

Audiovisual translation of humor: los Simpson latinos

La traducción audiovisual del humor: los Simpson latinos

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ABSTRACT

The audiovisual translation of humor is challenging due to factors such as translatability, the cultural aspects of humor, and timing. However, the Latin American audiovisual translation of the animated TV show *The Simpsons* is an excellent example of how to translate humor accurately and effectively from an audiovisual product. This paper analyses the translation decisions that were made in the process of translating and dubbing *The Simpsons*, with the purpose of helping translators who would like to accept the challenge of translating a humorous show, and to serve as inspiration for future research about *The Simpsons*' Latin American dubbing. To achieve this, three different episodes of the show were analyzed: "Treehouse of Horror VII (The Thing and I)", "Lisa the Vegetarian", and "Springfield Files". After the analysis, it was concluded that the most used translation techniques were Oblique Translation Techni-

ques, such as adaptation, modulation, and transposition. These translation decisions accompanied by the masterful dubbing by voice actor Humberto Velez contributed to the massive success of The Simpsons in Latin America, and their immortalization into Latin pop culture.

Keywords:

Audiovisual translation, humor, The Simpsons, dubbing, translation techniques, transposition.

RESUMEN

La traducción audiovisual del humor es retadora, debido a factores como la traducibilidad, los aspectos culturales del humor, y el tiempo que se maneja. Sin embargo, la traducción audiovisual latinoamericana del show animado de TV Los Simpson es un excelente ejemplo de cómo traducir el humor de un producto audiovisual de manera adecuada. Este ensayo analiza las decisiones que fueron tomadas en el proceso de la traducción y doblaje de Los Simpson, con el propósito de ayudar a los traductores que acepten el reto de traducir un show humorístico, y así servir de inspiración para futuras investigaciones sobre el doblaje latinoamericano de Los Simpson. Para esta investigación, tres episodios fueron analizados: “La casita del terror VII”, “Lisa la Vegetariana” y “Springfield Files”. Luego del análisis se concluyó que las técnicas de traducción más utilizadas fueron técnicas de traducción oblicuas, como adaptación, modulación y transposición. Estas decisiones de traducción, acompañadas del doblaje magistral del actor de doblaje Humberto Vélez, contribuyeron al éxito masivo de Los Simpson en Latinoamérica, y su immortalización en la cultura popular.

Palabras clave:

Traducción audiovisual, humor, Los Simpson, doblaje, técnicas de traducción, transposición, modulación, adaptación.

INTRODUCCIÓN

The Simpsons is a remarkable example of audiovisual translation and of the translation of humor. This research paper will analyze the translation of humor in the dialogues of three episodes of this animated TV show, and their respective translations into Latin American Spanish from the English source language. The Spanish dubbing was done in Mexico, the country with the biggest audiovisual translation industry in Latin America. The purpose of this research is to analyze the elements of the Latin American translation of this TV show, as well as the obstacles and challenges of translatability of humor into a target culture. There is little research about the Latin American Spanish translation of The Simpsons that focuses on the translation of humor, therefore it is important for those who are facing the challenges of the audiovisual translation of humor to get familiarized with the translation decisions that resulted in a successful translation such as this one.

The translation of humor can be quite difficult, especially when it is an audiovisual translation. Not only must the translator find equivalence in the target culture for the jokes, expressions, and songs, but they must also consider other factors such as synchronicity and timing. Hence, this paper intends to offer an analysis that will open the door to more research regarding the audiovisual translation of humor through previous works of translation that have succeeded and left an impact in a target culture. This is relevant because in a globalized world, where most television and film are consumed through streaming platforms such as Netflix or Hulu, there is an increasing market of audiovisual products that require a translation in the form of dubbing or subtitling to several languages. In addition, the quality of the humoristic translation will represent the success or the failure of a show or film

in a foreign culture. In other words, there is a commercial component to the quality of the translation, and translators need to be aware of the impact their final product might have commercially.

