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Trabajo Fin de Grado

Traducción del inglés al español: estrategias traductológicas para la resolución de problemas de naturaleza cultural o lingüística

English-Spanish Translation: Strategies for Solving Translation Problems of a Cultural or Linguistic Nature

Author

Cristina Sala Fernández

Supervisor

Ignacio Guillén Galve

FACULTY OF ARTS
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ABSTRACT

This dissertation aims to analyse the translation of cultural and linguistic elements in the context of a sitcom. Specifically, it aims to provide solutions to some deficiencies that can be found in the original translation of the corpus of analysis. For this purpose, an analysis of the original translation was conducted, considering previous studies on the translation of cultural and linguistic elements. The analysis showed that some of the examples that were studied presented deficiencies that can be later improved if certain tools from the literature are used. The findings of the study are that certain theoretical aspects from the literature on the translation of cultural and linguistic elements can be applied to sitcoms and can be utilised to improve the final translation in many cases.

El objetivo de este Trabajo Fin de Grado es analizar la traducción de elementos culturales y lingüísticos en el contexto de las comedias de televisión. En particular, tiene como objetivo aportar soluciones a ciertas deficiencias encontradas en la traducción original del corpus. Para ello, se ha llevado a cabo un análisis de la traducción original, teniendo en cuenta estudios anteriores sobre la traducción de elementos culturales y lingüísticos. El análisis muestra que algunos de los ejemplos que se han estudiado presentan deficiencias que pueden mejorarse si se emplean algunas herramientas proporcionadas por la bibliografía. Las conclusiones extraídas de este estudio son que ciertos aspectos teóricos de la bibliografía en lo referente a la traducción de elementos lingüísticos y culturales pueden aplicarse a las comedias de televisión y pueden ser empleadas para mejorar en muchos casos la traducción final.

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1. INTRODUCTION

This dissertation aims to analyse the elements that contribute to the creation of humour in audiovisual texts and how these elements are translated from English into Spanish so as to maintain the humorous effect. For the purpose of this analysis, three main aspects will be considered regarding the creation of humour: cultural elements, wordplay and the visual element. This dissertation will focus on the translation of the TV series *Modern Family* and how the presence of these elements determines the creation of humorous situations and how this effect has been maintained or not in the translation. Taking into consideration the premises to maintain humour in translation that will be exposed in the first part of this paper, I will provide the reader with my own proposals for some of the examples extracted from the corpus. At the end of this dissertation, I expect to have been able to provide the reader with a clearer idea of how the process of creating humour in audiovisual texts works and how this humour can be maintained in order to achieve a successful translation.

2. CORPUS

For the purpose of the analysis of the translation of humour in audiovisual texts, the corpus that will be used is the TV series *Modern Family*. It is an American sitcom created by Christopher Lloyd and Steven Levitan that was released in 2009 and which currently has 10 seasons. It tells the story of a very peculiar family who lives in Los Angeles, whose members are very different, and all the hilarious situations in which they find themselves involved. This family includes Jay Pritchett, his wife Gloria, their son Joe, Gloria's son Manny, Jay's son Mitchell and his family (Cameron and Lily) and Jay's daughter Claire and her family (Phil, Haley, Alex and Luke).

The reason for the election of this corpus of analysis is that it is a very popular series which has achieved great success, not only in the country of origin but also on other countries where it has been aired. The main reason for the popularity of this sitcom is the fact that most of the scenes are highly humorous. The questions that are posed here and which have prompted the election of this corpus are the following: how is it possible that *Modern Family* is equally funny both in English and in its translated version in Spanish? and, consequently, what are the strategies that have been used for the translation that make it equally successful in the source culture but also in other cultures such as the Spanish culture?

Finally, the seasons from which the examples of the corpus have been extracted are seasons 6 and 7. The reason for the election of these seasons is that they do not belong to the first part of the series (when this sitcom was not yet as widely known as it is now), so the type of humour and the elements that are used to create it are well established and recognisable. During these seasons, *Modern Family* had already a characteristic humour and had achieved a good reputation in the international panorama of sitcoms.

3. AUDIOVISUAL TRANSLATION

As this dissertation will deal with the analysis of humour in a comedy series, the concept of audiovisual translation should first be introduced. Audiovisual translation is defined as the semiotic, interlinguistic and intralinguistic transfers among audiovisual texts (Chaume, 2013). Audiovisual translation deals with multimedia texts that are produced for TV, the Internet, etc. These texts are characterised by the fact that information is transmitted through more than one channel, specifically via two channels: acoustic and visual. The presence of multiple channels to transmit the message is what

makes this type of translation especially complex and the task of translating audiovisual texts especially laborious. According to Agost (1999: 15), this type of translation requires of the translator to have specific knowledge, not only of the content but also of the techniques and limitations that condition it. It has even been considered as the hardest type of translation, but that will be difficult to determine, since each type of translation requires different skills.

Nevertheless, something that can be confidently stated is that audiovisual translation is much more important nowadays than it was some decades ago, due to the high demand for audiovisual products. This increase in the demand has been partially caused by technological advances which, consequently, have led to the creation of many mediums for the broadcast of these texts (Internet, TV, cinema, etc) as well as many different genres. Audiovisual translation, thus, has to adapt to the wide variety of audiovisual texts that the audience is offered.

