

Recibido / Received: 30/06/2016
Aceptado / Accepted: 10/09/2016

Para enlazar con este artículo / To link to this article:
<http://dx.doi.org/10.6035/MonTI.2017.9.3>

Para citar este artículo / To cite this article:

BOTELLA TEJERA, Carla. (2017) "Translation of Intertextual Audiovisual Humor. *May the Force Be with You.*"
In: Martínez Sierra, Juan José & Patrick Zabaldebeascoa Terran (eds.) 2017. *The Translation of Humour / La traducción del humor. MonTI 9trans*, pp. 1-23.

TRANSLATION OF INTERTEXTUAL AUDIOVISUAL HUMOR. *MAY THE FORCE BE WITH YOU*

Carla Botella Tejera

cbotella@ua.es

Universidad de Alicante

Abstract

This article is an approach to the translation of humorous intertextual references in audiovisual productions. Firstly, it deals with different theories of humor to then describe the main characteristics of audiovisual cultural references. Based on all the above mentioned issues, this article will show how allusions can certainly result in parody. Therefore, translators should take into account that humorous nuances should be transferred so that the new audience is on an equal footing with the original one.

Keywords: Audiovisual translation. Humor. Intertextuality. Cultural references.

1. Introduction: a brief approach to humor

Humor is undoubtedly both an interesting and controversial field of study. Abundant literature has been written in search of definitions that manage to include everything that this term alludes to. There are even authors like Attardo (1994: 3) that have suggested that it is practically impossible to come up with a definition for such a complex process:

Not only has it not been possible to agree on how to divide the category of “humor” (e.g. “humor” vs. “comic” vs. “ridiculous”), but it is even difficult to find a pretheoretical definition of “humor” in the most general sense. As a matter of fact, the claim that humor is undefinable has been advanced several times.

If we look back in history, it appears that in Ancient Greece the term *humor* was used to describe each one of the liquid or semiliquid substances contained in the human body. It is interesting to comprehend that, from this perspective, the mixture of those four elements was required to reach a balance. Hippocrates (470-377 B.C.) was one of the thinkers that drove the doctrine that suggests that man faces his vital reality in a balanced way (Carbelo 2006: 18). Consequently, we can derive from this that when somebody is healthy and when everything in their organism is working well, they are in a good humor. If this harmony is lacking, we can expect the opposite. Laughter, in turn, would be a positive expression of this sentiment. Therefore, humor studied from this perspective would be a way of understanding the connection between humans and their environment, whatever the relationship between the two may be. The theories set forth in some of Freud's (1978) and Bergson's (1984) works greatly influenced the study of humor and the impact of laughter.

Following this line of thought, many authors focus their research on the study of laughter as the result of humor, as a positive element that materializes from humor and that can be described, in the words of Vandaele (1995: 1), as: “a physical laughter, this strange convulsion as an apparently unambiguous outcome and sign of a psychological reality, or smiling, or even an ‘inner’ feeling which comes close to laughter”. Thus, for Attardo (1994: 10-11) this “laughter” would be the common criterion when defining a humoristic act, connecting

humor to the neurophysical phenomenon of laughter and recognizing that something is considered funny if it makes someone laugh.

The same author explains that what is definitely clear is that humor is based on a perlocutive act; that is, on the sum of the context plus the interaction between the speaker and the listener. To quote Alcaraz (1990: 149-150), the perlocutive effect “surge de las circunstancias de la enunciación y, por lo tanto, no nace sólo por la simple emisión de un enunciado, sino en un determinado contexto, y comprende los efectos, deseados o no, a veces imprecisos o poco claros que cualquier enunciado puede producir en unas determinadas circunstancias”¹.

Another interesting proposal is that of Nash, who thoroughly studied humor and recognized the importance of language as a mechanism used to create humor by noting that the *act* of humor has three principal models (1985: 9-10):

- a) A ‘genus’ or derivation, in culture, institutions, attitudes, beliefs, typical practices, characteristics, artefacts, etc.
- b) A characteristic design, presentation or verbal packaging, by virtue of which the humorous intention is indicated and recognized.
- c) A locus in language, some word or phrase that is indispensable to the joke; the point at which humour is held and discharged.

Regarding the mechanisms used to create humor, Vandaele (1995: 255) emphasizes incongruity, which in his opinion is a basic element of humor and has always been a central factor—the main characteristic of humor—in the theoretical tradition; and he also emphasizes superiority, which would be expressed as an increase in the individual’s own self-esteem. Incongruity, in his opinion, could be linguistic, pragmatic, narrative, intertextual or parodic (which he considers a parasite to the other genres), social or satirical and natural, and takes place when what happens does not correspond with what was expected to happen. In other words, when what we thought was going to happen does not and we are surprised by the incongruity between the reality and the assumption. What is of special interest to this study is that incongruity can be intertextual and, therefore, the author considers intertextuality to be one of the possible mechanisms used to create humor. Theories about incongruity have been backed by thinkers such as Kant and Schopenhauer. In fact, in his work *The World as Will and Representation* (1985), Schopenhauer talks about

1. “arises from the circumstances of the enunciation and therefore does not originate solely from the simple emission of a statement, but rather in a given context, and comprises the effects, desired or not, and at times ambiguous or unclear, that any statement may produce in certain circumstances [my translation].

surprise, about how an unexpected change can be a possible mechanism for producing laughter (Carbelo 2006: 20-21).