The Simpsons is an American animated television show created by Matt Groening. It was broadcasted for the first time in 1989 and it is still airing today. The show has gained a cult following throughout the years, due to its satirical portrayal of the American family. The family members are Homer, Marge, Lisa, Bart, and Maggie Simpson. Homer is the father in the family, he is very dumb, lazy, and an alcoholic who deeply loves his wife Marge and his kids, although he does not make the best parental decisions. Somehow, he is also an adorable character, and he is arguably the funniest character in the show, due to the comedic situations that arise from his ignorance. Marge is the mother in the family. She is a submissive homemaker who is usually the voice of reason that tries to dissuade Homer to making impulsive decisions, but she ultimately accepts Homer and supports him no matter what. She is a great mother, very polite and kind to everyone.

However, sometimes she struggles to find her purpose and she wishes she had been able to achieve her artistic dreams. Bart is the eldest son. He is mischievous, and he is always defying authority. He does not do well at school, and he is always getting into trouble. He is constantly trying to find ways to annoy his sister Lisa, even though he is also protective of her. Lisa is the middle child. She is extremely smart and musically gifted. She is very compassionate towards animals, and she is usually quite rational. She is also desperate for attention and recognition, and she is judgmental of her family and the people around her. Maggie is the youngest child. She is a baby who cannot talk or walk, yet she is very smart, and she is Marge's favorite child. The portrayal of this American

family is very different from the typical Latin American family in that the American family communicates differently and has different habits and customs. For example, Americans (and *The Simpsons*) have dinner at the dinner table every night, as a family. This is not always for true for Latin American families, since they usually have their bigger meal at lunch and not dinner. Usually, dinner is a small meal that is not necessarily consumed as a family at the dinner table. They could, but it does not have the same relevance and ritualistic nature, as in American culture. Furthermore, even though *The Simpsons* are sometimes dramatic, they are not as loud and extravagant as Latino families usually are. They are also not very close to their other relatives. In fact, Homer avoids seeing his father and he put him in a retirement home. This is very typical of American culture, whereas in Latin America most people prefer to take care of their elder parents and they are usually very close to their family members, to the point that there could be a household where grandparents, uncles, aunts, cousins, and other members live, aside from the core family members. There are many other cultural differences, but the point is it is amazing that Latino audiences were able to relate to the show at a deep level despite of them.

The show has been translated into more than 50 languages. The first languages that they were translated into Arabic, then into Catalan, Dutch, Flemish, French, German, Portuguese, Spanish and Latin American Spanish, among others. It aired for the first time in Latin America in 1993, with Procineas SCL in charge of dubbing; subsequently, Audiomaster 3000 was assigned to take over the dubbing. Initially, and for several years, the version of *The Simpsons* broadcasted for Latin America was a Mexican adaptation, with cultural references from this country, but including idioms and references from other Latin American countries. Later, the show underwent a series

of changes in terms of direction and the dubbing actors' voices.

The massive success of the first 15 seasons of *The Simpsons* [Los Simpson], was due to not only its masterful translation, but also its marvelous dubbing actor, Humberto Velez. This Mexican dubbing actor and coach gave shape to a whole new personification of the character of Homer Simpson, into the hilarious, ridiculous, ignorant, innocent, and at times arrogant, Homero Simpson. It is no coincidence that the audience widely prefers the seasons where Velez was the voice actor. However, Velez was fired from the show after a dispute between the company Grabaciones y Doblajes Internacionales and the Mexican actor's union (ANDA). Velez was later replaced by dubbing actor Otto Balbuena. However, Velez was hired again to perform as Homero in season 32 of the show. (simpsons.fandom.com)

A very interesting aspect of the show is that back when it first was broadcasted in other parts of the world, the world was a different place back then, since this was pre-globalization. Streaming services did not exist back then; therefore, it was very innovating to have this animated cultural product that made fun of the American culture. It was groundbreaking, not only in terms of television, but also in terms of translation. At the time, technology was not as advanced as it is today, which made the translation process a more difficult and challenging job. This makes *The Simpsons* audiovisual translators some true pioneers in the field.

The episodes that will be analyzed belong to the golden age of the show. These are: "Treehouse of Horror VII (The Thing and I)," which is the first episode of season eighth. "Lisa the Vegetarian," which is the fifth episode of season seventh. Lastly, the episode "Springfield Files," which is the tenth episode of eighth season.

The first episode to be analyzed is “Treehouse of Horror VII (The Thing and I),” a Halloween episode where Bart finds out he has an evil twin brother that was chained in the attic and kept as a secret for years. Pertinent areas of analysis include the dialogues in English and Spanish, the techniques used, and possible reasons for specific translation decisions.

