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DEPARTAMENT DE FILOLOGIA ANGLESA I DE GERMANÍSTICA

**An Analysis of the Spanish Dubbing of *The Office*
(*American TV Series*)
Challenges of Translating Humor Based on Offensive
and Taboo Language**

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Statement of Intellectual Honesty

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Title of Assignment: An Analysis of the Spanish Dubbing of *The Office* (*American TV Series*): Challenges of Translating Humor Based on Offensive and Taboo Language

I declare that this is a totally original piece of work, written by me; all secondary sources have been correctly cited. I also understand that plagiarism is an unacceptable practise which will lead to the automatic failing of this assignment.

Signature and date: 12/06/2024

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Maria', with a large, stylized flourish extending from the end of the name.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to thank my family for their unconditional support: to my parents and my brother for always believing in me and reminding me of my worth daily, and to my dear grandmother, who has never doubted I would achieve anything I set my mind to. I would also like to thank my friends for their love, understanding, and support: thank you very much for being there and for being my source of guaranteed laughter. Finally, thanks to my tutor, Prof. Ana Fernandez, for her guidance and help in writing this paper.

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Abstract

This study examines the challenges and techniques involved in translating humor in audiovisual content, specifically through the Spanish dubbing of the American TV series *The Office*. The widespread availability of audiovisual content on the Internet, with a notable preference for North American productions, underscores the importance of dubbing and subtitles. However, Hollywood's global dominance in film and television brings cultural differences and context-dependent humor to the forefront.

Humor, though a universal cognitive and emotional experience, relies heavily on idiomatic expressions and cultural references, complicating its translation. By analyzing specific episodes of *The Office*, the study explores how translators navigate linguistic and cultural nuances to preserve comedic elements while adapting them for Spanish-speaking audiences. The research highlights the strategies employed to overcome language barriers and maintain the essence of humor, offering insights into the intricate process of humor translation in audiovisual media.

Keywords:

Humor Translation, Dubbing, *The Office* (American TV series), Offensive and Taboo Language, Context-Dependent Jokes.

List of abbreviations

AVT – Audiovisual translation

AV – Audiovisual

AD – Audio description

LE – Linguistic elements

SDH – Subtitling for deaf people

SL – Source language

ST – Source text

TL – Target language

TT – Target text

1. Introduction

This thesis analyzes the humorous elements of the original version and the Spanish dubbed version of the series *The Office (American TV Series)*, especially dealing with the offensive and taboo elements used as comedic puns. The objective of the paper is to compare these elements in the original version and the Spanish dubbing, and to analyze which strategies are used by the translator to adapt the humorously content-dependent load to a different language. This descriptive analysis aims to highlight the work that translators do in comedies, which is often similar to a screenwriter's work, as they have to rewrite many of the humorous elements of the original script to adapt them to the target language (TL).

The selection of *The Office (American TV Series)* as a case study is due to its success with the American version. Likewise, it has a large amount of humorous elements that may be of interest from the point of view of translation. The American version of *The Office* is an adaptation of a British comedy that revolves around the same plot and has the same name. Based on the BBC series created by comedian Ricky Gervais and Stephen Merchant, the sitcom was produced by Deedle-Dee Productions and Greg Daniels, first aired in 2005. Its run ended in 2013, after nine seasons.

The general aim of this paper is to analyze how humor is translated from English to Spanish and what existing strategies are used to achieve a trustworthy context-dependent translation. The interest in the analysis of Spanish dubbing rises from the fact that the Spanish subtitled version does not exist as such, since it is merely a transcription of Xosé Castro and Juan Antonio Arroyo's dubbed version.

For this purpose, I have selected a set of short dialogues from two episodes of each season of the series in order to evaluate the preferred translation strategies when dubbing, and, in a way, establish a classification for the translation of humorous elements.

Additionally, using episodes from different years has proven to be useful in determining whether there has been a significant evolution in humor or its translation throughout the years of broadcast and seasons.

To achieve these objectives, the paper is divided into different sections. The first section focuses on the history of audiovisual translation and provides an overview of the main translation and humor studies, particularly those related to the dubbing process and the challenges of translating multilingual humor. This is followed by the presentation of the methodology used and the analysis of the techniques and strategies employed to adapt the humorous elements in each case study.

2. Literature Review

This section presents the background, main theories, and concepts that support the analysis of this paper. To further elaborate on the theoretical framework, this essay encompasses the evolution of audiovisual translation (AVT) studies, as well as its impact on the translation of specific elements, such as humor. Furthermore, this section addresses previous studies on the techniques and strategies adopted by translators, with a particular focus on their relevance in adapting comedic elements.

Nowadays, AVT studies and interest have shifted towards more specialized areas, as opposed to the initial broad focus on linguistic, technical, and translational aspects. The majority of published studies on this subject take the form of descriptive case studies that explore the portrayal of humor in dubbing and subtitling. Consequently, when it comes to genres, the analyzed products predominantly revolve around instances involving humor. Previous case studies have attempted to explore and describe the strategies employed to convey specific aspects of this intricate phenomenon, which deviates from the language and cultures in which the product was originally conceived. These studies attempt to explain the challenges inherent in translating humor, comprehend the reasons

behind the chosen approach, and evaluate the choices that ultimately determine the success or failure of the translation.

2.1. Audiovisual Translation

In a century where electronic devices allow instant access to information, there is a growing interest in audiovisual content. Díaz-Cintas and Remael (2021) define Audiovisual Translation (AVT) as a professional practice that emerged with the arrival of cinema in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. However, it was not until the mid-1990s that it started to gain popularity and recognition. As a subfield of Translation Studies (TS), AVT involves the transfer of multimedia and multimodal texts into another language and culture. While AVT initially occupied a peripheral position, Díaz-Cintas asserts that “there has been a tremendous quantitative boom in recent decades, both in the production of audiovisual translation and in research into this field” (2012, p.280). According to this author, this growth can be attributed to advancements in technology and the recognition of cinema as an art.

The need to provide access to foreign audiovisual content for non-proficient speakers made AVT a critical professional practice in content distribution. Despite AVT being a long-established practice for over 80 years now, it has played a significant role in meeting the increasing demand for accessible film products in numerous countries worldwide (Perego, 2014, p.9). The integration of the Internet into every aspect of our lives, the abundance of content on these online platforms, and the linguistic barriers that need to be overcome are some of the factors contributing to the growing popularity of AVT. According to Gambier (2008), there is a key year for the recognition of AVT as a discipline: 1995. The commemoration of the centenary of cinema, the emergence of linguistic minorities, and the technological boom brought attention to AVT studies. Furthermore, the internationalization of distribution, deregulation, and the establishment

of copyright have also affected AVT, leading to a significant transformation in the production, distribution, and consumption of audiovisual (AV) products. Despite being considered aesthetically inferior to literary works, AVT has gained rapid recognition, and the number of studies and conferences on AVT has experienced a dramatic increase since 1999 (Gambier, 2004, p. 14).

The advancement and evolution of technology have facilitated the emergence of methods to enhance accessibility of textual content. These methods include the more common practices of dubbing and subtitling, as well as to less widespread practices such as voiceover, narration, commentary, or audio description (AD) for the visually impaired, and subtitling for the hearing-impaired (SDH) (Diaz-Cintas & Anderman, 2009, p.2).

Once AVT has been established and assigned a clear role within the field of translation studies as a university discipline, it has gathered interest from both practitioners and scholars seeking to understand its mechanisms. Many scholars have started dissecting its various properties, initially placing emphasis on broad linguistic and technical aspects. However, the growing need to explore more specific areas has accentuated the acknowledgement of humor as one of these particularly challenging domains (Perego, 2014, p.10).

There are over 7000 distinct languages in the world. From this fact, two potentially compatible conclusions can be drawn: linguistic diversity can either enrich human communication, or complicate it. When it comes to humor, it appears to be a preoccupation with words, even though humor encompasses more than just words, particularly in audiovisual formats (Chiaro, 2014, p.17). Technically, before being able to translate humor it might be necessary to understand what humor is. The complexity of this phenomenon complicates the establishment of a simple definition.

Humor is inherently a cognitive and emotional phenomenon. The cognitive aspect of humor involves the perception of incongruity, which is a mental process labeled by Koestler (1964) as “bisociation.” Bisociation occurs when two contradictory images of the same object or situation are simultaneously held in one's mind. However, it is important to note that not all forms of incongruity are humorous. To be considered humorous, something must be accompanied by a non-serious and playful attitude, where things are viewed as relatively unimportant or trivial within a “play frame” (Koestler, 1964, in Chiaro, 2014, p.17). The emotional aspect of humor involves triggering a specific positive affective response, a series of feel-good factors, referred to as “exhilaration” (Ruch, 1998, in Chiaro, 2014, p.18).

Furthermore, it can be argued that humor is a spontaneous and social phenomenon that occurs during personal interactions. As a result, wordplay, which is examined in this study, is expected to be the least common form of humor expressed verbally in everyday reality (Chiaro, 2014, p.18). This is primarily because it relies on jokes structured with ‘puns’ that are intended to cause laughter in the audience.

Therefore, the translation of humor possesses distinct characteristics in relation to other translatable elements. Consequently, a general translation framework is insufficient for analyzing humor in depth. Firstly, and most importantly, translation is directly linked to its reliance on the original culture: humor is culture-dependent. Therefore, audiovisual humor represents one of the most challenging aspects to translate, as the translator must contend with the aforementioned requirements, as well as other limitations outlined in section 2.2.

2.2. General Translation Strategies

Gottlieb (1998, p.244) states that within the entire variety of AVT methods, two approaches prevail: subtitling and dubbing. Subtitling involves providing a written

translation of the dialogue at the bottom of the screen. On the other hand, dubbing is an AVT mode that involves replacing the original audio track of an audiovisual product, which contains the source language (SL) dialogues, with a new track with the translated dialogues in the TL (TL). Chaume (2021, p.210) further elaborates on the main features of the dubbing process noting that it is a form of translation that tends to domesticize the source material, especially when compared to subtitling. However, despite its advantages, dubbing results in a loss of authenticity. This is because certain elements, such as the characters' personalities, are missed due to the inaccurate conveyance of stress and intonation. This highlights the crucial role of the translator, which not only requires the translation of words, but also the adaptation of the dialogues to gestures and lip movements.

