A relevance-theoretic account of translating jokes with sexual innuendos in *Modern Family* into Spanish

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The main purpose of this paper is to analyse jokes containing sexual innuendos in ambiguous utterances from the first two seasons of *Modern Family* and their translation into Spanish using relevance theory. More often than not, the ambiguity and sexual innuendos are also reflected in the Spanish versions analysed. Hence, in all those cases, in relevance-theoretical terms, the cognitive effects intended in the source text (ST), including humorous ones, will also be accessible to target text (TT) viewers. It, therefore, follows that the pragmatic scenario is preserved in the TT, sometimes at the expense of a sacrifice in the semantic scenario. In audio-visual texts, ambiguity may also impact the visual channel. Although in some cases the visual component may render the translator's task difficult, in others it may act as an aid to both the translator and TT viewer, contributing to the yielding of humorous effects.

Keywords: humour, sexual innuendo, audio-visual translation, *Modern Family* , relevance theory, ambiguity

1.   Introduction

The presence of sexual innuendos is a defining feature of a considerable amount of jokes in *Modern Family* and also of a great many jokes across cultures. It has been highlighted, in this sense, that jokes on the subject of sex or 'dirty jokes' abound everywhere, to such an extent that they could be considered as being cross-cultural and universal (see Davies 1998; Ross 1998; Blake 2007; Chiaro 2011). As stated by Zabalbeascoa (2005, 194), in those jokes dealing with aspects such as sex, bodily functions, religion, etc., taboo may be considered as an external factor of humour, as contrasted to those other cases in which humour itself is taboo. A common characteristic of many of these jokes is the resort to ambiguity.

In this sense, as pointed out by Jaki (2016), a large number of jokes in sitcoms rely on verbal humour or different types of language play, many of which are based on ambiguity.[1] Moreover, the polysemiotic nature of audio-visual texts permits the exploitation of the visual component for humorous purposes. Hence, ambiguity may also be reflected in the image, which may also be interpreted in two different ways. The main objectives of this paper, in this connection, are to analyse the resort to sexual innuendos in jokes from the first two seasons of *Modern Family* and their translation into Spanish in both the dubbed and subtitled versions. The theoretical framework adopted in this study is relevance theory (Sperber and Wilson 1986).

2.   Relevance theory, humour and translation

Relevance theory is one of the most influential theoretical frameworks within the field of pragmatics. It is based on the premise that humans are programmed to direct their attention towards that which may be relevant to them or, in relevance-theoretic terms, towards that which may give rise to changes in their cognitive environments.[2] The technical name given by relevance theory to those changes is positive cognitive effects. In this sense, the more positive cognitive effects that can be derived from a given stimulus, the more relevant that stimulus will be. It is also true, however, that those cognitive effects must be considered in connection with the effort which was necessary to obtain them. An increase in the processing effort needed will be to the detriment of relevance. In Wilson and Sperber's (2004) own words,

a. Other things being equal, the greater the positive cognitive effects achieved by processing an input, the greater the relevance of the input to the individual at that time.

b. Other things being equal, the greater the processing effort expended, the lower the relevance of the input to the individual at that time (p. 609).

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1. The term ambiguity refers to a word, phrase or sentence which conveys at least two different meanings. Different types of ambiguity may be distinguished, namely lexical ambiguity, related to the different meanings of a given lexical item, and grammatical ambiguity, related to alternative analyses of a structure or reference assignment of a pronoun.

2. A person's cognitive environment comprises all the facts and assumptions that are manifest to that person. In other words, it comprises all the information which can be perceived in the physical environment, remembered and inferred. (Sperber and Wilson 1995, 39)

In this respect, an individual will make the effort to process a given statement if s/he considers that the statement will be relevant to him/her or, according to relevance theory, will be able to produce changes in his/her cognitive environment. As will be explained below, many of the decisions taken by a translator may be explained by resorting to this principle, which has been called the principle of relevance. In fact, relevance theory has been applied to translation in general and to the translation of humour in particular. Gutt was the pioneer and one of the most outstanding scholars dealing with translation from the perspective of relevance theory (See Gutt 1990; 1998; 2000; 2004; 2005; 2010). According to him, translation involves interpretive use across languages:

> [f]rom the relevance-theory point of view, translation falls naturally under the interpretive use of language: the translation is intended to restate in one language what someone else said or wrote in another language. In principle it is, therefore, comparable to quoting or speech-reporting in intra-linguistic use. One of its primary distinctions setting it off from intra-lingual quoting or reporting is that original text and translation belong to different languages.   (Gutt 1998, 46)

The interpretive use of language implies an utterance that represents what somebody else said or thought. Between the original utterance and the utterance used to represent it, there is a relation of interpretive resemblance. From the perspective of relevance theory, then, the relation between a source text (henceforth ST) and a target text (henceforth TT) in translation is based on interpretive resemblance. The translator's task will be to try and recreate the ST-intended cognitive effects in the TT in exchange for a similar mental effort to that involved for the ST addressee. Before that, s/he will need to evaluate the source author's intentions as well as the cognitive environments shared by ST addresser and TT addressee. In those cases in which both of them have different cognitive environments, Gutt (2004) claims, the human metarepresentational ability is required. Metarepresentation refers, among other things, to the ability to represent in an individual's mind how other individuals represent states of affairs in the world in their minds.[3] Later, Gutt (2005) defined translation as a higher order act of communication (HOAC), i.e. as "an act of communication that is about another (lower-order) act of communication" (Gutt 2005, 25). Moreover, as the lower-order act of communication consists of a stimulus and an intended interpretation, a distinction

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3. As stated by Wilson (2012, 232), metarepresentation involves "a higher-order representation with a lower-order representation embedded inside it. The higher-order representation is generally an utterance or a thought. Three main types of lower-order representation have been investigated: public representations (e.g. utterances); mental representations (e.g. thoughts); and abstract representations (e.g. sentences, propositions)".

between two higher order acts of communication can be established, namely, the *stimulus-oriented mode* -or *s-mode* - and the *interpretation-oriented mode* - or *i-mode* – .

