How funny is dubbing?

English to Spanish dubbing in the sitcom "How I Met Your Mother"

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ABSTRACT

Humour and language are both two elements which are undeniably part of human life and social interactions, rendering the two as relevant subjects when it comes to human behaviour. In the junction between these we find *linguistic humour*, where the humoristic element is supported by the language. We wished to explore if there was a loss in the perception of linguistic humour when the jokes are submitted to translation. Using four different kinds of clips (six portraying a different type of linguistic humour: Puns, Wordplay and Punchlines; two showing contextual humour -not language dependant-) of scenes from the American TV Show "How I Met Your Mother", we compared the results obtained from two samples (one which watched the clips in the original English audio, and one that watched them in the Spanish translation) who rated how funny they had found the scenes in the clips in a 1-5 Likert Scale. We also used the *Multidimensional Sense Of Humor Scale* to assess the participant's understanding and use of humour. We found no correlation between the results of the MSHS Scale and the rating of the clips, but we saw significant differences in the rating of how funny the scenes were in the Spanish and the English sample. T tests were run and the difference between samples was that the Spanish ratings were on average lower than the English ones with a significance of $p<0,005$. This significant difference was not shown when comparing the rating results of the contextual humour scenes. The results show therefore that there is a loss of linguistic humour appreciation when jokes are directly translated.

Key words: humour, humour use, linguistic humour, translating, humour loss.

CONTRIBUTION

The birth of humour cannot be pinpointed to a particular time period or moment and it has been part of human life for centuries. The studies on humour have been of relevance and interest for decades, in turn asking for the creation of humour-dedicated associations or teams specialized in its research, such as the

International Journal Humor Research (with its various international branches like the European or the Israeli) (*The International Society For Humor Studies*, n.d.). Its different sub-organizations focus on the humoristic changes related to cultural environment. The EJHR was stablished in 1988 and is currently still active and has considerable impact factor (De Gruyter Mouton, n.d).

Hence to the already existing knowledge about humour and its studies, we will focus on the ones related to cultural linguistics, to try and explore the linguistic side of humour, and how language translations portray linguistic humour. No other study has been found that tackled the same objectives considering the variables we will work with, so this study may be a pioneer in the area and it might help rise interest.

OBJECTIVE

The aim of this study is to value the amount of linguistic humour loss in dubbing; this means, how "less funny" a linguistic message becomes when we translate it, therefore referring to both the weight of verbal humour as well as the cultural humour reflected in the use of language.

RELEVANCE

Humour and language are both two constructs which are part of everybody's daily life, to some extent. Whether we participate in humorous activities or not, there are a great number of humoristic events happening all the time (and, in first world societies, with TV Shows and the ever-growing Internet culture, humour is unavoidable). Language is a main factor in communication, and communication is constant; language enables the coding of life events and creates a defined path for communication.

"Humor is a multidimensional construct that seems to be intimately related to quality of life" (Thorson, Powell, Sarmany-Schuller & Hampens, 1997), as show the Multidimensional Sense of Humor Scale with its results' positive correlations with psychological health (optimism and self esteem), and negative correlations with signs of psychological distress (depression). Humour is, therefore, a construct of relevance in the studies of mental health, and linguistic forms of humor depict one's ability to play with language, performed within a contextual linguistic and humoristic frame determined by culture. Some authors even plausibly confirm that humorous language can benefit or avail diverse cognitive mechanisms (Brône, Feyaerts, & Veale, 2015).

The study of linguistic, humour, and linguistic humour could carve a path towards new findings related to therapeutic techniques, educative models, and social development models, which make the field a very interesting work set with still much left to explore (Carbelo, 2006).

BIBLIOGRAPHIC UPDATE

Since Hypocrite's use of the term "humour" to describe personality in a four factor theory, the evolution of use and definition of the term has changed with history. Initially, though, the study of humour was already set to a difficulty for its semantic; the term could refer to laughter, to fun, to wit... and therefore as it was difficult to limit it was difficult to explore (Carbelo, 2006). There have been many theories which aimed to explain the presence of humour and its uses in our daily lives, from its cognitive processing to its social function. Currently, the studies on humour go from its physiological components to its social functions and its presence in *Positive Psychology*, going through interpersonal

differences and correlating it with constructs such as health, personality, life quality, etc.

When we wish to explore the factors which construct humour, there are many theories. For instance, Eysenck (1942) referred to three factors which allowed the comprehension of a joke: conative, affective, and cognitive, and understood as an adaptative tool to learn from the environment. Positive psychology frames humour in factors which make for an experience of events which increment life happiness (Seligman, Steen, Park & Peterson, 2005). In 2001, The General Theory of Verbal Humor was formulated (Attardo, 2001), and it defined humour in the sense that it always implies semantic-pragmatic processing activated by a text (or a fragment) which violated Grice's maxims principles of cooperation, which say that in a conversation context, the interlocutors will cooperate to find achieve the same end to the conversation (Grice, 1975). Raskin (Raskin, 1985) follows this linguistic approach to humour, and explains that some words in the text might *trigger* the activation of 'scripts' (cognitive structures which include semantic information related to the structure and lexeme and the speaker's knowledge of it), hence making humour dependant on each person's different scripts.

