'You should've put him in custardy' can be reinterpreted ('Yo que tú lo castigaba sin postre') in such a way that the joke is maintained, because perhaps for the translator this strategy was simpler than looking for a similar pun in Spanish.

TABLE 5	
Season 1, chapter 4	
ORIGINAL VERSION	SPANISH SUBTITLES
Michael: [to the camera] Can you get her? She's right there. [camera zooms in on Meredith at her desk] That is Meredith, the birthday girl. And this... is Meredith's card. ***Happy Bird-Day***	Michael: ¿La veis? Está sentada. Esa es Meredith, la que cumple años. Y esta es su tarjeta de felicitación: ***"Feliz pajaraños"***

Table 5. Example of modulation.

Sometimes, as we see here, it's worth spending a few minutes to think of a clever pun because the scene deserves it. In my opinion, the translator gets it right with this expression since a literal translation would have completely ruined the required touch of humor. On the other hand, another valid option could have been any other witty phrase that we can see in birthday cards, even if it was completely different from the one in the SL.

4.2.2 Cultural references

It is very likely that any series or movie, or the vast majority of them, produced today is going to be aimed at the widest possible audience. This means that any cultural references made are going to be general enough for anyone to understand. Despite this, the director's touch, or the place where they are shot, or even the context of the series or film itself, will always be present, so more specific cultural references can and will be present.

TABLE 6	
Season 1, chapter 1	
ORIGINAL VERSION	SPANISH SUBTITLES
Michael: All right Jim. Your quarterlies look very good. How are things at the library? Jim: Oh, I told you. I couldn't close it. So... Michael: So, you've come to the master for guidance? Is this what you're saying, **grasshopper?**	Michael: Bueno, Jim. Tus informes del trimestre están muy bien. ¿Cómo van las cosas por el archivo? Jim: Ya te dije que no pude acabar con eso y… Michael: Y acudes al maestro en busca de ayuda. ¿Es eso, **Pequeño Saltamontes**?

Table 6. Example of adaptation.

In this fragment, the reference to Spielman's Kung Fu film, is well-known enough to have an equivalent in the TL. In English, the grasshopper does not "jump mountains", but only blades of grass. The iconic quote "Have you a burden, grasshopper?" was translated to Spanish with the addition of "pequeño", "¿Te preocupa algo, Pequeño Saltamontes?".

In this case, the term in the SL has an equivalent in the TL that most of the audience will understand and recognize. This is a great advantage and helps, after all, to facilitate the translator's work and to maintain the essence of what the series originally wanted to convey, while keeping at the same time the humor intact.

TABLE 7	
Season 1, chapter 1	
ORIGINAL VERSION	SPANISH SUBTITLES
Dwight: [singing] **Shall I play for you? Pa rum pump um pum… I have no gifts for you. Pa rum pump um pum.**	Dwight: [cantando] **El camino que lleva a Belén… baja hasta el valle que la nieve cubrió.**

Table 7. Example of equivalence.

This fragment resembles the previous one in the sense that, again, there is an equivalent in the TL that maintains intact the humor of the scene. Despite this, there is a huge difference. Although the carol is the same, it is not sung the same in the United States as in Spain, the lyrics vary. In this case, the translator adapts the equivalence to the culture of the country in question, but being an exact equivalent, the essence is maintained despite being adapted.

TABLE 8	
Season 1, chapter 1	
ORIGINAL VERSION	SPANISH SUBTITLES
Michael: Corporate really doesn't really interfere with me at all. Jan Levinson Gould. [walking out of his office] Jan, hello. I call her *Hillary Rodham Clinton*	Michael: La central no se mete en mi trabajo. Jan Levenson-Gould. Yo la llamo la *Hillary Rara Clinton.*

Table 8. Example of adaptation.

On the other hand, in this excerpt we can see how, sometimes, although the term may be known worldwide, there may be details that are too local. In this case, Hillary Clinton is an American politician with a lot of fame and is easy to recognize, but what is not so easy to identify and what can disorient the audience that does not know it, is her middle name.

 In this case, the translator has decided to add an extra touch of humor and, following the essence of the scene and the dialogue, transform that middle name into a kind of joke. In this way, the Spanish audience, in this case, will be able to easily identify Hillary Clinton, since the middle name has no influence, and will also find an extra touch of humor.

TABLE 9	
Season 1, chapter 2	
ORIGINAL VERSION	SPANISH SUBTITLES
Michael: […] Was there any emotion going on? No. Where was the heart? I didn't see any heart. ***Where was my Oprah moment?*** OK, get as much done as you can before lunch because, afterward, I'm going to have you all in tears.	Michael: […] ¿Ha habido algún tipo de emoción? ¡No! ¿Y los sentimientos? Yo no he visto ninguno. ***¿Dónde han estado "las lagrimitas"?*** Muy bien. Haced lo que podáis antes de comer porque, luego, voy a hacer que os emocionéis todos.

Table 9. Example of compensation.

On the other spectrum of possibilities, we find cases like the one in this fragment, where the term in the SL is too specific and local and cannot be easily transferred to the TL.

The television presenter Oprah Winfrey, despite having almost worldwide fame, her program is only broadcasted in the United States, so it is very easy that part of the Spanish audience does not understand the reference, which is key to understanding the scene. In this case, the translator has chosen to reinterpret the term, translating it literally and in a way in which it is explained what the metaphor means. In this way, the humor is maintained as faithfully as possible, and the audience using the Spanish subtitles will not notice any difference.

4.2.3 Dialects and accents

As it has been already said, those who occupy positions of power in terms of politics and economy, tend to speak the dialect of the «Establishment», associating the working class with accents and dialects with less social prestige.