The difficulty involved in the metarepresentation required by translation is increased in the translation of humour.[4] Yus (2012) considers that translation, from a cognitive-pragmatic point of view, may be considered as 'an inferential gap-filling activity' for the translator. As highlighted by him,

> [t]he initial gaps between what the speaker intends to communicate and what he or she codes, and between what is coded and finally interpreted, both gaps related in terms of interpretive resemblance, increase in the task of humour translation, since now there are gaps (a) between the source-language author's intended inter-pretation and the coded source-language humorous text; (b) between the source-language joke and the translator's interpretation; (c) between the translator's interpretation and the translator's target-language humorous text; and finally (d) between the coded target-language joke and the target-language audience's selected interpretation, all of these gaps related to each other, again, in terms of resemblance. To make matters more difficult, similar resemblance needs to be obtained between the intended humorous effects predicted for the source-language audience and the ones obtained by the target-language audience.
>
> (Yus 2012, 126)

Yus (2012, 2016) considers three parameters or scenarios in the translation of humour: cultural, semantic, and pragmatic. In his opinion, the translator should strive to maintain the pragmatic scenario, even if that implies changing the other two. Regarding the pragmatic scenario, two different aspects may be distinguished: the inferential steps needed to derive the humorous effects and the balance between processing effort and positive cognitive effects.[5]

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4. Among the studies which focus on the translation of humour from a relevance-theoretic perspective, Martínez Sierra (2008) analyses the translation of jokes in the animated American TV series *The Simpsons* into Spanish and Díaz-Pérez (2015) deals with the translation of puns (most of them with a humorous function) in *Alice in Wonderland* and *Through the Looking Glass* into Spanish and Galician. Díaz-Pérez (2017), in turn, focuses on jokes based on culture-bound elements in *Modern Family*, and Díaz-Pérez (2018) on the translation of humorous puns in two film adaptations of *Alice in Wonderland*. Many of the puns present in film titles in Span-ish whose translation into English is analysed in Díaz-Pérez (2014) also have humorous over-tones.

5. Although the theoretical framework adopted in this study is relevance theory, which defends that the translator must try to make accessible to the target addressees ST-intended cognitive effects (in the case of humorous texts, humorous effects included), there is much controversy in the field of translation studies regarding the relation between ST and TT. Not all approaches consider that translators should strive for giving rise to the same effect in the TT.

3.   Description of the corpus: *Modern Family*

Modern Family is an American mockumentary situation comedy created by Christopher Lloyd and Stephen Levitan for the ABC television channel. The corpus of the study consists of all the episodes of the first two seasons, though *Modern Family* has been the longest-running comedy series, stretching for 11 years and 11 seasons. Out of these 11 seasons, it was the first five that were mainly acclaimed by critics. Thus, the series won the Emmy *Award for Outstanding Comedy Series* in each of the first five years.

The series deals with different family types (nuclear family, step family and same-sex family) in Los Angeles. Jay Pritchett, the patriarch of the family, remarried to a much younger woman and Colombian immigrant, Gloria, who has a son from a previous marriage. Therefore, the Pritchetts are a representation of the step family. Jay, in turn, has a son, Mitchell, and a daughter, Claire, from a previous marriage. The same-sex family is represented by Mitchell and his husband – Cameron –, who have an adopted daughter, Lily. Claire and her husband – Phil Dunphy – together with their three children – Hale, Alex and Luke – represent a more traditional nuclear family.

4.   Ambiguity in the verbal component

4.1   Language-based jokes

According to Allan and Burridge (2006, 144), "[s]exual activity is tabooed as a topic for public display and severely constrained as a topic for discussion. The language of sexual pleasuring and copulation gives rise to a great deal of verbal play and figurative language". Partly due to the fact that sex is associated with taboo, ambiguity is very often resorted to when a joke has a sexual content. In addition, as signalled by Blake (2007, 39), "[o]blique references to sex often have a certain cleverness that would be missing from direct reference". Ross (1998, 65) says, in this sense, that one of the factors which makes sex, which is certainly a taboo, to be accepted in humour and which affects the audience's response is "the use of euphemisms or innuendos rather than explicit language or taboo words". Although she also says that the sex taboo seems to be universal, it is also true that there are cross-cultural differences in this respect.

As suggested by divergences, for example, in the classification of certain films in the United States and Spain, it could be affirmed that there are some cultural differences between the two countries regarding the public treatment of sex. Thus, for instance, some of Almodóvar's films were initially classified as X-rated films

in the United States, until a change in the American film rating took place precisely with one of Almodóvar's films – *Átame*, or *Tie Me Up Tie Me Down* –, which initially received an X-rating and was the first film to be rated as NC-17.[6] Similarly, the poster of another of Almodóvar's films – *Los amantes pasajeros* or *I'm So Excited* – was modified for the American market to erase a couple who seemed to be having sex on the wing of a plane.[7] These cultural differences in the public attitude towards sex make it interesting to research into the translation of jokes containing sexual innuendos from English into Spanish or vice versa.

Ambiguity itself may give rise to misinterpretations and/or to incongruity, and, hence, to humorous effects.[8] As regards translation, verbal ambiguity is normally reflected in the TT as well. Hence, the cognitive effects, and particularly the humorous effects, yielded in the ST will also be accessible to the TT audience.

The sequence in (1) involves a conversation between Gloria and the Dunphies – Claire and Phil – crowded with ambiguous utterances. The conversation in the scene takes place after Gloria goes to the Dunphies' in order to apologize for an offensive e-mail message she had accidentally sent to Claire. When she gets there, she finds the Dunphies in dismay after their children walked in on them while they were having sex.

