

Taboo and Offensive Language in Audiovisual Translation: A Spanish to English Case  
Study of the Television Series Paquita Salas

by

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## Abstract

Subtitling and translating works are incredibly difficult tasks to tackle, especially in the case of taboo and offense language. In the world of audiovisual translation, there is a limited amount of research on this problem, specifically on translations from Spanish to English. This project analyzes the subtitles from the Netflix original show *Paquita Salas*, which was originally created in the Spanish language. Specifically, this study considers the offensive Spanish word, “puta”, which appears seventeen times within the first season of the show, as a case study. This word, by itself or paired with other words in a phrase, can be translated into English to mean a large variety of different things, ranging from “prostitute”, to “freaking”, to “son of a bitch.” This project reveals that of the five impacts (maintained, softened, intensified, neutralized, or omitted) that can occur because of the translation of the offensive word or phrase, over half of the time the impact is one that alters the intent of the word from its original form. This can be for many reasons, many of which relate to the translator’s culture and that of the translated text. When meanings get lost in translation in different forms of media, much confusion can be created for the viewers. It is crucial that subtitles reflect the original intent of the message. This thesis allows others to see examples of these types of errors, as well as the ability to teach from its findings. By identifying common patterns and mistakes, translators are able to ensure that they make an effort to prevent it from happening.

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## I. INTRODUCTION

There are many challenges that take place within audiovisual translation (AVT). One of the greatest challenges occurs when the original language of a work is translated into another language and the meaning of what is being translated becomes misconstrued or lost. This issue poses a great threat to many media, including books, movies, and TV shows. If a person tries to watch a TV show that was initially in a language that they are not familiar with and the translation is not entirely correct, then the initial message of a scene or even an entire episode can become clouded. The creator of a work has a very specific and intentional message in mind when creating something; however, when that work is altered for people of various linguistic backgrounds, the message may not be received as it was originally intended.

The issue occurs for several reasons: variations in cultural differences, the use of idioms, viewer error, technical reasons, just to name a few. The problem happens to most everyone who attempts to tackle the task of subtitling. María del Mar Ogea expresses a similar struggle when discussing translations within her article, “Subtitling cultural humour in the Spanish comedy *‘Paquita Salas’*”: “One of the main hurdles overcome in the translation of this comedy is the presence of cultural-bound terms...[.] This difficulty increases due to the inexistence of equivalences in the target language and culture, and these references won’t be known or understood by the target audience” (Ogea 339). From tasks as small as translating a paper for a friend to those as large as subtitling an

American debate for the foreign leaders of the world—all have experienced such issues when dealing with this type of task.

Subtitling requires continuous effort, as well as constant improvement and adaptations. One of the more well-known and globally used platforms, Netflix, also endures the same issues. Netflix offers its viewers TV shows in approximately 20 different languages (Fetner and Sheehan). One of the previously mentioned troubles that translators encounter are idioms, which are phrases that have an actual meaning that differs from that of the actual words within the phrase. More often than not, these phrases become specific to and more well-known within certain regions and languages that are spoken within that region. “There are approximately 4,000 idioms in the English language and being able to translate them in a culturally accurate way is critical to preserving the creative intent for a piece of content” (Fetner and Sheehan). Therefore, the Netflix team created a tool called “HERMES,” which was a platform developed to carry out testing of translators in efforts to analyze their ability to accomplish the difficult task of audiovisual translation (Fetner and Sheehan). The test consists of multiple questions that are given and answered in a specific amount of time. The questions aim to test their ability to understand English, to translate idiomatic phrases into the target language at hand, to identify linguistic and technical errors, and to subtitle proficiently.

This challenge becomes clear in many TV shows, both within and outside of Netflix. One Netflix original continuation series in particular, *Paquita Salas*, has such troubles. When the show is subtitled from Spanish, the source or original language, to English, the target language, many complications surface. Thus, arises the question of how frequently this issue occurs. This thesis utilizes a corpus, a large collection of words



within a specific language that shows how they are structured and interpreted within that language, to identify which translation technique is used most often and, thus, which impact is seen as a result of the use of that technique. The corpus takes all of the data collected from *Paquita Salas*, and makes it organized, analyzable, and readable.

## II. LITERATURE REVIEW

It's the season finale of your favorite Netflix series. Things are really stirring up, and your favorite character just confessed their love to the main character. *How can this be?!* The main character isn't supposed to be with him. He's supposed to be with Nate. Just when you thought things couldn't be going any worse for the show, she tells him she loves him... but she has "a bun in the oven." Now you, being a native Spanish-speaker and only really familiar with your home culture, have not even the slightest clue what this means. Your favorite character was practically confessing his deepest secrets to the main character and now she wants to talk about her recent endeavors with baking? It all seems so wrong, and so confusing to you.

The unfortunate reality of this type of experience is that it occurs for natives who watch American television shows all too often, and vice versa. In fact, when films and shows get translated without professional translation and stringent quality control process, the translations can become very cloudy. Furthermore, we can consider the negative effects of incorrect translation of taboo and offensive language. In many works of literature, including TV shows, the use of this type of language at many points can be very crucial to correctly delivering the message that creators are trying to achieve in a scene. The fact that shows do not always get correctly translated from one language to another is the foundation of this research. In this literature review, previous studies are analyzed and discussed in order to add to what we already know, and to raise awareness as to what knowledge is still missing from the literature.

## **Subtitling Cultural Humour**

In her 2019 study of subtitling cultural humor, María del Mar Ogea reviews the translations of humor within the show *Paquita Salas* and observes whether or not the examples of humor were translated correctly or incorrectly. The study concludes that many types of humor were translated incorrectly, and some to such an extent that the meaning was then misconstrued.

Many ideas examined in the study directly relate to my research, with some variations in the terms that are used in relation to my study. Within audiovisual productions, the goal of the comedy is to provide a mock version of reality from a social aspect in order to leave the audience with laughter and smiles. When translating these types of productions, it is important to maintain the “reality effect” (Chaume 12) that was previously mentioned so that the same laughter and smiles will, in turn, reside within the new audience. Translation implies a need for cultural understanding, especially within the case of translating humor because the humor directly correlates to certain social groups and the culture of such groups.

Culture is a key component to audiovisual translations. Every movie takes place at a specific location, and with that location comes certain cultural elements tied to that place. Everyone involved in the task of translation must be aware of any possible misinterpretations. If not, when certain types of language involved with humor are used in various forms of media, for example jokes and swearwords, there could be unwanted effects on the viewers. As a result, it becomes the translator’s responsibility to become aware of any item within a production that could possibly be translated incorrectly to a different language with a different cultural background. In 2019 Ogea says, “For a better

insight on this project of audiovisual translation, we must focus on the product instead of the process, as the main goal was to create an audiovisual text to be perceived by the audience as it was designed in their own language and culture” (334). Furthermore, the author explains that the complexity of the process is a very in-depth one, with many parts from a cultural standpoint to take into consideration. For example, she mentions language density and speed, expressive language with different levels of intensity, and actors and actresses’ personal way of speaking (Ogea 334-335).