Regarding humor, it is usual that xenophobia plays a role here. If there is any kind of enmity between countries, it will be used in an offensive and discreditable way to make humor out of it. It is no coincidence that all countries have a kind of "established" language for humorous situations, with a specific pattern that is always repeated and maintained.

Lippi-Green (2012: 46) in regard to the United States case, asserts that «when a native speaker of a language other than English learns English, the accent is used to refer to the breakthrough of native language phonology into the target language. Thus, we might say that an individual has a Welsh accent, or a Tagalog accent because the phonologies of those languages influence the learner's pronunciation of U.S. English, and any effort to block the L2 accent will be accomplished with differing degrees of success»

The first decision the translator has to make it through an exhaustive analysis of the specific purpose of the accents, that is, to understand why and for what those accents were elected and how does it affect the plot.

TABLE 10	
Season 1, chapter 2	
ORIGINAL VERSION	SPANISH SUBTITLES
Dwight: OK, do me. Something stereotypical so I can get it really quick. Pam: OK, I like your food. Dwight: ***Outback steakhouse. [Australian accent] I'm Australian, mate!***	Dwight: Dime algo. Algún tópico para que lo adivine rápido. Pam: vale, me gusta su comida. Dwight: ***Ah, La crêperie de París, ¡soy francés, mon cherie!***

Table 10. Example of adaptation.

In this example, the translator not only has to deal with the accent but also with the context of the dialogue. "Outback steakhouse" is a well-known restaurant chain, which has locations in the United States and Australia. The American audience will be able to understand that reference without any problem, but when switching to a Spanish audience, that cultural context is completely lost. Therefore, the translator has decided not to follow a literal translation and reinterpret the dialogue. Following European clichés, and with an easily recognizable accent, the Australian is transformed into French. In this way, the humor of the scene and the intention of the dialogue remain intact. The Spanish audience, hearing the original audio and seeing the context, might be able to understand the cultural

reference, but with these subtitles the job will be much easier and with more guarantees of success.

TABLE 11	
Season 1, chapter 2	
ORIGINAL VERSION	SPANISH SUBTITLES
Dwight: Um... ***Shalom. I'd like to apply for a loan.*** Pam: That's nice, Dwight.	Dwight: ***Shalom, vengo a pedirle un préstamo a Salomón.*** Pam: Qué bonito, Dwight.

Table 11. Example of adaptation.

In this example, we deal with the opposite case. Shalom' is a Hebrew term found in Judaism and Christianity. As these two religions are spread all over the world, it is possible to keep the accent and the cultural reference because there is a previous context that supports them in both English and Spanish audiences.

5 CONCLUSION

The process of translating is always a complex task, involving not only the text itself, but also the context of the text and its translation, and the knowledge of both the translator and the audience that will receive it.

The hypothesis that has been stated in section 3.1 dealt with these three aspects:

1. The main problem when translating humor appears when the text does not rely upon general knowledge.
2. Many cultural references will be lost in the process of translation.
3. The translator will reinterpret the SL in order to maintain the comic moments even if it implies a drastic change in the TL.

The first aspect has been proved to be true since the translator has to find possible alternatives to solve this problem. Among these alternatives, the most effective will always be to find the cultural equivalent in the country of origin, as in *Table 1*, or as close as possible if there is no equivalent, as in *Table 2*. When this is not possible, it is necessary to

analyze the importance of understanding that context in order to understand the mood of the scene to be translated. In *Table 7,* the context is key to understanding what is happening, and there is an equivalent in Spanish, while in *Table* 9, the context is also key but there is not an equivalent, so the context has to be reinterpreted and explained in order to adapt it to the TL. Although it is true that in these cases part of the information is lost, sometimes it is the only option. If the translator is sufficiently skilled, the humorous touch will prevail without altering too much the of text that will be translated.

As for the second aspect, the fact that information is lost during the translation process can make a difference in the text. As discussed previously, sometimes the translator can rely on the image to create a balance between the original information and the information that is lost. The problem with this strategy is that it can create too much dichotomy between what the viewer reads in the subtitles and what he/she sees in the image; that is, he/she may be receiving too much information on one channel and not enough on the other channel. Depending on the particular scene and text, and the audience's perception, this will either be problematic or a simple transition to the next scene.

As for the third aspect of the hypothesis, as it can be seen in *Table 9*, the priority of the translator will be always to maintain the comic moments even if it implies a drastic change. The vast majority of the aspects that rely on cultural references are characterized as being very specific and explicative. That means that changing them can produce modifications in the TL and the original intention of the text would be completely altered. Hence, knowing what the priority for the translator is, is a matter that has to be settled from the very beginning. If we, as a Spanish audience, want to enjoy an English audiovisual work that we know is a comedy, we expect to laugh. If there are local references that we do not understand, and the fact of not understanding them makes it impossible for us to laugh, the final purpose of that audiovisual work would have been violated.

To conclude this dissertation, the skills and tools at the translator's disposal are essential to do a good job. Translating cultural contexts is always a challenge, as there are cultures that differ greatly from one another. Humor is an added complication because have not only to

maintain the context, but that context is sometimes the key to understanding the humor. In spite of this, there are enough options to solve these issues successfully, so that the audience will enjoy your subtitling with pleasure. The key to making a good translation is to understand the original intention of that audiovisual work; if that intention is humorous, that is what has to prevail.

After having reached the previous conclusions, it is important to remark that in this dissertation appears only the most relevant examples of the first season of the TV series. Consequently, future research could be conducted by analyzing the rest of the seasons, and different conclusions can be drawn.

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