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Spanish Series in English: Subtitling into
English the TV Series “Velvet”

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Abstract

This project deals with the translation and subtitles of the Spanish Tv Series “Velvet” to English. The objective is to achieve an accurate and idiomatic translation and to put the subtitles following the standardized parameters. This project shows some of the translation problems found in the episode and how they were resolved. And it also deals with subtitling problems related mostly to Characters per Second and Characters per Line. The episode chosen deals with funny expressions, comparisons, jokes, typical Spanish expressions, colloquial vocabulary, informal speech, cultural elements, etc. The translation strategy used is a foreignizing strategy, keeping some linguistic and cultural elements of the source text when translating. What is being analyzed is the thought process and the reasoning behind a translation decision. The tools used were the episode of the TV Series and the subtitling tool *Aegisub*.

Keywords: translation, subtitles, idiomaticity, subtitling parameters, “Velvet” TV Series.

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1. Introduction

This project deals with subtitling twenty minutes of the TV series Velvet. It deals with the translation of the script, from Spanish to English, and the creation of the subtitles of the chosen scenes. I chose to do the last episode of Season Two, which is Episode 13, and I chose different scenes inside the episode.

The first thing that I looked for in a series to perform this project was that it was not subtitled into English. I watched “Velvet” TV Series some time ago and I liked it. It has romance, but also comedy, and the comedy aspect is what I was looking for. I believe it is such a challenge to translate jokes, funny expressions, typical expressions, and cultural elements from one language to another, because you are dealing with the transfer of one culture to another. I chose this episode because it presents a lot of action, many things happening, fast dialogues, old Spanish expressions, etc. And I chose specific scenes inside the episode because of all the vocabulary and expressions, and to follow a specific storyline inside the episode.

I was interested in this project because I think that audiovisual translation is very useful nowadays and very interesting. I had never translated humor before, and I was looking for a challenging project. I wanted a project in which I could put into practice everything that I learned in the English degree. Also, I was attracted to this specific project because it was very practical. I think it was very interesting to have the chance to do what someone does for a living.

I believe this project will benefit me in numerous ways. I will be able to know if this is what I want to do for a living. Also, I will know if I am able to apply most of the aspects of the English language that I have been taught. I expect to grow in the accuracy

and idiomaticity of the English language and to learn about translation and subtitling and its respective professions. Also, I believe I will learn how to deal with difficult translations and find solutions to the different problems that might come up.

The first step of my project was to decide on the TV Series, the episode, and the scenes that I want to subtitle. The second step of the project was translating everything and putting the subtitles on the episode. The translation was done from scratch but using online tools to search for the words and expressions that I did not know. And I used a subtitling tool, called *Aegisub*, to put the subtitles.

The TV Series “Velvet” is set in the sixties and deals with the love that Ana and Alberto share, and how difficult it is to be together due to the difference of social classes. The Series develops in a fashion gallery, and we can see the inside of this gallery and the life of all the workers. Amid this atmosphere of love, I think it is very funny to see how the workers deal with everything that happens to them. One of the things that caught my attention from this series is the language and vocabulary they use since it is set in the sixties and very characteristic of old townspeople.

The aim of this project is to get an idiomatic translation and comfortable and intelligible subtitles. Regarding the translation, my objective is to get an accurate translation bearing in mind the context of the series, the genre, and the viewers. About the subtitles, my objective is to achieve practical and comfortable subtitles following the conventions stipulated. I want the viewers to get the same experience and the same message that the Spanish people would receive. I understand this is hard since what I am creating are subtitles and sentences need to be much simpler, however, I plan on working with this mindset.

In the theoretical part, our reader will read about what subtitles are, the standardized parameters for subtitles, and an introduction to what fan subbing is. Moreover, in the methodology of this project, I explain how I carry out the translation and the subtitles and how I deal with the subtitling part. In addition, in the results, I explain and analyze the most difficult and challenging expressions and words that I encountered while translating and the difficulties related to subtitling as well. Then, in the discussion, I talk about the project itself from a critical point of view. I mention what I did and how I resolved the different problems exposed in the results part. Also, I give an overview of the whole process. Besides, I present my conclusions in which I talk about what I learned and what I think of the translator's work now. Finally, I reflect upon the essence of the work that I have done.

2. The world of subtitling

2.1 What is subtitling?

According to Jorge Díaz and Aline Remael in their project *Audiovisual Translation: Subtitling* (2007), subtitling can be defined as “a translation practice that consists of presenting a written text, generally on the lower part of the screen, that endeavors to recount the original dialogue of the speakers, as well as the discursive elements that appear in the image (letters, inserts, graffiti, inscriptions, placards, and the like), and the information that is contained on the soundtrack (songs, voices off).” (Page. 8) They also specify that subtitles “must appear in synchrony with the image and dialogue, provide a semantically adequate account of the SL dialogue, and remain displayed on screen long enough for the viewers to be able to read them.” (Page. 9)

They talk about subtitling as a type of translation that is increasing more and more nowadays due to the amount of audiovisual content present in our daily life. Thanks to the widespread use and distribution of audiovisual products in our culture since the 1990s, it has attained well-deserved visibility. Nowadays, the significance of the image is vital, and screens are all around us. Based on the power of the screen, our social environment is frequently characterized by television sets, movies, computers, and mobile phones. They can be found everywhere, including our homes, workplaces, public transportation, libraries, pubs, restaurants, and movie theatres. To complete our work, advance and improve our professional and academic careers, have fun, and learn new things, we spend a good amount of time on the screens and watching audiovisual content. Speaking of the image’s ubiquity in our day and age would not be an exaggeration.