3.1 History of audiovisual translation

Duro (2001:196) provides the reader with a brief account of the history of translation of audiovisual texts. In this summary, Duro (2001) explains that the first Hollywood movies were exported to other countries in the original version (in English), however they changed this decision as producers started to become aware of the possibility of losing non-English speaking audience and, consequently, of losing money. This awareness, linked to the fact that many countries complained about the invasion of the English language, forced Hollywood producers to provide films with subtitles. These subtitles were only made in three languages: French, German and Spanish. Those countries that did not have any of these three languages as their first or second language were still provided with films in the original version. This decision, thus, marks the beginning of audiovisual translation.

This change in the languages used to export films is especially important in the case of Spanish audiovisual translation. The fact that Spanish was one of the few languages into which films were translated has resulted in a rapid evolution of translation in general and of audiovisual translation in particular. The positive results of this development can be seen in the quality that Spanish audiovisual translation has nowadays and, because of this high quality in translations, in how successful films and series such as *Modern Family* are both in the country of production and in foreign countries such as Spain.

3.2 Subtitling

Subtitling and dubbing are two of the most recent and well-known modalities of audiovisual translation. This method involves the addition of subtitles in the target language, while the film is shown in the original version (Agost, 1999:17). As it has been previously mentioned, when producers decided to translate films into other languages, the method that they decided to use was subtitling, probably because it was cheaper and quicker. It seems appropriate to state that subtitling was used before dubbing became common. Even though in Spain there is a preference towards dubbing, subtitling is still very common, especially nowadays as English has become such a prominent language.

Nevertheless, according to Duro (2001: 50-51), there are some genres in Spain that are usually subtitled or that are both subtitled and dubbed. Some of them are exclusively subtitled, such as films who are only projected in specialised cinemas, while others are subtitled and dubbed: films that are prestigious and which are released in the dubbed and subtitled versions at the same time. In addition, Duro (2001: 54) suggests that subtitling is nowadays mainly used in Spain as a technique for students to learn English, rather than an option to enjoy films, etc. Subtitling, compared to dubbing, is considered to be closer to the original version and the message is not as easy to manipulate as in

dubbing, which, as it will be explained in the following section, is the main reason why the second method is preferred.

As can be concluded from the use of subtitling and dubbing in Spain, the former, although it was the first to appear, has been surpassed by the latter, which is more frequently used in most of the genres that are produced nowadays.

3.3 Dubbing

Dubbing can be considered the most common method of audiovisual translation in Spain. Dubbing involves the substitution of the original audio by a soundtrack in the target language (Agost, 1999: 16). According to Duro (2001:54), the fact that dubbing is the dominant trend in audiovisual translation in the country is just a historical consequence. During the dictatorship in the 1940s, dubbing was declared the only translation method that could be used, since it was easier for the government to manipulate the content of these texts. When a text is dubbed, the audience cannot perceive any trace of the original message; this is the reason why this method was favoured over others such as subtitling, in which the audience can still hear what is said in the source text.

Nevertheless, this historical predominance of dubbing has resulted in a significant development of this modality and in a major improvement in the quality of translated audiovisual products. This is probably the reason why dubbing is still predominant in Spain. Since it is the most common form of consumption of audiovisual texts in the country, this dissertation will focus on the analysis of humour in *Modern Family*, using examples of how the series has been dubbed.

3.4 Humour in audiovisual translation

Humour is defined as all those elements belonging to human communication and that have the aim of making the audience laugh or smile (Duro, 2001: 255). In the case of translating humour in audiovisual texts, the translation should not only focus on the humoristic elements that appear but also in the conventions of audiovisual translation and the modality of it that will be used.

When translating a humoristic audiovisual text, Duro (2001: 256-257) explains that there are several factors that need to be considered. The first of these factors is the importance they have in the text depending on the relevance of humour in the type of genre being translated (comedy, romantic film, TV contests, etc). The second factor is the role that humour plays in that specific text: entertaining, propagandistic, didactic, critical purposes, etc. The last factor that need to be considered is that the translator needs to identify the type of humour, that is, the techniques that have been used to create humour in the source text in order to adapt it to the new context and language.

4. THE TRANSLATION OF CULTURAL ELEMENTS

Cultural elements play a crucial role in the creation of humour and, consequently, in the way this humour is kept in the translation. In this respect, it is important for the translator to have a vast knowledge of the language and cultural context of both source and target culture. As Díaz Cintas (2009:44) states: “A translator needs both a bilingual knowledge of the languages they work with but also certain degree of bi-culturalism. Paying attention to the cultural element in audiovisual texts is essential to produce a successful translation. The figure of the translator becomes that of a ‘mediator’”. This knowledge of source and target cultures is especially relevant in the translation of humour

since there is a very close relation between humour and context. Despite what is stated by Díaz Cintas (2009) about the need for translators to be bi-cultural, it is true that the translation will always be conditioned by the culture and language with which they access the source text (Mateo Martínez-Bartolomé, 1995: 176)

Cultural elements are one of the most difficult elements to translate. Nevertheless, in the case of audiovisual translation this difficulty is even greater. One of the main reasons for this is that these cultural elements are often linked to both visual and acoustic mediums. Another important reason is that humour which relies on cultural elements is closely linked to a certain culture that is based on values, systems and conventions different from those of the target culture.