(1) **GLORIA:** It was bad.

  CLAIRE: I know that.

  GLORIA: Claire, it was an accident.

  CLAIRE: That doesn't make it any better.

  GLORIA: Okay, you're right. I know how you feel.

  CLAIRE: Oh, God.

  GLORIA: It happened to me before, with another woman. And that time, I was the one getting it. And it hurt.

  PHIL: Wow.

  GLORIA: I'm sorry it had to come out like this, but you have to admit that you're only happy when you're the one cracking the whip.

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6. See https://elpais.com/diario/1990/04/25/cultura/640994410_850215.html, an article which explains that *Tie Me Up Tie Me Down* provoked the change from X to NC-17 in film ratings in the United States. X-rated films were popularly associated with pornography, and therefore, X-rating was replaced by NC-17, meaning "No One 17 and Under Admitted".

7. See in this respect Díaz-Pérez (2014, 118).

8. In a different type of context, misinterpretations and incongruity would not give rise to humorous effects. It is partly the fact that these misinterpretations or incongruity occur in a type of context in which a humorous outcome is expected that incongruity turns into humour.

CLAIRE: What?

GLORIA: Come on, we all know how you ride Phil. But maybe if you just let go a little, maybe even taste my cupcakes, I will join you.

CLAIRE: No… unh-unh. No. No. I… I am so confused right now.

PHIL: I may pass out.

CLAIRE: What are you talking about?

GLORIA: What are you talking about?

CLAIRE: The kids just walked in on me and Phil i… in bed. And we've just spent the last hour holed up in our room trying to figure out what to say to them.

GLORIA: Yeah. That's what I'm talking about.

(S2 Ch13 "Caught in the Act": 00:11:10)

CLAIRE: *Ha estado mal.*

CLAIRE: *Ya lo sé.*

GLORIA: *Claire, ha sido un accidente.*

CLAIRE: *Eso no lo justifica.*

GLORIA: *Tienes razón. Sé cómo te sientes.*

CLAIRE: *Dios mío.*

GLORIA: *A mí me pasó una vez con una mujer. Y esa vez me dieron a mí. Y me dolió.*

PHIL: *Vaya.*

GLORIA: *Siento que haya sido así. Pero reconoce que solo estás feliz cuando tienes el látigo.*

CLAIRE: *¿Qué?*

GLORIA: *Vamos. Todos sabemos lo que le haces a Phil. Pero si te sueltas un poco… incluso si pruebas mis magdalenas… yo me apuntaría.*

CLAIRE: *No. No. Estoy muy confundida.*

PHIL: *Voy a desmayarme.*

CLAIRE: *¿A qué te refieres?*

GLORIA: *¿A qué te refieres tú?*

CLAIRE: *Los niños me pillaron con Phil en la cama. Llevamos una hora encerrados, pensando en qué decirles.*

GLORIA: *Sí. De eso te hablaba yo.* [9]

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9. In those examples in which nothing is added after the TT, there is coincidence between the subtitled and the dubbed versions. When there is a difference between both versions, it

Ambiguity in this exchange is related to reference assignment, particularly of the pronoun *it*, and also to polysemy of several lexical items, such as *hurt, ride* or *cupcakes*, which gives rise to some polysemic puns. Other instances of wordplay are based on idiomaticity. Thus, in utterances such as *It was bad, it was an accident*; *It happened to me before, with another woman*; *I was the one getting it*; or *And it hurt*, the referent of the pronoun *it* is ambiguous. Whereas for Gloria the referent is the e-mail incident, the Dunphies believe that she is talking about their own incident with their children. Polysemy is the source of ambiguity in utterances which contain lexical items such as the verbs *get, hurt, join,* or *ride*, and nouns like *cupcakes*, all of which have an interpretation related to sex. Likewise, the idiomatic expression *crack the whip* has two simultaneous interpretations in this situation. Although the most accessible interpretation – and that intended by Gloria – is the idiomatic one, Claire and Phil interpret this phrase in a literal sense.

Several of the ambiguous utterances referred to above, then, contain humorous puns of two different types. In this sense, in Juckel et al. (2016), it is proved that the frequency of humorous puns in *Modern Family* is much higher than in other three situational comedies also focused on in the same study, namely *The Big Bang Theory, Family Guy* and *The Office.* Attardo (2018) defines a humorous pun as

> a textual occurrence in which a sequence of sounds must be interpreted with a reference to a second sequence of sounds, which may, but need not, be identical to the first sequence, for the full meaning of the text to be accessed. The perlocutionary goal or effect of the pun is to generate the perception of mirth or of the intention to do so.   (p. 91)

The utterances *I was the one getting it*; *It hurt*; *we all know how you ride Phil*, and *maybe even taste my cupcakes* contain polysemic puns, whereas the utterance *you have to admit that you're only happy when you're the one cracking the whip* includes an idiomatic pun. In the majority of these cases, there is also ambiguity in the TT. Thus, *Y esa vez me dieron a mí*; *Y me dolió*; *Pero reconoce que solo estás contenta cuando tú tienes el látigo* contain puns very similar to their ST counterparts, regarding both semantic content and the linguistic device that serves as the basis for the pun. In these cases, following Yus (2012, 2016), it could be said that the semantic scenario has been maintained – since the two senses conveyed by the original puns are also present in the TT puns –, and, in addition, the prag-

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will be indicated in brackets after the TT. The italics in the TT fragments are my own and in accordance with the journal's guidelines. Those words or phrases appearing in italics in the TL subtitles do not have any emphasis in the examples, in order to differentiate them from the surrounding text.