In 1991, both Attardo and Raskin (Attardo & Raskin, 1991) set a list of parameters called *Knowledge Resources* which determine the humorous effect:

1. Scrip opposition: central requirement for humour production by the opposition of scripts.
2. Logical mechanism: resolution of the incongruity perpetuated by the script opposition.

3. Situation: the frame of events, including characters, objects, places, etc.

4. Target: to whom the humour is aimed at.

5. Narrative Structure: organisation and style of the humoristic text.

6. Language: the verbalisation of the humoristic text.

These elements are also found in the study of conversational humour, bearing the referenced to previous utterances, information beyond the conversation frame, cultural elements… This type of humour depends heavily on the cooperation and shared frame between the participants, as well as the meaning of the uttered lexemes, and it is inside conversational humour that we find jokes, puns, wordplays, etc (Prodanović Stankić, 2017). These linguistic elements, in their cultural conceptualisation will denote "patterns of distributed knowledge inside a cultural group" (Sharifian, 2011). Regardless of humour's shape or construction, it is always culture dependable and it is constructed from the interlocutors' shared context.

When it comes to telecinematic discourse, humour depends on this collective aspect, and these socially collected social conceptualisations affect extralinguistic or extra conversational elements which will be highlighted in verbal humour (Prodanović Stankić, 2017). In his study published in 2017, Prodanović Stankić tested how cultural differences between Serbian and English people would result in different humour appreciation. In this case, the language that encoded the jokes and the linguistic humour was in English for both groups of subjects, and the results highlighted the weight of cultural elements in how verbal humour is experienced. In this case, we will study the opposite case; shared culture but different languages.

To the studies of humour joined the study of humour as an individual's trait, and therefore it became operatized to be explored systematically, with instruments like the Multidimensional Scale of Humour Sense (Thorson & Powell, 1993), which explored the construct dividing it in four factors and it allowed to explore its use and understanding.

After presenting the study of humour and its relation to linguistics, let's define the three types of linguistic humour we are going to use in the study. The Cambridge Dictionary (2017) defines "Puns" as "a humorous use of a word or phrase that has several meanings or that sounds like another word". This would refer to a phonetic aspect of humour linguistic. "Punchlines" are defined also by Cambridge as "the last part of a story or a joke that explains the meaning of what has happened previously or makes it funny" referring to the whole content of the message. Lastly, "Wordplay" is defined in the same dictionary as "the activity of joking about the meanings of words, especially in an intelligent way" alluding to the purely semantic component of the used words.

Lastly, the choice to study *How I Met Your Mother* is due to the show's popularity during the last decade, as well as its contemporarity and humour variety. The language of the show does now require any sort of special linguistic knowledge and it is suitable for all the subjects.

METHODOLOGY

Participants

The sample of this study will be made out of every subject who can fill in the questionnaire and test who reside or have resided in Spain to ensure all participants share the same cultural environment and hence control the weight

of culture on humour. The only criteria will be that the subjects will have to be able to speak Spanish or English, and will therefore take either the Spanish or the English questionnaire and test. No other criteria will be applied to select the participants, but we will control gender and age variables with the study's questionnaire.

The initial number of answers collected was of 60 for the Spanish questionnaire, and of 30 for the English, and the final sampling of the survey consisted of a total of 22 subjects for each language, selected from the total of volunteers, after some filtering of the answers. The criteria used to select or reject the answers were that they had to be over 48 points in the MSHS (as explained in the methodology section, as these answers would represent half of the total punctuation obtainable from the test -a simple addition, reverting the punctuation of the six indirect items-, we consider these subjects whose use of humour is not that relevant in their daily lives to give answers which are not interesting for the study), that they were part of the 18-26 age group (as this group was the one to which most volunteers belonged), and that they had all seen the show before and had a positive view of it (to control the effects of priming and affective response towards the clips). Nationality was left fully random, but language knowledge was limited to high and native profiles in all cases (the Spanish sample was made of mainly native whilst the English was mainly high) to guarantee that the perception of humour was not biased by the subjects' lack of knowledge of the languages. Gender was also left at random (ending with 4 males and 18 females in each group). After the application of these filters, the final subjects' results were chosen randomly from the total so to have equal numbered groups for each of the languages.

Material

Stimuli

The tested material will be 8 short videos from the sitcom *How I Met Your Mother*, in the original version (USA English) and in their translated version to Spanish (Spain's Spanish). The clips will be all chosen with a shared criterion: the use of the laugh track. Under the understanding that the use of the laugh track indicates that the creators meant for a humorous outcome of the scene, the clips will all contain it. Then they will be classified in three types of clips: use of "*punchlines*" (2 clips), use of "*puns*" (2 clips), use of "*wordplay*" (2 clips) and contextual humour (2 clips). This will show, also, if there is a difference in the humour response regarding its shape and form, having 6 linguistics forms of humour and 2 contextual humour (with no linguistic element). The length of the clips will vary but they will go from 5 to 30 seconds approximately.