An interesting moment in this episode when Homer says at minute 1:40: “I work my butt off to feed you four kids.” It is translated as: “Trabajo como burro para los cuatro.” In English, the literal translation would be “I work like a donkey for the four of you.” This is an example of the translation technique of modulation. This technique is defined by Hardin and Picot as “a change in point of view that allows us to express the same phenomenon in a different way” (21). It is not quite the same expression to say, “I work my butt off” as to say “I work like a donkey,” but they both have essentially the same meaning, considering that “working like a donkey” means to work very hard; therefore, there is a change in point of view, and Homer and Homero are saying the same thing in a different way. The translation also features the component of exaggeration, which is very common in Latin American Spanish. When someone uses an exaggerated expression in Latin America, there is usually a reference to animals and their qualities, in this case a donkey, as a reference to how hardworking they are. The origin of this expression is unknown, but the Spanish language is known to contain several expressions that use the animal- human metaphor, and it is believed to originate in the times of the Pre- Hispanic Indians:

“[They] held a conception of the human-animal relationship that was different from that of their European conquerors. Aztecs and other groups believed that humans had an intimate relationship with animals, and they

presented their gods in animal form, while the Spanish at the time of the conquest were Christians who held a sharper human-animal dichotomy and believed that God created humans in his image.” (Taggart 280).

Another interesting moment comes at minute 1:05 when Homer sings “fish heads fish heads, too doo doo doo,” while he picks up a bucket of fish heads to feed Bart’s evil twin, Hugo. However, its translation is not a song, but the exclamation: “¡Cabecitas de pescado! Doo doo doo doo doo doo too.” The translators chose to keep the essential lyrics of the song, which is the phrase fish heads, but the song is a little different, because there is an exclamation of “cabecitas de pescado” and then the “doo doo doo doo doo too” that Homer sings on his way up to the attic. This is an example of adaptation.

“Adaptation is in fact the least literal or the freest type of translation. It abandons the strict linguistic aspect of translation and rather concerns itself with the cultural one, though it inevitably is concerned with the linguistics also. Adaptation is one of the most appropriate and effective modes of expression when a re-creation is needed to convey the same effect attached to a word to another culture where a same word is missing. Adaptation is usually employed to convey the equivalent in socio-cultural terms.” (Asadzadeh & Steiert, 56)

They may have done this for comedic reasons, or because the dubbing might have affected the timing and synchronicity. Regarding this topic, Cohen explains:

“The translation should match (as much as possible) the visual input in timing (judged by onscreen activity, editing cuts and lip movement) and intonation (judged by body language, expressions, lip movement and general atmosphere). A conflict at this point detracts from the viewing experience and draws the audience’s attention to the

mismatch” (2).

Still, it is quite interesting that they chose to modulate this phrase when it is not particularly comedic, and they had the chance to translate it into a funny phrase, and yet, Homer’s voice and tone compensate and fulfill the comedic aspect even when it is not a particularly comedic line. Thanks to the dubbing actor Humberto Vélez, Homer was portrayed as a funnier and perhaps, a dumber character, due to his voice and intonation.

Another interesting moment in this episode is when Doctor Hibbert says at minute 3:53: “And hillbillies prefer ‘sons of the soil.’ But it ain’t gonna happen.” The translation in the Spanish dubbing is: “Y los patanes prefieren llamarse hijos de la tierra, pero nadie hace caso.” This is also a case of modulation, because “it ain’t gonna happen” does not have the same meaning as “nadie hace caso” which means that “nobody pays attention to them;” it tries to convey the same meaning but changing the register from informal to formal and changing the idiomatic quality of the segment. As for the expression “sons of the soil,” there are several aspects to this concept that have a historical and cultural referent:

“Sons of Soil Doctrine underlies the view that a state specifically belongs to the main linguistic group inhabiting it or that the state constitutes the exclusive ‘homeland’ of its main language speakers who are the ‘sons of the soil’ or the ‘local residents.’ All others who live there or are settled there and whose mother tongue is not the state’s main language are declared ‘outsiders.’ These outsiders might have lived in the state for a long time, or have migrated there more recently, but they are not regarded as the ‘sons of the soil’” (iasscore.in).