matic scenario has also been preserved, both in terms of quantity and quality of inferential strategies and balance between the processing effort and cognitive effects. In the other two cases, however, there is no pun in the TT. It is true that in *Todos sabemos lo que le haces a Phil* there is a certain degree of ambiguity, as the verb *hacer* ("do") in Spanish has a very wide meaning that could refer to almost any type of action, but there is no pun in the TT in this case. The punning lexical item *cupcakes*, which is used in English not only to mean "a cake baked from ingredients measured by the cupful, or baked in a small (frequently paper) cup,"[10] but also as a slang term meaning "women's breasts,"[11] is literally translated as *magdalenas*, a noun which is not commonly used in Spanish to refer to women's breasts. In this sense, the punning fragment could be said to be translated by means of a non-punning fragment. This translation solution would imply that the ST-intended cognitive effects – and specially the humorous ones – would not be accessible to the TT viewer. It is also true, however, that, considering the general content of the conversation, the situational context, and kinesics or body gestures (see Figure 1), the TT viewer could interpret that in this particular case, *magdalenas* could refer to Gloria's breasts. If this were the case, the translation solution would be *transference*, as a TL lexical item would acquire a meaning it does not normally have and which corresponds to its SL counterpart. In Delabastita's words, transference "imposes source language *signifieds* on a target language text" (Delabastita 1993, 212).

Figure 1. (S2 Ch13 "Caught in the Act": 00:11:46)

Furthermore, different studies in the field of lexical pragmatics maintain that the meanings of words may be pragmatically adjusted and fine-tuned in context. Lexical broadening involves "the use of a word to convey a more general sense than the encoded one, with a consequent expansion of the linguistically-specified denotation" (Wilson and Carston 2007, 234), whereas lexical narrowing implies

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10. http://www.oed.com /view/Entry/45878?redirectedFrom=cupcake#eid7758306

11. http://www.listaholic.com/138-slang-words-for-breasts.html

"the use of a word to convey a more specific sense than the encoded one, with a more restricted denotation (picking out a subset of the items that fall under the encoded concept)" (Wilson and Carston 2007, 234).[12] As Wilson and Carston (2007, 238) state, in this sense, a theory of lexical pragmatics may explain punning cases, such as those presented above. Thus, the interpretation of the lexical item *cupcakes* in its context, for instance, would be explained by lexical pragmatics within relevance theory by saying that it involves the construction of an ad hoc concept of CUPCAKES* whose denotation includes both cakes normally baked in a paper cup (CUPCAKES $_1$) – literal meaning – and women's breasts (CUPCAKES $_2$) – metaphorical or figurative meaning –.[13] This metaphorical or loose sense involves, according to Wilson and Carston, lexical broadening. As Wilson and Carston (2007, 239) highlight, lexical adjustment, which is guided by expectations of relevance, may be a 'one-off process', by means of which an ad-hoc concept is created and linked to a particular context, probably never to be used again. Of the two senses in the ST pun, nevertheless, only the literal one is present in the Spanish TT, unless it is assumed that, at least for some viewers, the metaphorical one is exceptionally transferred in this particular situation to the Spanish noun *magdalenas*.

In the majority of the cases discussed so far, then, a word-for-word translation into Spanish has reproduced ambiguity in the TT. Thus, for instance, the translation of the sequence *crack the whip* as *tener el látigo* has yielded a congenial pun in Spanish, a pun which is based on the same linguistic device as its ST counterpart and which conveys roughly the same meanings (see Delabastita 1993, 196). The translator took advantage of the fact that the relation between the signifier and the signified is almost identical in the SL and the TL in this case. Before adopting the translation solution, nevertheless, the translator had to metarepresent or analyse the cognitive environments of both the ST addresser and the TT addressee. The analysis could be summarized along the following lines:

Cognitive environment and effects (source culture)
Existing assumptions (EA)
1. The English idiomatic phrase *crack the whip* indicates that somebody uses his/her authority to make somebody behave better or work harder[14]

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12. An example of lexical narrowing would be the use of the verb *drink* to refer to drinking considerable amounts of alcohol and an example of lexical broadening would be the use of the noun *chameleon* to refer to people who can easily adapt to their surroundings.

13. It is the standard practice to represent ad hoc concepts as starred concepts, for instance CUPCAKES*. For further discussion of ad hoc concept construction within the relevance theoretic framework, see for instance Carston (2002a, 2002b).

14. https://dictionary.cambridge.org/es/diccionario/ingles/crack-the-whip

2. The phrase *crack the whip* may also have a literal meaning in certain contexts
3. The two previous interpretations can co-exist in a pun

Contextual assumptions (CA)
1. *Modern Family* is a situation comedy with plenty of jokes that are based on wordplay
2. The sequence *crack the whip* is part of a joke in a situation full of ambiguities and misunderstandings
3. In the conversation in this scene Gloria is referring to an incident concerning an e-mail that had been accidentally sent, whereas Claire and Phil think she is referring to an incident in which they were seen by their children while having sex
4. Claire's reaction and response to Gloria indicate she misunderstood Gloria's words, interpreting the sequence *crack the whip* in a literal sense.

Cognitive effects (CE)
1. CA1 reinforces mainly EA3, but also EA1 and EA2
2. CA2 reinforces EA2 and EA3
3. CA3 reinforces EA2
4. CA4 reinforces EA2
5. Contextual implication: The combination of CA3 and CA4 with EA2 and EA3 produces a surprising and amusing effect, because what might seem an unlikely interpretation of *crack the whip* – the literal one – is relevant in this context, and this produces humorous effects.

The five cognitive effects derived by the ST addressee would also be accessible to the TT addressee without any gratuitous processing effort, since s/he would depart from the same assumptions. Therefore, not only the inferential steps, but also the balance between cognitive effects and processing effort would be very similar in ST and TT. As a result of the translation solution adopted in this case, the TT addressee will have access to roughly the same cognitive effects intended by the source addresser. Had the translator reflected the meaning without reproducing wordplay in the TT, the TT addressee would have had to invest less processing effort, but s/he would have also been deprived of deriving the ST-intended cognitive effects, humorous effects included. Therefore, the translation solution adopted may be explained by resorting to the principle of relevance.