The scene specifications will be extracted from the following episodes (IMDB, 2017), and following the details about the episode lies the scene script:

A) <u>Wordplay scenes</u>

- *Oh Honey* (1) *(episode 15 season 6)* directed by Pamela Fryman and written by Carter Bays and Craig Thomas (2011).

> <u>English original</u>*:*
> o **Character 1**: "Oh Marshall, I stopped by that new doughnuts shop, Hurtz Doughnut. Would you like a Hurtz Doughnut?"
> o **Character 2**: "Sure!"
> o **Character 1** (*hits character 2*): Hurts, don't it?!

- **Character 1**: "*Eh Marshall, he pasado por esa nueva tienda de chuches, Tortas Dame, te apetece una Torta Dame?*"
- **Character 2**: "*Eh claro!*"
- **Character 1** (*hits character 2*): "*Dame torta!*"

- *Oh Honey* (2) *(episode 15 season 6)* directed by Pamela Fryman and written by Carter Bays and Craig Thomas (2011).

  English original:
  - **Character 1**: "And… what kind of name is Zoey, eh? What is that, short for Zoseph?"

  Spanish translation:
  - **Character 1**: "*¿Y qué nombre ese de Zoey? ¿Qué es eso, un diminutivo de Zoes?*"

B) Pun scenes

- *Hopless (episode 21 season 6)* directed by Pamela Fryman and written by Chris Harris (2011).

  English original:
  - **Character 1: "**Let's see, what club shall we hit first. There's club 'Was'. There's 'Wrong'."
  - **Character 2:** "Uhm, those places shut down a long time ago."
  - **Character 1:** "Oh, no."
  - **Character 2:** "'Oh No' shut down too."
  - **Character 3:** "There's 'Were'."
  - **Character 4:** "Where's 'Were'?"
  - **Character 5:** "'Were's' where 'Was' was, isn't it?"
  - **Character 1:** "No 'Was' wasn't where 'Were' was, 'Was' was where 'Wrong' was, right?"
  - **Character 4:** "Okay…?"
  - **Character 3:** "No, no 'Okay'. That place is lame."

- **Character 6:** "'Okay' is 'Lame'? I thought 'Lame' was a gay bar. Or is that 'Wrong'?"
- **Character 2:** "That's wrong, that's not 'Not Wrong'."
- **Character 1:** "Guys, focus."
- **Character 6:** "Oh I like 'Focus', let's go there."

<u>Spanish translation:</u>

- **Character 1:** "*Veamos, a qué* pub *vamos primero. Tenemos el* pub *'Antes', el 'Mal'…"*
- **Character 2:** "*Esos sitios cerraron hace un montón de tiempo.*"
- **Character 1:** "*Oh, no.*"
- **Character 2:** "*'Oh No' también ha cerrado.*"
- **Character 3:** "*Está 'Donde'.*"
- **Character 4:** "*Dónde está el 'Donde'?"*
- **Character 5:** "*El 'Donde' está donde antes verdad?*"
- **Character 1:** "*No, el 'Antes' está dónde estaba 'Donde' y el 'Donde' estaba donde estaba 'Mal', ¿no?*"
- **Character 4:** "*Vale…?"*
- **Character 3:** "*No, el 'Vale' es cutre.*"
- **Character 6:** "*¿El 'Vale' es el 'Cutre'? Pensaba que el 'Vale' era un bar gay, ¿o no estaba 'Mal' allí?*"
- **Character 2:** "*Está mal, eso es el 'No Está Mal'."*
- **Character 1:** "*Chicos, concentración.*"
- **Character 6:** "*Sí, me gusta el 'Concentración', vamos a ese.*"

- *Sweet Taste Of Liverty (episode 3 season 1)* directed by Pamela Fryman and written by Chris Harris and Phil Lord (2005).

    <u>English original:</u>
    - **Character 1:** It's gonna be legen -wait for it (and I hope you're not lactose intolerant 'cause the second half of that word is)- dary!

    <u>Spanish translation:</u>
    - **Character 1:** Va a ser legen -espero que no te molestes mucho porque la segunda parte de la palabra es- dario!

C) Punchline scenes

- *Oh Honey* (3) *(episode 15 season 6)* directed by Pamela Fryman and written by Carter Bays and Craig Thomas (2011).

    English original:
    o **Character 1**: "Marshall I'm going to Barleys, you want anything?"
    o **Character 2**: "Mum, get off the phone!"
    o **Character 3**: "Could you get some more *Bugels* please?"
    o **Character 1**: "Of course, dear."
    o **Character 2**: "Marcus, hang up! Both of you, hang up!... And we need ice cream."