According to Ogea, “Humour can be defined as a form of human communication intended to produce laughter amongst the recipients” (335). Because there are many kinds of humor, it would be easy to say that the translation of it can be difficult. Ogea mentions another researcher, such as Zabalbeascoa, who suggests tackling the study of translation of humor from different angles because of its complexity. In 1996, Zabalbeascoa created a taxonomy of the types of humor (251-254). The categories include international joke, national culture and institutions joke, national sense of humour joke, language-dependent joke, visual jokes, and complex jokes. Ogea adds to the categories based on the type of humorous language that is used within the show that she called “humorous swearing.”

The last point regarding humor within a cultural context that is made by the author has to do with visual humor and whether or not it helps or harms in the process of audiovisual translation. The author provides readers with a snapshot from the show itself and uses it to provide an example of how being able to see the scene helps in aiding the understanding of it. In other words, even if one does not understand the actual spoken joke because of cultural differences, the viewer could still find the situation humorous

simply because of what ones sees. Thus, the visual aspects would aid the auditory element. The two components work together as a team, with the same shared goal of getting the point of the joke across.

The series on which this study is based, *Paquita Salas*, was created by Javier Ambrossi and Javier Calvo and is available on Netflix. The series aired in 2018 and included three seasons. The show is about a middle-aged woman who seems to be stuck in her ways and risks losing her business for this reason. Based in Spanish culture, the show uses many jokes referring to specific things within that culture that a non-Spaniard viewer might not understand. The next part of the study discusses the various types of issues that this viewer might encounter. There are many issues that are presented, and one is cultural references. For example, a hairdresser is making a comment about the neck of someone's hair that she is doing and relates it to the humps of the camels' that are a part of a Spanish traditional Christmas. However, English viewers might not understand this cultural reference, so the part that makes it pertain to Spanish Christmas is simply omitted. According to Newmark, "Food is for many the most sensitive and important expression of national culture; food terms are subject to the widest variety of translation procedures" (97). Ogea describes two examples of food that are mentioned in the show and explains that any translation of the item would eliminate a key description of the food. The translation would exclude explaining the exoticism of the food, which is a very important aspect to the nature of the comedy.

Although these are only two of the multiple examples provided, the one most relevant to my study is taboo words and swearwords, whose translation becomes a problem for many reasons. One of the first things that Ogea mentions is that the intensity

of the meaning of a word will more than likely vary based on where it is said. She then says, “The target language does not usually share the same cultural features as the source language, so translators feel obliged to make a decision on whether to adapt or to translate them literally (in which case, the result will probably be an unintelligible product)” (342). Then, she gives examples from the show. The Spanish swearword “coño” is used in three separate examples from the show, and then the translation is given in English. Yet, when translated, this word is used in three different ways. This is because the word can mean multiple things in English, such as “fucking hell” or “fanny.” Not only is this a problem, but also the author explains that when the phrases are translated, the English versions lose some of the intensity that was in the Spanish one when it was originally stated.

To conclude the study, Ogea explains that based on the examples provided from the show, many jokes are derived from a specific community that would not be understood by someone not from that same community. In addition, it is crucial that the translators of these types of works have a wealth of knowledge on both the source language and culture and target language and culture. In reference to swearwords and taboo words, she states, “We believe that they should be neither omitted nor softened, as they depict the characters’ idiosyncrasy and feelings, and provide intensity and spontaneity to the scene” (348). Regardless of the difficulty in translation, the role of the world is still necessary. Rather than avoiding the translation of these types of words all together, we must instead discover the best ways to do so and utilize them in each instance.

## **Subtitling Tarantino's Offensive and Taboo Dialogue**

Another relevant study, completed by José Javier Ávila-Cabrera on the subtitling of the movie *Pulp Fiction*, was translated from its source language, American English, to its target language, European Spanish. The study aims to examine the translations of the movie, directed by Quentin Tarantino in 1994, as well as the strategies put forth by the translator of the movie, by focusing on three main points: the translation strategies used by the subtitler; the way offensive/taboo dialogue exchanges were transferred on the screen; and deciding whether the reasoning behind deleting these types of words and phrases altogether was justifiable due to the limitations within translations.

Ávila-Cabrera discusses the basics of subtitling—which includes technical restrictions and subtitling methods in this case. He states, “Audiovisual translation concerns the transfer of multimedia and multimodal texts from one language into another language and/or culture” (2). This field within Translation Studies poses a certain restriction in respects to technical factors. The subtitles can only be held on screen for anywhere between two and six seconds, and the way that they appear on screen is determined according to a few different factors (d’Ydewalle et al. 650; Brondeel 26-33). “Some studios make use of what is known in the industry as the ‘six-second rule’, which is based on the speed that the average viewer is able to comfortably reading [sic.] and assimilating in a two-line subtitle in six seconds,” explains Ávila-Cabrera (2). He then explains that the reasonings and strategies behind subtitling used in the were borrowed from multiple people. The first strategy, literal translation, was taken from Vinay and Darbelnet (86-88). Díaz Cintas and Remael were the source of the other seven:

calque, explicitation, substitution, transposition, compensation, omission, and reformulation (202-207).

The use of offensive and taboo language, according to Gao (2013), is far from new, as the start of their use dates back to when they might be used in reference to superstition and supernatural powers (2,310-2,312). Over time, the use of cover up words and phrases become more and more popular rather than saying the actual term. There is a difference between these types of words that have been covered up. Ávila-Cabrera states, “Offensive language is considering those terms or expressions containing swearwords, and taboo language would be referred to as words that are considered inappropriate to the audience based on the context and their culture” (4). He created a taxonomy of this type of language that includes examples of each category taken from the movie, with his work derived from that of Wajnryb (2005), Hughes (2006), and Jay (2009).

This study poses several research questions. The quantitative data came from the film itself, and the qualitative data came from an interview with the marketing director of the company that translated the movie, because an interview with the translator himself was not an option. The multitude of research questions went something like: “What strategies does the translator use?,” “What were the most common forms of taboo/offensive language that were present?,” “What translation patterns were followed?,” and “Is omitting taboo/offensive words and phrases permissible?”

The analysis of this study includes evaluating the translation of this movie from English to European Spanish and allows the readers to access a surplus of examples. The subtitles of *Pulp Fiction* include much taboo/offensive language, whereas the movie was rated R and *Not Recommended* for underage viewing. The movie includes mature



content, too, and the translation of such from English to Spanish becomes tricky. In each example, the readers see how words can get translated in a way that changes a word or two and makes the meaning similar, but also slightly different. For instance, the word “madman,” which is actually a type of heroin, changes to “awesome thing.” In addition, what happens most often is that a word or an entire phrase gets changed and, thus, the entire meaning is altered. “You hear me talking, hillbilly boy?” gets changed to “Are you hearing me, peasant?,” which could offer a completely different meaning. In another instance, the taboo/offensive language is just completely omitted. The phrase in the source language says, “Don’t fucking die on me, Mia!” While on the other hand, the target language in turn says “¡No tu mueras!” which simply translates to “Do not die.” As Ávila-Cabrera says, “the offensive language is omitted which in turn tones down the target text” (7).