4.2 Language-based and culture-based jokes

There are some instances of wordplay that also involve culture-bound terms as one of the senses reflected in the pun. In these cases, following Chiaro (1992, 87),

it could be said that "jokes in which sociocultural references cross-cut play on language are the most difficult of all to render in another language." This is the case, for instance, of *Dick Butkus* in (2),[15] corresponding to a scene in which the whole family gather at Jay and Gloria's to watch an American football match. *Dick Butkus* is the name of a famous American football player, a linebacker. In this context, the phonological similitude with two parts of the male human body serves as the basis for a phonologic pun and, hence, for semantic ambiguity. Moreover, there is an additional phonologic pun based on the paronymy between *Butkus* and *butt kiss*. This ambiguity leads Mitchell, who knows nothing about American football, to misinterpret Jay, which gives rise to humorous effects.

(2)   CAMERON: Let's go, Illini!

MITCHELL: Let's go, right now!

JAY: Looks like I gotta watch the game with **Dick Butkus**.

MITCHELL: Dad! Dad, come on. That's offensive.

CAMERON: No, Mitchell, he's one of the greatest linebackers to ever play at Illinois, and one of my personal heroes.

MITCHELL: And his name is **Butkus**? And we're just choosing to… Okay, all right. Dad, I thought you were being homophobic. I'm sorry.

<div align="right">(S1 Ch5 "Coal Digger": 00:08:27)</div>

CAMERON: *¡Arriba, Illini!*

MITCHELL: *¡Venga, vamos!*

JAY: *Parece que voy a ver el partido con **Dick Butkus**.*

MITCHELL: *¡Papá! Vamos. Eso es ofensivo.*

CAMERON: *No, Mitchell, ha sido uno de los mejores* linebackers *de Illinois y uno de mis héroes personales.*

MITCHELL: *¿Y se llama **Butkus**? Y hemos decidido… Vale. Papá, perdona, pensé que habías sido homófobo.*   (Subtitled version)

CAMERON: *¡Vamos, equipo!*

MITCHELL: *¡Vamos, equipo!*

JAY: *Voy a tener que ver el partido con **el Ballena**.*

MITCHELL: *¡Papá! Vamos. Eso no se dice.*

CAMERON: *No, Mitchell, es uno de los mejores defensas que ha jugado jamás en lllinois y uno de mis héroes.*

MITCHELL: *¿Y se llama el Ballena? Si lo dices para … Vale, está bien. Papá, creía que era un insulto homófobo.*   (Dubbed version)

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15. This example is also dealt with in Díaz-Pérez (2017).

The type of translation solution adopted in this case by the subtitler involves leaving ST words or sequences in their original forms, in the SL – English in this case – and it has received different names depending on the author: exoticism (Haywood et al. 2009), loan (Díaz-Cintas and Remael 2014), repetition (Franco Aixelá 1996), retention (Pedersen 2011) or direct copy (Delabastita 1993, 1997). It constitutes an extreme case of what Venuti (1995, 20) called foreignizing translation. As put forward by Martínez-Sierra (2008, 237), the adoption of foreignizing or exoticizing solutions might increase the processing effort and, consequently, affect the derivation of humorous effects. Shared background knowledge is, therefore, particularly important in this case, as highlighted more than once (Zabalbeascoa 2005; Chiaro 2008; Martínez Sierra 2010). In Yus's (2012, 2016) terms, it can be said that the cultural scenario has been promoted to the detriment of the pragmatic one, since the ST culture-bound term has been conveyed to the TT, even if the pun and at least one of its senses will not be accessible to the monolingual TT addressee. The monolingual Spanish viewer would not be able to derive the ST-intended cognitive effects – particularly humorous ones – and would wonder what the American football player's name has to do with homophobia. In the dubbed version, on the contrary, the cultural scenario has not been preserved, as the culture-bound term is translated as el Ballena ("the Whale"), probably to make fun of Cameron's overweight. However, there is no pun or sexual allusion in this case. The pragmatic and semantic scenarios, therefore, have not been maintained either. Besides, the target viewer might also wonder why Mitchell talks about homophobia in this situation.

The difference between the dubbed and subtitled versions in this case may be due to one of the defining characteristics of subtitling, namely its additive nature, following Gottlieb's (1997, 141) and Pedersen's (2011, 113) terminology. The fact that, unlike dubbing, subtitling adds information (in the sense that both the ST and TT are present) also has important consequences for translation. The simultaneous presence of the two texts allows the viewer to compare both messages, something which is not possible in dubbing. This characteristic of subtitling led Díaz-Cintas and Remael (2014, 57) to consider it an instance of "vulnerable translation", subject to the scrutiny of a target audience who might have some knowledge of the SL. Karamitroglou (1998, 6) states, in this sense, that according to certain studies in the psychology of viewing, when certain linguistic items are recognized by the viewers, they expect those items to be literally translated into the TL in the subtitles.

Similarly to (2), (3) also contains a pun in which one of the senses is a culture-bound term. Cameron, as an enthusiastic interim music director at a children's school, gets angry at the criticisms of his partner, Mitchell. In this context, the verb *Sondheim-ize* is a newly coined word in which the morphologic base, *Sond-*

heim, is the name of a well-known American composer and lyricist, to which the suffix *-ize* was added to derive the verb. This new coinage phonologically resembles the verb *sodomize*, which implies a high level of taboo, not only because it refers to a type of sexual intercourse "characterized as unnatural or immoral, or otherwise culturally stigmatized; esp. (of a man) to penetrate the anus of (a person or animal) with the penis", according to the *Oxford English Dictionary* entry,[16] but also, and more importantly, because the pronoun *them*, direct object of the verb, refers to children.