One possible way to create incongruity in humor production is, precisely, to violate Grice's conversational maxims. Authors like Attardo (2002) and Nash (1985) point out that jokes involve the violation of at least one of the maxims and, in addition, to produce the humoristic effect there must also be a break in the understanding between the speaker and the receiver. In turn, Yus (2003: 1313) believes that incongruity cannot act alone in the production of humor, but that a combination of three elements must exist: "1) the actual resolution of incongruous ongoing interpretations; 2) the realization of having been fooled by the communicator; 3) a positive interaction of the joke with the addressee's cognitive environment". That is to say, for the joke to be effective and to guarantee that it does not go unnoticed, it is important that the incongruity be evident to both the speaker and the receiver.

Regarding superiority, Vandaele (1995: 257) discusses negative superiority and positive superiority as distinct emotions capable of producing humor. Feeling a sense of superiority over others or that one is better than the rest is a factor capable of producing laughter, hence its social nature. But once again, superiority cannot create humor on its own.

Another line of investigation on humor leads us to theories relating to the release of tension, which try to fill in some of the gaps left by the theories of incongruity and superiority. In this sense, physical strain and psychological strain are differentiated, capable of reestablishing the balance mentioned earlier (Carbelo 2006: 25-26).

In addition to all the characteristics we have already mentioned, humor is culturally specific, although we also try to show its universality. For this reason, we agree with Martínez Tejerina (2008: 38) when she points out:

Cultural coexistence shows us that all cultures laugh, but not for the same reasons, nor on the same occasions, nor about the same things. In other words, humor is an apparently contradictory element, in the sense that it deals with a universal phenomenon while also being enclosed by concrete cultural and linguistic borders.²

So, humor exists in "communities" (Martínez Sierra 2008: 133) that share a series of convictions and conventions. As Nash (1985: 9-10) mentioned, one of

2. The original text, written in Spanish, is the following one: "La convivencia cultural nos demuestra que todos los pueblos ríen, pero no lo hacen ni por los mismos motivos, ni en las mismas ocasiones, ni con los mismos referentes. Es decir, el humor es un hecho aparentemente contradictorio, en el sentido de que se trata de un fenómeno universal, que al mismo tiempo se encuentra encerrado en fronteras culturales y lingüísticas concretas."

the characteristics that defines humor is the importance of a society's culture, attitudes and beliefs, etc.

However, we agree with Gillies (1997: 352) in that the differences between cultures are not the only features that affect whether a text is found to be humorous or not. Logically, individual differences that make each human being unique and distinctive also matter.

Thus, if we review all the characteristics that we have described on this point, and we still have not found a satisfactory definition for the term, regarding humor we can affirm that:

- 1) The community's culture plays an important role in what we find humorous. A society's attitudes and beliefs influence and shape what is understood as humor.
- 2) It can rouse laughter. What is funny makes us laugh, and what makes us laugh is funny. There is a connection between the mental phenomenon of humor and a complex neurophysiological manifestation: laughter (Attardo 1994: 10).
- 3) The linguistic element can be a source in the creation of humor.
- 4) It is based on the perlocutive effect; the context and the objective are fundamental to the creation of humor.
- 5) It can be produced by violating conversational maxims, that is, through a divergence between what is expected to happen and what really happens (incongruity and superiority), although this incongruity must be evident for it to be effective.
- 6) Allows one to escape and release physical and psychological stress.

After completing the difficult task of compiling a list of characteristics of what we understand *humor* to be, we have yet to describe the process through which humor is transmitted and received, which we will try to do in the following section.

2. Transmission and reception of humor

As we know, in any communication process it will be the communicative relationship established between the speaker and the listener that will give rise to the transmission of information or, in Torres' (1999: 93) words,

his task [that of the speaker] consists in producing a verbal stimulus that the listener must use as a basis for restoring meaning to the statement and, to do so, must make a prior assessment of the contextual suppositions that the

listener needs to classify to perceive the intended meaning and of the inferential processes used in the search for optimal relevance.³

On this topic, Yus (2010: 1) mentions that “on the speaker’s side, there is certain control over what inferential paths the interlocutor is expected to take”, which means that the speaker can anticipate certain information, certain knowledge that exists in the memory of the listener and is used to process humor and extract the comicalness of the joke. Therefore, to approach humor, we must also approach pragmatics. Like this, as Martínez Sierra (2004: 226) affirms, the speaker and the listener must share a certain degree of prior knowledge for the jokes to be successful. On this point, Sperber & Wilson (1986: 58) insist that it is important that the listener be capable of inferring and assessing the speaker’s communicative intention. Therefore, the very act of decoding that information is what provides input for the comprehension process, for both authors. In this process, Yus (2003: 1304-1307) establishes different phases that the listener must go through to extract the logical form (the listener or receiver works to decode and arrange the grammatical constituents): resolve the ambiguity based on the context, determine the real meaning of the message being received despite polysemy and other similar characteristics, and enrich the semantic load and discover the derived implications, again based on Sperber & Wilson’s (1986: 383) relevance theory.

On the other hand, and regardless of the importance of the communicative relationship between the two, we think it is important to insist that humor largely depends on the communicative context and that the speaker can only hypothesize and anticipate the receiver’s reaction. Sperber & Wilson (1986: 58) state that “[Communicators] can have some controllable effect on their audience’s cognitive environment, but the effects of these modifications are only partly predictable by the speaker”. Ideally, in theory, the speaker should consider, as proposed by Rubio Santana (1996: 225), whether the joke will be effective and achieve the desired effect for the receiver, that the circumstances surrounding the receiver at the time of the exchange are favourable, and that the receiver has enough cultural knowledge to understand the nuances responsible for producing the humorous effect.

3. Torres’ original words were the following ones: “su tarea [la del emisor] consiste en provocar un estímulo verbal que el oyente ha de utilizar como una base para recuperar el sentido del enunciado y, para ello, debe hacer una evaluación previa de los supuestos contextuales que el oyente necesita seleccionar para la interpretación y de los procesos inferenciales en pos de la búsqueda de la pertinencia óptima.”

