

Martínez Sierra, Juan José (2008). *Humor y traducción. Los Simpson cruzan la frontera*. Publicaciones Universitat Jaume I. Castellón,

Martínez-Sierra undertakes the translation of humor in audiovisual texts, analyzing the dubbing of four chapters of the famous TV series *The Simpsons*. The approach taken is specially interesting for two reasons. Firstly, it is the first descriptive analysis on the translation of humor in audiovisual texts. Previous researches had focused on literary texts (Mateo, 1995), theoretical questions (Zabalbeascoa, 1993, 1994, 1996a and 1996b) or reception (Fuentes 2001) on audiovisual texts. Secondly, the object of study is cartoons, which is a genre that has not received the attention deserved from the scholars so far. This corpus-based research is preceded by a very interesting theoretical frame that includes concepts from disciplines such as Translation Studies, Intercultural Communication, Humor Studies, Semiotics or Pragmatics. This highly-readable book consists of seven chapters.

The first chapter starts with a description of AVT in general to move on to the dubbing process in particular. In this section, concepts as relevant as *priorities and restrictions, adaptation, domestication* or *skopos* are commented.

The second chapter focuses on the descriptive approach in translation research and analyses the concept of *norm* as conceived by different scholars. After this reflection, the author suggests a new term: *tendencias de traducción (tendencies of translation)*, that is, regularities in the translation of a corpus that work as an intermediary step between the localization of strategies and the finding of translation norms.

Due to the interculturality intrinsic to translations, the third chapter resorts to Cultural Studies to achieve a better understanding of Translation and Humor, paying special attention to cultural referents and intertextual allusions.

The following chapter analyses the (audiovisual) translation of humor defining concepts such as *joke*, highlighting the importance of the previous knowledge and commenting on specificities of humor in the audiovisual text, as the coexistence of images, sounds and words. He suggests a new classification of jokes in audiovisual texts that develops and modifies the taxonomies by Zabalbeascoa (1993, 1996, 2005) and Fuentes (2001), adding other categories to the classification of jokes (*paralinguistic* and *graphic elements*), as well as terminological changes (*elements* instead of *jokes*).

The fifth chapter turns to Pragmatic Studies to have a better understanding of humor and highlights the usefulness of the *relevance*

principle as a tool for humor analysis. Next, the methodology followed in the research is explained. As the author himself points out, the book seeks to develop a descriptive methodology for the contrastive study of humor translation in audiovisual texts in order to identify *tendencies of translation*.

Finally, the much expected analysis is presented. The corpus is made up of four chapters of *The Simpsons* in its original version and its Spanish dubbed version. In the analyses the author suggests an approach that dissects the original jokes in order to analyze individually and jointly the elements that have the potential to create the humoristic effects. The same process is applied to the dubbed version and then the results are compared from a quantitative and qualitative point of view. His analysis finds regularities in the translation of the series, which may be used afterwards in a more exhaustive research in order to find out norms.

Among other interesting results obtained from his research, Martínez-Sierra states that the dubbed version presents a continuous effort for keeping the potential humorous effect; that is, a priority. The author also concludes that both versions' humor is based on what the author calls *compound humor* (that is, when several elements are used at the same time to create the effect), being cultural jokes based on the original culture the most frequent feature. One more example of the author's findings is that, in the four analyzed episodes, there is a clear tendency to the use of foreignization strategies in the translation. To finish, I would like to underline a groundbreaking claim from the author. The interaction between image and sound in the audiovisual text had frequently been considered a restriction, but Martínez-Sierra draws attention to the other side of the coin and points out the help provided by the image in the process of translation.

Overall, this is an outstanding study that manages to provide a useful approach to humor that is not only interesting for translators and Simpsons fans, but that also proves itself as a useful tool for researchers willing to study the complicated topic of humor translation.

Anjana Martínez Tejerina
Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona
martineztejerina@gmail.com

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