(3)   CAMERON: This production was a joke until I introduced these children to the musical-theater greats... Bernstein, **Sondheim**. Years from now, some of these kids will still be talking about the way I **Sondheim-ized** them.

MITCHELL: Ooh, I don't think that's a good way of saying... okay.

<div align="right">(S2 Ch19 "The Musical Man": 00:12:29)</div>

CAMERON: *Esta producción era ridícula... hasta que yo le hablé a estos niños de los grandes del musical- Bernstein, **Sondheim**. Algunos siempre recordarán... como los "**Sondheimicé**".*

MITCHELL: *No creo que sea apropiado decirlo así.*

By providing a congenial pun in the TT, the cultural, pragmatic, and semantic scenarios have been preserved in the TT in this case. The source-culture bound term is also present in the TT, which, moreover, contains a congenial pun, reflecting the same senses or semantic layers as its ST counterpart. The degree of interpretative resemblance between ST and TT is very high, and the ST-intended cognitive effects, especially humorous ones, will be accessible to the TT viewer as well.

In (4), Luke is speaking to his mother about Heather, the receptionist at his father's workplace. The most accessible sense of *woody* in this context is the sexual one, because of the set phrase *give sb. a woody*. However, later on, that sense is ruled out, when Luke mentions that Woody was his favourite character from the animated film *Toy Story*. This second sense of *Woody* is a culture-bound term. The initially selected sexual frame immediately afterwards turns into a children's film frame. The concept that is activated first – WOODY $_1$ ("an erection of the penis") – after a reanalysis of the text is cancelled in favour of a more plausible interpretation in which WOODY $_2$ ("character from an animated film") is activated. Although this is a single-retention pun, the first interpretation lingers in the addressee's mind and gives rise to humorous effects, inasmuch as incongruity and sexual innuendos are typical components of jokes. With regard to humorous puns in which the audience are misled to a plausible but incorrect first interpretation, Padilla Cruz (2015) argues that their comprehension involves a set of cognitive

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16. http://www.oed.com /view/Entry/183886?redirectedFrom=sodomize#eid

mechanisms of vigilance, which lead the audience in their search for alternative interpretations. In his own words, "these mechanisms alert the audience to the punster's jocular intention, which surfaces in the production of a text amenable to reinterpretation" (Padilla Cruz 2015, 469).

(4)   LUKE: One time, she gave me a **Woody**.

      CLAIRE: Sweet Je…

      LUKE: She remembered he's my favorite character from "Toy Story."
                                     (S2 Ch20 "Someone to Watch Over Lily": 00:03:36)

      LUKE: *Una vez me dio un **Woody**.*

      CLAIRE: *Jesús-*

      LUKE: *Se acordaba de que era mi personaje preferido de* Toy Story.
                                                               (Subtitled version)

      LUKE: *Una vez me dio un **mordisco**.*

      CLAIRE: *Será, eeh…*

      LUKE: *Siempre pide un sándwich de queso que me encanta.*   (Dubbed version)

As far as the translations are concerned, in the subtitled version, the cultural scenario has been preserved, while the pragmatic scenario has not. On the contrary, in the dubbed version, the pragmatic scenario has been favoured over the cultural and semantic ones. The ST punning sequence is translated as *Una vez me dio un mordisco* ("Once she gave me a bite"), which is initially interpreted as "Once she bit me", an interpretation with sexual overtones. However, immediately afterwards, Luke adds "she always orders a cheese sandwich I love", in such a way that the initial interpretation is invalidated and replaced by one along the lines of "she offered me a bite of her cheese sandwich". Consequently, in the dubbed version, as in the ST one, there is ambiguity and the TT viewers will, hence, follow very similar inference steps and will have access to some of the cognitive effects available to the ST audience, humorous effects included. Moreover, the balance between cognitive effects and processing effort is very similar in the ST and TT as well. As in (2) above, the additive nature of subtitling may have favoured a source-culture bias in the Spanish subtitles.[17] Section 5 will deal with another peculiarity

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17. Other specific characteristics of subtitling which may affect the translation solutions adopted are time and space constraints, such as the maximum number of characters per line – 39 – and per subtitle – 78 – (see Díaz Cintas and Remael 2014, 85), as well as the maximum reading speed demanded from the viewer, which depends on the medium but oscillates between 15 CTS and 19 CTS. As regards dubbing, there are also constraints, such as synchronization or "one of the features of translation for dubbing that consists of matching the target language translation and the articulatory and body movements of the screen actors and

of audio-visual translation that affects both dubbing and subtitling and which is derived from the polysemiotic nature of audio-visual texts.

5.   Ambiguity in the visual component

5.1   The polysemiotic nature of audiovisual texts

The most defining characteristic of audio-visual texts is their polysemiotic nature. As Gottlieb states, films are polysemiotic texts in which four semiotic channels can be identified: the non-verbal visual channel (i.e. the picture), the non-verbal audio channel (e.g. music and sound effects), the verbal visual channel (e.g. written signs, captions, etc.), and the verbal audio channel (i.e. the dialogues). All four may interact, but the interest of this paper particularly lies in the interplay between the visual channel and the audio verbal channel in the case of dubbing, and among the audio verbal, the visual non-verbal and verbal channels in the case of subtitling. Figure 2 below, extracted from Zabalbeascoa (2008), represents these four semiotic channels in a graphic way. The fact that audiovisual translation deals with polysemiotic texts, which involve both audio and visual semiotic channels, may have some consequences for the adopted translation solutions.