2.2 Official subtitling: parameters

As Fotios Karamitroglou (1998) explains in his article *A Proposed Set of Subtitling Standards in Europe*, the general aim of subtitling is “to provide maximum appreciation and comprehension of the target film as a whole by maximizing the legibility and readability of the inserted subtitled text.” And for this purpose, there are the following parameters to create subtitles.

First, the spatial parameter concerning the layout:

- Position on the screen: Subtitles should be positioned near the bottom of the screen to cover an area often occupied by picture action, which is of lesser value to the general aesthetic appreciation of the target film. Only in the most extreme circumstances, where visual material (linguistic or otherwise) essential to understanding and appreciating the target film is exposed at the pre-determined part of the screen where subtitles would otherwise be inserted, could subtitles be placed towards the upper part of the screen.
- Number of lines: Only two lines of subtitles at most should be shown at once. To minimize disruption of the action in the background image, a single-line subtitle should place on the lower of the two lines rather than the top line.
- - Text positioning: The subtitled text must be centered on the designated line(s). This would make it easier for the viewer's attention to travel a shorter distance to reach the beginning of the subtitle because the majority of the visual action revolves around the center of the screen.
- - Number of characters per line: To include a sufficient amount of the (translated) spoken material and reduce the necessity for original text reduction

and omissions, each subtitle line should allow about 35 characters. In an effort to fit more characters per subtitle line than 40, the font size must eventually be decreased, which affects the intelligibility of the subtitles.

- - Typeface and distribution: Serif-free typefaces are preferred to serif-containing fonts since the latter's increased visual complexity reduces the intelligibility of the subtitled text.
- Font color and background: Type characters should be a light shade of white (not "snow-bright" white) to avoid tiring the viewers' eyes.

Then, Fotios presents the temporal parameters concerning duration:

- - Maximum duration of a full two-line subtitle: A text of average complexity (a blend of formal and informal language) may be read by "average" viewers (aged between 14 and 65, from an upper-middle socioeconomic class) at a rate of 150 to 180 words per minute, or 2 1/2 to 3 words per second. This means that a whole two-line subtitle with 14–16 words should only be shown for a maximum of about 5 1/2 seconds. Since the brain requires about 1/4 to 1/2 of a second to begin processing the subtitle it has traced, the estimate would need to be increased to roughly 6 seconds.
- - Duration of a full single-line subtitle (maximum duration): Although pure mathematics would lead us to believe that the required maximum duration time would be somewhere around 3 seconds for a full single-line subtitle of 7-8 words, it is really 3 1/2 seconds.
- - Length of a single-word subtitle (absolute minimum): Regardless of how short the word is, a single-word subtitle must last at least 1 1/2 seconds. Insufficient time would cause the subtitle to appear as nothing more than a distracting screen

flash. Again, it should be remembered that maintaining the same subtitle for no longer than 1 1/2 seconds is equally as important as keeping it for at least 1 1/2 seconds to ensure adequate reading time.

- - Leading-in time: According to tests, the brain needs a quarter of a second to process the beginning of spoken language material and direct the eye toward the bottom of the screen in anticipation of the subtitle, so subtitles shouldn't be added at the same time as the utterance.
- - Lagging-out time: Even if no additional utterance is started during these two seconds, subtitles should not remain on the image for longer than two seconds after the conclusion of the utterance. This is so that the spoken language can be as accurately translated into the subtitles as feasible, both in terms of content and display time and because a greater lag time would make viewers more skeptical of the subtitles' accuracy.
- Between two consecutive subtitles: In order to prevent the impression of subtitles' "overlay," there should be a pause of approximately 1/4 second. For the brain to be alerted to the appearance of a new subtitle and the omission of an earlier one, a brief pause is required. The viewers' eye cannot distinguish the difference in the new subtitled text if this gap is not maintained, especially if it is the same length as the previous one.

Then, about punctuation and letter case:

- - "Sequence dots" (or "ending triple dots") ...: Three dots should be used immediately following the final character of a subtitle (with no space character inserted), when the subtitled phrase cannot end on one subtitle and must continue over the subsequent subtitle. The three "sequence dots" let viewers

know that the subtitled sentence isn't complete, so their eyes and minds are prepared for the appearance of another flash to come next.

- - "Starting triple dots" or "linking dots" When a subtitle contains the continuation of a previously unfinished sentence, three dots should be used immediately before the first character (no space character inserted, the first character not capitalized).
- - Periods or full stops should be used immediately following the final character of a subtitle.
- - Dashes and hyphens: Dashes are used before the first character of each line of a two-line subtitle (with a space character inserted each time) to indicate the exchange of speakers' utterances, i.e., a dialogue. This exchange may be presented as "static double text" or as "dynamic double text," with the second speaker's exchange appearing as a "overlay" to the first subtitle line.
- Question marks (?) and exclamation points (!): Just like in printed text, should be used to denote a question or emphasis, respectively.
- Parentheses (()) and brackets ([]) should be used to include comments that provide context for the preceding phrase.
- Commas, colons, and semicolons should all be used in the same way that they would in printed materials.
- - Italics: When there is an off-screen source of the spoken text (such as someone thinking about something, talking on the phone from the other end, or narrating anything), italics should be used to highlight this.
- Quotation marks "" around italicized text: A public broadcast, or spoken text and addressed to many people (for example, through a TV, a radio, or a

loudspeaker), should be indicated by quotation marks enclosing text in italics.