In this way, the receiver cannot be passive, because he is the one who must create meaning in the communicative process, not only by deciphering the intertextuality, but also by extracting the comicalness.

Supported by Chaume's (2004: 165) classification of the specific problems encountered in audiovisual texts, in our study we mainly find difficulties in the linguistic code, semiotically complemented by the iconographic code; that is, the image can complicate the translation, or simplify it. Further on, when we delve into the field of translating humor, we will see, as Zabalbeascoa (2005: 185) states, that humor and translation studies overlap and that for that reason, whenever a translator's work approaches one of the two fields, that which he discovers in one will lead him toward the other and will prompt him to take an interest in it.

3. Intertext as a parodic element. Audiovisual intertextuality in humor: culture-specific references

Before we go any further and approach the translation of humor and, more specifically, describe the process in the audiovisual modality, we think it is important to explore the concept of culture and its undeniable and inseparable relation to humor in the form of culture-specific references that, while usually quite funny, can also greatly complicate the translator's job.

From the definitions offered in the Royal Spanish Academy dictionary, the concept of *culture* that we refer to here is the "combination of lifestyles and customs, knowledge and degree of artistic, scientific and industrial development, in a period, social group, etc." Authors such as Sales (2003) and Martínez Sierra (2008) put this definition into context, and understand culture to be somewhat dynamic, something that is in a constant process of change. Some traditions are preserved, others lost, and others newly acquired. It is what is known in language acquisition studies as "culture with a capital c" versus an individual's collection of knowledge, which would be "culture with a lower-case c".

Humor is a part of culture. It is culturally specific. It is transmitted and acquired by living in a specific society. That is why we have what we call *culture-specific references*, which, based on Agost's (1999: 99) definition, are what allow societies to differentiate themselves from one another, providing an idiosyncrasy of its own to each culture. In the author's opinion, villages, cities, places in a country, as well as literature, songs, esthetic concepts, famous people, gastronomy, and money, etc., that are all characteristics of a society, can be considered elements of culture. Many authors—cf. Delabastita (1990),

Agost (1999) or Martínez Sierra (2008)—point out the importance of cultural context in order to understand these elements.

Culture (with a capital c) is typical and characteristic of a social group, of a group of individuals; it is ethnocentric. However, we must be aware that nowadays the phenomenon of globalization also affects culture and, even though the distance between certain cultures continues to be stratospheric, American culture, for example, has increasingly spread to all continents through the media, and audiovisual products (series, films, programs...), etc. In this regard, in his review of the contact between cultures and the role of mass media, Martínez Sierra (2008: 90) suggests that it is possible that we are heading toward a “cultural homogeneity”. We share the author’s fear and we are also concerned that the American culture will spread even further, even to the point that we assume some of its customs and traditions as our own. On the other hand, the advantage would be that this phenomenon could also facilitate the comprehension of products produced in the US and make the task of translating certain elements easier since they would no longer be so foreign to the Spanish audience.

It is important to link culture and intertextuality to then be able to understand intertext as a parody. Marco (1998: 185-190) considers cultural elements, the manner in which texts are grouped, and intertextuality to all fall within the context of culture. Intertextuality and cultural elements, therefore, are part of the culture. Intertextuality is, without a doubt, a source of humor; as Nash (1985: 80) points out: “Allusion can be an important, indeed cardinal, device in the structure of comic texts”.

According to Iampolski (1996: 10), the Theory of intertextuality comes from three basic sources: Tyniánov’s theoretical ideas, those of Bakhtin, and Saussure’s theory of anagrams. What is interesting for our research is that both Tyniánov and Bakhtin tackle the problem of intertext through the study of parody. In the words of Iampolski (1996: 10), both saw parody as:

[...] a basic principle of the renovation of artistic systems, based on the transformation of preceding texts. Parody is represented as a text on two different planes, through which the predecessor text “shows through” according to its expression.⁴

4. In this case, this was the original text: “[...] un principio fundamental de la renovación de los sistemas artísticos, basado en la transformación de textos precedentes. La parodia se representa como un texto de dos planos, a través de cual ‘se transparenta’ según su expresión, el texto predecesor.”

Another argument that we find interesting and that other authors also share is, in fact, that Lampolski understands parody as a principle capable of renewing artistic systems, considering that, with the use of parody, prior texts can be transformed into new texts, within which we can observe the text to which it makes reference.

In this regard, referring to the new texts that are generated, it is also of interest to note that those new comic texts do not just depend on the original texts to which they make reference, but the way in which they are contextualized so that they are funny in and of themselves without having to depend so humoristically on the text from which they are derived, is also important.

On this point, we return to Vandaele (1995: 255) to take a closer look at what the author considers *intertextual incongruity* or *parodic incongruity*. To begin with, as we briefly discussed, he considers it a parasite to the rest of the incongruities for depending on them and for imitating a certain style through the combination of some allusive and transgressive elements. The merging of these elements, of both a verbal and visual nature, activates the memory to recall and alter, through the incongruity, the mental constructions that the receiver has stored in relation to the parodied genre or style.

Lorenzo (2005: 136) has approached the intertextual functions that depend on, in any case, a shared knowledge or some kind of implicit or explicit complicity between the speaker and the receiver, and among those that emphasize the humoristic function, the discourse construction function, and the appellative function. The author insists that the humoristic function is one of the most common and that, although it basically appears in entertainment and political diatribe genres, it can also be found in a large variety of textual genres and typologies. For us, as we have been discussing, in those audiovisual productions where the humoristic function is emphasized, the translator should fight to maintain it in order to create equal conditions for the new receivers. It is also true, as the author mentions, that the political terrain is a source of numerous parodic allusions.