    Spanish translation:
    o **Character 1**: "*Marshall me voy al super, ¿necesitas algo?*"
    o **Character 2**: "*¡Mamá, cuelga el teléfono!*"
    o **Character 3**: "*¿Podrías traer más nachos por favor?*"
    o **Character 1**: "*Por supuesto, cariño.*"
    o **Character 2**: "*Marcus, ¡cuelga! Los dos, ¡colgad! Y… necesitamos helado.*"

- *Pilot (episode 1 season 1)* directed by Pamela Fryman and written by Carter Bays and Craig Thomas (2005).

    English original:
    o **Character 1**: "Kids, I'm gonna tell you an incredible story. The story of how I met your mother"
    o **Character 2**: "Are we being punished for something?"
    o **Character 1**: "No."

    Spanish translation:
    o **Character 1**: "*Chicos, voy a contaros una historia increíble. La historia de cómo conocí a vuestra madre.*"
    o **Character 2**: "*¿Nos estás castigando por algo?*"
    o **Character 1**: "*No.*"

D) <u>Contextual scenes</u>

- *Sweet Taste Of Liverty (episode 3 season 1)* directed by Pamela Fryman and written by Chris Harris and Phil Lord (2005).

  o A man comes out of a suitcase on a conveyor belt.

- *Definition (episode 1 season 5)* directed by Pamela Fryman and written by Carter Bays and Craig Thomas (2009).

  o A man cannot decide what type of teacher he wants to be, so he portrays two opposed teaching models: the "friendly" and the authoritative, changing tone in every sentence.

The two contextual clips will serve to show if contextual humor goes beyond linguistic humour; in other words, if found difference between verbal humor when comparing two languages, what is the result if we compare these differences languages when they are referring to the same context. The links to all the clips can be found in the Annex 1.

Instruments

A) *Multidimensional Sense of Humor Scale* (Thorson & Powell,1993)

In means to assess humour in the participants we will ask them to fill in this self-reported scale. The population to which this test is directed are adults, therefore the data obtained will be filtered to eliminate subjects who are under 18, (age stablished by the test / age for adulthood in Spain). This scale contains 24 items, 18 positively-phrased and 6 negatively-phrased to control response-set bias which are to be responded by rating the agreement to the statements on a five-point Likert Scale from strongly disagreeing (0) to strongly agreeing (4). The results of the MSHS allow two purposes: obtain an overall score of sense of humour in its use and understanding, and to explore four principal humour

factors; (1) humour creativity and uses of humour for social purposes, (2) uses of coping humour, (3) appreciation of humorous people, and (4) appreciation of humour. We, however, will just use the total score of the scale (maximum of obtainable score being 96) to discard cases in which humour is not understood to be a constant personality trait in the individual, therefore making their use of humour in day lives not a relevant personal factor. We will discard cases in which the total score is bellow half of the total maximum achievable score (<48), and we will not explore the scales separately.

With these results we can compare the group's sense of humor hence we can control this variable and it allows group comparisons. The internal reliability of the scale is good (alpha = 0.92) (Thorson & Powell, 1993), understanding then that the scale measures the construct it's meant to asses and not other variables. The test's time of application is short (around 10 minutes), and it can be applied autonomously to the subject to be responded individually.

For the Spanish subjects we will use the Spanish adaptation of the test, the *Escala Multidimensional del Sentido del Humor* (Carbelo, 2006), tested with subjects from the General Hospital in the Madrid Autonomous Community, Spain. The internal validity of the translated scale obtained a value of 0.88, meaning that its Spanish translation is highly valid as well. However the four factor theory is not supported well (Spanish correlations show a three factor model), but we will solely work with the general score, therefore this shouldn't affect the results.

B) Questionnarie

Before looking at the clips, we collected demographic data: the subjects will need to select an age range (18-26, 27-36, 37-45, >46), write down their nationality, their gender, their proficiency level of the language in which they're visualizing the clips, and an alias (for information classification purposes, as it is anonymous), and will be asked the following question:

E) Did you know this TV Show? If so, what was your view of it?
   a. No, I didn't know it.
   b. Yes. My view was positive.
   c. Yes. My view was negative.

And then, after viewing each clip will have two questions under it:

F) Rate, from 1 (not funny) to 5 (very funny), the viewed clip:
   1. Not funny
   2. Somehow funny
   3. Indifferent
   4. Quite funny
   5. Very funny

With the first one question we will be able to assess whether age and previous exposure to the show had any effect on its humoristic value, and it will allow us to value whether the subject had a previous consideration of the TV show, to control whether a negative view of the TV Show would make the subjects set to reject the show and in turn give low scores to all the clips. We will control the nationality variable with the first question, also. With the second one, the participants will provide the data we will use for the comparison of language humour.