The results and discussion sections of this study answer the targeted research questions. It was found the most common method of translating was omission, which was used 27.2% of the time, and is accomplished by deleting a word altogether. The second strategy was reformulation, which Ávila-Cabrera described as rephrasing and condensation (3), and next was literal translation. “There was a total of 618 instances of offensive (48.7%) and taboo (51.3%) language in the original dialogue” (Ávila-Cabrera 8). The most common type of taboo and offensive language was of course, abusive swearing, with 190 instances. He found that “All in all, in 58.2% of the cases, an attempt can be detected to transfer the offensive/taboo load from the original to the Spanish subtitles” (8). Concerning the results from the interview with the marketing director, Fernanda Leboreiro reported that the reasoning behind which strategy is chosen most

commonly has little to do with technical challenges within audiovisual translation. Lastly, it was found that about half of the instances could be justified by the limitations within translation, in this case technical considerations.

In conclusion, the constant use of swearwords and other language like such in this movie make the translation of it very difficult. The meaning, seriousness, and offensiveness of each word can greatly vary from one audience using one language to another. There is not enough evidence to claim that the “self-censorship” was used in the translation of this movie; however, it can suggest that some of the cases of omission could be due to such. Finally, Ávila-Cabrera reports, “The subtitling of offensive and taboo language into Spanish in Pulp Fiction can be said not to be especially faithful to the source text” (10). The results of the study show a definite need for similar research to be conducted. With additional information, such as Ávila-Cabrera’s research, we can begin to look for solutions.

### **Gap in the Literature**

As previously discussed, most of the existing literature includes examples of translations from English to other languages, rather than the contrary. This project helps to build the almost nonexistent literature of analyses of subtitling into English, and in this particular case from Spanish into English. While it is important also to have data collected and data from those that are English into other languages, it is also necessary to include literature from the opposite. This gap is one that can be filled, and this project is one that helps fill it.

Another specification of this thesis is the fact that it is focuses on a specific type of language – taboo and offensive language. There is an ample amount of research

within this field. To name a few, there is *An Encyclopedia of Swearing* by Hughes (2006) and *Forbidden Words: Taboo and the Censoring of Language* by Allan and Burridge (2015). Taboo and offensive language is very popular and used frequently in all types of work, as well as in daily life. It is a very complex topic that demands to be studied. Likewise, there is also a large amount of research within the general topic of audiovisual translation. There are many aspects to the topic, which also create a demand for the topic to be studied.

With respect to the topics at hand, the amount of research becomes limited when the scope is narrowed down like it is in this thesis. Although there are a few studies that have started the attempt to fill this gap, such as the study conducted by Ávila-Cabrera within *Pulp Fiction*, there is more work to be done. The most important difference between the two studies that this literature review analyzes is that one is based on audiovisual translation of cultural humor, and the other on audiovisual translation of taboo and offensive language. This thesis in particular, adds to the basis of scholarly work of audiovisual translation of taboo and offensive language from Spanish to English. Unfortunately, the issue is that there is not enough research within this field. “The scarcity of literature focused on the translation of swearwords seems contradictory, considering the high presence of this type of language in the oral speech and, thus, in audiovisual texts” (Ogea 341). Seeing as this language type is so common and is used in everyday aspects of life, more research on the topic is crucial.

### **Attempting to Fill the Gap**

Ogea’s comment exemplifies what drives the research of this thesis, which applies corpus linguistics to analyze taboo language when it is used in audio visual

translations from Spanish to English. By viewing multiple audio-visual translations from various episodes of *Paquita Salas*, we can see how often and in what ways the taboo and offensive language is translated incorrectly. By utilizing Ávila-Cabrera's taxonomy of taboo and offensive language as well as his proposed strategies to translation, we can see what categories are found most often and attempt to fill this gap in the literature a bit more.

The study focuses on the Spanish word "puta," which certainly falls under the category of offensive. The first definition listed on WordReference.com (2021) for the Spanish word describes it as "someone who practices prostitution." However, another definition that is listed states that it is "a person who acts with the want or drive to do horrible things." This word was chosen because it is a very good representation and example of offensive language within the Spanish language. Also, it is a very commonly used offensive Spanish word, ensuring enough data to analyze. The word is mostly so common because it is very versatile, whereas it has many uses (see table 1). The English language also has a wide range of curse words, and, when translated into English, the word "puta" can be used to mean any number of them. On the other hand, when the word is paired with other words to make phrases, the possibilities become even more limitless. The utilization of this word easily allows for the replenishment of the void that exists when it comes to the subtitling of taboo and offensive language.

Table 1: Various translations of the word "puta"

Use in Spanish:	Translation into English:
puta	prostitute
puta	whore
¡Ah, la gran puta!	Son of a bitch!
cagarse en la puta	shit!
de puta madre	fucking great
de una puta vez	already
puta mierda	fucking piece of shit

Source: WordReference.com. [www.wordreference.com/es/en/translation.asp?spen=puta](http://www.wordreference.com/es/en/translation.asp?spen=puta).

Accessed 29 April 2021.

### III. METHODOLOGY

This project employs a specific methodology. For data collection, the subtitles from the targeted show, *Paquita Salas*, were downloaded from Netflix. At first, I decided that data would be collected from each season and episode of the show, but then I changed it to all the episodes in the first season. Then, the subtitles were thoroughly analyzed in both Spanish, the source language, and English, the target language. Originally, the plan was to use the tool called ANTConc for data analysis. However, it became evident that the Command F function could be used instead. This simple function was all that was needed to provide the ability to find the specific examples of text. I decided that the research would be centered on the Spanish word “puta,” which is a prime example of offensive language within Spanish. The tool was utilized to find that word specifically within each downloaded subtitle. In addition, I aligned the subtitles by whether they were from the source or target text so that they would be coherent and organized, and so that it would be easy to follow along and decipher between the two.

Next, the terminology data was organized into tables. Each table includes multiple things: which episode the example comes from, the context of the scene from which the text comes, the time that each subtitle appears in the show, the example of the source text, the example of the target text, the part of speech that is utilized, which translation techniques are used, and the impact that using that technique has. The impact means how the audience may react to the message. Depending on which technique is used, various impacts on the meaning of the word or phrase is created as a result. The desired impact is

maintained, because this means that the original intent of the message remains unchanged after it is translated. Each translation data sheet was organized, and then the data was analyzed in order to find any patterns. It was assumed that the tables would show results that mirror that of the work of Ávila-Cabrera in his review of the film *Pulp Fiction*. Mostly, Ávila-Cabrera found that often the translation of this type of language, when translated from English to Spanish, was incorrect.

When conducting my research, certain questions remained in mind that needed to be answered: how often the impact of the word “puta” gets altered from its original impact in the source text when translated from Spanish to English in Season 1 of *Paquita Salas*, which translation technique is most commonly used when translating the word “puta” from Spanish to English in Season 1 of *Paquita Salas*, and which translation technique is most effective in maintaining the impact from ST to TT. I hypothesized that the mistranslation of the focus word would occur frequently, at least over half of the time, and that the most common translation technique would be literal translation. Also, I hypothesized that the most effective technique for translation would be establishing an equivalent, because unlike literal translation, the context and cultural aspects are taken into consideration.

#### IV. ANALYSIS

The source text word “puta” is found within Season 1 of *Paquita Salas* a total of 17 times. I ultimately decided that 17 examples would be an ample number of times to allow for adequate data to be received and analyzed. The 17 examples would allow me to find any existing patterns within the subtitles. The episode with the most examples, however, was the second episode, which had more examples of the word “puta” than any other episode. See Figure 1.