They must be applied when transferring music lyrics as well.

And finally, regarding target text editing, Fotios presents:

- - "From a single-line to a two-line subtitle: It is preferable to divide a lengthy single-line subtitle into two separate lines, dividing the words evenly between each line. This is due to the fact that viewers' eyes and brains perceive a two-line subtitle as being bulkier and speeding up the reading process as a result.
- - Highest node segmentation: Subtitled text should be segmented at the highest nodes in the syntactic tree. Thus, ideally, each subtitle flash should consist of a single entire sentence. The segmentation on each of the lines should be designed to correspond with the highest syntactic node possible in circumstances where the phrase cannot fit in a single-line subtitle and must instead continue over a second line or even over a new subtitle flash.
- - Segmentation at line length: Since the viewer's eye is more accustomed to reading text in a rectangular than a triangular shape, the top line and lower line should be as equal in length as possible.
- Utterances and subtitled sentences: Each spoken utterance should correlate to one of the subtitled sentences. The basis for this is that viewers want a true and accurate portrayal of the original text, and one simple way to determine this is by observing if the number of spoken utterances and the number of sentences with subtitles are equal. In this regard, unless explicitly required by spatiotemporal limitations, combining two or more utterances into a single subtitled sentence should be avoided.

- Excluding certain language from the original: The relative value of each piece of information to the understanding and enjoyment of the target film as a whole should be considered when deciding whether material to include or exclude. Even though it is physically possible from a spatiotemporal perspective, the translator shouldn't try to convey everything. The following groups of linguistic components could be skipped:
 - “Padding expressions: (e.g. “you know,” “well,” “as I say” etc)”
 - “Tautological cumulative adjectives/adverbs (e.g. “great big,” “super extra,” “teeny weeny” etc)”
 - “Responsive expressions (e.g. “yes,” “no,” “ok,” “please,” “thanks,” “thank you,” “sorry”).”

- Retaining linguistic components of the original: If linguistic components of the original that are easily recognizable and understandable by the viewers appear in a context of unrecognizably blurred components that obscures the meaning of the entire utterance, they should not only be retained but also translated word-for-word.

- -A delicate balance must be struck between a) semantic aspects (maintaining the semantic load of the original), b) pragmatic aspects (maintaining the function of the original), and c) stylistic aspects (maintaining the stylistic features of the original) if simpler syntactic structures (canonical forms) are to be preferred because they tend to be both shorter and easier to understand than complex syntactic structures.

- Culture-specific linguistic elements: There is no set standard on how to transfer language that is specific to a culture. Five options exist for such a transfer: a) cultural transfer; b) transposition; c) transposition with justification; d) neutralization (clear explanation); and e) leaving out the cultural component.

2.3 Fan subbing

This term is made out of the words “fan” and “subtitle”. According to the Anime News Network, it consists of a group of people that subtitle audio-visual content, e.g., series, and movies, and put them on the market for free. Generally, fansubs do their work under the motto “fans for fans”. Nowadays, fan subbing has gained a lot of recognition and importance. According to Kazka in their blog, the current term “fansub” advocates a philosophy of free material and complete availability for anyone who wants to download their work. They work in groups for fan subbing companies. According to Kazka, they are amateurs who subtitle Japanese series to their native language.

According to Muñoz and Diaz in their article *Fansubs: Audiovisual Translation in an Amateur Environment*, there are many positions in a fan subbing company. First of all, there are raw providers who acquire the source material, there is the translator, to translate the series, then a proofreader, a timer, who marks the start and ending of an utterance. There is also an editor for the subtitles, also called a typesetter, and finally the encoders who use the final subtitled text and the raw material and create the subtitles episode.

Legal and ethical matters need to be discussed when talking about fansubs. According to Salomon Charles (2005), literary and artistic work is protected by the

Bern Convention (1971) and by intellectual property protection laws, thus it can be acknowledged that fansub is against the law. However, fansubs have maintained a common ethic code and do not see themselves as lawbreakers. They distribute their subtitled work without the author's consent, thus violating Article 8 of the *Bern Convention* which deals with the author's right to authorize his work's translation. Nonetheless, Article 2.3 (page 12) of the *Bern Convention* declares that the translations and other transformations on a literary or artistic piece are protected as original. As George Phillips (2003) expresses in his work *Legality of Fansubs*, this does not mean that fansubs are original work, just the translation and subtitles are, but the audio and video are under copyright as the *Bern Convention* states in Article 8 (page 53).

An interesting point when discussing fan subbing is how they earn money and if one can live from this. As Antonio discusses in his article, fansubs work for a web page, or a blog, therefore, the most common way they earn money is from visits to the web page. Also, they include in their web advertisement in links, and they earn money with the visits to those links. Lastly, donations are a very important part of their hobby.

To conclude, as Diaz and Remael mention, despite the unclear legality of this activity in terms of the program's copyright, the principle behind this sort of subtitling is the free dissemination of audiovisual programs with subtitles done by fans.

3. Methodology

In this part of my project, I will explain the different procedures that I used to bring about my objectives. Also, the different tools that I needed to carry out this project will also be identified.