The joke is supposed to be a sociopolitical one, that refers to the hillbillies as sons of the soil, since it is widely believed that people who fit the characteristics of a hillbilly, usually live

in rural and remote areas of the United States, tend to have racist, nationalist, and anti-immigration ideas; however, there is no equivalent in Spanish that encapsulates the overall meaning of this concept. This is probably why the translators chose to translate it as “patanes,” which is not necessarily a hillbilly but a rude or uneducated person. It is close enough in meaning, but it lacks the nationalist or racial component of it. The concept of sons of the soil is believed to be originated or at least popularized by a novel, and subsequently a movie, *Sons of the Soil*, by Gunnar Gunnarson. The novel was later adapted into film under the direction of Gunnar Sommerfeldt in Iceland in 1919 (themoviedb.org).

Later, Dr Hibbert says about Hugo, at minute 4:36: “Poor Hugo, too crazy for ‘Boys Town,’ too much of a boy for crazy town.” Translated as: “Pero ¿qué hacer con el pobre Hugo? Era demasiado loco para un hogar y demasiado normal para un manicomio. This line has a double meaning, because “too crazy for Boys Town” is a reference to the organization that offers support to children with difficulties and their families. While “too much of a boy for crazy town” could be a reference to putting him in a mental facility, although it is not totally clear. However, the translation does refer to him being too crazy for a home and too normal for a mental institution, which could be an adaptation, because there is no mention of ‘Boys Town,’ since this is a cultural reference that was omitted, and it might not mean anything to Latin American audiences.

In another segment of the episode, at minute 5:06, Homer says to Bart: “Bart, you stay home and tape the hockey game.” The Latin American translation changes it to: “Bart, tú te quedas a grabar el fut” [Bart, you stay and tape the soccer match]. This translation decision seems more appropriate for the target culture since soccer or “fútbol” is the most popular sport in Latin America. This is an example

of adaptation. Furthermore, the decision to abbreviate “fútbol” and just say “fut”, could be due to synchronicity. It is interesting how the translators decided to adapt the sport, because Hockey may be known in Latin America, but it does not have a fraction of the significance it carries in the English speaking world, so it may have also been a matter of using a sport that a Latin American viewer would consider important enough to tape, and that is comparable in popularity in the Latin American context, perhaps even more popular. Thus, the translators decided to appeal to the Latin American audience in every way possible, including their emotions, because soccer is a sport that causes so much animosity and inspires so much passion and devotion in the Latino community. Hence, using this term can bring the audience closer and connect at a deeper level to the show, which is key to the success of an audiovisual product.

The second episode for analysis is “Lisa the Vegetarian,” an episode where Lisa decides to become a vegetarian after visiting a farm, which leads to all kinds of comedic situations. This episode has several interesting elements. When the family sees the Big Bad Wolf at the farm trying to knock down the pigs’ house in a very slow and boring way at time stamp 1:20, Bart says: “what a load of crappy crap.” In the Spanish version he says: “Qué montón de basura infantil.” Then, he says about the wolf: “He blows alright, he blows big time.” It is translated as: “Ay sí, es un gran soplador.” On the first sentence, there is a change in the tone because “basura infantil” [childish crap] is not the same as “crappy crap” which sounds in fact, more like an expression a child would use. “Basura infantil” sounds more like something an adult would say. Either way, it is one of those lines that make Bart a sarcastic and mischievous character, it is also curious that the translation makes Bart sound older, and his sarcasm more sophisticated than that of a child, but it seems like the translators could

not find an expression equivalent to “crappy crap,” and that just shows how the translation of humor can be incredibly challenging in terms of finding the right equivalent for a given expression.

Later, at time stamp 1:52, Abraham Simpson is sleeping at the bears’ bed (as if he was Goldilocks) and he says to the bears: “Well I’m sorry but it was 150 degrees in the car.” The Spanish version uses: “Pues, lo siento, pero en el auto hace mucho frío” [Well, I’m sorry, but it’s too cold in the car]. This is a very peculiar translation, because 150 degrees means the car was very hot, whereas in the Spanish version, the translators chose to say that the car was too cold for Grandpa Simpson, and that is why he decided to sleep in the bear’s bed. In fact, this makes more sense, because if he was too cold in the car, then it is more reasonable to think that he would want to lay in a warm bed, as opposed to the car being too hot, as he said in the source language.