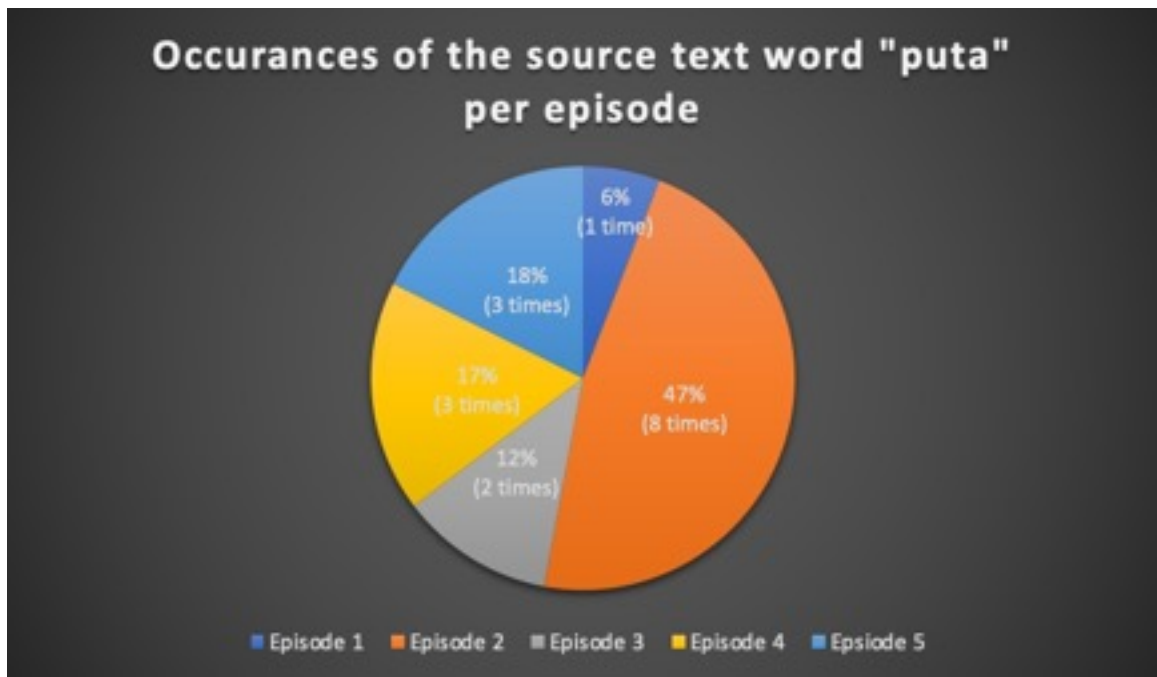


Figure 1: Number of times "puta" appears per episode

The data was analyzed even more in order to see how many times each instance of the source and target texts in the subtitles is utilized as various parts of speech. Figure 2 shows evidence of how many times each example of the source text was used as an



adjective, noun, or gerund. Figure 3 illustrates how many times the examples of the target text were used as an adjective or noun. It was interesting to see that the number of times each example was used as each part of speech did not match up to each other. For instance, the source text examples were used as adjectives 13 times, and the target text examples were used as adjectives 11 times. It is possible that the type of speech that is utilized in each example, source versus target, would have something to do with whether or not it is translated correctly. The chart of the target text examples and what type of speech is used includes the option of Not Available (N/A), because in some cases the use of the word “puta” was omitted when translated to the target language. This caused the part of speech in that example to be unreportable, whereas the offensive language is no longer present.

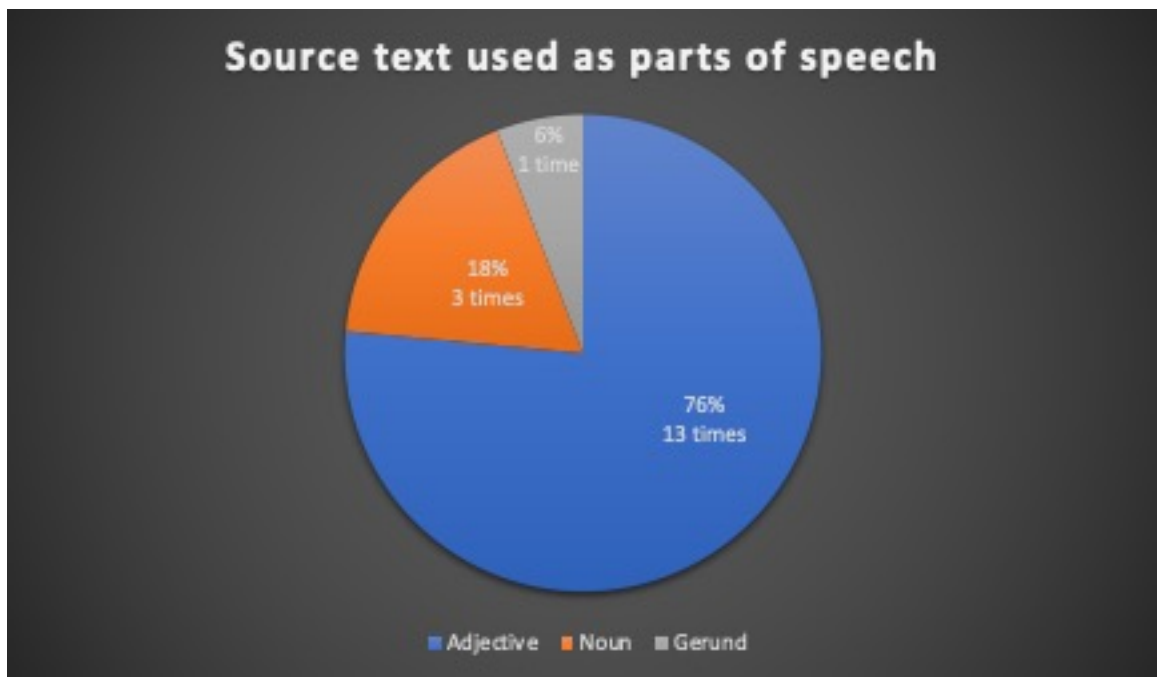
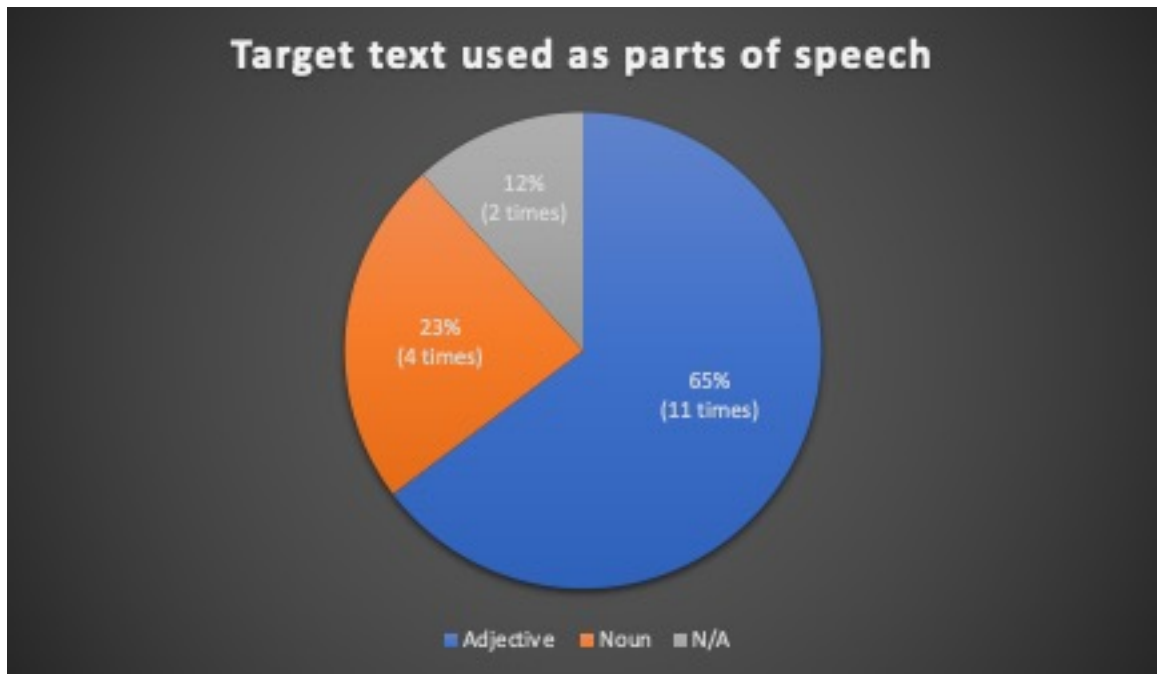