4.1 The role of the context

The first thing that should be commented on regarding the role of the context is that, when dealing with the issue of context in translation, a distinction between two types of context should be made: **literary context**, that is, the tradition to which the text belongs, genre, possible previous versions and literary conventions in general; and the **social or cultural context**. Owing to the nature of the texts under analysis (a sitcom), only the cultural context will be considered.

Texts, including comedies as it is the case with the corpus that is analysed for this dissertation, do not rely only on linguistic aspects but also on cultural and contextual elements. Those elements that belong to this system are known as paralinguistic and they play a significant role in any artistic or literary production. When translators face new texts, they need to deal with both linguistic and paralinguistic elements. In many cases, these paralinguistic elements will be crucial in the creation of humour. This is due to the fact that humour is more closely related to context than to language itself, which is the

reason why a great knowledge of both target and source cultures is essential (Mateo Martínez-Bartolomé, 1995:170).

4.2 Extratextual references

One of the most useful devices to create humour is the use of extratextual references. These are described as all those references that do not belong to the text, but to external factors related to the context of the culture where the text has been produced. According to Mateo Martínez-Bartolomé (1995: 182-183), these extratextual references can be divided into three groups: socio-cultural, artistic and literary and historical and political references, which are also divided into subgroups.

In the case of socio-cultural references, Mateo Martínez Bartolomé (1995: 184) divides them into three main groups: references to places, to food and to customs. For the sake of the corpus of analysis only references to food will be studied:

References to food. Omission is the most frequently used strategy, followed by literal translation which, in some cases, results in the loss of the connotations that this food may have in the socio-cultural context of the source text. They can also be adapted to the context of the target culture when there are no visual references. An instance of this will be observed in example 3.4 of the analysis regarding the term “butternut squash”.

In the case of artistic and literary references, considering the corpus that will be analysed, the focus will be on specific references to artists and authors and how they are usually translated, according to the author:

References to artists. The main factor to consider when dealing with the translation of names of artists and authors is whether they are internationally or nationally known. In the case of internationally famous artists that are easily identifiable by the prototypical target audience, the tendency is to keep the original reference as it appears

on the source text. In the case of a reference to national artists, translators should decide whether to change it for a national reference from the target culture or to keep it as it was in the original with the resulting loss of the humoristic effect. An example of the translation of these references can be observed in examples 1.4 and 1.5 in the analysis.

Regarding historical references, these are some strategies that are suggested:

Historical references. These references are normally transferred to the target language without modifications in those cases when the translator considers that the target audience will be acquainted with these specific events. One of the possible strategies would be the omission of the historical reference in these cases in which it does not imply a drastic change in the text. The second strategy would be adaptation: the historical reference from the target text is substituted with a historical reference either belonging to the history of the target culture or that is widely popular among the target audience. An instance of historical references and their translation can be seen in example number 1.2 of the analysis with reference to the Irish Potato Famine.

4.3 Strategies for the translation of cultural elements

According to Peter Newmark (1988, 103), there are several strategies that can be useful when dealing with the translation of cultural elements:

Transference. This is the idea of transferring the term to the target text, keeping its original form.

Cultural equivalent. This is a strategy based on the substitution of a cultural term of the source text for a term that is related to the original element but more popular in the target culture.

Neutralisation. In the case of this strategy, the cultural term is substituted by a “functional equivalent” that is not culturally charged or by a “descriptive equivalent” that describes the object instead of describing its function.

Literal translation. This strategy is commonly known as “calque”.

Deletion/Omission. The term is removed in those cases when it is not necessary for the understanding of the target text.

5. THE VISUAL ELEMENT

One of the most important characteristics of audiovisual translation is the fact that, unlike more traditional modes of translation, information is sent to the audience via more than one channel: visual and aural. This can be regarded as a restriction in many cases, but it can also be an advantage for the translator (helping to understand the original version and to create the translated version). Nevertheless, the main problem relies on the fact that translators can only modify the aural channel but not the visual, which can make their tasks more arduous.

According to Martínez Tejerina (2012), the image in an audiovisual text determines temporal, spatial and semantic restrictions. The difficulty of translating terms that make explicit reference to objects that can be seen on the screen is not always the same: in those cases when the object of reference can be seen clearly by the audience this will determine the translator’s work to a greater extent than if the object can only be partially seen. According to Martínez Tejerina (2012), when the translator encounters a visual restriction, the humorous effect is lost in most cases. This is due to the fact that the translator modifies the message in order not to change or contradict what is seen on the screen, so that the target audience does not feel confused. In some cases, the audience is

not aware of this loss of humorous effect or, in other cases, this incongruence can create humour by itself (using a technique for humour creation different from the original). In the case of comedies such as *Modern Family*, it may be easier to achieve this humorous effect even when there is visual restriction, since the audience is predisposed to laugh and to find humour in every scene.