Another epic moment in the show comes at minute 3:05, when the family is at the sheep’s section, and they are amazed by how every sheep or lamb is cuter than the next one. When they get to a smaller lamb, the first sheep they admired gets in the way and Homer says: “Out of the way, you.” The Translation is: “Quítate tú”. This phrase became a cultural reference in Latin America, and a meme in modern times, not only because this scene is hilarious, but because of the way Homero says it. As previously mentioned, Humberto Vélez, who did Homero’s voice for the first 15 seasons, contributed to the show’s great success, and even though other actors took over after him, the show will always be associated with his tone of voice.

Vélez managed to create an Homero that sounded dumber, more clueless and at times more arrogant than the original Homer. The translators gave Homero funny and culturally

adapted lines, and Vélez gave him the funniest interpretation in the market.

Another aspect worth mentioning is the way the translators chose to approach the character of Ned Flanders. As a general feature of the show, the Latin American translators completely adapted Ned Flanders' way of speaking and added the diminutives ('illo' and 'ijillo') as a suffix to every word he says, which helps him come across as a silly character. This is indeed a very smart translation move in the comedic aspect, because in the original version Ned Flanders uses "diddly", "doodle" or different versions of these words, as affixes for other words, usually as infixes, but other times as prefixes or suffixes. The writers probably wanted to portray Flanders as the stereotypical American Christian, who is too good for his own good, and who speaks in a silly or ridiculous manner. It is a way of speaking that denotes his socioeconomic and cultural background. Adding the diminutives ('illo', 'ijillo' and 'irijillo') as suffixes to nouns or adjectives in Flanders' utterances, truly is a marvelous example of adaptation. Even though "diddly" and "doodle" are not diminutives and do not possess the same meaning as 'illo', 'ijillo', 'irijillo', they both have a similar function when talking about language in use. The purpose of using this type of language was to make Flanders a silly middle-aged man, and the translators decided, based on what made sense for the character and what the writers wanted Flanders to represent, to completely adapt his speech to what would be considered a silly religious middle-aged man in Latin America, while also keeping the exaggeration and surreal factor of every character from *The Simpsons*.

Diminutives are commonly used by a similar demographic in the Hispanic world, so the translators managed to find an equivalent way of expression for this character. This is illustrated at minute 3:49 of the episode, when Ned is having a family barbecue at home and Homer arrives, so Ned introduces him to two of his relatives, who not only look exactly like Ned but also use the same kind of language as him. Jose Flanders (Flanders relative): "Buenos ding-dong dilly-días." Translation: "Claras-tardecirijillas, señor." It's puzzling that the translators decided to translate a sentence in Spanish into a different sentence in Spanish. It is also a sentence that was not very coherent, although they probably made this translation decision to insert the suffix 'ijillas'. Still, they could have preserved the "buenos días" and insert the suffix in that phrase. Then, Ned proceeds to introduce Homer to his other relative: "And this is Lord Thistlewick Flanders." Then his relative says: "Charmed... eh, googely-doogely." It is translated as: "Él es Lord Ferguson Flanders... Es un placer... eh, queridillo, vecinillo." It is noticeable that Thistlewick was translated as Ferguson, another English name. The reason could be that Ferguson is easier to pronounce for a Spanish speaking person than Thistlewick. At the same time, it is a refined English name that suits the character.

But this is not the only time that the characters' names from *Los Simpson* were modified. Lisa's teacher Ms. Hoover is sometimes referred to as "Maestra Stricter" and others as "Maestra Hoover." It is not clear why, but Stricter is probably a reference to being strict, and a name that would be easier to understand semantically for Spanish speakers. Itchy and Scratchy, translated as "Tommy y Daly" are a parody of the animated cartoon *Tom and Jerry*, and it is a show that Bart and Lisa watch constantly. Their names in English are a reference to the violence they depict and the name in Spanish is a reference to *Tom and Jerry*, only this time it has a violent twist. Furthermore, Chief Wiggum is known as "Jefe Gorgory" in the Latin American version, which is also an existent name, again not a Latino name, but one that would be easier to pronounce