Figure 2: Number of times the source text was used as various parts of speech



*Figure 3: Number of times the target text was used as various parts of speech*

The types of translation techniques that were found throughout the data are established equivalent, adaptation, calque, literal translation, and reduction. Figure 4 shows this information. The most common technique that was employed during translation was literal translation, which was used a total of 8 times. Similarly, there were also 5 various types of impact that occurred as a result of various translation techniques. As seen in figure 5, the most common impact was maintained, which is the opposite of what was hypothesized. The maintained impact was seen a total of 8 times in the subtitles. However, there are four other impacts that were seen in the 9 other cases, all of which did not result in the original intent being maintained. This result aligns with my hypothesis, whereas over half of the time, when the word “puta” was translated, the meaning was altered.

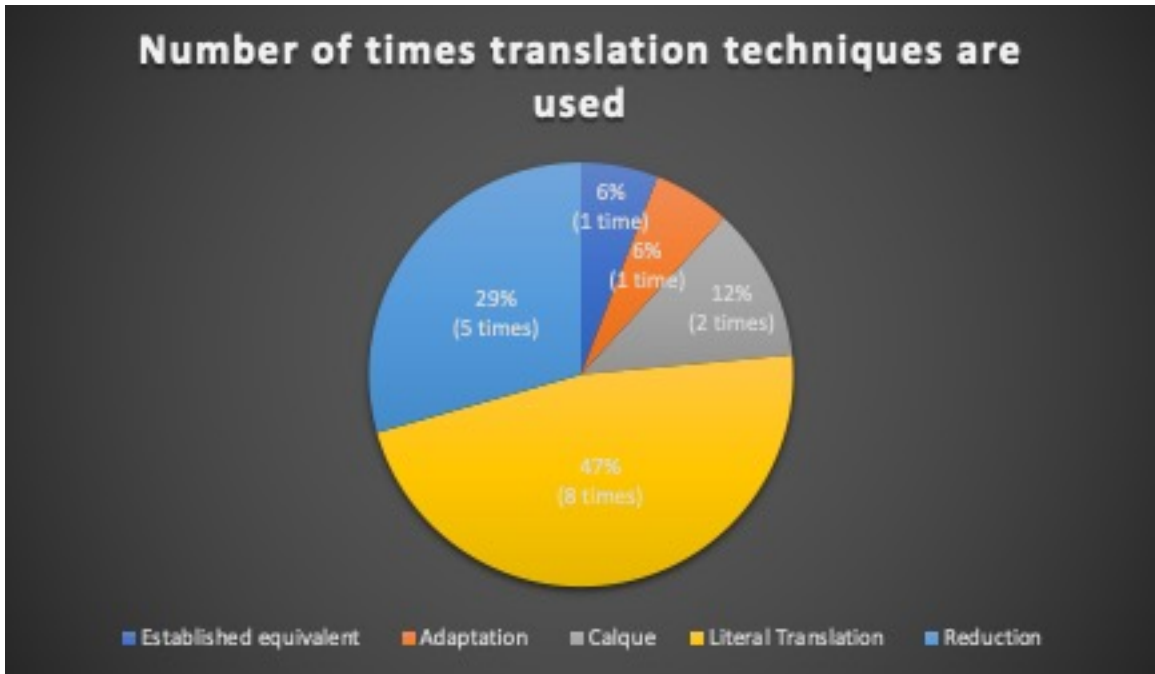


Figure 4: Number of times each translation technique is used

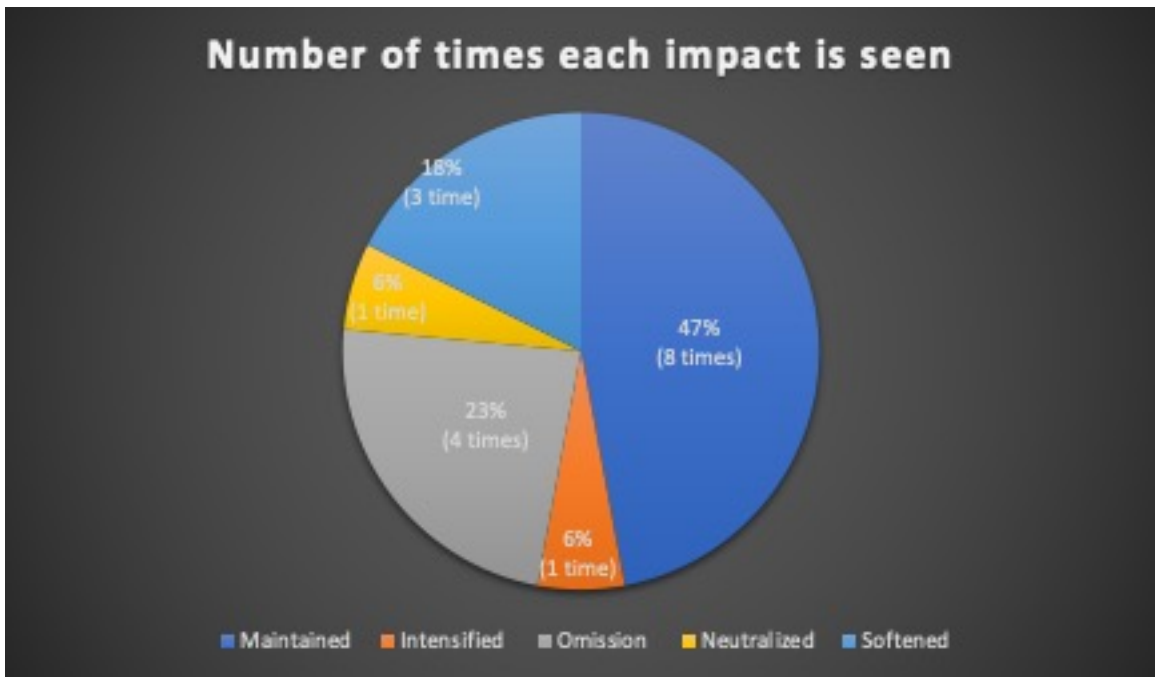


Figure 5: Number of times each impact is seen

As previously mentioned, the most common impact was maintained. Table 1 provides a textbook example of what it looks like when the impact of the offensive language is maintained. The example in the target text is translated exactly from the

source text example. The translation technique that is used is literal translation, which, as the name of this type explains, is simply just translating it verbatim. Most every time the example has used the literal translation technique, it results in the maintained impact.