According to Chaume (2021, p.215) the comprehensive list of dubbing standards is as follows:

- **Lip synchronization and voice casting strategies**

Lip-sync dubbing aims to synchronize the translated dialogue with the lip movements of the actors on screen. The objective of translators is to ensure that the translated dialogue matches the timing, tempo, and lip movement of the original dialogue. Adequate lip-sync is one of the quality standards that can have a huge impact on viewer reception.

- **Cultural localization**

Cultural localization involves adapting the content to reflect the cultural norms, values, and references of the target audience. This may include replacing culturally specific references with equivalents that are more familiar to the target audience. Heiss (2014) argues that viewers accustomed to film dubbing are willing to accept this illusion, even though they are aware that a large proportion of the production they are watching is of foreign origin.

- **Script adaptation**

The translator may modify the original dialogue to better fit the cultural context and linguistic nuances of the target audience. This may involve altering jokes, idiomatic expressions, cultural references, and other elements to make them more relevant and understandable to the target audience. The challenge lies in finding a balanced adaptation that remains faithful to the original meaning and intention of the dialogue. Therefore, the main objective of dubbing is not to translate the dialogue but to “create the illusion that the actors are speaking the language of the target audience” (Denton & Chiampi, 2012, p.404).

The classification of translation techniques proposed by Molina and Hurtado’s (2002, p.509-511) has been proven to be useful and extensive:

- **Adaptation:** the replacement of the cultural element in the source text with one from the target culture. It also involves adapting the pronunciation and morphology of words or phrases from the SL to the TL. This technique is used when dealing with community-related issues.
- **Compensation:** when there is a loss of meaning or effect in a part of the ST, it is restored in the TT. This is usually done because it cannot be reflected in the same place as in the original text.
- **Explicitation:** the explanation of an implicit element in the ST in the TT, usually to bridge cultural differences. The use of this strategy depends on the relevance of the implicit information in the ST is in the TT.
- **Generalization:** the substitution of a specific element in the ST with a more general one in the TT.
- **Modulation:** a change in perspective in the ST to achieve a more idiomatic expression in the TT.

- **Neutralization:** the replacement of a “cultureme” in the SL with an element that is not specific to any culture. A “cultureme” refers to a “cultural information-bearing unit,” a cultural expression recognized by a group of people.
- **Omission:** the deletion of elements in the TT because they are considered to have a different effect than in the ST.
- **Particularization:** the substitution of a more general element in the SL with one that has a more specific meaning in the TL.
- **Reduction:** the simplification of the content of the ST in the TT, usually because it is believed that the removed information is not necessary for the target reader to understand the text.
- **Free translation:** the replacement of semantic formants with different ones based on criteria related to the macrostructure of the text. This strategy is often used in movie and book titles.
- **Literal translation:** a word-for-word translation of the ST, usually, done to convey what was literally written in the ST for easier understanding.
- **Transcription:** the transfer of proper names to the TT without any modification. This is commonly done with place names, gastronomic names, movie titles, among others.
- **Transposition:** the change of the grammatical category of a word in the ST.
- **Variation:** the change of paralinguistic elements (gestures, intonation) or linguistic elements, that depend on aspects of linguistic variation.

2.3. Humor and Translation

As we have previously mentioned, translators often prioritize either the source text (SL-oriented approach or foreignization) or the target audience (TL-oriented approach or domestication). According to Venuti’s (1995) approach, domestication refers to the

strategy of replacing cultural references with target culture ones, while foreignization involves retaining culturally marked elements in the target text (TT).

When it comes to humorous elements, they typically involve linguistic elements (LE) that aim to produce a comedic effect, through jokes, wordplays, or puns. In order to preserve the original effects and intentions of the source text (ST), translators should aim to adapt the culture-specific terms – unknown to the target audience – rather than creating a word-for-word equivalence. To strike a balance between the ST and the TT, translators must conduct a thorough analysis to determine the most suitable translation strategy, taking into consideration the overall approach to the text, as well as the specific techniques to be employed for individual units of the text.

2.3.1. Humorous Elements

In order to reach a comprehensive understanding of humorous elements and its potential to become a pun, Martínez Sierra (2004) proposed the establishment of a classification of these elements:

Firstly, there are elements pertaining to the community and institutions. These references are culturally dependent and have specific origins within a particular community. They can be further categorized into two types: intralinguistic elements, which are rooted in the language itself (e.g. sayings, idioms, idiomatic expressions, etc.), and extralinguistic elements, which refer to cultural aspects of the community (e.g. movies, newspapers, television programs or channels, food brands, famous people, institutions, politicians).

Secondly, there are elements related to the community's sense of humor. These elements revolve around topics that are perceived as more humorous within specific communities, as they are dependent on the reality in which the community exists. For instance, the way certain individuals speak within a community can be humorous when

understood within that specific context. The third category consist of linguistic elements. Humor derived from these elements is based on language-related aspects. This category encompasses wordplays and puns.

Lastly, there are unmarked humorous elements. These have the ability to generate humor without being attributed to any of the aforementioned categories. For example, the ignorance or ugliness of a character may contribute to the comedic effect.

2.3.2. Specific Translation Strategies of Wordplay and Puns

Some puns have been classified as untranslatable due to the difficulty of translating a linguistic structure that only exists in the language in which it is produced. In other words, the TL sometimes has different linguistic structures compared to the SL and, therefore, in some cases, it may not be possible to accurately translate the pun. Therefore, when it comes to translating puns or jokes in audiovisual works, more specific techniques are taken into consideration. Within the field of translation studies, the term “equivalence” is used to describe the relationship of similarity between the ST and the TT. Equivalence refers to the replacement of the ST (or textual material in one language) with an equivalent textual material in another language, which produces the same humorous effect.

Other translators view translation as the process of mapping aspects from one language to another. The task involves connecting the message of the ST with the minds of the target audience. In other words, a target text-oriented approach is favoured, where the aim is to create a desired effect on the target audience. To achieve this effect on the target audience, the typology for the translation of puns differs (Delabastita, 1996, p.134). Delabastita has developed a model specifically focused on the translation of puns. This model identifies different translation techniques that can be employed when translating puns.

- **Pun → Same Pun:** reproduction in the TT of the wordplay in the ST.
- **Pun → Other Pun:** translation of the wordplay in the ST into the TT. In both wordplays have semantic differences.
- **Pun → Non-pun:** the wordplay in the SL is replaced by an expression in the TL that conveys the meaning but lacks humor. The objective is to preserve the meaning while sacrificing the humorous aspect, which is completely lost.
- **Non-pun → Pun:** a completely new pun is created in the TT. Generally, the goal is to compensate for those times when puns have had to be omitted.

2.4.The Translation of Humor Based on Offensive and Taboo Language

Depending on the speaker's context, various registers are utilized in order to adapt the speech to a specific subject or social setting. In observing the adjustment of word choice to the context, it becomes evident that there exists a range of levels, each serving a distinct purpose. The formal register, referred to as 'literary'; the intermediate register, known as 'common'; and finally, the lowest register, called 'colloquial'. The present study focuses on colloquial language, encompassing slang, offensive and taboo terms, as well as other words belonging to a low register.

Taboo is an old concept, and within specific cultures, certain taboo words are considered to be 'off-limits' due to their association with religious, sexual, and racial topics. It is crucial to understand that every culture has its own way of dealing with offensive language. For instance, it may be incomprehensible for Western cultures to comprehend that swearing in moments of anger, surprise, or shock is considered offensive to Native Americans, Japanese, or Malaysians (Ávila-Cabrera, 2023, p.44).

Ávila-Cabrera (2023, p.45) asserts that words possess the ability to influence the recipient, and their impact can be categorized based on their intended effect: insulting, offending, vilifying, and so forth, or they may simply be more or less welcome depending

on the recipient's culture, age, context, and other factors. According to Wajnryb's (2005, p.19) terminological description, the term 'foul language' would perfectly embody this sense of inappropriateness in social language, thereby giving rise to a new confusion related to form and function: the same word, semantically similar, yet pragmatically different, may be employed in a repetitive manner.

“Offensive language refers to those linguistic terms or expressions made up of swearwords, expletives, etc., which are normally considered derogatory and/or insulting [and] taboo language is related to terms that are not considered appropriate or acceptable with regard to the context, culture, language and/or medium where they are uttered” (Ávila-Cabrera, 2016, p.28)

Offensive language may cause discomfort to certain individuals within specific contexts, but this reaction is subjective and not universally shared.

Ávila-Cabrera illustrates this notion through a compelling example involving the words 'motherfucker' and 'have sex' (2023, p.46). The former is an insult, and, consequently, it can be considered an offensive term. However, some may argue that it can also be considered taboo due to its sexual connotation. The same happens with the term 'have sex', it could be considered taboo or not.

2.4.1. Classification of Offensive and Taboo Terms

As Ávila-Cabrera illustrates, there exists a significant intersection between the categories of offensive and taboo, making it quite challenging to categorize these terms into a single category. This paper follows the distinction between the two main categories of offensive and taboo terms, as well as their respective subcategories, as outlined in Ávila-Cabrera's (2023, p.46) taxonomic framework, which is presented in the following table.

Category	Subcategory
Offensive	Curse/Threat/violence
	Expletive
	Insult
	Invective
	Swearing
	Swear words/phrases
Taboo	Drugs/excessive alcohol consumption
	Filth/urination/scatology
	Profanity/blasphemy
	Sex

Table 1. Taxonomy of offensive and taboo terms

The categorization of offensive terms deals with terms that can be used to insult, threaten, express emotions, or simply utter swear words/phrases. In the following paragraphs, I will illustrate Ávila-Cabrera’s taxonomy of offensive and taboo terms, with examples extracted from the case study series.

- **Cursing** refers to the use of threatening and violent language to cause fear and harm, which tends to be offensive, as in “Hey, I just think you should know that one of my salesmen beat your *stupid* computer. So, take that *ass******” (*The Office*, Season 4 Episode 6).
- **Expletives** are exclamatory swear words used in emotional situations to express anger, frustration, joy, and surprise. They are not directed at anyone in particular. In *The Office* the expletives ‘fuck’ and ‘shit!’ are recurrent elements; however, they are censored in most seasons.
- **Insults** are words that are intended to offend the person being addressed. “Welcome back *jerky jerk-face*.” (*The Office*, Season 5 Episode 8). It sometimes includes the category of death, as in “If I had a gun, with two bullets, and I was in a room with Hitler, Bin Laden and Toby, *I would shoot Toby twice*” (*The Office*, Season 6 Episode 25).