phonetically for that audience. Then there are other adaptations of the names that are equivalents in the target language such as Homero (Homer), Reverendo Alegría (Reverend Lovejoy), El Hombre Duff (Duffman), Gaspar (Jasper), Magda Flanders (Maude Flanders), Ayudante de Santa, sometimes referred to as ‘Huesos’, which is a common dog name in Latin America (Santa’s Little Helper,) and Bola de Nieve (Snowball). In addition, some names were adapted to Latin American names or last names, as in the case of Inspector Archundia (Superintendent Chalmers), Barney Gómez (Barney Gumble), and Bob Patiño (Sideshow Bob).

Subsequently, there is an amazing moment where Lisa starts to question her school’s practices in terms of animal rights, and their accommodations for students who are vegetarian; this leads the teachers to press an “Independent Thought” button which alerts Principal Skinner, and he discusses this with Groundskeeper Willie at minute 7:30:

Principal Skinner: The students are overstimulated. Willie, remove all the colored chalk from the classrooms.

Groundskeeper Willie: I warned you! Didn’t I warn you? That colored chalk was forged by Lucifer himself!

The translation is: Skinner: Los alumnos están exaltados. Willie, quita la tiza de color de los salones.

Willie: Se lo advertí. ¿No se lo advertí? Esa tiza de color la fabricó el mismo Lucifer.

It’s interesting how the translators chose to translate this dialogue literally (word-for-word- translation.) This probably happened because it is a funny exchange that does not need modifications, since the punchline makes sense and it is considered funny universally, so

it does not need to be adapted in any way. In addition, the tone of voice and the wording make perfect sense together and the comedic rhythm and intention is preserved.

This episode also gave the public the iconic song of “You Don’t Win friends with Salad” which the whole family sings to Lisa, as they are mocking her vegetarianism. This song, whose Latin American version is called “No vives de ensalada,” became iconic for a whole generation, which is a supporting argument to the thesis that The Simpsons’ Latin American translation is a masterpiece. The song is an example of modulation and adaptation, since the core meaning of the song was preserved, although its form was modified. The song in Spanish currently has 1,3 million views on YouTube, it has inspired a variety of memes, and it has become a cultural reference. Something very particular is the moment where they are at the farm at minute 3:13, and someone who works there says from the speaker: “This is Mother Goose. The following cars have been broken into.” While in the translated version, the voice from the loudspeaker is that of the character Ned Flanders and he says: “Tomen su parejilla y sigan el compás, que esta fiestecilla, vamos a alegrar.” This translation nothing to do with the original, and the translators even decided to change the character who said this line.

The third episode is “The Springfield Files,” shows Homer Simpson’s encounters with an alien. There are some exciting elements regarding the translation of the episode. There is a moment, at minute 5:51, where Homer is drunk and gets lost in the woods, where everything seems scary to him. He sees a sign that says “DIE” and in the Spanish version he reads it as “Muerte, en inglés,” which is in fact wrong, because “die” is an imperative and not a noun; When the sign gets completely uncovered, it reads as “DIET” which causes Homer to scream in fear even harder, but he reads

this sign as “DIETA”. This is an example of transposition, which according to Molina and Hurtado “is a shift of word class, i.e., verb for noun, noun for preposition.” (499)

Later, at minute 7:30, when Homer is trying to convince his family about having seen an alien, Lisa says to Homer: “The people who see aliens are lowlife losers with boring jobs... Oh, and you, dad. Translated as: “Los que dicen haber visto extraterrestres son pobres diablos mentirosos con empleos mediocres... Oh, y tú, papá.” It is interesting that “lowlife losers” was translated as “pobres diablos,” because this expression encapsulates its meaning, without resorting to literal translation. This is a particular case because the word “lowlife” is polysemic, which according to Cambridge Dictionary is “the fact of having more than one meaning. Polysemy occurs when a word form carries more than one meaning. English has a very large stock of word forms, so its lexicon is relatively free of polysemy compared with many languages.” (dictionary.cambridge.org)

Thus, another option would have been to translate it as “perdedores” or “miserables” because “lowlife” could have several meanings in Spanish, it could refer to someone’s socioeconomic status, or the fact that they are criminals, or just being someone useless to society. However, because this adjective qualifies the noun “losers,” it is very accurate to use the expression “pobres diablos,” which refers to someone who has a low socioeconomic position in society. Furthermore, it is a phrase that in certain contexts can be considered funny to Spanish speakers.