We have already mentioned that Nash (1985: 45) considers parodic references to be one of the possible means for creating jokes, and the author explains that sometimes these references find themselves affected by plays on words, as well as substitutions, for which we again consider the linguistic element as a source of humoristic creation. Intertextuality can be, therefore, a parodic element, just as Nash (1985: 80) believes, “wherever allusions occur some excursion into parody is possible; the parodic line often begins with the allusive point”. The act of making a reference, whether to a dramatic work, a passage, or a character, etc., can be accompanied by a comedic intention that

seeks to establish complicity with the receivers who, once they detect the intertextuality, will discover the humoristic element derived from the use of it. Having said that, the same author warns that sometimes we will be confronted with what he calls “pseudoparody” in those cases in which “the sense of recollection is vaguer, and the writer appears to be imitating, in general, the kind of rhetoric appropriate to a convention or genre” (1985: 100). Either way, and always bearing in mind that at times intertextual humor will be disguised as pseudoparody, we cannot deny that parody makes use of imitation and that, therefore, it is highly connected to the use of intertextuality.

Furthermore, another element that can generate humor, but at the same time complicates the job of the translator, is the distortion itself of the intertextuality. An example of distortion could be: “Let my pidgeons go”, parodying the phrase “Let my people go”, in this case through the use of paronymy, in Episode 12 of Season 1 of the TV series created by Seth MacFarlane, *Family Guy*. It makes reference to, incidentally, the motion picture *The Ten Commandments* (Cecil B. DeMille 1956) (Botella 2010: 109). In any case, and in addition to creating an added difficulty, Agost (1999: 103-104) believes that the translator will have to assess the receiver’s knowledge so that the comical distortion will be equally as funny in the new language; in the words of the author, “en una traducción para el doblaje, el traductor siempre ha de recordar que su destinatario es el gran público y qué tipo de texto está traduciendo”⁵.

In any event, we also think it is interesting to mention the difference between a reference that is made as a tribute (occasionally through the recreation of a scene or the use of the same set that appears in a feature film, for example, although at times it may be purely linguistic), and one that is used to simply get a laugh out of the receiver. Sometimes, however, the line that divides the two is extremely fine and the reference may try to create both effects. In many series, like the aforementioned *Family Guy*, the ultimate goal of the allusions, however much they may try to pay homage to a film, a series, or an actor/actress, is always to make the spectator laugh, given their comic, subversive, and irreverent nature. It is also important to bear in mind that, in audiovisual translation, many of these references will rely solely on the visual seme, which will be sufficient to perceive the intertext. Thus, there will be times when the image itself will be the carrier of intertextuality, without using the linguistic code. Even so, if the image can be the source of intertextuality, occasionally with the intention of being funny, so can voices or verbal inflection

5. “in a translation for dubbing, the translator must always keep in mind what type of text he is translating and that his addressee is the general public” [my translation].

(imitation, characteristic ways of speaking, etc.) (Martínez Sierra 2004: 170). Without a doubt, these signs and indications can be helpful in recognizing the intertextuality behind the phrases and words of the characters. We will go into further detail about this when we discuss the mechanisms that facilitate the detection of audiovisual intertextuality.

Summing up the two previous points, intertextuality forms part of the culture with a capital c and can be a source of humor. Obviously, and as in any communicative process, it presupposes a shared knowledge between the speaker and the receiver in order for the receiver to comprehend the humoristic elements that the speaker is trying to transmit. Authors such as Nash (1985) consider allusions or references to be basic elements in the creation of humor. We have also observed that intertextual humor can in reality be a pseudoparody. Lastly, we have seen that it is important to pay attention to possible distortions of intertext and to elements that are not only visual, but aural as well.

In considering the characteristics of parodic intertext, we have agreed to affirm that the humoristic effect of the new text will be much more than a simple reflection of what the original text transmitted. To further examine this topic, we must now approach the elements and restrictions that surround the translation of humoristic or parodic audiovisual intertext, as well as the mechanisms that help us detect it.

4. The translation of audiovisual intertextual humor

There is no such a thing as “untranslatability”
(Whitman-Linsen 2001: 145)

Much has been written about the translatability or the untranslatability of humor. We have begun this section with a sentence by Whitman-Linsen, being optimistic in the approach, even though we believe this opinion is debatable. Quite a few authors, however, are more pessimistic and suggest a loss in the humoristic load of a translation. Others, from a much more optimistic viewpoint, believe that it is possible. We are not interested in entering into that debate, since we assume that humor is translatable within certain limits. The descriptive and functionalist perspective of our study implies that we understand that the translation of humor works if the receiving target society accepts it as such.

It is clear that, when referring to the translation of humor, if every translator must be bicultural as well as bilingual, whoever attempts to translate humoristic passages “debe realizar un gran esfuerzo imaginativo y poseer una creatividad especial así como una competencia lingüística muy extensa” [must

make a considerable effort to be imaginative and possess a special creativity as well as a broad linguistic competence] (Agost 1999: 108). Assuming it is possible to translate humor in no way implies that it is an easy task. As we will see, many factors must be taken into account when translating humor and, in the case we are dealing with, in the audiovisual modality of dubbing.

Previous knowledge and experience are crucial when it comes to communication and the transmission of humor, as we have already observed. Likewise, we have discussed the cultural component of humor when we classified intertextuality within the culture that characterizes a society. Yule (1996) talks about *schemes* as some kind of familiar patterns of previous knowledge. Zabalbeascoa (1993) of shared *memes*. Martínez Sierra (2008) calls it *shared cultural background*. The relationship between humor and each society's own culture is undeniable (in the case of our study, the American culture will take preference, and in this case references to American audiovisual productions, given that it is the largest source of cultural transfers at present), and in the move toward the new polysystem it will not be simple to overcome these obstacles. Obviously, the knowledge and experience of the original audience and of the target audience will not necessarily be shared, and this will suppose a challenge for the translation. In her pragmatic approach, Agost (1999: 108) also points out the importance of the intention of the audiovisual text, that is, of humor, irony, ambiguity, etc. Once again we approach the communicative process and we must be aware of the importance of the intention of the speaker to achieve the functions that were being transmitted in the original text.