The main problem or restriction that audiovisual translation presents is that of visual synchronism: harmony between the movements of a character and the dubbing voice. In some cases, visual synchrony is prioritised over the content or form of the text (Martínez Sierra, 2009:142). Nevertheless, as Martínez Sierra (2009) states, it is important to distinguish visual synchrony and problems caused by the visual element as different issues, that is, that not all translation problems produced by the visual element are related to visual synchrony.

Martínez Sierra (2009) does something very innovative in this respect by stating that the visual element not only should not be regarded as problematic, but that, in most cases, it is an advantage for the translator. Sometimes, a funny image compensates for the lack of linguistic possibilities to translate a joke or reference. In other cases, absurd situations or behaviours that can be seen in the image accompanied by non-sensical or absurd comments resulting from the translation of the message can compensate as well for the lack of possibilities of doing a more appropriate translation.

As it can be inferred from both authors, the visual element is, in many cases, an essential component in the creation of humour in audiovisual texts. Nevertheless, it is still argued whether this element affects the job of the translator positively or in a negative way. In this respect, some examples where the visual element is used to help create humour will be analysed in section 7 of this paper.

6. THE TRANSLATION OF WORDPLAY

Wordplay is one of the most important elements in all types of translation, but it plays a crucial role in the creation of humour in audiovisual texts; hence it is very important for the translator to identify these wordplays and have a vast knowledge of both source and target language to do a successful translation.

Delabastita (1996: 128) defines wordplay as: “the general name for the various textual phenomena in which structural features of the language(s) used are exploited in order to bring about a communicatively significant confrontation of two (or more) linguistic structures with more or less similar forms and more or less different meanings. As in all definitions, this formula buys compactness and generality at the cost of elegance and transparency”. When reading this definition, we can conclude that wordplay, even though it is an effective element to obtain a humorous effect, will present several problems for the translator. One of the main difficulties of translating wordplay appears when the wordplay has a direct relation with what the audience sees on the screen. Due to the presence of the image, the translator must prioritise the nonverbal element and will focus on changing the verbal content. This is easier to do in dubbed texts, since the original soundtrack cannot be heard unlike in subtitled texts.

6.1 Classification of wordplay

Delabastita (2004) provides a classification of wordplay that relies on the linguistic phenomenon that appears. The first of these linguistic features is **phonological structure**, which is the case with example 3.4. The second feature mentioned by Delabastita (2004) is **lexical structure**, which is also subdivided into wordplay based on polysemy (as in example 3.1) and idioms (example 3.3). The last two linguistic features

are **morphological structure** and **syntactic structure**, which is the case with example 2.1.

In addition, there is an important factor that translators must consider when analysing and translating wordplays from one language to another, and that is the fact that depending on the language, one type of wordplay is easier to achieve than others. This means that, in many cases, the type of wordplay that is easier to achieve in the source language would not be so in the target language and that, therefore, the translator would need to translate a type of wordplay into another type that is easier to achieve in the target language. As an instance of this, English tends to have more wordplays based on phonological structure (especially homophony) whereas, in Spanish, it is much more common for wordplay to rely on lexical structure, more specifically on polysemy.

6.2 Strategies for the translation of wordplay

As stated above, the types of wordplay used are directly connected to the language from and into which the text is being translated. This is the reason why it is very important for the translator to have a wide range of techniques to use when dealing with wordplay. In this dissertation, the group of strategies that will be commented are those of Delabastita (2004). The author provides the following classification of translation techniques that can be used when translating wordplays or puns (as they are called by the author):

PUN → PUN: when a pun in the source language is translated as a pun in the target language, even if the resulting pun is of a different type or has variations of any kind.

PUN → NON-PUN: translating the pun as a non-punning sentence in which both meanings can be maintained, or choosing only one of them (even if that means losing humour).

PUN → RELATED RETHORICAL DEVICE: the original wordplay is substituted by a rhetorical device other than wordplay, such as alliteration, irony, metaphor, etc. Consequently, the wordplay is lost but the humorous effect can be maintained in the target language.

PUN → ZERO: the entire part that contains the wordplay is omitted by the translator.

PUN S.T = PUN T. T: in this technique the wordplay is not actually translated. The wordplay from the source language is reproduced in the target language as well as the environment in which the wordplay appeared in the original text.

7. ANALYSIS OF EXAMPLES

7.1. EXAMPLES OF TRANSLATION OF CULTURAL ELEMENTS

EXAMPLE 1.1

The following example belongs to season 6, episode 15. In this scene, Claire has been upgraded to the 1st class in a plane and, after thinking she was very lucky to be there, she realises that the woman sitting next to her is rude and racist. This is how the conversation of the woman on the phone has been translated:

| O.V | D.V |
|---|--|
| Woman: Listen to me, Julio. I want the gutters cleaned today, not <i>mañana</i> . If everyone thought my people were lazy, I would do whatever it took to not seem | Mujer: Escúchame, Julio. Quiero que limpies los canalones hoy, no mañana. Si alguien pensara que mi país es de vagos haría lo que fuera para no parecer una |

| | |
|---|---|
| <p>lazy. <i>Comprende?</i> Well, if I were you I'd put down the burrito and get up that ladder.</p> | <p>vaga. <i>¿Comprendes?</i> Pues yo que tú dejaría ese burrito y me subiría a la escalera.</p> |
|---|---|

In this case, the humoristic effect relies on the presence of cultural references, specifically on cultural stereotypes. In the original version, the audience can see that the woman is both rude and racist towards Latin-American people. This is key to understanding what happens afterwards in the episode and why Claire starts feeling uncomfortable and asks Phil to change seats. In the case of the dubbed version, the idea that is transmitted to the audience is that this woman is just rude by the way that she speaks to this man. The references to this man being Latin-American are no longer clearly visible, since only the name and the fact that he comes from a “country of lazy people” are maintained. The words that show that he speaks another language (in this case, Spanish) become invisible when translated into Spanish, since they belong to the target language.