It is also worth mentioning, that the translation of “boring jobs” was “mediocre jobs,” because even though they are not quite the same semantically, it has more of an impact to say that it was a mediocre job than a boring one, thus her snarky comment to her father sounds more destructive, which seems to

be the purpose of her comment. This is an example of modulation, since they are saying the same things, in different words.

Then, at minute 8:25, Homer goes to the police station and tells Chief Wiggum about seeing the alien: “The alien has a sweet voice like Urkel and he appears every Friday night, like Urkel.” Translated as: “Tiene una voz dulce y celestial, como la de Alf. Y aparece todos los viernes en la noche, como Alf.” This is an example of adaptation, because the translators decided to translate Urkel (Steve Urkel), who is a character from the sitcom Family Matters, as Alf, who is a character from another 90’s sitcom named after the protagonist, Alf, who is an alien, unlike Urkel. Therefore, it seems to make more sense to adapt the name of the character for comedic purposes, since Alf is more well-known in Latin America than Urkel, and the important factor that Alf is an alien, just like the alien Homer saw and was referring to in that moment, whereas Urkel is a human being.

Subsequently, at minute 8:33, Chief Wiggum answers to Homer: “Wow, your story is very compelling, Mr. Jackass. I mean, uh... Simpson.” Translated as: “Su historia es muy interesante, Señor Pelmazo, digo Simpson.” This is an example of modulation because “pelmazo” is an adjective that refers to someone who is irritating or tiresome. A jackass refers to a stupid person. However, being irritating is not quite the same as being stupid, but it is close in meaning. In addition, the word “pelmazo” sounds quite funny and unexpected in this scene’s dialogue, and that contributes to the humoristic impact of this line. Similarly, at minute 9:01, Chief Wiggum says to a guy who claimed to have burned down a building: “Fruitcake,” as an insult. This was translated as: “Orate.” Which is quite accurate semantically because “fruitcake” is an informal way to call someone crazy, and “orate” is defined by the RAE as someone who has lost their mind. (dle.

rae.es). The issue about terms like “orate” is that this word is more commonly used in Mexico, and less in other Latin American countries, so that might have the risk of losing the comedic aspect of that line.

Another interesting moment comes at minute 9:15, when FBI agents Mulder and Scully (from the show *X-Files*) find out about Homer seeing the alien after it appears on the newspapers as “HUMAN BLIMP SEES FLYING SAUCER” meaning that, Homer Simpson saw an alien. In the Latin American version, that news title is read by a narrator as “Albóndiga humana ve platillo volador,” which refers to Homer as a meatball and not a blimp, as in the original version. This is an example of an adaptation. Another detail is the letters that appear on the screen saying the phrase: “ALL WORK AND NO PLAY MAKES JACK A DULL BOY.” This is a reference to the movie *The Shining*, by Stanley Kubrick. However, there is a narrator’s voice in the Latin American version that reads this as “Mambrú se fue a la guerra, no sé cuándo vendrá. Mambrú se fue a la guerra qué dolor, qué dolor, qué pena”. This is a popular and very ancient Spanish song, that has nothing to do with the reference from *The Shining*. This is another instance of adaptation.

Later in the episode, at minute 13:52, Homer is arguing with Marge in bed, since she does not believe that he saw an alien, so he says to Marge: “I refuse to share the bed with someone who thinks I’m crazy. Unless you’re feeling amorous.” Translated as: “Me niego a compartir la cama con alguien que cree que estoy loco... a menos que te sientas traviesilla.” This is an instance of an adaptation because there is no equivalent in Spanish that matches the formal register of amorous, conveying sexual desire, but the informal term “traviesilla” which is “traviesa” [naughty], with the diminutive “illa” does come quite close in meaning, even though they are two different registers. The adaptation

of this term was brilliant because it makes it a hilarious phrase, not only semantically, but also in terms of Homer’s voice and intonation when he says this to his wife, right after saying he did not want to share the bed with her.