Procedure

The questionnaire and the test were distributed online through the Google Questionnaire platform, and the subjects answered it from the comfort of their own homes with anonymity and with a simple option-selecting procedure (by clicking on the value they chose in the Likert Scale). It was an open link which was accessible for a month and two days (15th January 2017 – 17th February 2018), and which was distributed through online social networks. Certain instructions and guidelines were provided before the application of the test, as well as a presentation about the project at the beginning and an acknowledging message at the end of it. Anonymity was assured from the beginning of the test, and they were informed that the data would be used solely for this study.

The application time of the MSHS takes around 10 minutes, and the clip visualization would need another 5. We will inform the participants of this before-hand, and ask for them to not do anything else during these 15 minutes to avoid any external effects.

ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Answering the MSHS test is not intrusive to the individual's life and it does not violate any ethical principles. The view of the clips and the response to them are in no way harmful to the viewers, as they do not show or express any sort of sensitive content. The answers are all anonymous.

RESULTS

When the final sample was obtained, total punctuations of the MSHS test were used to divide each language group into two subunits, the ones with higher (≥69)

punctuation in each group, and the ones with lower (<69) punctuations. Means were calculated for both the total of the group and each subgroup of the samples for each languages. The mean punctuation for each video was also obtained.

	Mean Videos	Mean Test		Mean Videos	Mean Test
ENGLISH SAMPLE (N=22)	**2,2557** (SD: 0,8269)	**69,5**	ENG 1 (≥69) n=11	**2,5**	**79,18**
			ENG 2 (<69) n=11	**2,011**	**59,82**
SPANISH SAMPLE (N=22)	**1,9762** (SD: 0,5748)	**67,5**	ESP 1 (≥69) n=11	**2,125**	**78,27**
			ESP 2 (<69) n=11	**1,875**	**56,73**

Table 1. Descriptive means and standard deviations for each sample and the subgroups.

Descriptively, we can see that regarding the hypothesis, the original-script videos are generally funnier, and that people with higher test punctuations in the MSHS also gave higher punctuations to the videos. Using the non-parametrical correlation coefficient (Spearman), we looked into the correlation between the MSHS punctuations and the video rating, the result was that there was no correlation (r=0,2441). This value was looked into also for the Spanish and the English samples separately, but the found correlation was similar to the general one. Seemingly, then, there would not be a correlation between somebody's use and understanding of humour (information given by the test), and their humour appreciation (information gathered from the video ratings). The number of subjects did not allow to have a big enough sample on which it would have made sense to compare those subjects with higher and those with lower punctuation instead of the whole sample.
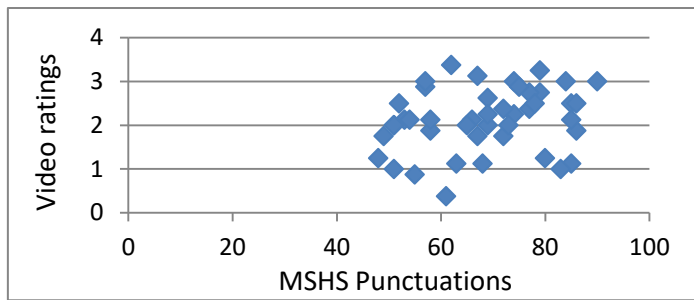
Graph 1. Dispersion of the data shows the lack of correlation between the obtained test punctuations and the video ratings.

To analyse whether the apparent differences were significant to the hypothesis, various T tests were conducted. The difference in punctuation between the videos with linguistic elements (puns, punchlines and wordplay) and contextual humour videos was significant ($p < 0.03$), meaning that there was a significantly shown difference between videos which needed linguistic abilities and those that didn't. In the Spanish sample, the significance was of $p < 0.01$, but in the English sample the difference wasn't significant at all. Choosing only one of the videos (*Sweet Taste of Liverty*), though (although both types of humour were context dependant, one had linguistic elements but the other one had none), the Spanish significance grew larger ($p < 0.001$), and the English sample grew closer to significant values, but still didn't show significant results.

To assess whether the intragroup rating differences were significant or not, it was tested (T test) in both sample's, and none showed a significant difference.

Looking at each video individually and analysing its significance, we see that between the samples, only two videos show differences worth noting: one case of wordplay ($p < 0.05$), and one case of a pun ($p < 0.001$). When looking into them by pairs (as grouped depending on the type of linguistic humour they portrayed) we also find significance in the wordplay videos ($p < 0.005$). Comparing the total of linguistic videos between the groups, we obtain a significant result that shows

that the linguistic value of the clips has an effect on the rating of the humour elements (p<0,005), and that the clips which carry contextual humour do not show significant differences (p>0,666).

DISCUSSION

Using the *Multidimentional Sense of Humor Scale* we obtained the subjects punctuations regarding their levels of humour, and this punctuation was expected to be a predictor for their ratings of the clips. In other words, we expected that having a high punctuation in the humour scale, implying this that the subject has a high humoristic performance; the subject would also be likely to find the clips highly amusing. However, this relationship was tested and no correlation was shown, hence proving that the test results do not predict the humoristic experience of watching the non contextualized humoristic scenes. This could be explained due to two factors: simply, the sample wasn't big enough to show more clear correlations, or more elaborately and following Eysenck's (1942) description of humour; that one's use of personal humour does not necessarily imply that they will find all types of humour to be funny. Jokes are a very particular type of self-expression, and the fact that one may use them daily and vastly does not mean that any and all types of humour have to be enjoyed. Certainly, each person defines their humour and what types of behavioural patterns and jokes they enjoy.