*Table 2: Example 5 from Season 1 Episode 2*

Example 5 (Season 1 Episode 2)	
Context: Mariona, an actress in the play, is expressing her feelings about the academy.	
Time: 998680	Time: 998560
Source Text: Mariona: Que estoy hasta el coño de <b>esta puta escuela</b> , joder.	Target Text: Mariona: I'm fucking sick of <b>this shitty academy</b> .
Part of Speech: Adjective	Part of Speech: Adjective
Translation Technique: Literal Translation	
Impact: Maintained	

An interesting example from Season 1 occurs in the second episode, as shown in Table 2. The part of speech remains the same in both the source and target text. However, the translation technique that is used is adaptation. It can be seen in the examples from the subtitles that the word “puta” translates into a harsher version of offensive language. Thus, the impact that occurs is intensification. Within a scene of a Television Series, this can certainly cause some confusion for the viewer. If the creators’ intention for this scene was not meant to be as extreme as it is in the target language, it can create an unintended message. Potentially, it could be that the speaker of that particular line in this scene does not actually mean to come across as severe, or maybe that character is the type of person who would not even use such explicit language.

Table 3: Example 2 from Season 1 Episode 2

Example 2 (Season 1 Episode 2)	
Context: Paquita and Magüi are at a play trying to recruit some talent, and someone that Paquita used to work with tries to steal that talent from her. Magüi stands up for Paquita against the man that she used to work with.	
Time: 963400	Time: 961240
Source Text: Magüi: Es verdad, a lo mejor yo no sé mucho cómo funciona esta profesión, pero sé cómo funcionan las personas y lo que tú has hecho es de ser <b>un poquito hijo de puta.</b>	Target Text: Magüi: You're right, maybe I don't know a lot about management, but I know the way people work and you were <b>kind of a motherfucker.</b>
Part of Speech: Noun	Part of Speech: Noun
Translation Technique: Adaptation	
Impact: Intensified	

In the example shown in Table 3, the impact shown is omission, which occurs four times throughout the season. As mentioned earlier, this example also shows how the part of speech in the target text is unrepresentable. The use of the offensive language in the original subtitle was completely deleted when translated, so there really is not a part of speech to report. Even more so, this impact can also hinder the effect of the creator's intent. In these example that include omission, it is obvious that the original strength of the message is lessened when translated into the target text. When offensive language is used, it is typically apparent that certain emotions are trying to be portrayed. Whether it be frustration, anger, excitement, or pretty much any chosen emotion, offensive language can help when trying to express various feelings.

Table 4: Example 15 from Season 1 Episode 5

Example 15 (Season 1 Episode 5)	
Context: A man and two women are working in a restaurant. One of the girls was late to work, and she is discussing it with the man, which seems to be her boss.	
Time: 44880	Time: 44840
Source Text: Girl: porque era de la ECAM, un escaparate muy bueno. Man: No tienes <b>ni puta idea</b> .	Target Text: Girl: It was from Madrid's Cinematography School, a great platform. Man: You've <b>no idea</b> .
Part of Speech: Adjective	Part of Speech: N/A
Translation Technique: Reduction	
Impact: Omission	

Although uncommon, the impact neutralization did appear once in the subtitles from Season 1. Table 4 shows the example where the reduction translation technique was utilized. When describing Mariona in the show, rather than using the offensive word, the translator reduced it to “fat girl.” The intensity of the offensive language is diminished, and, as a result, the impact of the offensive language became neutralized. Although the part of speech in the source and target text remains the same, the mood of the scene is altered due to the use of this certain translation technique and effectively the impact that it creates. Rather than being a scene that elicits an offensive state, a lighter state is created using a common adjective. Although calling someone “fat” is generally an unkind thing, it certainly is not as aggressive as the phrase in the source text example.

Table 5: Example 13 from Season 1 Episode 4

Example 13 (Season 1 Episode 4)	
Context: Paquita is on the phone trying to get a job for Mariona, and she is being turned down.	
Time: 120880	Time: 120840
Source Text: Paquita: Dios. ¡Es que ni Dios quiere ver a <b>esta puta gorda!</b>	Target Text: Paquita: Damn. Not even God would give <b>this fat girl</b> a chance!
Part of Speech: Noun	Part of Speech: Noun
Translation Technique: Reduction	
Impact: Neutralized	

The data collectively has much information to offer. To recap, the most common translation technique was literal translation, and the most common impact was maintained. Although one might be misled to believe that it is a good thing that literal translation was the most common, it is not exactly true. Even though the translation technique literal translation usually created the impact maintained, there were also instances when this did not happen. Table 4 illustrates the impact and translation technique from example 12. The impact that occurred was softened, even though it was translated literally. An example of when this could happen would be in the case of idioms. Words or phrases in the source text may have a meaning specific to the culture that it is from, so when translated into another language literally it has completely different meaning. For this reason, it is important to be familiar with not only the language that you are translating, but also to be knowledgeable on the culture in which the language is spoken. In addition, the translator should be able to know when it is best to use each technique for translating the subtitles. Of all the times the impact was maintained, the translation technique that was used was literal translation 7 of those times. Although it seems as though this technique is often only somewhat effective in

retaining the original intent of a message, there are also cases that it is not, as shown in Example 12.

Table 6: Example 12 from Season 1 Episode 4

Example 12 (Season 1 Episode 4)	
Context: Magüi is in the office singing about the man that she has a crush on.	
Time: 51480	Time: 51320
Source Text: Magüi: Siento en mi cuerpo un dolor que me devora. Me estoy clavando <b>la puta grapadora</b> .	Target Text: Magüi: I feel in my body a consuming ache. <b>The damn stapler</b> is stuck in my rear.
Part of Speech: Adjective	Part of Speech: Adjective
Translation Technique: Literal Translation	
Impact: Softened	



## V. CONCLUSION AND FURTHER RECOMMENDATION

Ultimately, of the 17 times that the word “puta” is mentioned in the first season of *Paquita Salas*, the impact is not maintained 9 out of the 17 instances. Although the most common impact that was seen was maintained, the number of occurrences of each of the other impacts makes the translation of this word in this television series seem not so successful. Again, the most common translation technique that was used was literal translation. In this case, the translator just took the text in the source language and quoted each word verbatim into the target language. Both the number of times the impact was not maintained and the most common translation technique that was found agreed with what was hypothesized. Lastly, the last research question was aimed at trying to decipher which technique was the most efficient for causing the impact to be maintained. The answer to this question is not a simple one, whereas the literal translation technique caused the maintained impact the most. However, one could pose a strong argument that that does not necessarily mean that it is the best. The literal translation technique simply allows for the words and phrases to be taken from one language into another verbatim, which can cause problems in some cases.