One possible way to improve this translation in order to maintain the issue of racism would be to change the Spanish words of the original version to words that the target audience would easily identify as belonging to a Latin-American variety of Spanish. As there is a mention to the Mexican word “burrito”, it would be appropriate to identify the character as Mexican. A way of changing the word “mañana” to make it sound more Mexican could be “ahorita” and “today” would be translated as “ya” to create that sense of imminence and contrast with “ahorita”. “*¿Comprende?*” would be replaced by a Mexican word with a different meaning, but which will fit in this situation and will not change the meaning drastically: “*japúrate!*”. The reference to the burrito could be maintained, since both source and target audience relate it to Mexican gastronomy, and

the same could apply to the shared stereotype of Latin-American people being lazy. The resulting translation proposal would be:

| PROPOSAL |
|--|
| <p>Mujer: Escúchame, Julio. Quiero que limpes lo canalones ya, no <i>ahorita</i>. Si alguien pensara que mi país es de vagos haría lo que fuera para no parecer una vaga.</p> <p><i>¡Apúrate!</i> Yo que tú dejaría ese burrito y me subiría a la escalera.</p> |

EXAMPLE 1.2

In this example from season 6, episode 22, Cam, Mitchell and Lily are buying things for Lily's project and they are discussing the excessive amount of glitter that Cam tends to put in Lily's projects:

| O.V | D.V |
|---|---|
| <p>Cam: uh, glitter glue, glitter dots, glitter paper...</p> | <p>Cam: pegamento, pegatinas, todo con purpurina.</p> |
| <p>Lily: Mrs Daniels says my projects have too much glitter.</p> | <p>Lily: la señorita Daniels dice que mis trabajos tienen demasiada purpurina.</p> |
| <p>Cam: Okay, well, she needs a Mr Daniels, because a project can't have too much pizzazz.</p> | <p>Cam: Vale, pues necesita un señor Daniels porque ningún trabajo puede tener demasiado brillo.</p> |
| <p>Mitchell: It's a report of the Potato Famine.</p> | <p>Mitchel: es un trabajo sobre la escasez de patatas.</p> |
| <p>Cam: I'm sorry. Do Irish tears not sparkle?</p> | <p>Cam: perdona, ¿es que las lágrimas irlandesas no brillan?</p> |

In this case, there is a cultural reference to the Potato Famine (Great Famine) that happened in Ireland between 1845 and 1849. In the translation, “Potato Famine”, which is a term that refers to a specific historical event, has been translated as “escasez de patata”. The reference to Irish history has disappeared in the dubbed version, creating an incongruence with the following sentence in which Irish tears are mentioned (“lágrimas de los irlandeses”).

This may cause confusion in the audience, since they may not relate both sentences and, consequently, part of the humoristic effect is lost.

A possible solution to this would be to translate “Potato Famine” as “La hambruna en Irlanda” or “La gran hambruna irlandesa”. Both options have a similar number of syllables than the one that has been used in the dubbed version, so they would be suitable. In addition to this, in both options there is a reference to Ireland, so the audience (even if they are not familiar with this historical event) can relate both sentences and understand the humour of the scene more clearly.

PROPOSAL

Cam: pegamento, pegatinas, todo con purpurina.

Lily: la señorita Daniels dice que mis trabajos tienen demasiada purpurina.

Cam: Vale, pues necesita un señor Daniels porque ningún trabajo puede tener demasiado brillo.

Mitchel: es un trabajo sobre la hambruna en Irlanda.

Cam: perdona, ¿es que las lágrimas irlandesas no brillan?

EXAMPLE 1.3

In this episode from season 6, episode 14, Jay is laughing at Manny because, as he is alone on Valentine's Day, he has decided to spend the day watching some cartoons.

| O.V | D.V |
|--|--|
| Jay: You're spending Valentine's Day in a <i>Cathy</i> Cartoon. | Jay: Vas a pasar un San Valentín de dibujos animados. |

In this example, there is an extratextual cultural reference that has two objectives: create humour and make the audience aware of the kind of character Manny is. *Cathy* is an American comic strip that deals with the problems in the life of a woman and how he deals with love, food, life and work in a very humorous way. In Spanish, the translator has decided to use the technique of neutralisation and says “dibujos animados”, which would be the equivalent of cartoon, without referring to any specific cartoon. This information that is lost in the translation is essential to understand the character: the fact that he wants to spend Valentine's Day with this cartoon that deals with the problems in the life of a woman shows that he is not a conventional teenage boy, but a more sensitive and emotional one.