With this we could continue explaining the differences between the results of the clips. Although the clips were chosen and paired in a way that there were two scenes containing the different types of linguistic humour (Puns, Wordplays and Punchlines), the two clips weren't rated equally; this means that if

difference is shown, it is not due to the type of joke but to the joke itself. We find that Wordplays are the type of joke which both when compared as a pair and when looked into individually show significant differences.

Looking into the nature of Wordplays, we know that these are jokes which rely on the semantic of the word, which means that although not always (which would show why one clip is significantly different between groups but the other one is not), most of the time we can safeguard the joke in the translation: all we need to do is substitute the English word for the Spanish word with equal semantics. This would explain why it is the only pair of clips that got a significant difference between the groups ($p < 0,005$). We can find, though, that connotations and denotations are not as exact as the direct lexical translation. Looking into the actual translation process of the wordplay scenes, we see why one got higher and significantly different punctuations between the Spanish and the English sample, and the other one didn't. In the case of the scene that wasn't punctuated differently, in other words, that was somehow similarly funny in the original and in the translated version, the Wordplay is as follows:

Episode 15 season 6 "*Oh Honey*"(1):

> **Character 1**: "Oh Marshall, I stopped by that new doughnuts shop, Hurtz Doughnut. Would you like a Hurtz Doughnut?"
> **Character 2**: "Sure!"
> **Character 1** (*hits character 2*): Hurts, don't it?!

Spanish translation:

> **Character 1**: "*Eh Marshall, he pasado por esa nueva tienda de chuches, Tortas Dame, te apetece una Torta Dame?*"
> **Character 2**: "*Eh claro!*"
> **Character 1** (*hits character 2*): "*Dame torta!*"

Here, the translation process has not been directed to the word itself, but to the meaning. The joke is maintained because the linguist elements which made it incompatible were eliminated (the 'doughnuts'), and turned into something with similar meaning ('*torta*') yet different semantic. The joke remains because he still turns the "food offering" into a physical painful attack, to the humour in this one is kept, explaining why the rating of the clips is similar.

Looking into the scene that shows significant differences (p<0,05), however, we find something different:

Episode 15 season 6 "*Oh Honey*"(2):

> **Character 1**: "And… what kind of name is Zoey, eh? What is that, short for Zoseph?"

Spanish translation:

> **Character 1**: "*¿Y qué nombre ese de Zoey? ¿Qué es eso, un diminutivo de Zoes?*"

In this case, the humoristic element is the background linguistic knowledge that "Zoey" could be a name's diminutive, if we followed the rule we use to obtain "Joey" from "Joseph". This, however, is linguistic knowledge which does not exist in Spanish, and the name equivalence is also not achievable in the Spanish shortening of names. Therefore, the joke tries to live on by following the Spanish patterns, such as turning "Andrés" to "Andi", but the similarity is not as close, so the joke is practically lost, and that could be why the ratings showed high differences when comparing how funny the English sample had found it to the Spanish sample. This type of contextual knowledge is constructed socially, and like Sharifian (Sharifian, 2011) pointed out, it is patterned; in this case, the pattern it follows is, as we said, how nicknames and

shortening of names is done, and this constructed knowledge, which exists for the English speakers but not for the Spanish speakers is what carries the joke.

In the case of Puns, which are a type of humour which relies on both semantics and phonetics, only one of the videos showed a significant difference. It is easier to understand that translating accurately both semantics and phonetics is highly off chance to be achieved easily. Although there are some words which are similar in both languages, when translating the phonetics or the semantics may be affected; it is very hard to conserve and convey both when translating. For the scene that wasn't punctuated differently between the samples, meaning that it was somehow similarly funny in the original and in the translated version, the Pun is the following:

Episode 21, Season 6 "*Hopeless*":

> **Character 1:** "Let's see, what club shall we hit first. There's club 'Was'. There's 'Wrong'."
> **Character 2:** "Uhm, those places shut down a long time ago."
> **Character 1:** "Oh, no."
> **Character 2:** "'Oh No' shut down too."
> **Character 3:** "There's 'Were'."
> **Character 4:** "Where's 'Were'?"
> **Character 5:** "'Were's' where 'Was' was, isn't it?"
> **Character 1:** "No 'Was' wasn't where 'Were' was, 'Was' was where 'Wrong' was, right?"
> **Character 4:** "Okay…?"
> **Character 3:** "No, no 'Okay'. That place is lame."
> **Character 6:** "'Okay' is 'Lame'? I thought 'Lame' was a gay bar. Or is that 'Wrong'?"
> **Character 2:** "That's wrong, that's not 'Not Wrong'."
> **Character 1:** "Guys, focus."
> **Character 6:** "Oh I like 'Focus', let's go there."