First, what I needed to produce the subtitles were the subtitling machine and the episode. As for the subtitling tool, when I was coursing Direct translation, we used a subtitling tool for a couple of days to subtitle a short part of a movie. This tool is called *Aegisub*, and I thought it would be convenient to use it for this task as well. In addition, I needed the episode or scenes to put the subtitles into. These two elements/items are the only ones I needed to carry out the project. However, I also used different translation sites and online dictionaries to translate. And I used books and articles to understand how to put the subtitles accurately.

When I acquired the subtitling tool, I watched some YouTube videos of people explaining how to use the subtitling machine and I had to make some changes to the settings to facilitate the task of subtitling. For instance, I selected the limit of Characters per Second to 18 and the Characters per Line to 35, I changed the spectrum analyzer mode to visualize the voice signal clearly, to select the subtitle according to the speech of the characters, etc.

I had already used this subtitling tool in a Direct translation class, but it was a short experience and I barely remembered anything about it. Thanks to the changes I did to the settings it was much easier to use now.

When I decided on the TV Series, I had to select the episode and the scenes. Starting this process of selection, I was looking for typical Spanish expressions, funny

expressions, and vocabulary, in general, I was looking for utterances that might be challenging to translate and subtitle, such as characters speaking very fast, etc. The scenes selected are from minute 13:03 to 16:14, then from 18:21 to 28:44, then from 32:49 to 36:55, and from 42:16 to 47:34.

The chosen episode deals with the journey of some characters that are going to a wedding. The bride, Rita, and her sister, Clara, are already in the town they are getting married which is called Porrillos. The groom, Pedro, and the bride's friends have to get from Madrid to Porrillos and their journey is quite chaotic. Some other aspects that should be considered to get into the context of the series are, for example, that the sister of the bride, Clara, was with Pedro before Rita and that Ana is in love with Mr. Alberto, whose mother just passed away.

After having selected the scenes, I had to transcribe the script. I realized there was no need of putting the characters, and that saved me some time. And if I had found the script online, which might have been a suitable option, it would have also saved me some time as well.

Following this, I translated the script. I translated everything from scratch, except a few sentences that were more complicated in terms of structure and vocabulary. I searched for translations and definitions of words I did not know how to translate. Some tools that have helped me in the creation of an idiomatic translation are *Word reference* and its forum of questions, as well as the web page *Reverso* and others.

The translation strategy that I have used is a foreignizing strategy. I wanted to send the viewer abroad, therefore I kept the cultural elements to keep the value of the linguistic and cultural differences of the foreign text.

Having finished the translation, it was time to subtitle. I had to do some research on how to subtitle, and I found all the parameters that should be considered to provide the viewers with comfortable and useful subtitles. After having read and understood the subtitling standards that were proposed to me, I moved on to subtitling. I had to select where and when should the subtitle appear, following the parameters. And I had to cut some sentences and remove meaningless utterances as well.

4. Results

4.1 Translation problems

Due to the type of project that I have carried out, which is more practical than research projects, the results are the translation and the subtitles. In this part of the project, I will analyze the translation choices I made while subtitling. I will explain the expressions, sentences, and vocabulary that have been more challenging to translate from the source language to the target language.

The first difficulty that I encountered was the expression “pareces un pincel” This has been understood as being dressed very elegantly since the character is trying on his wedding suit. I could not translate it literally since the speaker didn’t mean to compare him to a paintbrush. The expression in the source language is abstract and metaphoric and my thought process was to choose “You look dressed to kill” (n.16, min. 13:25), since it is quite metaphoric as well. The other options I had in mind were “You look on point” and “You look really good”. However, I thought that “you look dressed to kill” gives a more exaggerated response, which is what the speaker is trying to convey.

Another challenging word is “finolis” as in “Esto es muy finolis para mi.”. Even though there is an equivalent in the target language as “hoity-toity”, I was more interested in conveying the right message with the least possible characters bearing in mind the subtitles. The result is “This is too much for me.” (n. 21, min 13:35). I wanted to get inside the character and express what the character meant. And I thought that simply saying this, the meaning was perfectly understood.

In addition, the expression “ir hecho un feriante” appeared, and I could not translate it literally because it would not be idiomatic. A “feriante” in this expression does not have the same meaning in the source language as in the target language. The meaning of the expression is to dress vulgarly. Also, I wanted to keep the structure of the sentence, therefore the translation I came up with is “to go looking like a clown” (n. 23, min. 13:38). I realized it is very important to be familiar with the expressions and vocabulary of English speakers, otherwise it could seem unnatural.

An expression that was used a lot on the sixties, probably because of the religious environment of that time is “Qué cruz!”. There are many ways of translating this expression since its meaning is: bearing or having a disgrace. Some of the options were “What a nightmare!” and “What a disgrace!”, however, I wanted to keep the religious aspect of the expression and the translation I came up with is “For God’s sake!” (n.38, min. 14:12).

In addition, we find the expression “Con Dios”, which is the shortened version of “Vaya con Dios”. And even though I could have translated it as “Go with God!”, it seemed too formal and not as idiomatic as the expression “Godspeed” (n. 87, min. 18:40). One of the reasons why I ended up with this translation is because of the length of the word, and because it sounds archaic, and as I mentioned earlier, these characters come from towns and use old vocabulary and expressions. I thought this translation suited the context.