In order to maintain this information about the character, the phrase “de dibujos animados” could be changed for “de telenovela”, which is a genre that is known in the target culture and that is typically associated with romance, feelings and which, as *Cathy*, is associated with a female audience.

| PROPOSAL |
|--|
| Jay: Vas a pasar un San Valentín de telenovela |

EXAMPLE 1.4

In this example from season 7, episode 2, Phil is desperately trying to sell a house in order to impress his son Luke. The only problem is that this house is awkwardly distributed and very unpractical. In this scene, Phil is showing one of the bathrooms, which is tiny:

| O.V | D.V |
|---|---|
| Phil: It's like being on a submarine, right? You guys, uh, fans of Tom Clancy? | Phil: Es como estar en un submarino, ¿verdad? ¿Son ustedes fans de Tom Clancy? |

The humorous effect here, apart from the fact that Phil is desperately trying to sell the house, relies on the reference to submarines and the cultural reference to Tom Clancy, an American writer who wrote about spying techniques in the Cold War. This would be a literary reference that, in this case, has been maintained in the target text as it was in the source text. Nevertheless, Tom Clancy is not a literary figure that is widely known in the target culture, as well as his relation to submarines. In this case, maintaining the original reference may be odd for the audience.

A possible solution would be to replace the original cultural reference by another reference that is known by the target culture and that is coherent with the allusion to submarines. Replacing “Tom Clancy” for “los Beatles” (alluding to their song *Yellow Submarine*) could be a good option. In this case, a literary reference would be replaced by an artistic reference that is much more known in the target culture. The result would be:

PROPOSAL

Phil: Es como estar en un submarino, ¿verdad? ¿Son ustedes fans de los Beatles?

EXAMPLE 1.5

In this example from season 6, episode 23, Cam is telling Mitchel that he is going to get rid of his socks. Here, the humorous effect relies on the fact that Mitchel knows that it is a big deal for Cam and compares it to a famous couple who split up:

| O.V | D.V |
|---|---|
| Cam: That's it. I'm doing it. I'm throwing out all my socks and starting over. | Cam: decidido. Voy a hacerlo. Voy a tirar todos mis calcetines para empezar de cero. |
| Mitchel: and they say Tina was brave for leaving Ike | Mitchel: Y dicen que Tina fue valiente por dejar a Ike. |

In this case, the cultural reference is an artistic reference that has been maintained in the target text. Nevertheless, the target audience may not know that they are referring to Tina Turner and her relationship with Ike Turner. The audience of the target text may not be aware of the breakup of this couple or they may not even know them. A possible solution for this would be to replace their names for those of a better-known couple who also broke up, such as Angelina Jolie and Brad Pitt. This couple is well-known in the target culture and its presence will help maintain the humorous effect of the comparison to Cam and his socks. The result of this change would be:

PROPOSAL

Cam: decidido. Voy a hacerlo. Voy a tirar todos mis calcetines para empezar de cero.

Mitchel: Y dicen que Angelina fue valiente por dejar a Brad.

7.2. EXAMPLES OF TRANSLATION OF WORDPLAY

EXAMPLE 2.1

In season 7, episode 2, Cam and Mitchell are renting the upper floor of his house to a French couple, but Mitchell is very stressed out because of Cam's behaviour. In this scene, Cam wants to make sure that Mitchell has prepared the breakfast for the couple, but there is a very funny misunderstanding between them:

| O.V | D.V. |
|---|---|
| <p>Cam: did you make the French toast?</p> <p>Mitchell: Yes, it's right on the counter.</p> <p>Cam: That's French toast.</p> <p>Mitchell: What's happening?</p> <p>Cam: I wanted regular toast for the French people.</p> <p>Mitchell: Surely there was a better way to describe that.</p> <p>Cam: he is allergic to eggs, Mitchell.</p> | <p>Cam: ¿has preparado las tostadas francesas?</p> <p>Mitchell: están en la encimera.</p> <p>Cam: Eso son tostadas francesas.</p> <p>Mitchell: ¿Y qué problema hay?</p> <p>Cam: las quería normales para la pareja francesa.</p> <p>Mitchell: ¿Y no había mejor manera de describir eso?</p> <p>Cam: Tiene alergia a los huevos, Mitchell.</p> |

This is a clear example of a humorous situation created by wordplay, in this case a wordplay that relies on syntactic structure. The phrase “did you make the French toast?” can mean both “did you make the toast for the French couple?” or “did you make the French toast?” (referring to a specific kind of toast). In the case of the dubbed version, this wordplay has disappeared, since “tostadas francesas” can only refer to the specific type of toast that Mitchell has prepared. This will be an example of PUN → NON-PUN, as only one of the two meanings in English has been expressed in Spanish.

A possible solution to achieve a better translation would be to apply a PUN → PUN strategy. The proposal for this would include the use of the expression “a la francesa”, since it can mean both “a toast for the French woman” (which would be appropriate since the man is allergic to eggs but not the woman) and “a toast made in the French style” (that is, a specific type of toast). Using this technique, both meanings are maintained, and the humorous effect is achieved as well. In this case, the syntactic nature of the wordplay is also translated as a wordplay relying on syntactic structure in the target language. The result of the proposal would be:

PROPOSAL

Cam: ¿has preparado las tostadas a la francesa?