Having reviewed the importance of cultural elements in the creation of humor, and understanding that intertextuality usually contains a significant cultural load, in the transfer of these elements from one language to another the options in translation can be to preserve them or to substitute them. When dealing with a written text, it is possible to preserve them by resorting to the use of repetition, spelling or terminology adaptations, a linguistic translation, or extratextual or intratextual glosses. If the chosen option is substitution, the translator can opt for the ideological adaptation, different types of neutralization, naturalization or omission of the cultural elements, or autonomous creation. There is no universal rule for the translation of cultural elements, although it is influenced by diverse macrotextual and microtextual factors that the translator should take into account. Newmark (1981: 83) states that "normally a translator can treat cultural terms more freely than institutional terms", and he adds that "since little can be explained to the spectator, cultural terms are more likely to be translated or given a cultural equivalent in a play than in fiction". This last statement could apply to television and cinema, and

thus we find it interesting. The author later states that repetition and a discreet explanation is the most efficient method for literature, especially because he considers it respectful of foreign cultures. In our opinion, the methodology of translation of culture-specific references has evolved and at present we do not feel that repetition is the only possibility to consider. What is certain is that the reader or viewer is most important (in addition to maintaining the communicative objective of the text), and therefore we agree with Bassnett (1980: 23) when the author points out, regarding cultural elements, that “the emphasis in translation is on the reader or the listener, and the translator must tackle the SL (source language) text in such a way that the TL (target language) version will correspond to the SL version”. Another similar opinion with which we share is that of Schäffner (1991: 2), since she states that, to produce a text in the second language (L2) equivalent to a text in the first, or original language (L1), the translator must take into account the new receivers’ world knowledge, and when the receivers’ knowledge of L1 and L2 is different, the translator must compensate for this loss in the L2.

Having reviewed some of the methods used to translate culture-specific references, now we would like to deal with some interesting classifications of types of humor, like that of Fuentes (2000: 14-17), which distinguishes between verbal, visual, graphic, and audiovisual humor. We find it interesting that he considers audiovisual humor to be a genre in and of itself with its own characteristics, in some instances, distinctive. Within this category we will find verbal and non-verbal elements, but for our purposes the verbal elements will be most important, although on a great number of occasions they will be accompanied by non-verbal elements as well. As the author asserts, the verbal elements will have a cultural framework (in some cases, for example, through the use of accents) that may increase the humoristic load, and possibly cause difficulties for its reception and translation. Another of Fuentes’ classifications, based on the situation or setting in which the humor arises, leads us to affirm that, with respect to humor, the greater the distance between the cultures, the more complicated the translation will be, as we saw in the previous section.

Zabalbeascoa (1993: 266), who has taken interest in the humoristic field so often, groups the different types of humor according to his criteria. For this author, humor can be: entertaining, macabre, caustic, inoffensive, and pedagogic.

After having seen some of the different classifications of humor and approaches to translating culture-specific references, we must now delve deeper into the transfer of humoristic intertextuality. It is important to understand that this process consists of various stages: 1) detecting the intertextual reference,

2) documenting, and 3) translating, in which the translator will have to decide how to approach the transfer of humoristic intertextuality (Botella 2010: 76).

5. Mechanisms used to detect humoristic audiovisual intertext

As we have previously indicated, the first step in the process consists in detecting the humoristic intertext. To this effect, the translator must look for the “intertextual signs” that for Hatim & Mason (1995: 174) are those “elementos del texto que ponen en marcha el proceso de búsqueda intertextual, motivando el acto de elaboración semiótica” [elements of text which trigger the process of intertextual search, setting in motion the act of semiotic production]. In the case of audiovisual texts, the signs will reach us through two channels: the visual channel and the auditory, or aural, channel. Furthermore, given the convergence of codes, the vast majority of them will come through the linguistic code, oftentimes accompanied by musical code, iconographic code, etc. Hence, in the case of the audiovisual field, the intertextual audiovisual signs may be the following:

Through the visual channel:

- a) Isolated linguistic code: the titles of TV series episodes or movies can contain intertextuality and serve as a guide for the translator.
- b) Linguistic code accompanied by an image: a phrase or quote from a character accompanied by other visual references or by the use of characters from a referenced feature film or television series. The case of cartoons is especially interesting, considering that it is easier for the characters or scenes that are being referenced to appear when they are drawn.

Through the auditory, or aural, channel:

- a) Linguistic code accompanied by variations in the verb inflections of the characters: a character altering his voice in some way can be an indication of the use of a reference. In the case of cartoon series and animated feature films, a famous actor lending his voice to a character can be an indication of the use of intertexts.
- b) Linguistic code accompanied by music: the use of a representative song from the soundtrack of a feature film or audiovisual production can alert the translator to the possible use of a reference.

Of course, there will also be a number of cases in which the translator will not be able to count on the help of an audiovisual intertextual sign. In that case,

his previous experience, and cultural and audiovisual background will be the tools he will rely on during this first stage of the process.

This is then followed by the documenting stage, which may prove slow and tedious, but will be necessary to ensure the veracity of the reference and to ascertain its referential version.

Finally, the translation stage takes place. It must be clear to us that maintaining the comedic function will be extremely important—the communicative priority.