- **Invectives** are subtle insults used in a formal context to conceal the offensive nature of the word or phrase. They serve as insults rather than swear words, allowing the speaker to show disrespect towards someone without using more direct words. “Toby is in HR which technically means he works for corporate. So he’s really not a part of our family. Also, he’s divorced, so *he’s really not a part of his family*” (*The Office*, Season 2 Episode 2).
- **Swearing** can be categorized into two forms: formal and informal. Formal swearing is a social ritual of compliance and obligation, and there are certain concepts considered sacred when swearing. “If I am fired, *I swear to God* that every single piece of paper in this town is going to have the F-word on it” (*The Office*, Season 3 Episode 20).
- **Swear** words and phrases are vulgar words that can be used for the same purpose as expletives. “I don't know *what the fuck* that was” (*The Office*, Season 7 Episode 10).

The taboo language category concerns the various subcategories described as follows:

- **Drugs and excessive alcohol consumption** can be considered taboo topic. *The Office* depicts the character of Meredith, an alcoholic worker whose addiction affects her job performance and puts herself in danger on several occasions by lighting her hair on fire (Season 5 Episode 11).
- **Expressions related to filth, urination and scatology** can be unwelcome. Due to the need to avoid direct description, multiple euphemistic formulas are used: “I like to go in the women’s room for *number two*” (*The Office*, Season 3 Episode 2).
- **Profanity** can refer to mentioning religious figures in vain, while blasphemy can be considered an insult directed towards the aforementioned figures.

- **Sexuality and sex** are surrounded by a display of social norms, religious restrictions, and moral taboos. An example of sexual references in *The Office* are the recurrent “*That’s what she said*” puns. However, the character of Todd Packer perfectly embodies the taboo topics encompassed in the concept of sexuality: homophobia, sexism, misogyny, and sexual harassment.

2.4.2. Treatment of Offensive and Taboo Language in AVT

The translation of offensive and taboo language is often a controversial and challenging task for dubbers and subtitlers. They must carefully consider the impact that these words may have on the target audience. Just as speakers modulate their language style according to their audience, dubbers also need to do the same.

Allan and Burridge (2006, p.1) discuss different language styles when dealing with different taboo words: orthophemism, euphemism, and dysphemism. These language styles help either to intensify or tone down the translation of offensive and taboo language. Dysphemism entails the substitution of a non-offensive term for an offensive one; orthophemism involves the use of a more formal term whose content lacks offensive connotations; and euphemism entails the exchange of a taboo term for an acceptable term.

Dysphemism	Orthophemism	Euphemism
Take a piss	Urine	Go to the bathroom
Mear	Orinar	Ir al lavabo

Table 2. Examples of dysphemism, orthophemism, and euphemism (Ávila-Cabrera, 2023 p.51)

In terms of appropriateness or offensiveness, Ávila-Cabrera (2023, p. 51) states that these factors depend on several variables, such as the context, the social class of the speaker, age, gender, culture, among others. This implies that the dubber must assess the impact of the terms on the target culture before making a decision. Moreover, it is important to note that English and Spanish possess distinct linguistic systems for dealing with offensive and taboo language. For instance, in the series, we observe the translation

of the phrase “Little bastards” translated into Spanish as “Cabrones” (*The Office*, Season 1 Episode 2), which proves that dubbing offensive and taboo language into Spanish requires different strategies depending on the conversational, but also, cultural context.

3. Methodology

The sitcom *The Office*, which is the subject of this analysis, was originally produced in American English. Due to its success when first broadcasted in 2005, the episodes have been both dubbed and subtitled into several languages. For the purposes of this dissertation, a parallel corpus consisting of English as the SL and Spanish as the TL was used.

The selection of this series for analysis is justified by its popularity and recognized sense of humor. Despite its original run ended in 2013, it remains available on platforms such as Prime Video, which is famously known to have millions of subscribers. Regarding the Spanish audience, *The Office (American TV Series)* can be watched in the original version, dubbed in Spanish, and with subtitles in both English and Spanish. The focus of this dissertation is to analyze the Spanish dubbing in comparison to the original English version.

The analysis has been carried out by watching the entire TV series with the original audio, looking for potential fragments that reflect the most common problems translators tend to encounter when translating humorous elements. It is important to mention that all of these fragments are useful because they deal with aspects mentioned in the theoretical part (sections 2.2 and 2.3). Therefore, using a descriptive methodology, the aim is to document certain categories of humor in translation and to analyze the translation techniques and strategies used to maintain humor in the European Spanish dubbed version.

The practical analysis is organized in the following tables:

Original version text
Context
Category/Subcategory of humor
Dubbed version text
Strategies

Table 3. Table utilized for the analysis of the episodes

Each of the tables has an identification number and contains information about the chapter and season, along with context clarification and strategies or techniques used in the translation process. Moreover, after the table, there is a commentary that starts with a general approach and then moves into a specific analysis of the corpus and each dialogue or interaction. Both problems presented and techniques used by the translators are discussed in this subsection, always taking into consideration the difficulty of translating culturally-dependent jokes, especially when dealing with offensive and taboo puns.

4. Discussion and Results

4.1. Synopsis of the American TV Series *The Office*

The Office (American TV Series) is a sitcom produced by Deedle-Dee Productions and created by Greg Daniels. It is based on the BBC series *The Office* created by comedian Ricky Gervais and Stephen Merchant. The episodes are approximately 20 minutes long, and it was first broadcast on television in 2005 until 2013. The plot revolves around the everyday work lives of employees at a paper distribution office in Scranton, Pennsylvania, named Dunder Mifflin Paper Company.

The regional manager, Michael Scott, tries to portray himself as an exemplary figure who is loved by all his employees. Despite being fictional, the show is filmed in a mockumentary style, giving it a documentary format with comedic elements. This allows the audience to get to know all the employees of the Scranton office, including Michael Scott, Dwight Schrute, Jim Halpert, and Pam Beesly. After watching a few episodes, it becomes clear that Michael Scott is an oblivious character, who is completely unaware of his offensive comments that turn his employees off rather than making them laugh. Michael awkward jokes and forced situations reveal him to be a childish person with no interest in maintaining a formal work environment.

In short, the mockumentary presents the daily routine of this unique office and its members. All situations are filled with dark humor, and comedy, often pushing the boundaries of what is considered acceptable. Additionally, since the series is filmed as if a camera team is recording it, the main feature of the show is the fourth-wall breaking, which creates a sense of viewer involvement in the life within *The Office*.

4.2. Analysis and Discussion

This section will analyze the translation methods and strategies used by the translators of *The Office (America TV Series)*, along with the possible problems or inconsistencies when dealing with humor based on taboo and offensive language.

Even though puns and cultural references revolve around humor, the discussion focuses on how offensive and taboo elements are presented as comedic puns, and how these elements are translated while maintaining the pun for the target audience.

Season One, Episode “Pilot”

The first episode of the series, introduces Michael Scott, the regional manager of the Scranton branch of Dunder Mifflin. Through a mockumentary style, we are introduced to the employees of Dunder Mifflin's Scranton branch.

Source text	
Michael: Packman.	
Todd Packer: Hey, you <i>big queen</i> .	
Michael: Oh, that's not appropriate.	
Todd Packer: Hey, is <i>old Godzillary</i> coming in today?	
Michael: Uh, I don't know what you mean.	
Todd Packer: I've been meaning to ask her one question. <i>Does the carpet match the drapes?</i>	
Context	
The distribution company is currently in jeopardy of downsizing, prompting the arrival of Jan Levinson, the Vice President of Northeast Sales, to rebuke Michael. While they are talking, Todd Packer calls Michael, who puts him on speakerphone, and Todd proceeds to make a series of offensive comments of a sexual nature about his boss. In order to understand the interaction, it is important to know that Michael has previously referred to Jan as “Hillary Rodham Clinton.”	
Category/Subcategory of humor	
Linguistic element: Invective and taboo expression concerning the color of a woman’s pubic hair.	
Audiovisual translation	
Michael: Hola, Packman.	
Todd Packer: Hola, <i>amor mío</i> .	
Michael: Déjalo, no es el momento.	
Todd Packer: Oye, ¿no iba a pasarse hoy <i>la vieja Godzilla</i> ?	
Michael: No sé de qué me hablas.	
Todd Packer: Quería hacerte una preguntita. <i>¿Tendrá teñido el felpudo?</i>	
Translation strategies	
Generalization and modulation	
Pun → Other Pun	Maintaining humorous pun

Table 4. Fragment analysis of season 1, episode 1

In this first example, we can observe a series of predetermined phrases for certain humorous situations, which are expressed differently in each language. This suggests that the sense and meaning can be transferred from the ST to the TT without losing the essence of the message being conveyed.

In relation to the expression “*Does the carpet match the drapes?*,” the translator faces a straightforward task as there already exists an expression in the target language to render the source language. The choice to avoid a literal translation approach is wise, as I believe the humorous wordplay would have been missed by the target audience.

However, other phrases in this interaction are modulated, which, in my opinion, leads to the loss of a hilarious and witty dialogue. Firstly, the first intervention by Todd Packer in the entire series – who frequently says something stupidly macho, sexist, or homophobic – says “*Hey you, big queen,*” which in Spanish is translated as “*Hola, amor mío.*” Originally, the term “queen” is usually used with disparaging intent and perceived as insulting when referencing to a gay man, especially one considered effeminate. Michael's response stating that the comment is “not appropriate” reveals how Todd Packer's comment is inappropriate not only in the work environment but also extremely offensive to the LGBT community. Meanwhile, the transfer to Spanish lacks the homophobic undertone: a man telling another man “amor mío” is somewhat sarcastic, taking into account the context of the series. Nonetheless, it is generally an addition made to something said to a person whom one loves, to lovingly remind them of that love. Taking into account our current context and the state of globalization in which we find ourselves, I would propose a different translation based on a literal translation: “¡Reina!” or “¡hola, reinona!” The term “reinona” in Spanish implies the act of disguising oneself as a woman in a very striking way (SRAE, n.d); nonetheless, Spanish Generation Z has taken this word as a representation of the community, in the same way as American Generation Z has done. Therefore, both terms could currently be used as synonyms.