Mitchell: están en la encimera.

Cam: Esos son tostadas francesas.

Mitchell: ¿Y qué problema hay?

Cam: quería tostadas normales para la mujer francesa

Mitchell: ¿Y no había mejor manera de describir eso?

Cam: El marido tiene alergia a los huevos, Mitchell.

7.3. EXAMPLES OF TRANSLATION OF WORDPLAY WITH VISUAL ELEMENT

EXAMPLE 3.1

The first example has been extracted from season 6, episode 15. In this moment, Phil Dunphy is talking about how disappointed he was with his wife taking a 1st class upgrade in the plane and leaving him in the tourist class. He, then, realises that his experience in the tourist class is not going to be as horrible as expected, when he is hit by a piece of luggage. At that moment when he is hit, he says:

| O.V (Original version) | D.V (Dubbed version) | S.V (Subtitled version) |
|--------------------------|--|-------------------------|
| Phil: and then it hit me | Phil: y entonces me entró en la cabeza | Phil: y entonces caí |

In this case, there are two factors that the translator needs to consider: the presence of the visual element, which is directly related to the message, and a wordplay (based on lexical structure) that relies on the polysemic nature of the verb “hit” meaning both being hit by something (physical) and “being hit” meaning realising something (metaphorical). In this case, both translations have maintained the idea of realising something with the expressions “entrar en la cabeza” and “caer (en algo)”. In the case of the dubbed version, there is not any allusion to being hit by something in the physical sense, so the relation between the visual element and the message disappears. In the subtitled version, this relation with the visual element is maintained by the use of a different verb from “hit”, which is “caer” (to fall), meaning both falling and realising. This last translation could be considered then the most appropriate one since the original relation between the image and the wordplay has been kept.

A possible solution for the dubbed translation would be something like: “ahí me golpeó la realidad”, which in terms of adjusting the time of the intervention would fit, as it has a similar number of syllables. In this proposal of translation, there is the verb “golpear” which literally means “hit”, but also the expression “golpe de realidad”, which means realising something. The resulting translation would be:

| PROPOSAL |
|--|
| Phil: Y ahí me golpeó la realidad |

EXAMPLE 3.2

In this scene from season 6, episode 21, Jay and Phil are rebuilding a small castle for Joe to play. They are in a rush because they have destroyed the castle on their way home and need to rebuild it very quickly so that nobody knows what happened.

| O.V | D.V |
|--|--|
| <p>Jay: Let's pick up the pace. Window looks good. Let's raise the roof.</p> <p>Phil: I don't think it's time to celebrate, Jay. We haven't even put on the roo... oh.</p> | <p>Jay: Date prisa. La ventana está bien. Vamos con el tejado.</p> <p>Phil: yo no lo celebraría todavía Jay, no hemos puesto el teja...oh.</p> |

In this example, the two main elements that play a role in the creation of humour are wordplay and the visual element. When Phil is finishing his last sentence there is a shot that shows exclusively the roof of the castle, making the audience establish a connection between what is being shown and what the characters are saying. This visual element is linked to the wordplay (based on lexical structure) which relies on the idiom

“to raise the roof” which can literally mean to put a roof to cover the castle or to celebrate. In Spanish, though, there is no expression related to roofs that can be used in this context to maintain the same wordplay. In the case of the dubbed version, the translator has used Delabastita’s strategy of PUN → NON-PUN. Nevertheless, the removal of this wordplay may cause the audience to feel puzzled, since the expression of celebrating is kept in the translated version and it has no apparent relation to anything said before.

One possible solution would be to use other type of wordplay that can be achieved easily in Spanish, that is, to use Delabastita’s PUN → PUN strategy. In this case, the translation could be based on phonological structure and use the similar pronunciations of “tejado” and “dejado” to create a wordplay that could cause this misunderstanding between Phil and Jay. This way, the visual element would still have a connection to what is being said, but the puzzling presence of the expression “yo no lo celebraría todavía” would disappear.

PROPOSAL

Jay: Date prisa. La ventana está bien. ¿A por el tejado?

Phil: ¿que como lo hemos dejado? Yo creo que bien, pero, Jay, aún falta el teja... oh.

EXAMPLE 3.3

In this example from season 7, episode 2, Jay is telling Gloria that they will have to go and watch Lily play football, which they all hate to do. Jay is excusing himself by saying that he had no other option:

| O.V | D.V |
|---|---|
| <p>Jay: I ran into Cam at the market. He asked me if we could go. I panicked. I shot myself in the foot.</p> <p>Gloria: oh, yeah, you shot yourself on your foot, you put your foot in your mouth, you put the shoe in the wrong foot. What is with you Americans and the foot? I hate that painting, by the way.</p> | <p>Jay: Me encontré con ella en el mercado, me pidió que fuéramos y me bloqueé. Me he pegado un tiro en el pie.</p> <p>Gloria: sí, te metes un tiro en el pie, te metes un pie en la boca, te levantas con mal pie. ¿Por qué hay tantas expresiones con pie? Odio ese cuadro, por cierto.</p> |