	Audio	Visual
Verbal	Words heard	Words read
Nonverbal	Music + special effects	The picture Photography

Figure 2. The four components of the audio-visual text (extracted from Zabalbeascoa 2008, 24)

5.2   Visual channel as an aid to the translator

Thanks to the polysemiotic nature of audio-visual texts, the image may be used as another element that may be exploited for humorous purposes. Ambiguity may also affect the visual component, which, in association with the verbal compo-

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actresses, and ensuring that the utterances and pauses in the translation match those of the source text", as defined by Chaume (2012, 68).

nent, can be misinterpreted, as illustrated by Figures 3, 4 and 5, and by Example (5) below.

Phil had a poster made showing his own family, as portrayed in Figure 3, to wrap his van and advertise his real estate business. However, when the poster is actually wrapping the van, the Dunphies fail to notice that what can be seen on one side of the van is Claire's picture together with the motto *I can't be satisfied* and a phone number (Figure 4), whereas on the other side Haley's picture appears next to the motto *Let me make your dreams come true* and the same phone number (Figure 5). What was designed within a real estate agency frame, therefore, becomes a sexual services frame for addressees of the messages contained in the poster, both TV viewers and passers-by that could see the advertisement on the van. Hence, the interpretation of the utterances *I can't be satisfied* and *Let me make your dreams come* true depends on the frame or mental script that is activated. The most accessible one for by-passers was the sexual one, as reflected in the telephone conversation in (5) between Phil and a man who had seen the advertisement on the street. That conversation is crowded with utterances that have totally different interpretations depending on the frame which is activated, such as *The carpet matches the drapes*; *you're planning to flip one*; or *It'll give me a chance to give them both a good scrubbing*. This ambiguity involving a sexual interpretation is in general maintained in the TT. Reference assignment also contributes to ambiguity, as the pronoun *one* in *the little one* refers to "woman" or "house", depending on the interpretation, and similarly, *them* refers to "the women" or "the houses".

(5) **ALEX:** Dad, your phone's been buzzing like crazy.

PHIL: Sweet Lorna Doone! 19 missed calls? I wonder who's… Phil Dunphy. You saw the ad? Great. Do you know what you're looking for? The little one? I think I know which one you're talking about. Um, if you're interested, I also have an older model with a lot of character. What? I think the carpet matches the drapes. I haven't checked in a while. Both of them? Wow. Well, I guess that makes sense if you're planning to flip one. Listen, um, why don't I call you back? We'll set up an appointment. It'll give me a chance to give them both a good scrubbing. All right. Thanks a lot. Bye-bye. How about that, huh? You think all these calls are about the ad?

ALEX: Yeah. My friend Nicole just sent me a picture of the van.

PHIL: I guess I'll be seeing you Wednesdays and every other weekend.

(S2 Ch19 "The Musical Man": 00:09:48)

ALEX: *Tu teléfono no deja de vibrar.*

PHIL: *Madre del amor hermoso, 19 llamadas perdidas. No sé quién-* Phil *Dunphy. ¿Ha visto el anuncio? Estupendo. ¿Ya sabe lo que quiere? La pequeña. Creo*

que sé a cuál se refiere. Justo al lado hay otra mayor con mucha personalidad. ¿Qué? Sí, creo que el tejado pega con el felpudo. ¿Las dos? Vaya. Tiene sentido si quiere montarse un dúplex. ¿Le parece bien que le llame luego? Y concertamos una cita. Así podré darle a las dos un buen repaso. Muchas gracias. Adiós. ¿Qué te parece? ¿Habrán llamado todos por el anuncio?

ALEX: *Sí. Mi amiga Nicole acaba de enviarme una foto del monovolumen.*

PHIL: *Os veré los miércoles y cada dos fines de semana.*

Figure 3. (S2 Ch19 "The Musical Man": 00:00:27)

Figure 4. (S2 Ch19 "The Musical Man": 00:05:55)

Figure 5. (S2 Ch19 "The Musical Man": 00:06:03)

The sequence corresponding to the dialogue in (6) and Figure 6 (which portrays a frame within that sequence) also serve to illustrate ambiguity at the visual level. Regarding the verbal component, there is ambiguity in utterances such as

be one with me, Jay; *Now get your hands up there, like you're lifting me off the ground*; *Just snap the damn thing*; or *that kind of hurt*, all of which may have, apart from the interpretation intended by the speaker, also a sexual interpretation. This sexual interpretation is reinforced by the image, which, as mentioned above, also reflects ambiguity. Yus (2009) focuses on visual metaphors and maintains that the interpretations of both verbal and visual metaphors involve similar cognitive procedures. In both cases, Yus argues, the addressee will adjust the conceptual information and, in so doing, will generate an appropriate *ad hoc* concept. Likewise, in cases of ambiguity in the visual component, such as the one portrayed in Figure 6, it could be said that an *ad hoc* concept has been generated, so that the image may be simultaneously interpreted in two different ways. The real interpretation of the image, within an American football frame, coexists with another interpretation, within a sexual frame, which the viewer can access in his/her search for relevance and which yields additional cognitive effects, mainly humorous ones.

(6)   MITCHELL: You want to hear weird? Cam said he'd pick up dad at a gay bar.

CLAIRE: How did that come up?

MITCHELL: I'm really trying to block it out.

CLAIRE: As far as I'm concerned, mum and dad had sex two times.

MITCHELL: Agreed.

CAM: Now get your hands up there, and like you're lifting me off the ground. Be one with me, Jay. There you go.

CLAIRE: Do you want to get something to eat?

MITCHELL: I am never eating again.

CAM: Just snap the damn thing. Perfect. That one kind hurt.