I would like to conclude this discussion by addressing the translation of the “*old Godzillary*” pun. The very clever play on words between Godzilla and Hillary Clinton is partially lost in the Spanish translation. Previously, as I point out in context, Michael

makes a comment regarding Jan, referring to her as Hillary Rodham Clinton (which can be freely interpreted depending on the viewer and their political tastes), which in Spanish is brilliantly translated as Hillary “rara” Clinton by allusion to the phonetic pronunciation of “Rodham.” However, unlike the American version, the Spanish translation does not maintain this joke when Todd Packer refers to her as “Godzilla” without adding the suffix “-ry,” referring to an imaginary woman who is half Japanese monster and half First Lady of the USA, which, personally, is a hilarious mental image.

Season One, Episode “Diversity Day”

Dunder Mifflin Scranton branch faces a diversity training session after Michael Scott's inappropriate impersonation of a Chris Rock routine during a previous company event. The episode begins with the arrival of Mr. Brown, a representative from the corporate office, to conduct the training. Feeling undermined, Michael decides to run his own diversity seminar, which leads to a series of uncomfortable and offensive moments.

<p style="text-align: center;">Source text</p> <p>Michael: Why don't we just defer to <i>Mr.</i>, um—</p> <p>Mr. Brown: <i>Mr. Brown</i></p> <p>Michael: Ah...Oh...Alright. Okay, first test. I will not call you that.</p> <p>Mr Brown: Well, it's my name. It's not a test, okay?</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Context</p> <p>The representative attempts to take control again. Michael asks his name, and when he reveals that it's “Mr. Brown,” Michael thinks it's a trick to see if he will call a black man Mr. Brown.</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Category/Subcategory of humor</p> <p>Elements about the community or national humor.</p> <p>Invective.</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Audiovisual translation</p> <p>Michael: ¿Qué tal si dejamos...al <i>muchacho</i>?</p> <p>Mr Brown: ¡<i>Señor Brown!</i></p> <p>Michael: Ah, claro. Vale, <i>entendido. No debo decirte “muchacho.”</i></p>

Mr Brown: <i>No me gusta la sorna</i> , ¿de acuerdo?	
Translation strategies	
Free translation, omission, and literal translation (maintenance of the neologism)	
Pun → Non- Pun	Lost humorous pun

Table 5. Fragment analysis of season 1, episode 2

In this passage, two aspects are being called into question. On the one hand, we have the inconsistency of Michael's initial intervention. On the one hand, the translator's decision is poorly understood, as even the ellipses are not worded according to the expression in oral or written language. Moreover, considering Mr. Brown's initial intervention, which already includes the term “señor,” it is unclear why “muchacho” is used in the preceding and following lines, as it prevents the reader from understanding the sentence.

On the other hand, the issue of a national inside joke involving the surname “Brown” arises. The Spanish public is familiar with this term, which is why it is understood that the translator chooses to maintain the neologism in the Spanish translation. However, this passage lacks of humorous impact: it loses meaning when the reader takes a few seconds to understand the humor and has to relate it to the scene, assuming that understanding actually occurs. Therefore, the use of a better strategy, such as adaption, could have been a more suitable choice. For instance, the adaptation to the surname “Negro” would make much more sense in Spanish and immediately capture the public's attention.

Similarly, the use of omission strategy is employed to avoid the allusion of Michael's comment referring to the fact that his last name is part of some joke or test to make him engage in the game with his intolerant comments. In my view, a literal translation could have been adopted, and it would look something like this:

Michael: ¿Qué tal si dejamos al *señor*...?

Mr. Brown: *Señor Negro*

Michael: Ah, claro. Entendido, *primera prueba. No te llamaré así.*

Mr Brown: Bueno, es mi nombre. *No es ninguna prueba.*

The wordplay remains unchanged, and the allusion to the fact that Mr. Brown's racial identity as a black man and his surname which includes a reference to his skin color is quickly understood. Little contemplation is required, given the comedic nature of the series: the surname "Negro" does not exist in Spanish, but that is precisely what elicits amusement. Additionally, this would explain Michael's subsequent references to the "false last name" and the alleged "test" throughout the remainder of the episode.

Season Two, Episode "Sexual harassment"

Michael Scott's "best friend," Todd Packer, offends the staff by spreading crude gossip about an upper management scandal. In response, Toby Flenderson informs Michael that he will be conducting a review of the company's sexual harassment policies due to allegations made against the CEO by his secretary, which ultimately led to his resignation.

Source text
Todd Packer: And then, suddenly, for no reason, this <i>bimbo</i> blows the whistle on the whole thing <i>just to be a bitch.</i>
Context
In this scene, Todd Packer, who is spending the day in the office, informs Michael of the latest company gossip: a female coworker who has revealed her relationship with a senior company official.
Category/Subcategory of humor
Intralinguistic element that refers to an offensive term that intends to insult.
Audiovisual translation
Todd Packer: Y de pronto un día, sin motivo aparente, la <i>gilipollas</i> se lo cuenta a todo el mundo <i>simplemente para darle a él por el culo.</i>

Translation strategies	
Reduction and omission	
Pun → Other Pun	Humorous pun not found

Table 6. Fragment analysis of season 2, episode 2

In the second chapter of this season, the majority of Michael and Todd's interventions are offensive, specifically, targeting women in a sexist manner. The interventions do not seem to provide comedic relief, but rather they create discomfort. Todd Packer, the interlocutor, uses gossip as a form of humor, relying on intolerant, sexist, and homophobic remarks. They describe all women as “stupid,” particularly targeting a female coworker who has disclosed her relationship with a high-ranking company official.

Two interesting aspects of translation can be discussed from this discourse. However, first of all, it is important to note that the term “bimbo” as “a young woman considered to be attractive but not intelligent” (Cambridge Dictionary, n.d.) does not have an equivalent in Spanish, as it is an intralinguistic element (also known as a national joke).

It is important to note that following Todd's comment, Michael intervenes to comment how the mockumentary editors will be forced to censor Todd's profanity and use of offensive language by adding numerous bleeps. In this case, the translator anticipates Michael's intervention and uses it as a justification to translate “bimbo” as “gilipollas” and “just to be a bitch” as “simplemente para darle a él por el culo.” Michael's statement is a justification to aggravate the insults expressed by Todd Packer.

Some may argue that while the specific terms differ between English and Spanish, the translator has chosen culturally equivalent expressions that convey a similar level of insult. However, the excessive use of profanity in the translation creates a more aggressive impact compared to the original text, which contains fewer swear words. Consequently, the translation could be reconsidered, although finding an equivalent solution would be

challenging. Ávila-Cabrera (2023, p. 51) points out that “English and Spanish possess distinct linguistic systems for dealing with offensive and taboo language,” which makes it difficult to find a term that encompasses both the “pretty” and “dumb” aspects of the term “bimbo.” Some alternative options with a less aggressive tone could include “tonta” (or its diminutive form, “tontita”), “cabeza hueca,” or even the use of the neologism “Barbie,” which is sometimes used to describe a “young, stylized, and attractive woman who pays a great attention to her appearance.” (DRAE, n.d).

On the other hand, the translation “simplemente para darle a él por el culo” is rather complex and obscure. To maintain the argument of using a vulgar term to justify subsequent *bleeps*, the phrase “simplemente para joderle” would be more appropriate, as it better aligns with the colloquial language used by the target audience.

<p style="text-align: center;">Source text</p> <p>Darryl: Well, those are some awful tight pants you have on. Where did you get'em, like, <i>Queers 'R' Us</i>?</p> <p>Roy: <i>Boys 'R' Us</i>.</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Context</p> <p>In this scene, Michael, outraged by the arrival of company lawyers at his office, goes out in search of the warehouse guys as it is “time to bring out the big guns” to find “a killer joke that will just blow everyone away at this seminar later.” However, to his surprise, he gets mocked by the warehouse workers.</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Category/Subcategory of humor</p> <p>The linguistic elements used are international jokes based on language-related aspects.</p> <p>Use of invectives to subtle insult in a formal context to conceal the offensive nature of calling someone “gay.”</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Audiovisual translation</p> <p>Darryl: Bueno tío, esos pantalones que llevas te quedan super apretados. ¿Dónde te los has comprador, en “<i>Mariconald's</i>”?</p> <p>Roy: <i>En “Bur-gay King”</i></p>

Translation strategies	
Adaptation and neutralization	
Pun → Other Pun	Maintaining humorous pun

Table 7. Fragment analysis of season 2, episode 2

The episode titled “Sexual Harassment” has demonstrated a remarkable abundance of linguistic and offensive wordplay, particularly revolving around homophobic and sexist slurs. This is the reason for choosing both case study from this specific episode. The intervention performed by Darryl and Roy can be unequivocally categorized as an offensive joke targeted at individuals identifying as homosexuals.

As previously mentioned, the term “queen” is commonly used in the United States to describe effeminate homosexual men. In contrast to the analysis presented in Table 1, the substitution of the message conveyed in the ST as “reinona” in the TT would not have the desired humorous pun in this particular context. The use of other options such as the terms “marica” or “gay” are more appropriate for this particular case.

It is very interesting to observe the adaptation undertaken by the translators in the target text. The process of replacing a “cultureme” in the ST with an element that lacks cultural specificity is referred to as neutralization. Essentially, the translators have taken a popular entity in the United States, such as the Toys “R” Us company that sells toys, clothes, and baby products, and adapted it into universally recognized companies, such as McDonald’s and Burger King.

However, it seems that this adaptation may not be deemed appropriate since, while Toys “R” Us does sell clothing, McDonald's and Burger King are fast food chains. From an objective standpoint, the comic wordplay remains intact as the offensive term is still conveyed. Furthermore, it is my belief that the target audience would likely be intrigued by the surreal nature of this situation, possibly prompting the acceptance of it. The clever wordplay with “Mariconald's” and “Bur-gay King” demonstrates considerable

thoughtfulness, to the extent that I would venture to suggest that the latter could potentially resonate with an English-speaking audience, particularly due to its phonetic pronunciation.