We have previously discussed that each and every translation is communication, which is why the maxims we have so frequently mentioned above should be respected. In this regard, Agost (1999: 104) states that “los diálogos de los textos audiovisuales forman un todo dinámico en el que los personajes que intervienen cooperan para que haya una comunicación. Los traductores deben mantener los principios cooperativos a pesar de las dificultades y restricciones del texto original” [the dialogues from audiovisual texts form a whole dynamic in which the characters cooperate to have communication. Translators must adhere to the cooperative principles despite the difficulties and restrictions posed by the original text]. And the point is that, when transferring humoristic elements, we must take into account the degree of relevance between the two audiences and, thus, the two receivers of humor. Martínez Sierra (2004: 238) explains that we can find three possible situations between the original audience and the target audience:

- 1) The degree of relevance obtained for the target audience is inferior to that of the original audience.
- 2) The degree of relevance is similar for both audiences.
- 3) The degree of relevance obtained for the target audience is superior to that of the original audience.

This last case (3) will be the one that we come across the least, although we have noted that some authors mention that it is possible. The aspiration of the translator will be to try to achieve a similar degree of relevance even though it may be complicated and, to do so, the necessary resources will have to be employed.

The audiovisual translator will act as receiver and speaker of the original and target texts, for which he will have to perceive and process the humoristic information, as well as translate it to the language of the target community according to the needs and demands, and the dominant preferences of that language.

Logically, in the audiovisual modality, as we have aimed to transmit throughout these pages, there will be times when the characteristics themselves can make the process more difficult, in this case of the translation of humor from one text to another. According to Fuentes (2000: 46-53), some of the restrictions in the audiovisual translation of humor are:

- Image
- Noise
- Diachrony
- Titles
- Taboo language

The image will logically be the key element and, in spite of the translational restrictions to which the text is usually subjected, in the case of detection and translation of the intertextuality, the image will play an important role. Noise may cause problems as in any audiovisual process. More concretely, we may find what Fuentes (2000: 43-56) considers “cultural noise”, following the line of investigation we have just outlined, and relating to the cultural elements that are present or absent in one or the other culture. The diachrony will also be important, given that there will be occasions in which the references will be quite old, and the referential translations may be anachronic. Titles, sources of intertextuality, will also cause difficulties for translators and may give us clues of its possible use. In this regard, Zabalbeascoa (1993) contributes an added difficulty typically encountered in the dubbing modality, which is the use of a laugh track. The use of such canned laughter is present in a large number of series and sitcoms, which means that the humoristic element that should make the spectator laugh has to coincide in both languages, complicating the traductological process even further if possible. This phenomenon would also occur in subtitling if that were the modality that was chosen to translate these products to the Spanish audience; and it does indeed occur, accordingly, in countries that subtitle, and in our opinion, it makes the process even more difficult.

We cannot help but point out that many studies on the translation of audiovisual humor have been carried out in recent years. More and more, we can see that this subject sparks great interest and that many researchers are devoting their time to the study of the characteristics of the translation of humoristic elements in the audiovisual modality.

In any case, it must be reiterated that when it comes to translating humor, just as we saw with the culture-specific references associated with humor, the translation must be centered on the new receivers, taking into consideration

the shared knowledge (call it shared schemes, memes, or cultural background) and the degree of relevance between both audiences. Therefore, as Vandaele affirms (1995: 25):

[...] it is time and time again up to the translator to predict (a) whether the target group possesses the schemes on which the source text plays and, if so (b) whether these schemes have a similar cognitive value, i.e. whether they are as normal for the target group as they are for the source audience.

Given that, when dealing with the translation of audiovisual intertextuality used for humoristic purposes, the translator will have various possibilities from which to choose. Lorenzo (2005: 142) feels that, specifically, the translator will be able to a) preserve it when the target audience will recognize it; b) substitute the reference for another well-known reference in the target language; or c) neutralize it when it may jeopardize comprehension or when it may create problems of coherency.

Moreover, Martínez Sierra (2004: 170) reminds us that various factors must be kept in mind when translating these references in dubbing, among them, professional ones, the addressee, the interaction between the pragmatic, the semiotic and the communicative dimensions, and synchrony. Regarding this last characteristic so definitive of the audiovisual modality that we have mentioned, Agost (1998: 226) reminds us that, keeping the limitations of the visual restrictions in mind, when the quotes are famous, they usually have a famous translation that the translator should try to maintain.

Thus, if the translator were faced with the famous phrase “May the Force be with you”, so often repeated in the *Star Wars* saga (1977, 1980, 1983, 1999, 2002, 2005, and 2015), and therefore quite well-known in its peninsular Spanish version, once the process of detection and documentation is complete, he should try to maintain its referential version if the audiovisual circumstances and restrictions allow it. The use of a different version may disappoint the viewer or cause the reference to go unnoticed. Thus, the new viewers would not be on an equal basis with the source language viewers.

6. Conclusions

In this study we have tackled the difficulty of finding a definition of what humor is. We have found to be interesting the classic conception that humor is balance in the body and that being in a good mood is synonymous with everything functioning correctly in our organism. Laughter would be, precisely, a manifestation of these sentiments.

After thoroughly examining a few of the concepts that can help construct a definition of something so complex, we have come to the conclusion that,

given that our study focuses on intertextuality, we will find humor accompanied by the linguistic element, which we have already seen contributes to creating comic texts.

Considering the characteristics that give rise to the creation of humor, we have emphasized incongruity, which represents a violation of the conversational maxims, as well as positive and negative superiority. Humor can arise when what happens does not correspond with what was expected to happen. We have also seen that humor allows us to escape and can help release stress.