Moreover, we have the sentence “No te habrá liado Jonàs?”. It was difficult for me to grasp the meaning in the source text, therefore it was more difficult to know how to translate it into the target language. Considering the context, I understood the verb

“liado” as someone influencing on someone else’s decisions. I decided to translate it as “Did Jonàs confuse you?” (n. 132, min. 20:15). Other options were, “mess it up” and “trick you”, but they had different meanings than the one I was looking for. I think “confuse” is the verb that suits perfectly what they want to express because of the context.

Following, we have the sentence “Vamos que está más sobado que la chaqueta de un guardia”. I understand from the context that this means that her wedding dress has been worn by a lot of people. And the character makes a reference to the dress being as worn as a soldier’s jacket, which is the literal meaning. Doing some research online for this expression, what I found is the sentence “Más vago que la chaqueta de un guardia”, with the meaning of being lazy. I have found that this last expression is well-known; however, the first expression is not mentioned anywhere, it seems like the series made it up. It is very clear from the context that the character does not wish to say that the dress is lazy, but that the dress has been worn a lot. Therefore, I decided to convey the meaning without keeping the same structure or the comparison used. The character uses a typical Spanish expression – or a version of it – however, I have decided to only express what she meant. So, I translated it as “The whole town has worn it” (n. 182, min. 21:45).

Another example is the word “avaro”, this word is spoken by a woman that lives in a town, and I wanted to convey this fact through her vocabulary. Townspeople are known for using proverbs, sayings, and old words and expressions, therefore instead of translating it as “stingy”, or “cheap”, the expression “penny-pincher” (n. 215, min. 23:17) is the one that suits the situation best.

Moving on, we find the sentence “Clara le dió muy mala vida”, this has the meaning of treating someone badly, and making somebody’s life a misery. In English, I have found the expression “to ill-treat” meaning to treat someone bad. However, this expression was used a lot from the 1708 to the 1800, but its use has been in decay from then on. Therefore, I wanted to use a word everyone could understand, and the final translation was “She mistreated him” (n. 237, in. 24:43). Another option was to get inside the series and put “She cheated on him”, this could also be accurate since it is what happened. However, I preferred to keep what is most similar to the target text since it does not make any allusion to the fact that she cheated on him on this particular dialogue.

Another challenging expression is “ir enseñando rodilla”, which means to dress provocatively. At that time, women were supposed to wear their skirts and dresses below their knees, otherwise, they would be considered, as it is implied in the context, an unfaithful woman. This translation was very hard to find, and some of the options were “showing her body”, “showing flesh”, and “showing skin”. After consulting it with my tutor, we landed on the last option because “showing her body” and “showing flesh” seemed too direct and not at all appropriate. The character tries to say this in a subtle manner and showing skin seems the best option for that reason. Besides, reading some webpages, it seemed like “showing skin” (n. 238, min. 24:44) is an idiomatic expression of English speakers that has the meaning that I was looking for.

Moving on, we find this dialogue: “- Jonàs: El dueño nos ha dicho que tenemos que hacer no sé qué con el valentín... - Pedro: Con el ralenti.” In this conversation, a character mistakes a word for another and the other one corrects him; they are talking about the parts of a car. The word “ralenti” is translated as “idle”, therefore I had to find

a word that rhymed with “idle”. I came up with the word “needle”. Considering that the relation between the words “valentín” and “ralentí” is non-existent, I had more freedom when choosing the word to rhyme. In the same way, since “valentín” does not have any meaning related to the parts of a car, I thought I could choose any word it seemed suitable without taking into consideration the meaning. And the result is: “- Jonás: The owner told us to do something with the needle. - Pablo: With the idle.” (n. 279-289, min 26:03)

With the same topic of automobiles, we find the expression “Lo estaban ahogando (el motor)”. I compared various translations of this expression and I found that the most used is “to flood the engine”. Although I also found “to stall the engine” and “to choke the engine”. I had to find what this means in Spanish to know which option was the most accurate, and I also consulted a professional. Due to what happens to a car when this situation occurs, the best equivalent is: “They were flooding it” (n. 300, min. 27:15).

Another expression that was challenging to translate is “Vamos a 40 (km/h).” As I already mentioned, for the translation in general I use a foreignizing strategy, however I decided to use a domesticating strategy for this expression. The reason why is the fact that most English-speaking countries measure distance with miles instead of kilometers. I thought that it was important that the viewers understood how slow the character is going. It might not be a crucial aspect to know, however, to understand the conversation that the characters are having is important to know how fast or slow the character is going. When I was deciding on this, I kept thinking about TV series or movies where they mention the speed of a car in miles, and I remember how frustrating it was to not

know how fast or slow the car was going. Therefore, the result is “We’re going 20 mph” (n. 303, min. 27:28).

The next challenging expression that I found hard to translate is “Esto no es un seisientos”. The car they are referring to is a *Fiat Seisciento (Fiat 600)* and it was manufactured by an Italian company called *Fiat*. I was wondering if this car would be known everywhere or if I had to find an equivalent to the English-speaking countries’ culture because it is relevant knowing how this car is for the context of the scene. However, I found that this car was a worldwide success and therefore I assumed that people would know the characteristics of the car, that is why I decided to use a foreignizing strategy and leave it as it was but adding the word “Fiat” before “600” (n. 304, min. 27:29) in order to make sure that viewers know which is the car the characters are talking about.