Towards the end of the episode at minute 19:25, Homer has gathered the whole city at the place where he has seen the alien before, so he can prove its existence. When the alien finally appears and it tells people that it is bringing them love, the characters Lenny and Carl say the following:

Lenny: “It’s bringing love, don’t let him get away.”

Carl: “Break his legs.”

Translation: Lenny: “Nos trae amor. No lo dejen escapar.”

Carl: “Acábenlo.”

This moment is yet another iconic moment of the show, and the translation is able to preserve the elements of humor in the phrases, the tone, the sudden change of a pacifist phrase to one of anger and contempt for a seemingly loving creature, which helps maintain the dark humor and tone of the scene. The translators used a modulation technique by translating the command “break his legs” into “acábenlo,” which means to annihilate someone.

The Simpsons is an outstanding example of how to translate humor, in audiovisual translation. Episodes from the TV show *The Simpsons* were analyzed, focusing on the English to Latin American Spanish audiovisual translation. Those episodes were: “Treehouse of Horror VII (The Thing and I)”, “Lisa the Vegetarian”, and “The Springfield Files”. The first episode is about Bart’s secret evil twin, who was chained in the attic by his parents. It is a Halloween episode, so it is quite dark, but also humorous. The second episode is about the moment Lisa becomes a vegetarian, after visi-

ting a farm and later imagining that the lamb is asking her not to eat it. The episode is very iconic and has Paul McCartney as a guest. The third episode is about the time when Homer encounters what seems to be an alien, while he is drunk and lost in the woods.

This episode has agents Mulder and Scully from X-Files as guests. The purpose of this research was to delve into the techniques that would best serve a translator at the time of translating humor. For this, *The Simpson's* Latin American dubbing was analyzed, for it is an important example of the adaptation of humor in a target culture. While conducting the analysis, it was necessary to explore the different obstacles of untranslatability, and the reasons behind the choices that the translators made. However, it was found that the translators of the show did an amazing job at finding solutions and adapting certain terms, jokes and songs ("You Don't Win Friends with Salad") and it is important to mention that even when a joke got lost in translation, the team managed to create a product that people could enjoy, such as Homero's voice and intonation when he says things that would not sound funny if they were said in a normal voice.

The aim of this paper is to serve as an educational tool for learners or people in the field, who wish to learn more about the translation of humor (which is a knowingly challenging genre,) especially in audiovisual translation. The most used translation techniques were Oblique Translation Techniques, such as adaptation, modulation, and transposition. Although they resorted to literal translation in very specific moments where the joke would have been ruined otherwise, the aforementioned techniques were predominantly used. These techniques and translation decisions contributed to the success and relevance of the show in the Latin American community. It is indeed a successful audiovisual translation, that reached a wide audience, became

a part of Latin American pop culture, and became possibly even more influential in Latin America than in the United States. The show's popularity is such that a whole neighborhood in Mexico City was renamed after *The Simpsons* and there are several graffiti of the show's characters, which is why it has the nickname "Sprayfield". This neighborhood is originally known as Infonavit Iztacalco. (vice.com)

Another example of the influence that *The Simpsons* had in Latin America is the socio-cultural impact it had on a few generations. When the FOX channel first broadcasted the 30th season of the show in Latin America, they decided to celebrate it by conducting qualitative research about their audiences in the ages ranging between eighteen and fifty. The investigation was done through the agency Nimble, in Mexico, Argentina and Brazil. Even though the audience belongs to different generations, the researchers decided to name those who shared certain characteristics, as the "S Generation." (cablenoticias.tv). These were the individuals who have been influenced by *The Simpsons* and who share the personality traits of being funny, sarcastic, meme lovers, intellectual, and who have a politically incorrect humor. These are the people who quote *The Simpsons* constantly and who manage to build friendships and break the ice in conversations through the show's references. (futuro.cl)

It is important that translators study and learn from previous results, since a good translation of humor generates more streams, views or ticket purchases. Therefore, an audiovisual translation determines the success of a product in a localized audience. The phenomenon that *The Simpsons* became in Latin American is proof of this, and it can serve as a wonderful tool for translators and learners. Therefore, it is important to further investigate what makes an audiovisual translation successful and how to properly translate not only humor, but also different types of genres.

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