On the other hand, we have emphasized laughter as a positive element that is derived from a humoristic act and, based on the syllogism that Attardo (1994: 10-11) suggests, we have considered that, what makes us laugh is funny, and what is funny makes us laugh. We have also emphasized the importance of context and purpose in the humoristic act, for which the effect that takes precedence is usually perlocutive.

Furthermore, we have discussed the fact that humor is produced in a given society, although it may cross borders. Thus, the attitudes, customs, and beliefs of a given group can determine how *humor* is understood. In any event, we have also insisted that not only do the cultural differences matter, but that each individual is a world in itself and it is possible that what one individual finds humorous differs from what the rest of the individuals in that same culture or society find humorous. For us, the intertextual references can form part of the culture of a particular place.

However, as we approach the transmission of humor, we have observed that the process is similar to that of communication. To simplify, we find that a shared knowledge between the speaker and the receiver can significantly help in the reception of humor. Although the speaker can anticipate the receiver's knowledge and cultural background, in reality he can only hypothesize about what the receiver will be able to decipher.

On another note, we have talked about audiovisual humor, in which the linguistic code is complemented semiotically by the iconographic code (as well as by other codes such as sound, etc.). Obviously, we have framed our study within this type of humor, since intertextuality is complemented by the iconographic code, as well as by that of sound, that of mobility, by the photographic and the paralinguistic ones, etc.

We have also seen some concepts on culture-specific references as mechanisms used to create humor, understanding culture to be customs and lifestyles, always in constant change, within a society. Therefore, understanding the cultural context will be key to perceiving the humor behind a reference of this type. However, we have mentioned that, due to globalization, cultures are

moving closer together and that they increasingly share more and more elements, although the degree of intervention between the source culture and the target culture will continue to be decisive to the comprehension of a reference.

After analyzing the culture's relationship with humor, we have been able to recognize that intertext, cultural or not, can be a parodic element in itself, a series of phrases or words that form a group used for humoristic purposes. Again, in order to receive this parodic intertext, complicity is required, a certain shared knowledge between the speaker and the receiver. There are times, however, when we have to be careful with the pseudoparody, which is just a vague reflection, an imitation that does not correspond to an original reference. With a comedic intention, we have also seen that the intertextuality can be distorted, which may sometimes cause difficulties for the translator.

Speaking of the translation of humor, which in this case we have said is based on language, we have pointed out the difficulty of completing this undertaking. The translator will have to make sure that he overcomes obstacles such as the distance between the speaker and the receiver whose knowledge, culture and ways of seeing the world will not necessarily be shared. The options, as we see it, are to maintain the cultural elements, substitute them for others, or omit them, but always keeping the characteristics of the target audience in mind. Providing our small contribution, we have determined that the translator will have to complete at least three steps, or stages, when he is faced with a possible audiovisual intertext: the intertextual detection stage, the documenting stage, and the translation stage. In the detection stage, it will be important to look for the *audiovisual intertextual signs* that, when they appear, will reach us through the visual channel and the auditory, or aural, channel. The convergence of codes typical of this means may favor the recognition of the reference. Then, the translator will look for the referential translation in the documenting stage.

As a final conclusion about the translation of audiovisual humor we have stated that, while translating, it is important to keep in mind the cooperative principles and keep the degree of relevance between the two audiences, recognizing that elements will appear that will make the translation more difficult, such as cultural noise, for example. When it comes to the communicative process, the translator must consider the objective that the speaker is seeking to achieve. If the speaker intended to produce a humoristic effect through the use of intertextual references, the translator must determine the mechanisms that will help him achieve the same effect for the new audience. This is the only way that both receivers will be on equal terms. Additionally, the translator must consider whether the references have a recognizable translation for the target audience and, addressing the visual restrictions, the task of translating,

and the addressee, among other factors, choose to maintain them, substitute them for others that are better known, or neutralize them in case of opacity. The humoristic objective will be, without a doubt, the main goal.

References

- AGOST, Rosa. (1998) "Traducció i intertextualitat: El cas del doblatge." In: Messeguer, Luís & María Luisa Villanueva (eds.) 1998. *Intertextualitat i recepció*. Castellón: Publicacions de la Universitat Jaume I, pp. 219-244.
- AGOST, Rosa. (1999) *Traducción y doblaje: palabras, voces e imágenes*. Barcelona: Ariel.
- ALCARAZ, Enrique. (1990) *Tres paradigmas de la investigación lingüística*. Alcoy: Marfil.
- ATTARDO, Salvatore. (1994) "Linguistic Theories of Humor." In: Raskin, Victor & Apte Mahadev (eds.) 1994. *Humor Research 1*. Berlin & New York: Mouton de Gruyter.
- ATTARDO, Salvatore. (2002) "Translation and Humour: An Approach Based on the General Theory of Verbal Humour (GTVH)." In: Vandaele, Jeroen (ed.) 2002. *The Translator 8-2 (Translating Humour, Special Issue)*, pp. 173-194.
- BASSNETT, Susan. (1980) *Translation Studies*. London: Methuen.
- BERGER, Peter L. (1997) *Redeeming Laughter: The Comic Dimension of Human Experience*. Berlin & New York: Walter de Gruyter.
- BERGSON, Henri. (1984) *La risa*. Madrid: Sarpe.
- BOTELLA TEJERA, Carla. (2010) *El intertexto audiovisual y su traducción. Referencias cinematográficas paródicas en Family Guy*. Alicante: Universidad de Alicante. Unpublished Doctoral Dissertation.
- CARBELO BAQUERO, Begoña. (2006) *Estudio del sentido del humor*. Alcalá: Universidad de Alcalá. Doctoral Dissertation.
- CHAUME, Frederic. (2004) *Cine y traducción*. Madrid: Cátedra.
- CHIARO, Delia. (2003) "The Implications of Quality of Translated Verbally Expressed Humour and the Success of Big Screen Comedy." *Antares VI*, pp. 14-20.
- DELABASTITA, Dirk. (1990) "Translation and the Mass-Media." In: Bassnet, Susan & André Lefevere (eds.) 1990. *Translation, History and Culture*. London/New York: Pinter, pp. 97-109.
- FREUD, Sigmund. (1978) *El yo y el ello y otros escritos de metapsicología*. Madrid: Alianza Editorial.
- FUENTES LUQUE, Adrián. (2000) *La recepción del humor audiovisual traducido: estudio comparativo de fragmentos de las versiones doblada y subtitulada al español de la película "Duck Soup", de los hermanos Marx*. Granada: Universidad de Granada. Doctoral Dissertation.