The next translation problem that I wanted to discuss is a road song that the characters sang. This song is not relevant in terms of information to understand the series, which is why at first, I was not sure if I should translate it literally or leave it in Spanish. However, this last option did not seem sensible, since viewers might think it is odd to leave the lyrics in Spanish even if they don’t have any meaning for the scene. So, I decided to use Chat GPT’s help in translating the road song for it to be very similar to the source text. The song in Spanish is “Para ser conductor de primera, de segunda, de tercera. Para ser conductor de primera, hace falta buen humor. Acelere, señor, acelere, acelere, acelere. Para ser conductor...” and the one I chose from Chat GPT is “To be a top-notch driver, driving fast and free. To be a first-class driver, humor is the key. Rev it up, my friend, let the road set us free. To be a top-notch driver...” (n. 319-325, min.

28:09). I think it was a good option to use this resource, to see and think about how intelligent a machine can be, but it cannot be as precise as a human.

Moving on we have the expression in Spanish “No mentes a la bicha”, this expression is not used nowadays. I hadn’t heard it before, but considering the context, I already knew what the character meant. Spanish people used this expression to say: don’t mention bad things or bad luck will come upon us. When they say “bicha” they are referring to the Devil, but they don’t want to say his name, according to Instituto Cervantes. And I thought that in English the most accurate expression to this meaning was “Don’t jinx it” (n. 365, min. 34:20). I decided not to refer to the religious aspect in this case basically because I believe the best equivalent for this sentence is the expression “to jinx something”.

Another Spanish expression that was hard to translate is “Cambiarle el agua al canario”. In terms of semantics, this means to pee. However, I did not just want to convey the meaning, I wanted to see if I could find a better equivalent, one that uses a metaphor just like in the source text. Even though I found expressions like “go number one” or “see a man about a horse”, I decided to choose one that is much more similar to the source text structure, which is “to drain the lizard” (n. 367, min. 34:24). It might not be as well-known as the others, however, both expressions use an animal to create the metaphor and the same structure and that’s why I thought it was the best option.

Moving on there is the sentence “Si no condujeras como un desfile de cojos, igual iríamos mejor”, this sentence refers to the fact that they would get to where they have to go much faster if the character was not going that slowly. It is a very strange way to express that one is going slowly, and in this case, I decided to not translate the

comparison and focus only on the viewers understanding the meaning of the sentence. It is true that I considered translating it as “If you didn’t drive as if you were on a lame parade”, but it was too long for the subtitles, and I do not think it would be considered an utterance that an English-speaking person would say. That’s why I decided to translate it simply as “If you drove faster, it’d be better” (n. 369, min. 34:37). I thought that it was better if the viewer understood the meaning of the sentence rather than getting the joke inside it.

Another word that was difficult to translate is the nickname “Pedro el Verbenas”. In this case, I felt like I had more freedom to translate, and the reason why is that I felt like I could use any expression that expressed something related to a party person, and if there is this meaning I can use whatever I want as a nickname. So, the tool that I used to get inspired to create a nickname was Chat GPT, which gave creative ideas such as “Fiesta Master”, “Party Animal”, “Dance Dynamo”, “Celebration King”, and “Life of the Party”. None of these options have the same structure as the source text, however, I decided that it was more important to convey the meaning. When thinking about this nickname, I thought that it might have been given to him by his friends or townspeople, and this thought helped me translate it because I kept thinking that they gave it to him as a joke. And I decided to put “Pedro Dance Dynamo” (n. 231, min. 24:20) as the result because I think it is the one that expresses better the time the series is set in and it gives an equivalent to the joke.

Another word that was complex to translate was “matanza”. From the context I could guess it was something common at weddings at that time. Some options were “slaughter”, “killing”, “carnage”, “bloodbath”, “massacre”. I think some of them are too strong like the last two. That’s why I decided on the word “butchery” (n. 418, min.

42:49). I think it conveys the meaning well and it does not give such a disgusting visual as the other options.

Finally, another translation problem I would like to mention is “Mientras tu pelas la pava con el pastor”. I had to look up the meaning of this sentence, and it means to talk lovingly to someone you like. Looking at the context it does not make any sense, however, the character mentions this as a joke with irony and I wanted to convey this funny irony. I found on the Word reference that the translation is “whisper sweet nothings” (n. 444, min. 43:59). I looked up the meaning behind this expression and thought that the viewers would understand the context better if I put this expression.

4.2 Subtitling problems

All the standardized parameters mentioned in the theory part (see page 5) of this project have been considered to create the subtitles, which can be found numbered in the Annex. In this part of the project, I will explain only some of the subtitling problems that I encountered. Most of the problems that I had to confront were related to the Characters per second (CPS). In this TV series characters speak really fast and trying to put a certain number of characters in a certain number of seconds has not been an easy task. When I had to put what I translated in the form of subtitles, I had to make numerous changes, to almost every single sentence that I translated, I had to simplify the sentences and get rid of many words.

When a sentence or word was said very fast in a very short period of time, the viewer could barely appreciate its appearance on the screen. A solution that I found for this was to start an utterance while the other one still hadn't finished. Therefore, the

reader has time to finish reading the first one and moves on to the next. I was thinking mostly of people that have different reading paces and this is a strategy that I have only used in cases where otherwise, it was impossible for the subtitles to be legible. As it happens, for example, in utterances 280 and 281, and from 179 to 182.