Often in translation, the literal translation technique does not work, because it does not account for the cultural aspect of words or phrases. If an English-speaking person in the United States says, “it’s raining cats and dogs,” to someone who is not from here, that phrase might create confusion for them. So, if that phrase is translated into another language, it certainly cannot be done literally. This concept can become even more complex within the use of offensive language. Something that is said to be

offensive in one culture might not necessarily mean anything hurtful in another. For this reason, it is so incredibly critical that translators know the difference and understand the intent of a message before translating it, so that whatever was meant for can be maintained when taken into another language.

This project allowed for this concept to be seen in a new light, that is, within taboo and offensive language. Research on this topic is seemingly scarce, and this project enabled more knowledge to be brought forth. If this project were to be continued and taken a few steps further, one could collect data from another season of *Paquita Salas*, or even analyze the entire show. Another option could be to include other examples of taboo and offensive language, rather than just the single offensive word “puta,” like in the case of this project. If further research were to be conducted, I feel confident that similar results to this one would be found. Errors in subtitling are very common, and there are so many things that go into the process. Even more than just the lack of cultural awareness, there are many other things that could cause things to be subtitled incorrectly. For example, another factor is screen time for the actual subtitle. Subtitles are only allowed to be on screen for so long, and so sometimes things must be altered according to that in order to abide by those rules.

Although there are so many things that can cause the process to go incorrectly, there are many things that can be done in efforts to make them right. If translators receive the proper training and are able to identify when the subtitle might need special attention, then there can be more of a chance that the meaning of things remains the same.

Regardless of the type of language being used, there is always a reason to try to preserve the original intent of the work of a creator. With the help of this project and many more like it, the patterns of the mistakes can be identified in order to help prevent them from happening again.

Appendix 1: Corpus from *Paquita Salas* Season 1

Example 1 (Season 1 Episode 1)	
Context: Paquita and Macarena are driving in the car discussing Paquita's original plans for the evening, when Paquita mentions her ex-boyfriend's new girlfriend.	
Time: 989520	Time: 990040
Source Text: Paquita: Sabes quién digo, ¿no? Maca: Ajá. La Montero, ¿no? Paquita: Esa. <b>Qué hijo de puta.</b>	Target Text: Paquita: You know her, right? Maca: Montero, the singer. Paquita: Right. <b>That son of a bitch.</b>
Part of Speech: Noun	Part of Speech: Noun
Translation Technique: Established equivalent	
Impact: Maintained	

Example 2 (Season 1 Episode 2)	
Context: Paquita and Magüi are at a play trying to recruit some talent, and someone that Paquita used to work with tries to steal that talent from her. Magüi stands up for Paquita against the man that she used to work with.	
Time: 963400	Time: 961240
Source Text: Magüi: Es verdad, a lo mejor yo no sé mucho cómo funciona esta profesión, pero sé cómo funcionan las personas y lo que tú has hecho es de ser <b>un poquito hijo de puta.</b>	Target Text: Magüi: You're right, maybe I don't know a lot about management, but I know the way people work and you were <b>kind of a motherfucker.</b>
Part of Speech: Noun	Part of Speech: Noun
Translation Technique: Adaptation	
Impact: Intensified	

Example 3 (Season 1 Episode 2)	
Context: Paquita is explaining why she is going to leave the play, then one of the cast members joins her in stating how they feel about the academy.	
Time: 990760	Time: 990720
Source Text: Paquita: Nos vamos por una razón muy clara: que esta escuela <b>es una puta mierda.</b> Mariona: Claro que sí, coño, esta escuela es una puta mierda.	Target Text: Paquita: We'll go for a very obvious reason. This academy <b>is a fucking shit.</b> Mariona: She's right, damn it! It's a fucking shit!
Part of Speech: Adjective	Part of Speech: Adjective
Translation Technique: Calque	
Impact: Maintained	

Example 4 (Season 1 Episode 2)	
Context: Paquita is explaining why she is going to leave the play, then one of the cast members joins her in stating how they feel about the academy.	
Time: 990760	Time: 990720
Source Text: Paquita: Nos vamos por una razón muy clarita: que esta escuela es una puta mierda. Mariona: Claro que sí, coño, esta escuela <b>es una puta mierda.</b>	Target Text: Paquita: We'll go for a very obvious reason. This academy is a fucking shit. Mariona: She's right, damn it! <b>It's a fucking shit!</b>
Part of Speech: Adjective	Part of Speech: Adjective
Translation Technique: Calque	
Impact: Maintained	

Example 5 (Season 1 Episode 2)	
Context: Mariona, an actress in the play, is expressing her feelings about the academy.	
Time: 998680	Time: 998560
Source Text: Mariona: Que estoy hasta el coño de <b>esta puta escuela</b> , joder.	Target Text: Mariona: I'm fucking sick of <b>this shitty academy.</b>
Part of Speech: Adjective	Part of Speech: Adjective
Translation Technique: Literal Translation	
Impact: Maintained	

Example 6 (Season 1 Episode 2)	
Context: Mariona is speaking to the director at the academy.	
Time: 1002600	Time: 1003920
Source Text: Mariona: Te diré algo: tú eres un viejo que no tiene <b>ni puta idea de nada</b> , que solo me pones de criada, coño.	Target Text: Mariona: You are an old guy who knows nothing about theater. You only give me maid roles, damn it.
Part of Speech: Adjective	Part of Speech: Adjective
Translation Technique: Reduction	
Impact: Omission	

Example 7 (Season 1 Episode 2)	
Context: Mariona is explaining what she wants to do as an actress.	
Time: 1062600	Time: 1061840
Source Text: Mariona: Porque estoy harta de Ibsen y <b>de su puta madre</b> que me van a comer el coño, ¿vale?	Target Text: Mariona: Because I'm really tired of Ibsen, Chéjov and all that crap, okay?
Part of Speech: Adjective	Part of Speech: Noun
Translation Technique: Reduction	
Impact: Omission	

Example 8 (Season 1 Episode 2)	
Context: Mariona is about to leave the theater with Paquita, and they are telling everyone that Mariona is going to be a star.	
Time: 1075000 // 1087240	1075040 // 1087080
Source Text: Mariona: Que sepas que <b>esta puta gorda</b> es una estrella, ¿vale? Paquita: Cariño, claro que vas a triunfar y claro que eres una puta estrella.	Target Text: Mariona: You'd better know <b>this fucking fatty</b> is a star, okay? Paquita: Darling, of course you'll make it and you're surely a fucking star.
Part of Speech: Adjective	Part of Speech: Adjective
Translation Technique: Literal translation	
Impact: Maintained	

Example 9 (Season 1 Episode 2)	
Context: Mariona is about to leave the theater with Paquita, and they are telling everyone that Mariona is going to be a star.	
Time: 1075000 // 1087240	1075040 // 1087080
Source Text: Mariona: Que sepas que esta puta gorda es una estrella, ¿vale? Paquita: Cariño, claro que vas a triunfar y <b>claro que eres una puta estrella.</b>	Target Text: Mariona: You'd better know this fucking fatty is a star, okay? Paquita: Darling, of course you'll make it and <b>you're surely a fucking star.</b>
Part of Speech: Adjective	Part of Speech: Adjective
Translation Technique: Literal translation	
Impact: Maintained	