Spanish translation:

> **Character 1: "***Veamos, a qué*** pub *vamos primero. Tenemos el* pub *'Antes', el 'Mal'…"*
> **Character 2:** "*Esos sitios cerraron hace un montón de tiempo.*"
> **Character 1:** "*Oh, no.*"
> **Character 2:** "*'Oh No' también ha cerrado.*"
> **Character 3:** "*Está 'Donde'.*"
> **Character 4:** "*Dónde está el 'Donde'?"*
> **Character 5:** "*El 'Donde' está donde antes verdad?"*
> **Character 1:** "*No, el 'Antes' está dónde estaba 'Donde' y el 'Donde' estaba donde estaba 'Mal', ¿no?"*
> **Character 4:** "*Vale…?"*
> **Character 3:** "*No, el 'Vale' es cutre.*"
> **Character 6:** *"¿El 'Vale' es el 'Cutre'? Pensaba que el 'Vale' era un bar gay, ¿o no estaba 'Mal' allí?"*
> **Character 2:** "*Está mal, eso es el 'No Está Mal'."*
> **Character 1:** "*Chicos, concentración.*"
> **Character 6:** "*Sí, me gusta el 'Concentración', vamos a ese.*"

This scene is, on its own, full on humoristic factors. Going back to the elements presented by Attardo and Raskin (1991), the scene contains basic humoristic elements, such as script contradiction (the bar names are words and names at the same time, creating constant contradictions), logical mechanisms (how each of them tries to surpass the difficulty of the contradictions while solving the general discussion), and a narrative structure constantly being limited by the linguistic elements. The scene shows a debate and the debate is supposed to advance, but instead it just goes in circles as the linguistic elements twist the structure creating constant loops of ambiguity due to the bar names. The translation accurately maintains both the semantic and the phonetic elements of the pun –using the same word in the second case (like the word 'okay' and the

bar's name 'okay') or using homophones (such as "where" and "were"). In the Spanish, the main tool to translate is to keep the word and use its diverse meanings. Hence, most of the words have been translated with their meaning and linguistic equivalent, but as said before, the linguistic of the scene is not the only carrier of the humour; there are many other contextual and structural elements that made this scene particularly enjoyable for most subjects, showing hence no significant differences in the rating between the two groups. Also, this scene violates Grice's (Grice, 1975) principle of cooperation, as the conversation is constantly restricted from achieving a clear end.

The other pun scene highlighted significant differences ($p < 0,01$) in the ratings:

Episode 3, Season 1 '*Sweet Taste Of Liverty':*

> **Character 1:** It's gonna be legen -wait for it (and I hope you're not lactose intolerant 'cause the second half of that word is)- dary!

In the Spanish translation:

> **Character 1:** Va a ser legen -espero que no te molestes mucho porque la segunda parte de la palabra es- dario!

In this case, the pun falls fully in the use of "dary" as "dairy" and the lactose intolerance reference, that being what holds most of the humoristic weight. However, in the Spanish version there is no joke, only the intonation and style of the utterance remains similar, but the linguistic joke is completely absent. That could be pointed as to the reason which would explain the significant differences between the two language groups.

When analysing Punchlines, we find maybe the –in theory- hardest case to translate. Punchlines use the contextual information and they turn it into a linguistic joke held by rest of the linguistic information available. Therefore, the

Punchline is fully dependant of both context, language, and linguistic context. The Punchline relies on what was said and what was being done before it was uttered, so overcoming all these elements with the translation is highly difficult. However, we found no significant differences in these scenes, and their script for the original English and the translated Spanish would be these:

Episode 15 season 6 "*Oh Honey*" (3):

> **Character 1**: "Marshall I'm going to Barleys, you want anything?"
> **Character 2**: "Mum, get off the phone!"
> **Character 3**: "Could you get some more *Bugels* please?"
> **Character 1**: "Of course, dear."
> **Character 2**: "Marcus, hang up! Both of you, hang up!... And we need ice cream."

And the Spanish translation:

> **Character 1**: "*Marshall me voy al super, ¿necesitas algo?*"
> **Character 2**: "*¡Mamá, cuelga el teléfono!*"
> **Character 3**: "*¿Podrías traer más nachos por favor?*"
> **Character 1**: "*Por supuesto, cariño.*"
> **Character 2**: "*Marcus, ¡cuelga! Los dos, ¡colgad! Y… necesitamos helado.*"

Episode 1, Season 1 (*"Pilot"*)

> **Character 1**: "Kids, I'm gonna tell you an incredible story. The story of how I met your mother"
> **Character 2**: "Are we being punished for something?"
> **Character 1**: "No."