Moreover, another solution to fix the Character per Second problem is the simplification of sentences. In the theory part, there are many strategies to simplify sentences, and I used many of these to simplify complex constructions. For example, originally, I had translated this sentence “Ay el vestido, hay que ir a recogerlo del taller!” like this: “Uh, the dress! It has to be picked up from the workshop.”. I translated it similarly to the structure of the source text without bearing in mind the subtitling part and I had to get rid of the passive structure and the colloquial expression “uh”. So, I simplified it as: “We have to pick up the dress.” (n. 5, min, 13:08)

Another example of this is found in subtitles 137 (min. 137), where there is no way to put the sentences uttered in the short time that I have. Two sentences are said in only one second, these are: “Clara: - Que te ha dicho? / Rita: - Que ya salen.”, and I originally translated it as: “- What did he say? – (That) they’re leaving now”. Since I have to put the subtitles $\frac{1}{4}$ of a second after they start the utterance there is only one second of the subtitle before the other utterance starts. Therefore, if I put the two sentences, there are 28 Characters per Second and that is illegible. And what I decided to do was to substitute the question “What did he say?” with “So?” and leave the answer to the question which I think is what’s most important. And the final result is: “Clara:- So?, Rita: - They’re leaving.” If you take a look at the context, they called to see what was happening, and why they didn’t start the journey. Therefore, I believe it is understandable if I omit the question itself and replace it with “So?”.

In addition, with the same problem of having too many characters per second, I had to omit many parts of sentences that were not important like padding expressions. But also, I omitted parts that might have had meaning but weren't very important. For an example, look at subtitle 140 (min. 20:30). In this subtitle the source text is "Luisa, tú a mi no me vas a mentir, está todo bien?", and the translation is "You won't lie to me, is everything ok?". I had to put this in a subtitle of two seconds and there were too many CPS, and the solution that I found is to cut out the first part of the sentence, so the result is "Is everything ok?". As I mentioned, "You won't lie to me" is a part that has its meaning, but we do not need it to convey the main message of the sentence.

Another problem that I had to face, which might be linked as well to the CPS, is the Character per Line. In subtitle 351 (min. 33:36), the character talks very fast and the other character does not understand her. The utterances are "Luisa: - Something happened between Jonas and me", Ana: - What?" What happened in this subtitle is that since she speaks fast, there is no time to put everything she says and the reaction of the friend. If we only put the first sentence there would be too many CPS, so we put both utterances in one subtitle, and then the CPS is regulated, and the viewers do not have any problem reading everything, which is what I am looking for. However, the sentence "Something happened between Jonas and me." has too many Characters per Line (CPL), the maximum is 35, and this has 40 characters per line. I could not find any way to simplify the sentence, so, I played with the fact that she speaks in a very low voice that is almost unintelligible and made the result like this: "Something happened between...". What I decided to do is to keep the air of mystery as the spoken version in Spanish does.

Another subtitling problem that I had to face is found from 168 to 171 (min. 21:23). The first part of the dialogue in the target language is “Mañana me caso, no hay novio y a ti lo único que te importa son las horquillas?”. Originally, I translated it as “I’m getting married tomorrow, there’s no groom and all you care about are hairpins?”, however, there is no way I could have included that in a 5-second subtitle. So, I simplified the sentence as “There's no groom for tomorrow / and you worry about this?”, I believe it is equally understandable to omit certain things or replace them with shorter words, as I have substituted the word “hairpins” with the word “this”. Since in the context of this dialogue, the characters are talking about hairpins, I thought it would not matter the change. And now the sentence divided into two subtitles can fit into the regulation of 18 CPS.

And the second part of this dialogue in Spanish is “Mira que no seas exagerada Rita, que me he dejado el neceser en Madrid, cómo tengo que decirte que esto es lo peor que te puede pasar”. And I thought it was important to maintain the funny irony in the sentence, that’s why I wanted to keep all the elements. As I have mentioned, I want viewers from English-speaking countries to get the same experience as Spanish speakers. Therefore, what I originally translated was “Don’t be dramatic, I left my bag in Madrid, how can I tell you this is the worst thing that could have happened”. And I had to include this into another 5- second subtitle. However, it went over 18 CPS, so I cut the sentence into two subtitles and simplified it as “Don’t be dramatic, I left my bag. / It’s the worst thing ever.” I believe viewers can get the irony inside the sentence and they will be able to read them properly.

5. Discussion

In this part, I will give the reader an overall view of my project and I will analyze my translation from a different point of view. In this translation project, I have tried to follow a foreignizing strategy, however, there were some translations where it was not suitable to use this strategy. Doing this project and analyzing my own translations and choices, I realized that one cannot use only one strategy. I realized that it depends on the context and on how important the sentence is to follow properly the TV series. Also, it depends on how well-known a cultural element in the target language's culture is.

In this TV series, characters tend to use funny expressions, comparisons, etc, and depending on the context and the sentence, it would be better either to find the equivalent of the joke or simply convey the meaning. I want to find the equivalent of the funny comparisons and expressions in the target language, but in some cases, I think it is better to only express the meaning of the sentence. I realized that if you are able to translate a funny expression for it to be funny as well in the target language, it feels like a success. And in my opinion, it felt really good when I could achieve that and besides, keep the structure of the sentence from the source text.

Looking at my own translation, I understood that the translator has to evaluate which is the correct way to go in any translation. I have my reasons for every decision that I have taken, they might not be shared by everyone, but in every case, I had to assess which option was best. And this made me think that the human factor plays a very important role. I kept thinking that a machine would not have been able to critically think about which translation would be best for the viewer's understanding.