Example 10 (Season 1 Episode 3)	
Context: Paquita is recording a casting tape of Mariona at the office. Instead of putting up a white background for the video, they just use a door as the background. Paquita thinks this is wrong.	
Time: 273000	273080
Source Text: Paquita: Detrás hay una pared que no es blanca. <b>¡Es una puta puerta de mi agencia!</b>	Target Text: Paquita: There's a wall behind that's not white. <b>It's my fucking agency door.</b>
Part of Speech: Adjective	Part of Speech: Adjective
Translation Technique: Literal Translation	
Impact: Maintained	

Example 11 (Season 1 Episode 3)	
Context: While recording a casting tape of Mariona in English, Mariona keeps getting stuck over a specific part that is difficult for her to say.	
Time: 311560	311520
Source Text: Mariona: Paquita, ¿podemos quitar <b>esta puta frase</b> que no me sale?	Target Text: Mariona: Paquita, can we leave out <b>this fucking hard line?</b>
Part of Speech: Adjective	Part of Speech: Adjective
Translation Technique: Literal translation	
Impact: Maintained	

Example 12 (Season 1 Episode 4)	
Context: Magüi is in the office singing about the man that she has a crush on.	
Time: 51480	Time: 51320
Source Text: Magüi: Siento en mi cuerpo un dolor que me devora. Me estoy clavando <b>la puta grapadora.</b>	Target Text: Magüi: I feel in my body a consuming ache. <b>The damn stapler</b> is stuck in my rear.
Part of Speech: Adjective	Part of Speech: Adjective
Translation Technique: Literal Translation	
Impact: Softened	

Example 13 (Season 1 Episode 4)	
Context: Paquita is on the phone trying to get a job for Mariona, and she is being turned down.	
Time: 120880	Time: 120840
Source Text: Paquita: Dios. ¡Es que ni Dios quiere ver a <b>esta puta gorda!</b>	Target Text: Paquita: Damn. Not even God would give <b>this fat girl</b> a chance!
Part of Speech: Noun	Part of Speech: Noun
Translation Technique: Reduction	
Impact: Neutralized	

Example 14 (Season 1 Episode 4)	
Context: Paquita is trying to get an appointment with the casting director of a film with hopes that she will cast Mariona, but she does not have an appointment so the receptionist will not let her in. Paquita runs past the receptionist anyways.	
Time: 760400	Time: 760400
Source Text: Paquita: Voy a pasar, va a ser un minutito. Receptionist: No, no, no. Perdona. <b>Put a gorda.</b>	Target Text: Paquita: I'll come in. It'll be a minute. Receptionist: No. Excuse me! <b>Fucking fatty.</b>
Part of Speech: Adjective	Part of Speech: Adjective
Translation Technique: Literal Translation	
Impact: Maintained	

Example 15 (Season 1 Episode 5)	
Context: A man and two women are working in a restaurant. One of the girls was late to work, and she is discussing it with the man, which seems to be her boss.	
Time: 44880	Time: 44840
Source Text: Girl: porque era de la ECAM, un escaparate muy bueno. Man: No tienes <b>ni puta idea.</b>	Target Text: Girl: It was from Madrid's Cinematography School, a great platform. Man: You've <b>no idea.</b>
Part of Speech: Adjective	Part of Speech: N/A
Translation Technique: Reduction	
Impact: Omission	



Example 16 (Season 1 Episode 5)	
Context: The man from Example 14 tries to get the girl to begin working by mentioning an apron.	
Time: 49760	Time: 49920
Source Text: Man: ¿Dónde coño tienes el mandil? Girl: El... Aquí está. Man: Pues pónitelo ya <b>de una puta vez</b> .	Target Text: Man: Where is it? Girl: It's here. Man: Put it on <b>already</b> .
Part of Speech: Adjective	Part of Speech: N/A
Translation Technique: Reduction	
Impact: Omission	

Example 17 (Season 1 Episode 5)	
Context: Paquita is upset and has been hiding away at her house when one of her clients comes to visit her. It's the one that she has had for a very long time, the only one who has stuck with her, and she's coming to check on her.	
Time: 910360	Time: 910400
Source Text: Lidia: Claro, ¿cómo lo vas a saber, sino me coges el teléfono? Paquita: ¿Para qué quieres que lo coja, para decirte que estoy tumbada como <b>una puta gorda</b> con tres pizzas, dos botellas de vino y unos Doritos?	Target Text: Lidia: Sure, how would you if you don't answer my calls? Paquita: What for? To say I'm on the couch like a <b>fucking fat lady</b> with pizza boxes, wine bottles and a bag of chips?
Part of Speech: Adjective	Part of Speech: Adjective
Translation Technique: Literal Translation	
Impact: Maintained	

## Appendix 2: Glossary of Key Terms

For the purposes of this thesis, each of the following terms should be understood to mean the given definition. There are multiple definitions that could be appropriate for these terms, but I have chosen these for standardization purposes. These are some of the key terms that will be seen:

*Audiovisual Translation:* “Audiovisual translation (AVT) is a branch of translation studies concerned with the transfer of multimodal and multimedial texts into another language and/or culture” (Saldanha 13). It is a very complex process with many factors that impacts whether or not it is completed successfully. According to Gambier in 2018, “Not only does this intricate process include the four main components—audio-verbal signs, visual verbal signs, audio-nonverbal signs, and visual-nonverbal signs—but it also includes any other form of audiovisual text that may not directly fit into one of those categories” (11). To make it even more difficult, the technologies that are used within AVT are evolving so rapidly that the process is also having to constantly evolve with it. This is a never-ending cycle that just allows for more and more complications to arise within the world of audiovisual translation. Much research exists within AVT, such as María del Mar Ogea’s “Subtitling cultural humour in the Spanish comedy *Paquita Salas*” and José Javier Ávila-Cabrera’s “Subtitling Tarantino’s Offensive and Taboo Dialogue Exchanges into European Spanish: The Case of *Pulp Fiction*,” and the search certainly continues.

*Taboo/offensive Language:* Taboo and offensive language could be anything from words that one might view as shocking to words that one might view inappropriate. The translation of this type of language is a very delicate process, which

takes careful consideration. When these types of words and phrases are used, there is a specific intent behind it. When you take the use of these words and translate them to another language, the intent can often be misconstrued. Certain phrases that include taboo and offensive language are not always perfectly translated to another language, whereas certain phrases would only take to a specific meaning depending on the culture of the viewer who is hearing or reading it. From the words of Ávila-Cabrera in 2015, “The use of this type of language provides viewers with information on the speakers’ mood, social class and cultural background” (8).

*Corpus Linguistics:* As a whole, corpus linguistics is the study of language as it naturally occurs. In other words, it is not studied using regulations and structures. Stoica says in 2019, “Corpus linguistics uses corpora, or empirical collections of written and/or spoken text, to discern naturally occurring patterns and features of language use.” A researcher who studies corpus linguistics would create a corpus—which is a large collection of words that represent a language and are structured and interpreted.

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