Season Three, Episode “Gay Witch Hunt”

After referring to Oscar's cinematic tastes as “faggy,” Michael discovers that Oscar takes offense to the word because he is homosexual. While trying to apologize, Michael accidentally reveals Oscar's sexual orientation to the entire office.

Source text	
Michael: I bet lots of straight men wish that applied to them. So they could go out there and have some <i>torrid, unabashed, monkey sex</i> . As much as they could	
Context	
After forcing Oscar to come out, Michael organizes a meeting in the conference room to calm nerves and stop discriminatory comments towards Oscar. However, he makes it worse by making sexual comments about the promiscuity of the community.	
Category/Subcategory of humor	
Offensive and taboo topic: homosexual sex compared to animal sex.	
Audiovisual translation	
Michael: Seguro que a muchos heterosexuales les gustaría que se les aplicara a ellos y así <i>practicar el sexo como animales y a lo loco</i> .	
Translation strategies	
Adaptation and modulation	
Pun → Other Pun	Maintaining humorous pun

Table 8. Fragment analysis of season 3, episode 1

The selection of this excerpt is not due to the difficulty of translation, but rather as an example of an offensive situation (and even taboo, considering that it occurs in a workspace) that creates a sense of discomfort in the audience, sometimes leading to laughter. The idea that a boss would start describing sexual acts as animalistic behavior in the middle of a seminar is practically unimaginable, yet hilarious.

As we have observed, there are several linguistic differences between American English and Spanish. We not only speak at a structural level but also in terms of linguistic elements and cultural context. Nonetheless, I found it curious that the adaptation of the ST to the TT is rather euphemistic. Although it maintains the offensive nature of describing and comparing homosexual sexual acts with those of animals (or monkeys, to be more specific, according to the original version,), a comparison of both sources gives the impression that the original text is much more explicit and sexual than the TT. The modulation of “*monkey sex*” into “*practicar el sexo*” not only misses the rudeness of the message conveyed in the ST but it also exchanges a taboo term for an acceptable term.

I would not dare offer an alternative translation because I believe that the translators have done a good job in modulating this intervention. However, I do emphasize the idea that *The Office* is a series with dark humor and offensive wordplay that does not require toning them down.

Season Three, Episode “Diwali”

Michael Scott invites the office to a Diwali celebration hosted by Kelly Kapoor's family. The office becomes a Buddhist center and Michael is determined to discover all the secrets of the Hindu religion and its celebrations.

<p style="text-align: center;">Source text</p> <p>Angela: How many gods do you have? Kelly: Like hundreds, I think. Maybe more than that. Angela: And that <i>blue, busty gal</i>—what’s her story?</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Context</p> <p>Kelly is forced by Michael to explain the origins of the Diwali’s festivity. Michael has wallpapered the entire conference room with images of deities, censored by the recording crew for their “sexual component.”</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Category/Subcategory of humor</p> <p>Linguistic element to talk about a taboo topic: religion and sexual comments in the workplace.</p>

Audiovisual translation	
Angela: ¿Cuántos dioses tenéis?	
Kelly: Pues cientos, creo, o más. No lo sé	
Angela: Y esa <i>tía azul tetuda</i> , ¿qué representa?	
Translation strategies	
Literal translation	
Pun → Same Pun	Maintaining humorous pun

Table 9. Fragment analysis of season 3, episode 6

This passage has been selected due to the offensive nature of both its linguistic and visual elements. However, in this section, only the linguistic aspect will be examined. The dialogue between Angela and Kelly has been selected because it provides a clear and concise example of how a literal translation of offensive terms can be used.

The use of a literal translation strategy effectively conveys the rudeness of Angela's comment. It is interesting to note that the character representing Catholicism in the workplace turns out to be the least tolerant, as she derogatorily refers to the deities of other religions as "blue busty gal," which is accurately translated as "tía azul tetuda." The term "tía" is a national linguistic element that encompasses several meanings within Spanish slang, including the use of the term as offensive or derogatory.

Season Four, Episode "Fun Run"

Michael accidentally runs over Meredith with his car and has to take her to the hospital. When Dwight goes to see her at the hospital, he finds out that Meredith has had to get the rabies vaccine due to several animal attacks. He tells Michael, who, feeling guilty for running over her, decides to organize a charity race to raise awareness about rabies.

Source text	
Angela: Can you do me a little favor? Go to my place at lunch and give Sprinkles her medicine?	
Dwight: Sure.	
Angela: I have to visit <i>the alkie</i> .	
Context	
In this scene, Dwight waits for Angela. She wants to ask him to feed Sprinkles, Angela's cat, because she has to go to visit Meredith at the hospital.	
Category/Subcategory of humor	
Linguistic element that refers to a taboo topic: overconsumption of alcohol.	
Audiovisual translation	
Angela: ¿Me puedes hacer un favor? ¿Ir a mi casa y darle la medicina a Manchitas?	
Dwight: Claro.	
Angela: Tengo que ir a ver <i>a Melopea</i> .	
Translation strategies	
Free translation.	
Pun → Other Pun	Lost humorous pun

Table 10. Fragment analysis of season 4, episode 10

According to the *Cambridge Dictionary* (CD), “alkie” refers to a “heavy drinker or alcoholic.” The humorous effect is produced when Angela refers to Meredith with a derogatory diminutive. Similarly, according to the *Dictionary of the Spanish language* (DRAE), the term “melopea” is a colloquial expression for intoxication or drunkenness. However, unlike the slang used in English, this term is not a common expression in Spanish.

I am unable to judge in any way the work of the translators. However, as a contemporary viewer of the series I can confirm that the term “melopea” used in this translation is outdated, resulting in the unfortunate loss of the comic wordplay. While it is impossible and unpractical to redo the dubbing of a series every time it becomes outdated, it is a problem that we observe throughout the case study series *The Office*. The transit of nearly two decades renders terms that are obsolete and they do not produce the

same comic effect as the original text, not even the effect that, for example, the term “meloopa” could elicit a couple of decades ago.

Always with due respect to the translators and their professional work, I would like to suggest the following phrase: “Tengo que ir a ver a la borrachuza.” This alternative expression effectively captures a derogatory tone and attitude towards Meredith, who struggles with alcoholism.

Season Four, Episode “Dunder Mifflin Infinity, Part I”

Ryan returns to the office for the first time since he was promoted at the company and the staff organizes a party. He is now the superior of his colleagues and tries to earn everyone's respect.

<p style="text-align: center;">Source text</p> <p>Michael: <i>Can you make that straighter? That's what she said.</i></p> <p>Pam: “<i>That job looks hard, you should put your mouth on that</i>” ... when had you planned to use that naturally?</p> <p>Michael: Blowing up balloons, I thought.</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Context</p> <p>Angela and Phyllis are decorating the conference room to welcome Ryan. Michael comes in and reads one of his “That’s what she said” jokes from a notebook. Pam reads another one.</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Category/Subcategory of humor</p> <p>Linguistic element that works as a pun.</p> <p>Taboo topic: sexual comment.</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Audiovisual translation</p> <p>Michael: <i>¿Puedes poner eso más derecho? Eso fue lo que dijo ella.</i></p> <p>Pam: “<i>Eso parece muy duro, deberías probar con la boca</i>” ¿Y esta cómo harías para que sonara natural?</p> <p>Michael: Cuando se inflasen los globos.</p>

Translation strategies	
Literal translation.	
Pun → Same Pun	Maintaining humorous pun

Table 11. Fragment analysis of season 4, episode 11

The humor that characterizes this series is clearly represented in this example. Jokes of a sexual nature, considered offensive in the work environment, are subtly masked and revealed in the form of a pun with Michael's famous phrase "That's what she said." There are practically no comments to be made on this translation as it remains faithful and effectively conveys the intended pun to the audience, as sexual comments of phallic nature are not exclusive to any language. In fact, they are jokes shared across different cultures due to their linguistic related aspects.

In the original text, the term "job" carries a double connotation. One interpretation involves the notion of employment and remuneration, while the second interpretation refers to sexual acts (e.g., "do a blowjob," "do a hand job," etc.). In the Spanish translation, the translators opt to omit the part of "*ese trabajo parece muy duro*." Although the comic pun is not lost, it appears more complete in English. Moreover, it should be noted that in Spanish, we would typically use the word "difficult" rather than "hard" when referring to a challenging job or task.

Season Five, Episode "Weight loss"

The office participates in a company-wide weight loss competition, with the prize of extra vacation days for the winning branch. Initially enthusiastic, the staff becomes overly competitive. Other subplots take place, such as Pam going to New York to study for a degree in Graphic Design, but they are not important contexts to understand this dialogue.

Source text	
Dwight: Wait a minute. One more bite of <i>éclair</i> each. <i>Hold it in your mouth if you can't swallow.</i>	
Jim: [looks to Michael for a “That's what she said,” but Michael is silent] Really? Nothing?	
Context	
Jim and Dwight have to undergo training planned by Michael for being the worst salespeople of the quarter. Jim doesn't take it seriously and picks on Dwight.	
Category/Subcategory of humor	
Linguistic element, taboo topic: sexual joke	
Audiovisual translation	
Dwight: Esperad: un cachito de bollo de chocolate cada uno. <i>Dejáoslo en la boca si no podéis tragar.</i>	
Jim: [mira a Michael esperando un “Eso dijo ella,” pero Michael está callado] ¿En serio? ¿Ni un poquito?	
Translation strategies	
Literal translation and generalization	
Pun → Other Pun	Maintaining humorous pun

Table 12. Fragment analysis of season 5, episode 1

The selection of this example is based on linguistic and visual inferences that help understand the wordplay between the expression “hold it in your mouth” and the phallic-shaped object reminiscent of a penis.

According to Cambridge Dictionary (n.d), an *éclair* is a small, thin cake made of pastry, filled with cream and usually topped with chocolate. The imagery evoked could not be clearer. However, the use of the term “bollo de chocolate” as a generalization results in a certain loss in capturing the meaning that the term “éclair” encompasses. As I have already mentioned, the visual representation leaves no room for doubt and facilitates comprehension of the statement as an unintentional allusion to sexuality on Dwight’s part.