The humour in this example relies on wordplay (based on semantic structure) on idioms and, in the last part of the dialogue, on the visual element. Jay uses the expression “shot oneself in the foot” which figuratively means to damage yourself through foolish words or actions. Afterwards, Gloria starts enumerating idioms that contain the word foot and, finally, points at a drawing of a foot that is on a wall. The problem here relies on the fact that there are no equivalent expressions in Spanish containing the word “pie” (“foot”). This is especially problematic in the case of the first expression, since, later in the episode, Gloria will shoot Jay in the foot to avoid going to Lily’s match (that is, the literal meaning of the idiom will appear). In this case, the translator of the dubbed version has decided to do a literal translation of the expression, which will help connect this with the later events of the episode, but which makes no sense in this conversation, as the figurative meaning of the idiom is lost. The same happens with the following expressions uttered by Gloria, except for the last one, which is a real idiom in Spanish. This decision of using a direct translation would correspond to Delabastita’s PUN → NON-PUN, in

which only the literal sense of the wordplay has been maintained, with the consequent loss of humour.

A possible solution for this would be to replace the wordplay for a sentence including the word “foot” but which would maintain both meanings of the original idioms such as “hubiera preferido un tiro en el pie”, in which the wordplay is lost but the humorous effect is not. This is what Delabastita calls PUN → RELATED RHETORICAL DEVICE. Even though in this case there is no clear rhetorical device, the strategy is the same: replacing the wordplay by other element so as to maintain the humour even when the wordplay is lost. This will be a good option since it helps maintain the humour in this scene but will also be connected to the following events in the episode and with the visual element that appears (the drawing). The other expressions with foot could also be translated with the strategy of PUN S.T → PUN T.T. Using this technique, the expression would be replaced by expression in Spanish that would be appropriate in this context (that is, containing “pie”). The translation proposal would be the following:

| PROPOSAL |
|--|
| <p>Jay: Me encontré con ella en el mercado, me pidió que fuéramos y me bloqueé.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Hubiera preferido un tiro en el pie.</p> |
| <p>Gloria: sí, te metes un tiro en el pie, sales por pies, te levantas con mal pie. ¿Por qué hay tantas expresiones con pie? Odio ese cuadro, por cierto.</p> |

EXAMPLE 3.4

This example has been extracted from season 6, episode 15. In this episode, Manny is recalling an incident he had with another boy during a cooking class, which is

the reason why he does not want to come back to these classes. In this scene, after the following dialogue, Manny is hit in the testicles by this boy called Gideon:

| O.V | D.V |
|--|--|
| <p>Gideon: I don't know why you're smiling. Your fennel's burnt whereas I made a perfect butternut squash.</p> <p>Manny: That's just butter.</p> <p>Gideon: Oh, yeah I totally forgot the nut squash!</p> | <p>Gideon: No sé por qué sonrías. Se te ha quemado y yo he hecho una maravilla de huevos rotos con mantequilla.</p> <p>Manny: Solo es mantequilla.</p> <p>Gideon: Ah sí, se me olvidaban...;los huevos rotos!</p> |

The humoristic effect in this scene relies both on the visual element and on a wordplay with the word “butternut squash”. In this example, the wordplay is related to what is seen in the image, so in order to maintain the humoristic effect and the congruence of the scene, this relation should be present in the dubbed version as well. The wordplay is based on phonology, since the name of this vegetable, when split in a different way, can mean a completely different thing. Once the “butter” part is mentioned, the “nut squash” part can mean hitting someone in the testicles, which is what the spectator can see in the image. As it has been mentioned before, puns based on phonology are very difficult to translate, since they very rarely have a direct equivalent in the target language. The solution to this problem has been to find an equivalent in Spanish that means the same (“hitting someone's testicles”) and that contains names of food. The result is “huevos rotos”, which is a very typical dish in Spain but can also be literally translated as “broken testicles”. In this case, the technique of PUN → PUN has been applied, even though the resulting wordplay is from a different nature, in this case, instead of being based on phonology + polysemy, is based exclusively on polysemy.

This could be considered the perfect solution for this specific situation, as the humorous effect has been maintained using the same elements: a pun and the support of the visual element. In addition to this, it could be stated that the translation problem related to culture that is caused by the presence of the food terms “butternut squash” (a vegetable that is not very common in Spain) and “fennel” (which is not either a very common vegetable in Spain) has been successfully solved by omission in the case of “fennel” and by adaptation in the case of the “butternut squash”.

CONLUSION

To put an end to this dissertation, it could be stated that *Modern Family* is a perfect example of how three main strategies are used for the creation of humour: cultural references, wordplay and the visual element. In the case of the latter, it can be concluded that is the most restraining of the three (as it cannot be translated) but it is also essential to consider it when translating the other two. As it has been shown, the translator must have a vast knowledge of the source and target language (especially in the case of wordplay) but also of source and target culture to be able to produce a successful translation in terms of cultural references. Finally, has it can be concluded from the analysis of examples from *Modern Family*, this TV series complies with the techniques that many authors have considered useful for the translation of humour but, at the same time, it has been proved by means of the proposals that more than one strategy can solve the same translation problem without losing the humour.

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