(S1 Ch "The Coal-Digger": 00:19:39)

MITCHELL: *No, ¿sabes lo que es raro? Cam ha dicho que se ligaría a papá en un bar gay.*

CLAIRE: *¿Por qué lo ha dicho?*

MITCHELL: *Intento olvidarlo.*

CLAIRE: *En lo que a mí respecta, mamá y papá lo hicieron dos veces.*

MITCHELL: *Estoy de acuerdo.*

CAM: *Vale. Mete las manos, como si me levantaras. Sé uno conmigo, Jay. Vamos.*

CLAIRE: *¿Quieres comer algo?*

MITCHELL: *No volveré a comer nunca.*

CAM: *¡Pásala! Perfecto. Eso ha hecho daño.*

Figure 6. (S1 Ch "The Coal-Digger": 00:19:53)

As put forward by Martínez Sierra (2009, 147), although the visual component may complicate the translator's task, in some cases it may become an aid to both the translator and the viewer. In Examples (5) and (6), the visual channel, rather than constraining the translator's task, contributes to the creation of humorous effects.

5.3 Visual channel as a challenge to the translator

In spite of what was said above, there are some other cases in which the image makes the translator's task really difficult to such an extent that the ST-intended humorous effects may not be accessible to the TT viewer, the sexual allusion may be lost, or there may even be lack of intersemiotic cohesion in the TT. That is what happens in (7), which corresponds to the end of a musical show performed by Luke and his schoolmates at their school. To close this show, the kids were to display one letter each to form the phrase "We love the world", together with the letter F (standing for *Frankling Middle School*), which would come down from the ceiling. However, Luke – who was to show the letter L – cannot land, since the machinery gets stuck, and when his mates start to raise their letters, what can be read is "We love the word", which gets even worse when the letter F comes down, giving as a result "We love the F word". Jaki (2016, 377) refers to the polysemiotic nature or multimodal character of audio-visual texts as a restriction of the potential translation options at hand. However, the translator may decide to sacrifice intersemiotic cohesion. Thus, in (7), for instance, there is no intersemiotic cohesion between the visual component (what may be seen on the screen) and what may be read in the subtitles or heard in the dubbed version. For example, whereas the message formed by the letters held by the children reads *We love the word*, what the viewer of the Spanish dubbed version may hear is *Queremos a mundo* [18] ("*We love world"), and what the viewer of the Spanish subtitled ver-

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18. This is an ungrammatical sentence in Spanish, since it lacks the definite article.

sion may read is *Amamos al mudo* ("We love the dumb one"). Afterwards, the message *We love the F word* appears on the screen and in both versions it is translated as *Amamos el judo* by means of a caption. Therefore, in the subtitled as well as in the dubbed version, there is a lack of intersemiotic cohesion, between the multimodal verbal-visual semiotic channel and the verbal-audio channel in the translation for dubbing, and between the visual English semiotic channel and the visual Spanish semiotic channel of the subtitles. The Spanish viewer who has some knowledge of English, then, will be able to perceive that there is no coincidence between what is written in English and the Spanish translation in both versions. Moreover, since *the F word* has been translated as *mundo* ["world"] in one of the versions and as *el mudo* ["the dumb one"] in the other one, the sexual allusion has been lost in both cases. Concerning the humorous effects available to the Spanish viewers of both versions, in the subtitles the pragmatic scenario has been favoured over the semantic one, as a new pun was created at the expense of a sacrifice of the semantic content and of intersemiotic coherence. The new pun in Spanish is a phonologic one based on the paronymy between *mudo* and *judo* [see Figures 7 and 8]. Thanks to this TT pun, part of the ST-intended cognitive effects, and particularly humorous ones, will also be available to TT viewers of the Spanish subtitled version.

(7) CLAIRE: "We love the word"

CAMERON: Where's the "L"?

MANNY: That's Luke.

CAMERON: Lower the insignia. Lower it.

JAY: "We love the…" What the hell?

CAMERON: No, no, no. No, no. No, no, no. No. No, no, no. No.

MITCHELL: Brava!   (S2 Ch19 "The Musical Man": 00:18:01)

CLAIRE: ¿*"Amamos al mudo"*?

CAMERON: ¿*Y la N?*

MANNY: *Es Luke.*

CAMERON: *Bajad el emblema. AMAMOS EL JUDO.*

JAY: *Amamos e-- Pero ¿qué narices?*

MITCHELL: ¡*Bravo!*   (Subtitled version)

CLAIRE: ¿*"Queremos a mundo"*?

CAMERON: ¿*Y la "L"?*

MANNY: *Es Luke.*

CAMERON: *Baja la insignia. Bájala. AMAMOS EL JUDO.*

JAY: *Pero, ¿qué diablos?*

CAMERON: *No, no, no. No, no. No, no, no. No. No, no, no. No.*

MITCHELL: *¡Viva!*   (Dubbed version)

Figure 7. (S2 Ch19 "The Musical Man": 00:18:03)

Figure 8. (S2 Ch19 "The Musical Man": 00:18:10)

6.   Concluding remarks

In those jokes in which sex is a source of humour, semantic ambiguity is normally resorted to, in such a way that this double sense – often reflected in the form of puns – gives rise to humorous cognitive effects. More often than not, the semantic ambiguity present in the ST (and in the majority of these cases the sexual innuendo too) is also reflected in the TT. In those cases, it could be said, from a relevance-theoretic perspective, that the pragmatic scenario is preserved. It is also true, however, that on some occasions the sexual innuendo disappears from the TT, probably because the translator did not consider it relevant enough. Nevertheless, other conditioning factors should not be disregarded, such as certain requirements from the client, the translator's inability to find a solution which also incorporated a sexual interpretation, or his/her unawareness of the existence of a sexual innuendo in the particular context.

In audio-visual texts, the visual component may also be exploited for humorous purposes. In this sense, ambiguity can affect not only language but also the image reflected on the screen. Although it is true that the visual channel may complicate the translator's task – since it may condition the translation solutions if intersemiotic cohesion is to be sought – it is also true that the image may often help the viewer to derive humorous effects and the translator to find an appropriate solution to a given translation problem.

Acknowledgements

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