Just to bring a certain critical spirit to this analysis, I would dare to propose replacing the term “bollo de chocolate” with “flauta de chocolate.” Thus, maintaining the

sexual context both linguistically and visually. On the other hand, regarding the mention of holding and not swallowing the sweet, the translator chooses a literal translation, which appears to be the most logical and feasible strategy.

Season Five, Episode “Stress Relief: Part 2”

In the first part of the episode, Dwight's fire drill caused Stanley to collapse from a heart attack. To relive the collective morale, Michael opts to organize a celebrity roast in his honor, allowing his employees to say everything they have wanted to say.

<p style="text-align: center;">Source text</p> <p>Michael: Jim, you're 6'1" and you weigh 90 pounds. <i>Gumby</i> has a better body than you. Boom. Roasted. Dwight, you're a kiss-ass. Boom. Roasted. Pam, you failed art school. Boom. Roasted. Meredith, you've slept with so many guys, you're starting to look like one. Boom. Roasted. Kevin, I can't decide between a fat joke and a dumb joke. Boom. Roasted. Creed, your teeth called. Your breath stinks. Boom. Roasted. Angela, where's Angela? Well, there you are. I didn't see you behind that grain of rice. Boom. Roasted. Stanley, you crush your wife during sex and your heart sucks. Boom. Roasted. Oscar, you are – [laughs] Oscar you're gay. Andy, Cornell called. They think you suck. And you're gayer than Oscar. Boom. Roasted.</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Context</p> <p>After being roasted by his employees, Michael, offended, decides to roast each of them.</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Category/Subcategory of humor</p> <p>Linguistic elements used as insults and invectives</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Audiovisual translation</p> <p>Michael: Jim, mides uno ochentaiséis y pesas cuarenta kilos. Conozco <i>momias</i> más proporcionadas. Bum. Toma esa. Dwight, eres un lameculos. Bum. Toma esa. Pam, no te licenciaste en arte. Bum. Toma esa. Meredith, te has acostado con tantos tíos que ya pareces uno. Bum. Toma esa. Kevin, no sé si decirte un chiste de gordos o de tontos. Bum. Toma esa. Creed, tu aliento se considera arma blanca. Bum. Toma esa. Angela, ¿dónde está Angela? Epa, estás ahí. No te veía detrás del</p>

grano de arroz Bum. Toma esa. Stanley, aplastas a tu mujer en la cama y tienes una birra de corazón. Bum. Toma esa. Oscar, tú...eres [risas]. Oscar, tú eres gay. Andy, llamaron de Cornell y dicen que eres un asco y más gay que Oscar. Bum. Toma esa.	
Translation strategies	
Adaptation	
Pun → Other Pun	Maintaining humorous pun

Table 13. Fragment analysis of season 5, episode 14

This episode has been selected for being an undeniable source of subtle insults used in a formal context to conceal the offensive nature of the word. The context in which these insults take place is that of a group activity in which Michael could be roasted. Michael takes this “unserious” context to show disrespect towards someone without using more direct words. Therefore, these invectives serve as insults rather than swear words, and allow Michael to disrespect his employees in a humorous tone.

Firstly, as it has happened previously, we face the challenge of transferring linguistic elements that do not exist in Spanish linguistic system. The expression “to roast” in the United States denotes the act of criticizing someone, or rather to humorously criticize and make jokes normally about a famous person at a public event honoring that them. The difficulty is that there is still no real translation into Spanish because the concept is still foreign to Hispanic culture. The difficulty is that there is still no real translation into Spanish because the concept is still foreign to Hispanic culture, and could be considered a national joke. Although the term “sermonear” could be employed if we were to refer to the primary meaning of “roast,” it seems clear that he intended usage pertains to the humorous act of making fun of someone. The translation of “**Bum. Toma esa**” conveys the idea of having received what could also have been translated as “Zasca” in Spanish, defined by the DRAE as a “cutting response” that aligns with the concept being roasted.

On the other hand, it is pertinent to analyze the insults and invectives uttered by Michael and their translation to Spanish. The first target is Jim, who is compared to Gumby, a fictional character from an American TV series that ran for 35 years. The translators could have chosen to transcribe the name without any modification. However, considering that the term is an element of the community, specifically an extralinguistic element that pertains to cultural aspects, such as TV series or movies, the translators decided to neutralize it by replacing the “cultureme” with a term that is not specific to any culture: a mummy. This way, the pun is preserved and easily comprehended by the target audience.

Other insults are literally translated into their equivalent form in Spanish, such as “kiss-ass” to “lameculos.” However, the translation of Creed’s roast is also interesting, as the humor behind the “[decade/person] called, they want [object] back” joke vanishes. This type of joke, widely popular in English-speaking countries, aims to insult a person by mocking their outdated clothing, expressions, or attitudes. In Spanish, these jokes are not as common and the translators opt to adapt the pun by neutralizing the original text. For instance, instead of “Creed, your teeth called. Your breath stinks,” we have “Creed, tu aliento se considera arma blanca.” Both convey the desired insult, which is that Creed’s breath smells, and, personally, I find the Spanish translation wittier than the original version.

Season Six, Episode “Koi Pond”

Jim Halpert, as the new co-manager, arranges a meeting with a client who insists on Michael Scott accompanying him. Jim is dissatisfied as he prefers to handle meetings independently. When they return from the meeting, Michael is drenched after accidentally falling into a koi pond. Learning of this incident, the rest of the office proceeds to mock

him. In response, Michael organizes a sensitivity meeting during which he requests that everyone write down remarks they wish were not said about them.

<p style="text-align: center;">Source text</p> <p>Michael: You can only make fun of things that they have control over. Like Oscar is gay. That is his choice. We can make fun of that [...]</p> <p>Toby: Michael, you still can't make fun of people for race or gender or sexual orientation or religion</p> <p>Michael: Who let- Who let the <i>lemonhead</i> into the room? <i>You are a waste of life, and you should give up. [Silence] is what I want to say but I won't.</i></p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Context</p> <p>During the sensitive training meeting, Michael cannot control himself and attacks Toby from Human Resources.</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Category/Subcategory of humor</p> <p>Linguistic element used to insult. Invective.</p> <p>Allusion to the taboo topic of suicide.</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Audiovisual translation</p> <p>Michael: Solo puedes reírte de las cosas que tenga bajo control. Como Oscar, que es gay. Ha elegido serlo. De eso sí nos podemos reír [...]</p> <p>Toby: No te puedes reír de alguien por su raza, género u orientación sexual.</p> <p>Michael: ¿Quién ha dejado entrar al <i>listillo de turno</i>? <i>Déjalo, eres una pérdida de tiempo. [Silencio] es lo que me gustaría decir, pero no lo hago.</i></p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Translation strategies</p> <p>Omission and free translation.</p> <p>Pun → Non- Pun Lost humorous pun</p>

Table 14. Fragment analysis of season 6, episode 8

The Office is characterized by Michael's constant attacks on Toby, the head of human resources. This example serves as a direct representation of how the insult's translation in the original version is treated. Unfortunately, this example is taken as a translation that causes the loss of the humorous pun.

The omission of the star joke "*lemonhead*" is not understood. Michael insults Toby in such a ridiculous way that it goes unnoticed, but it is essential to understand their

dynamics as a staff manager and head of human resources. Translating “*lemonhead*” as “*listillo de turno*” seems disjointed, as the former makes refers to Toby’s physical appearance. By omitting and replacing the physical insult the HR boss receives with a euphemism for “stupid,” the offensive comic pun is lost. Perhaps, we could propose replacing “lemonhead” with another linguistic element in the TL that refers to someone’s head shape. For example, “cabeza-caballo” or, to continue with the vegetable theme, “cara de pepino,” along with other variants that are not lacking in Spanish.

Furthermore, in relation to this entire process of omission, the reference to “give up” that Michael makes towards Toby is also eliminated. It is interpreted from this intervention that “give up” does not simply mean surrendering, but could be a euphemism for committing suicide. It is understandable that a literal translation cannot always be achieved. Perhaps, as opposed to the variety of insults regarding face shapes in Spanish, the lack of euphemisms as obvious as “give up” to refer to the act of committing suicide complicates the task of finding an adaptation.

This opinion contradicts that of many translators such as Ávila-Cabrera, but perhaps in this case, I would choose to use a dysphemistic element to increase the level of offense in Michael's intervention. It wouldn't be the first time that Michael attacks Toby and urges him to “kill himself,” so opting for a free translation like “*eres una pérdida de tiempo, mátate*” could be argued.

Season Six, Episode “Secret Santa”

Michael comes into the office dressed as Santa and is outraged that Jim had already allowed Phyllis to be Santa at the office Christmas party this year. Everyone seems to enjoy having Phyllis as Santa, but Michael continues to try to gain attention by uttering offensive statements.

Source text
Michael: Why pay more to sit next to <i>old Tranny Claus</i> over there when you can sit on my lap? <i>Phyllis is only pretending to be a man</i> . I am the real <i>thing</i> ! <i>Sit down on my lap, and there will be no doubt</i> .
Context
Michael, completely furious at not being able to be Santa Claus, tries to compete against Phyllis by making sexist comments.
Category/Subcategory of humor
Linguistic element insulting to the LGBT community and employment of sexual comments.
Audiovisual translation
Michael: ¿Por qué pagar más para sentarse con una <i>Señora Noel</i> cuando podéis sentaros en mi regazo? <i>Phyllis solo quiere parecer un hombre</i> . Yo soy de verdad. <i>Sentaos en mi regazo y saldréis de dudas</i> .
Translation strategies
Adaptation (neutralization) and literal translation. Pun → Non- Pun Maintaining humorous pun

Table 15. Fragment analysis of season 6, episode 13

This case study is particularly important because it includes terms that could potentially be considered offensive by different groups within the LGBT community. The term “tranny” used by Michael is an extremely offensive word towards transgender individuals, although it was not originally coined to be offensive. It originated in the mid-20th century as a generic term for transgender people. However, due to its misuse by the mainstream media, the word became a joke or an insult. Therefore, similarly to other words, its use is only appropriate when you are part of the community where it originated.

The translators’ decision to avoid using the expression could be motivated by their intention not to offend the community. However, in order to maintain the initial comic pun that this offensive term was meant to convey, a suggestion would be to combine “transexual” and “Santa Claus” to create something like “¿Por qué pagar más para sentarse con una *Trans-Noel*?”