My aim was to achieve a translation that was idiomatic, clear, and accurate. Since it was for a TV series, I wanted people to get inside the series and find the best equivalent possible. I believe I did my best to achieve this goal. I looked up almost every term in Spanish and English to see if people used them, to learn about their meaning and history, and to know when they entered the dictionary and how old they were.

As I mentioned, my main priority was to provide useful translations to the viewers, and I focused a lot on being idiomatic to achieve that. I was always looking for idiomatic expressions in every translation. In addition, another priority that I had was to change the structure of the sentence as little as possible, but as I worked along the project, I realized that I should be more flexible when it comes to the structure of the sentences. I had to get rid of the myth that it was a better translation if it was as similar as possible to the structure of the sentence, and once I did that, I was able to express the meaning of the sentence better and in a more idiomatic way. I realized that if I got stuck in the source text, then it would not be considered natural speech in the English language.

Moreover, one of the main things that I struggled with was the simplification of sentences and the omission of information. What I wanted to do was to convey the exact same message that the Spanish viewers would receive. But, conveying everything through subtitles seems like an impossible task. So, I tried to do my best to express the main message.

As I already mentioned, I thought a lot about the viewer's comfort, and I think prioritizing what the viewer will receive should be the main aspect to be taken into

consideration in a translation. Everything that I have explained has as its main concern the outcome in terms of the viewer's sake.

Looking at the finalized subtitles, some aspect I would have done differently is asking for help from native speakers of English. Also, the subtitled version looks nothing like the original translation of every sentence, which makes me think that I could have moved on directly to do the subtitles and translate from there.

6. Conclusion

This project deals with translating the script and subtitling the “Velvet” TV Series, specifically, Episode 13 from Season Two. The work was very practical in nature but very significant from my personal perspective towards learning and applying almost everything that I have been doing in this degree. I had to bring into play most of what I have been studying in this degree, some aspects in a more explicit way than others. But all in all, it was the perfect practice to use the abilities and competencies that we have been taught in the whole degree, such as language comprehension, vocabulary, semantics, grammar, idiomaticity, translation strategies, etc.

In addition, I believed that due to online translators, the work of a translator was in decay, that’s why I wanted to experience having a translation task, to be able to judge for myself if online translators could in fact replace human translators. And, what I found out is that without the human factor, it is very hard to create an accurate translation. What the translator does is express what another person is trying to say, and without comprehending well the source, you cannot do a good translation. And I do not think that a computer will ever be as good as a person in trying to understand another person. This is one of the conclusions that I take with me from this project.

Since it is a very practical project, I am basically analyzing myself, my ability to translate to sound naturally in English, the ability to solve problems, and to search for information. I learned how to find the best translation of sayings and expressions, and how to deal with the translation of jokes or funny utterances. I learned how to simplify sentences to be fitted into a subtitle, and how to create subtitles following the

standardized conventions. Also, I learned about the importance of knowing the culture and being idiomatic in a language to create a good translation.

Regarding the subtitling profession, I think it is one of the most interesting professions there are, related to the English language field. I have been able to learn about subtitling and the subtitling profession. It was interesting to learn about all the standardized parameters, because they focus on giving the viewer comfortable and useful subtitles. This might seem obvious, but reflecting on this, I thought a lot about the principles and purpose of this profession, and it was an eye-opening experience. Also, I was surprised at how much one can learn, not only about language and vocabulary but about culture from both English and Spanish-speaking countries.

Regarding the subtitling parameters, they were very helpful when it came to creating the subtitles but at the same time, a little bit stressful. I realized that I am a person who likes to follow established rules, so it was a positive experience to follow those conventions that have been established bearing in mind what is best for the viewer. However, in some utterances, I was not able to follow strictly all the parameters. This happened because if I did, other issues might come up. This was stressful because I had to prioritize some aspects, always seeking the best result for the audience.

Looking at the overall project, at the beginning I thought it was going to be very difficult. However, in the end, I really enjoyed doing the translation and the subtitles. It was not as difficult as I expected it to be, even so, some problems were very hard to resolve. I think the translation part was more difficult than the subtitling part, however, both had their respective difficulties.

Regarding the time spent doing the project, it took me more time to do the translation than the subtitling part. However, both tasks required equal attention and have equal importance. Once I got the hang of the subtitling tool, it was very easy to do the subtitles, which was surprising because I thought it was going to be more difficult. And regarding the translation part, I was very cautious with how I translated everything. I realized in this project that I am becoming a perfectionist, and this quality about myself motivates me to keep learning. Trying to solve all the conflicts was amusing because I was learning all the time. To conclude, I believe this has been one of the best learning experiences that I have ever had.

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8. Annex

In the following link, the reader can find a document with the numbered subtitles in English:

<https://docs.google.com/document/d/1KS4P57GjOg2VoBgnapQT1MTZr4sMa1tH/edit?usp=sharing&ouid=112313671942431859329&rtpof=true&sd=true>

In the following link, the reader can find a document with the scrip in Spanish:

https://docs.google.com/document/d/11riR7u8h2qSWwAUX3W6yKWRF_GSCgejG/edit?usp=sharing&ouid=112313671942431859329&rtpof=true&sd=true

In the following link, the reader can find the episode with the subtitles. The exact minutes of the subtitled scenes are: from minute 13:03 to 16:14, from 18:21 to 28:44, from 32:49 to 36:55, and from 42:16 to 47:34.

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1ISfPEWMhIhyT4Po0ZcjUVe0BvHfRAsjH/view?usp=sharing>