- GILLIES, Eva. (1997) “¿El humor es traducible?” *Alba de América: Revista Literaria*, pp. 352-359.
- HATIM, Basil & Ian Mason. (1985) *Teoría de la traducción: una aproximación al discurso*. Barcelona: Ariel.
- IAMPOLSKI, Mijaíl. (1996) *La teoría de la intertextualidad y el cine*. Valencia: Episteme, S.L.
- LORENZO, Lourdes. (2005) “Funcions bàsiques das referencias intertextuais e o seu tratamento na traducción audiovisual.” *Quaderns. Revista de traducció* 12, pp.113-150.
- MARCO, Josep. (1998) “Intertextualitat i Traducció: Les línies bàsiques d’una relació inevitable.” In: Messeguer, Lluís & M^a Luisa Villanueva (eds.) 1998. *Intertextualitat i recepció*. Castellón: Publicacions de la Universitat Jaume I, pp. 185- 190.
- MARTÍNEZ TEJERINA, Anjana. (2008) *La traducción para el doblaje del humor basado en la polisemia: Los hermanos Marx cruzan el charco*. Alicante: Universidad de Alicante. Unpublished Doctoral Dissertation.
- MARTÍNEZ SIERRA, Juan José. (2004) *Estudio descriptivo y discursivo del humor en textos audiovisuales. El caso de Los Simpson*. Castellón: Universidad Jaume I. Doctoral Dissertation.
- MARTÍNEZ SIERRA, Juan José. (2008) *Humor y traducción. Los Simpson cruzan la frontera*. Castellón: Publicaciones de la Universitat Jaume I.
- MARTÍNEZ SIERRA, Juan José. (2009) “On the Dubbing of Humor. Tidying Up the Room.” *Translation Journal* 3. Electronic version: <<http://accurapid.com/Journal/49humor.htm>>
- NASH, Walter. (1985) *The Language of Humour*. London & New York: Longman.
- NEWMARK, Peter. (1981) *Approaches to Translation*. New York: State University of New York Press.
- RUBIO SANTANA, Juan Manuel. (1996) “A Pragmatic Approach to Interaction in Humorous Communication.” In: Penas Ibañez, Beatriz (ed.) 1996. *The Intertextual Dimension of Discourse. Pragmalinguistic-Cognitive-Hermeneutic Approaches*. Zaragoza: Universidad de Zaragoza, pp. 219-233.
- RUCH, Willibald & Sigrid Rath. (1993) “The nature of humor appreciation: Toward an integration of perception of stimulus properties and affective experience.” *Humor: International Journal of Humor Research* 6, pp. 363-384
- SALES, Dora. (2003) *Puentes sobre el mundo: Cultura, traducción y forma literaria en las narrativas de transculturación de Jose María Arguedas y Vikram Chandra*. Castellón: Universidad Jaume I. Doctoral Dissertation.
- SCHÄFFNER, Christina. (1991) “World Knowledge in the Process of Translation.” *Target* 3:1, pp. 1-16.
- SCHOPENHAUER, Arthur. (1985) *El mundo como voluntad y representación*. Barcelona: Ediciones Orbis.

- SPERBER, Dan & Deidre Wilson. (1986) *Relevance: Communication and Cognition*. Oxford: Blackwell.
- TORRES, M^a Teresa. (1999) *Estudio pragmático del humor verbal*. Cádiz: Servicio de publicaciones de la Universidad de Cádiz.
- VANDAELE, Jeroen. (1995) *Describing Translated Humour in Comedy*. Leuven: CETRA.
- WHITMAN-LINSEN, Candice. (1992) *Through the Dubbing Glass. The synchronization of American Motion Pictures into German, French and Spanish*. Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang.
- YULE, George. (1996) *Pragmatics*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- YUS, Francisco. (2003) "Humor and the Search for Relevance." *Journal of Pragmatics* 35, pp. 1295-1331.
- YUS, Francisco. (2010) "Relevance, Humour and Translation." Presentation at the 5th Conference *Interpreting for Relevance; Discourse and Translation*. Kazimierz Dolny (Poland).
- ZABALBEASCOA, Patrick. (1993) *Developing Translation Studies to Better Account for Audiovisual Texts and Other New Forms of Text Productions*. Lleida: Universidad de Lleida. Unpublished Doctoral Dissertation.
- ZABALBEASCOA, Patrick. (2005) "Humour and Translation. An Interdiscipline." *Humor* 18:2, pp. 185-207.

BIONOTE

CARLA BOTELLA TEJERA holds a Ph.D. in Translation and Interpreting from the Universidad de Alicante. Her research was on audiovisual intertextual translation. She also holds an MA. in New Technologies Applied to Education. She joined CIEE (Council on International Education Exchange) in 2005. She has been the academic director for both the Language in Context and Language and Culture programs in Alicante until September 2016. Nowadays, Carla is an Assistant Professor at the Translation and Interpreting Department of the Universidad de Alicante and has worked in other Spanish and European universities.