Nevertheless, it should be noted that the use of “**Señora Noel**” also conveys an offensive comic pun: the idea that a woman cannot perform the same job as a man. While it is true that the joke is based on the idea that a trans woman can never be a “complete woman” because she lacks a male reproductive system, the Spanish translation, which focuses more on the sexist aspect of gender dynamics, can also be seen as implying a lack of power due to the absence of a penis. Therefore, the utilization of a euphemistic tone proves to be a highly effective strategy in terms of translation and cultural acceptance.

Season Seven, Episode “Costume Contest”

The office is excited over the annual Halloween costume contest, the winner receives a Scranton-area coupon book. Many employees change their costumes multiple times to increase their chances of winning. Meanwhile, Gabe Lewis.

Source text	
Todd Packer: Has anyone started calling you <i>gabe-wad</i> yet?	
Gabe: Not here, no.	
Todd Packer: <i>Gabe-wad</i> .	
Context	
Gabe Lewis is informing the staff about new practices that will be carried out to increase sales, while dressed as Lady Gaga.	
Category/Subcategory of humor	
Insult (phonetic wordplay)	
Audiovisual translation	
Todd Packer: ¿Te han llamado alguna vez “ <i>mari Gabe</i> ”?	
Gabe: No aquí, no.	
Todd Packer: <i>Mari Gabe</i> .	
Translation strategies	
Adaptation	
Pun → Other- Pun	Maintaining humorous pun

Table 16. Fragment analysis of season 7, episode 6

The selection of this excerpt is due to the use of an intralinguistic element used to mock a person for their sexual orientation, as well as the translation of this intralinguistic element into the target language, which in this case is Spanish.

According to different blogs and sources that extract their data from different corpora, the pun arises from an Elementary joke that used the wordplay "gaywads" to infer that the person was gay ("you are gay"). The person would utter "gaywads," which phonetically sounds like "gay what?," when the hearer (who clearly hasn't heard the previous information because the speaker talks too fast) asks "what," he is automatically "gay." In Spanish we have similar Elementary jokes ("tonto dice qué"), but the wordplay in this episode goes further.

"Gay" and "Gabe" are not homophones but the pronunciation of one can evoke the other. Todd Packer is asking Gabe if he has ever been called "Gabe-wad" or, in accordance with this insult that was popular during their generation, whether he has ever been questioned about his sexual orientation. The Spanish adaptation employs a different type of wordplay, as the joke involving "gaywads" is unknown to the audience: translators take the word "maricon" (a derogatory term) and merge it with the character's name to establish a connection between the original text's wordplay and the translated text. It is funny in a way because the viewer links the prefix "mari-" with a missing part of the information, replaced by the name of the person being "insulted."

Source text
Michael: <i>Blacula!</i> Darryl: <i>Dracula.</i>
Context
Michael – dressed as MacGruber – goes to talk to Darryl – dressed as Dracula. Darryl is an African American character, which basically explains the whole interaction.

Category/Subcategory of humor	
Offensive wordplay: reduction of the character to physical traits.	
Audiovisual translation	
Michael: ¡ <i>Negrácula!</i> Darryl: <i>Drácula.</i>	
Translation strategies	
Literal translation	
Pun → Same- Pun	Maintaining humorous pun

Table 17. Fragment analysis of season 7, episode 6

Following the analysis of the same episode, Michael goes to Darryl's office and greets him by saying "**Blacula**" which is a combination of "Black" and "Dracula," referring to both his costume and his skin tone. This comment could be interpreted as racist and unnecessary.

The term "**Blacula**" is not a word created by the scriptwriters, but a reference to a 1972 American horror movie called *Blacula*. *Blacula* was released in the United States and received mixed reviews, but it was undoubtedly one of the highest-grossing films of that year. Therefore, we are dealing with the use of an extralinguistic element, which refers to a cultural aspect shared among different members of the American community.

Two strategies could be adopted: we could assume that this movie crossed border and is also known in Spain. In that case, we could adopt a transcription strategy, used to transfer information from the ST to the TT without any modification. On the other hand, as the translators have done, we could translate the term "**Blacula**" literally to its equivalent terms: "Negro" and "Dracula," resulting in "**Negrácula.**" Unlike the transcription of the pun, the audience quickly recognizes the reference. However, it is true that "**Negrácula**" is further from the phonetic pronunciation of "Dracula," partly because an extra syllable is added. At the end, it is the translator's job to assess the range of importance between rhythm and adaptation to the audience's cultural knowledge.

Season Eight, Episode “Tallahassee”

Dwight, Jim, Stanley, and others travel to Tallahassee as part of a team picked for Sabre’s new project. At the orientation meeting, Dwight and Jim find that Todd Packer is still working at the company. The president of Sabre’s special projects, Nellie begins to talk about the project, and Dwight and Packer start to compete to see who will become her vice president.

Source text	
<p>Nellie: Hunting’s so primal. Almost sexual.</p> <p>Todd Packer: Totally. I mean, I’d never bang an animal, you can hardly tell the difference between a boy or a girl, you know, but hunting’s intense.</p> <p>Dwight: You talking about hunting? I love hunting. I’m a master hunter.</p> <p>Todd Packer: Did you say “<i>masturbator</i>”?</p> <p>Dwight: I’m a decent baiter. My cousin, Mose, that’s a master baiter</p>	
Context	
<p>Dwight begins to experience stomach pains, but unwilling to be excluded from the running for the vice manager position, he remains in the meeting and participates in Nellie and Todd Packer’s private conversation.</p>	
Category/Subcategory of humor	
<p>Wordplay taboo topic: allusion to zoophilia and masturbation in the work environment.</p>	
Audiovisual translation	
<p>Nellie: La caza es tan primaria, casi sexual.</p> <p>Todd Packer: Totalmente. Bueno, yo nunca me tiraría un animal, porque es difícil saber si es macho o hembra, pero la caza es cosa seria.</p> <p>Dwight: ¿Estáis hablando de caza? Me encanta cazar. Soy buen montero.</p> <p>Todd Packer: ¿Has dicho “<i>pajillero</i>”?</p> <p>Dwight: No aviento mal la paja. Mi primo, Mose, es bueno con el trillo.</p>	
Translation strategies	
<p>Free translation</p>	
Pun → Non- Pun	Partially maintenance of the humorous pun

Table 18. Fragment analysis of season 8, episode 15

The selection of this excerpt highlights the difficulty in maintaining the pun during the translation process due to linguistic constraints. The translation attempts to preserve the humor and offensive nature of the original dialogue but loses the pun-based wordplay due to language differences.

Nellie's statement is translated literally, effectively preserving the meaning and sexual undertones of the original dialogue. Similarly, Todd Packer's remark "I'd never bang an animal" is rendered as "yo nunca me tiraría un animal," which captures the crude humor associated with zoophilia or bestiality. However, complications arise when Dwight joins the conversation: the wordplay between "master hunter" and "masturbator" is challenging – if not impossible – to translate. The translators choose to maintain the translation of the term "hunter" as "montero," which eliminates the direct pun regarding "masturbator."

Consequently, Todd Packer's inquiry about whether Dwight is a "mastubator" (master of baiter) loses the wordplay connection to "hunter." The translators opt for the use of the term "pajillero," which is a colloquial term in Spanish to refer to a person who masturbates frequently. While this choice captures the intended humor of the pun, the wordplay itself vanishes. Likewise, Dwight's response lacks a direct link to the original text: the term "baiter" and "master baiter" rely on the English wordplay that doesn't direct equivalence in Spanish. The translator uses "*No aviento mal la paja*" (I'm not bad at jerking off) and "(Mose) *es bueno con el trillo*" (he's good with the threshing) in an attempt to maintain the humor, but the pun becomes less apparent, weakening the comedic impact. This is a common challenge when translating wordplay and puns, particularly those involving taboo topics.

Season Eight, Episode “Free Family Portrait Studio”

Dwight offers free family portraits in the office, and many members of the office take advantage of the opportunity. Andy comes into the office pleading for a job.

Source text	
Gabe: Happy birthday to Gabe Nellie: Oh, get out, <i>Skeleton Man</i> Gabe: [<i>slams the door</i>]	
Context	
Andy calls for a meeting with the intention of unveiling his plan. During the meeting, he is about to reveal that David is going to buy back Dunder Mifflin from Sabre, but Gabe interrupts the proceedings to announce his birthday.	
Category/Subcategory of humor	
Linguistic element: invective.	
Audiovisual translation	
Gabe: Felicidad a Gabe Nellie: ¡Fuera de aquí, <i>esqueleto simplón!</i> Gabe: [<i>Cierra de un portazo</i>]	
Translation strategies	
Free translation	
Pun → Other- Pun	Maintaining humorous pun

Table 19. Fragment analysis of season 8, episode 24

The decision to analyze this fragment is based on the simplicity with which offensive terms are used to make a comical comment, as well as the successful translation into Spanish. This approach demonstrates how audiovisual translators can adapt cultural and linguistic elements to ensure that the comedic impact of the original dialogue is maintained (or even enhanced) and resonates with the target audience.

The pun in question is derived from on Gabe's physical appearance: a very thin and tall young man whose figure resembles that of a skeleton. The literal translation of “Skeleton Man” as “hombre esqueleto” would be acceptable and would still convey the comedic pun. However, the use of the colloquial term “simplón” adds to the naturalness

of the intervention, making it more characteristic of the translated text rather than the original itself. By adapting it into the target language, the translators preserves the comedic effect through a different but equally effective pun. The tone and intention of the original dialogue are upheld, and the humor derived from the invective is maintained.

Season Nine, Episode “A.A.R.M: Part 1”

Jim Halpert persuades Dwight Schrute, the regional manager, to select an someone to serve as an Assistant to the Assistant to the Regional Manager (A.A.R.M.). To determine the ideal candidate, Jim creates a series of challenges specifically tailored for Dwight. Ultimately, it becomes apparent that Dwight is most qualified for the role.