And the Spanish translation:

> **Character 1**: "*Chicos, voy a contaros una historia increíble. La historia de cómo conocí a vuestra madre.*"
> **Character 2**: "*¿Nos estás castigando por algo?*"
> **Character 1**: "*No.*"

It is possible that, as the Punchline is linguistic context dependant, the easiest way to make sure the joke isn't lost in translation, is by creating a linguistic environment which will lead to the punchline still being funny; to surpass all the assumed "in theory" difficulties due to how this type of humour is set in scene, the solution is to adapt not only the language but the whole scene. This is what we find in both cases, meaning that the Punchline is supported by what has been said previously, and it conserves the humour. No major meaning differences are seen in the translation, in other words, the jokes have been able to be translated successfully both in their linguistic and contextual sense.

The question, then, when translating is: what are we more interested in preserving? Translating comes from the Latin word *translatus*, a word including the preposition *trans*, meaning to cross or go through, and *lātus*, meaning "carry" (Online Etymology Dictionary, 2018). Hence, to translate is to bring a something from one place to another, across something –in this way, the codes and equivalences of translation-. So, again, in this case, what piece of information do we want to maintain faithful to the original*?* Do we wish to be faithful to the purely linguistic elements that carry the joke –the word, with its limited semantics-, or to the *meaning* behind the word, where the joke is supported?

When looking into the contextual humour clips, no significant difference was found in any case when comparing the ratings of both groups. For both of the clips, the humour was solely supported by the context (such as action contradiction for one of them, or the randomness of a person coming out of a suitcase on a conveyor belt, in the other). The humour did not rely on specific linguistic elements or types of jokes, so the translation should have had no effect on them.

To demonstrate that the linguistic elements are what cause the difference in the punctuations, the comparison between groups on the linguistic dependant humour (Puns, Wordplay and Punchlines) and the contextually dependant jokes was analysed. When comparing the contextual humour jokes, there was no significant difference between the original and the translated version. However there was a significant difference (p<0,03) when comparing the average rating of the groups for the linguistic jokes. All of the prior explained would support the main hypothesis that the dubbing does have an effect on the humour rating, and that this difference, as we saw in the descriptive results and looking into how the average rating are higher in the English viewers, highlights that the originally written humour is experimented as funnier than the dubbed one. Depending on the elaboration of the joke (the semantic depth), the linguistic adaptation (the translation), and the type of joke, the loss of linguistic humour can vary.

CONCLUSIONS

To conclude, we will point initially at how humour is a very personal experience and how, even if we group people regarding their use of humour, this does not mean their understanding of humour will also be equable. This also related to how the joke is translated; maybe some people will find funnier that the meaning is preserved, while other might appreciate more that the wording is preserved. We saw that depending on how the translation is carried, the result will stay faithful to some (or all, or non) of the original elements, and this then will determine how resultant joke will be received by the watchers. Therefore linguistic humour can be translated, but with limitations. There are certain linguistic or meaning sacrifices that might need to be done, and not always will we be able to achieve a fully well adapted and translated joke.

Regarding this study and its limitations, point out that a longer time of experimenting and a bigger sample and stimuli selection would help reinforce some of the conclusions, or clear out those where the line was certainly blurry.

In future researches, this study might be relevant both for psychology and linguists (and linguist psychologists), as it highlights how the individuals context, personal experience and appreciation of humour, and the linguistic elements of the translation are all important elements in humour. Understanding how humour works could turn it into a much more valuable tool, for it might find use in teaching and learning processes in studying people's mental representations, or even in their views and understandings of linguistics -as Brône, Feyaerts and Veale (Brône, Feyaerts, & Veale, 2015) suggested, using the cognitive implications of humour we could explore and exploit its benefits-.

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ANNEX1: Clip link list

Wordplay scenes

- *Oh Honey* (1)*:*
  - English: https://youtu.be/lb37btXYXkM
  - Spanish: https://youtu.be/1n4-oVPbZOw

- *Oh Honey* (2)*:*
  - o English: https://youtu.be/x8Zyjru6Dzs
  - o Spanish https://youtu.be/7qROOMf2zPw

Pun scenes

- *Hopless:*
  - o English: https://youtu.be/23W6hUR9pS0
  - o Spanish: https://youtu.be/25FsU5A3PFc
- *Sweet Taste Of Liverty:*
  - o English: https://youtu.be/oUN8R0hKA6A
  - o Spanish: https://youtu.be/U-XoliHJmys

Punchline scenes

- *Pilot:*
  - o English: https://youtu.be/JNhfYRBA4kw
  - o Spanish: https://youtu.be/cnCnOTVGwAA
- *Oh Honey* (3)*:*
  - o English: https://youtu.be/FrZ20LTj6jU
  - o Spanish: https://youtu.be/g6wUUN5K0CA

Contextual scenes

- *Sweet Taste Of Liverty:*
  - o English: https://youtu.be/Z6FM2mdHjo4
  - o Spanish: https://youtu.be/OWMdnTfxsT4
- *Definition:*
  - o English: https://youtu.be/hRuDQpykeQw
  - o Spanish: https://youtu.be/A9_p1cm6rBg