Source text
Pam: We are expecting a water delivery today at 10:00 am. What is, as they’re delivering the water jugs, someone screams out, “ <i>nice jugs!</i> ”
Context
Jim informs the staff that Dwight is interviewing potential A.A.R.M.s and that no jokes or foolishness will be accepted. However, it doesn't take long for the jokes to start.
Category/Subcategory of humor
Linguistic element based on wordplay to refer to breasts.
Audiovisual translation
Pam: Estamos esperando un paquete que llega hoy a las diez. ¿Y si cuando lo traigan alguien grita “ <i>menudo paquetón</i> ”?
Translation strategies
Free translation and modulation. Pun → Other Pun Maintaining humorous pun

Table 20. Fragment analysis of season 9, episode 22

This excerpt is an example of how the translator can take certain creative liberties to convey the original comical pun based on offensive terms. The original text refers to the arrival of an order for water jugs to set up the context of the wordplay between jugs as in “bottles” and jugs as the colloquial term to refer to breasts.

The translated text takes a different perspective to create a new pun that fits culturally and linguistically with the target audience. The reference to female breasts would still work with different linguistic elements in Spanish (such as “peras”, “limones” and so on). However, the translators decide to set up a new context for the pun in Spanish: instead of water jugs they are expecting a “package.”

The term “package” in Spanish is “paquete,” which is a colloquial term to refer to “the lump of male genital organs.” Therefore, the phrase “menudo paquetón” can be interpreted as a humorous double entendre: “paquetón” as a large package, or in slang, it can also refer to male genitalia, thus maintaining the humor through a different pun.

By changing the context from “water jugs” to “package,” the translator successfully creates a new pun that fits culturally and linguistically with the target audience and maintains the wordplay based on a set of double meanings in the original and translated language.

Season Nine, Episode “Finale: Part 1”

One year after the documentary has aired, Dwight and Angela are arranging their wedding, and Jim Halpert has been appointed as the best man. Jim plans a series of "good surprises" for Dwight's bachelor party, culminating in the unexpected arrival of Michael Scott.

Source text
Dwight: <i>I can't believe you came</i> Michael: That's what she said.
Context
Michael surprises Dwight, who expresses his surprise at Michael coming to the event, Michael replies with an emotional "that's what she said" joke.
Category/Subcategory of humor
Linguistic element: offensive sexual connotation

Audiovisual translation	
Dwight: <i>¡Estás aquí dentro!</i>	
Michael: Eso dijo ella	
Translation strategies	
Free translation	
Pun→ Other Pun	Partially maintenance of the humorous pun

Table 21. Fragment analysis of season 9, episode 24

The last fragment is taken from the last episode of the series and encompasses the offensive, taboo, and wordplay jokes analyzed during this section. The translation of the wordplay that sets up the context for Michael's famous response is, to say the least, unsatisfactory.

Dwight statement reveals excitement at seeing that his former boss has come to his wedding (“*I can't believe you came*”). As it has been commented throughout this analysis, both English and Spanish have terms with double meanings. In this case, and according to Cambridge Dictionary (n.d), the term “to came” can refer to the act of “moving or traveling towards or into a place” but also, in a more informal context, the “semen ejaculated by a man at an orgasm.” The latter would prompt Michael’s answer “That’s what she said.”

The translators focus shifts from the act of arriving to the physical presence of being inside, setting up a different but still sexually suggestive context. However, the Spanish translation seems far-fetched and forced. The connotations are understood, but it is unlikely that someone would greet a long-time friend by saying “*¡Estás aquí dentro!*” The translators preserve the structure of the joke and maintains the sexual connotation, although the specific wordplay involving "came" is lost.

4.3.Results

To conclude the analysis and discussion of this paper, it is presented a graphic that evaluates how the translators of the series have been able to maintain the humorous load.

Comedic pun	TT
Maintaining of the humorous pun	12
Loss of the humorous pun	3
Partially maintenance of the humorous pun	3

Table 22. Results of the humorous load analyzed

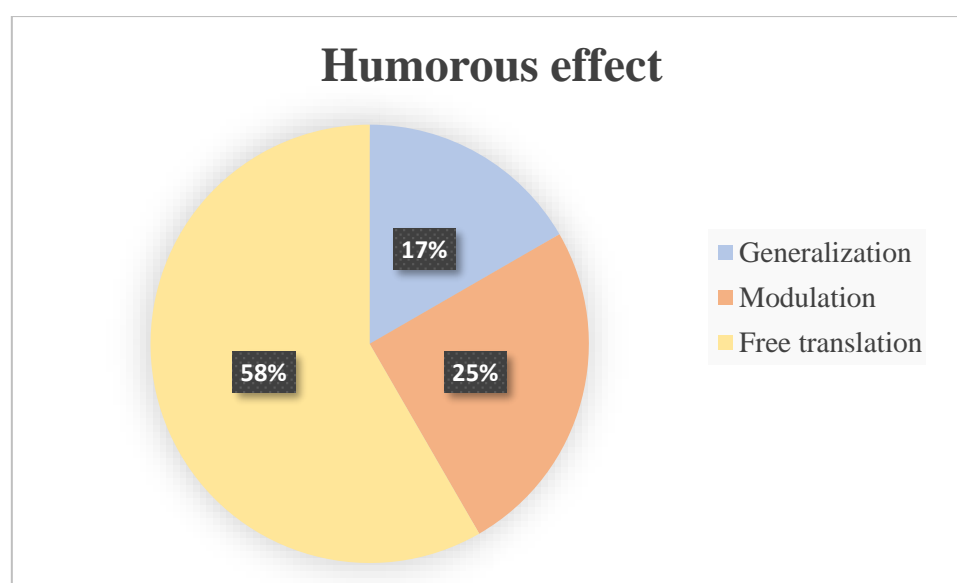


Table 23. Graphic with the results of the humorous load analyzed

In absolute terms, the humorous load increases and remains the same in 67% of the cases, while it decreases and disappears by 33 %. Therefore, the percentage of cases in which the load increases and remains the same is considerably higher than the percentage of cases in which the humor load decreases.

These charts show the valuable work of the translators, who manage to faithfully transfer the humorous load of the offensive elements throughout the series using different strategies. Among the different strategies available in the process of translation, the following have been observed during the analysis of the case study.

Translation strategies	Linguistic elements
Adaptation	5
Free translation	7
Generalization	2
Literal translation	6
Modulation	3
Neutralization	2
Omission	3
Reduction	1

Table 24. Results of the most used translation strategies analyzed

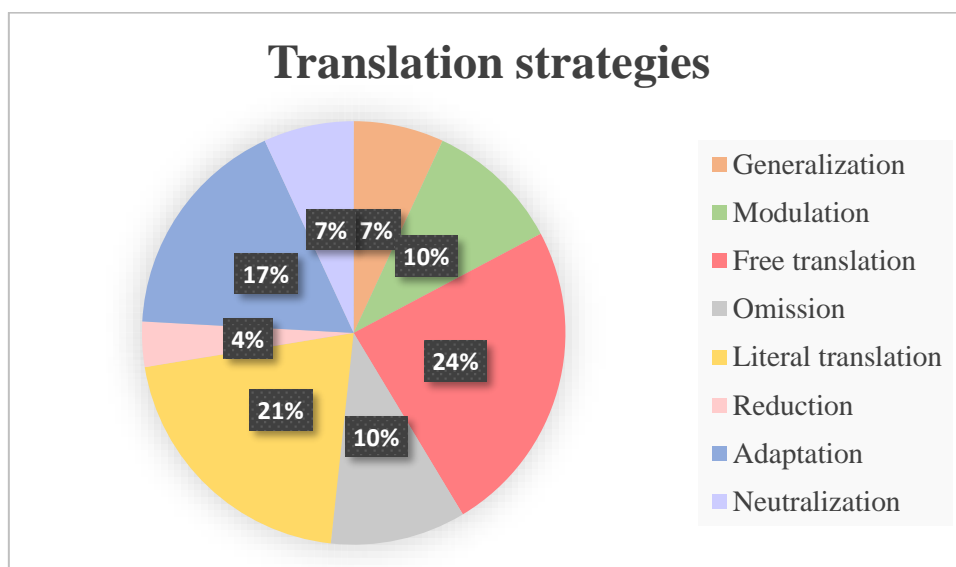


Table 25. Graphic with the results of the most used translation strategies analyzed

These charts prove that free translation is the translation strategy that has been used the most (24%), followed by literal translation (21%) and adaptation (17%). These results are not entirely surprising, since in many cases the humorous load is maintained thanks to the creativity of the translator, capable of rewriting the wordplay from scratch to convey the desired message into the target audience.

5. Conclusions

Based on the analysis and discussion, it can be concluded that the translation of humor in the series *The Office* is quite well achieved, as the humorous effect does not disappear and remains intact in the majority of the analyzed humorous elements.

The analysis of the Spanish dubbing of *The Office (American TV Series)* has revealed the numerous challenges associated with translating humor, particularly when it involves offensive and taboo language. Translating humor is not merely a technical task. It is an art that requires a thorough understanding of both the source and target cultures, as well as the ability to balance faithfulness to the original text with cultural sensitivity.

One of the most significant findings of this study is that translators have often resorted to creating new jokes that, while not literal translations, capture the essence and comedic effect of the originals. Adapting puns and specific cultural references that rely on discomfort and the transgression of social norms, which may involve offensive language and taboo subjects, has proven to be an arduous task. In many cases, this has required toning down or significantly altering content to ensure its suitability for Spanish-speaking audiences, without losing the humorous pun entirely.

The translation of offensive and taboo wordplay in *The Office* for Spanish audiences exemplifies the complexity and challenges inherent in this type of work. The need to strike a balance between the original text and cultural sensitivity, coupled with the creativity involved in adapting puns and cultural references, highlights the skill and resourcefulness required for a successful translation. Therefore, it is pertinent to acknowledge the great work carried out by the translators. Despite the limitations observed nearly 20 years after its creation, their creativity in finding solutions deserves recognition.

A possible future line of research would be to propose improving the translation of certain jokes in the series, always considering the change in mood that may exist between the time the series was originally aired and the translation being done now. Perhaps a more literal translation could be achieved thanks to the globalization. As already mentioned, the increased knowledge of the English language and culture in Spain has made translation a simpler process. The influence of social networks and other streaming platforms have allowed the visual content of many of the series in the form of small multimedia videos to end up reaching the consumers of these social networks, unconsciously generating shared cultural baggage.

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