

ANALYSIS OF THE ADAPTATION AND SYNCHRONIZATION IN THE DUBBING PROCESS TO “THE PROPOSAL” MOVIE

Analysis of the adaptation and synchronization in the dubbing process of “The Proposal”  
movie

Angie Tatiana CALDERON ALZATE

Ana María CARREÑO BARÓN

Karen Daniela GONZÁLEZ ESPITIA

Degree project to obtain the title as a Professionals in Modern Languages

Directed by Nelson PÉREZ ROJAS

Modern Languages program

ECCI University

Bogotá, Colombia

2021



### **Thanks to**

First of all, we thank God for having guided and directed us throughout the career, for allowing us to fulfill all our personal and professional achievements, for being our strength in moments of weakness and for providing us with new experiences and learning. We thank our parents for the values they have taught us, for unconditionally supporting us, for being a great example to follow and for the opportunity to access education to track our lives.

We also give thanks to our family and friends for being an important part of our lives and in all this process, for giving us words of encouragement in moments when we need them and for giving us a lot of support, happiness and love.

Therefore, we thank our advisor Nelson Pérez Rojas, for having believed in us and giving us the opportunity to develop our degree project with his help, dedication and time. Moreover, for giving us all the tools to overcome moments of confusion, thanks for giving us the opportunity to grow professionally and for offering his knowledge. Thanks for the patience and for being part of this important and cute experience.

**Abstract**

In the present investigation is conducted the analysis of the film *The Proposal*, which was chosen for being a romantic comedy. Furthermore, with some prior knowledge, it is known that humor tends to have many changes due to cultural issues. Due to this, it is possible to analyze, describe and explain some of the semantic modifications that can occur within the dubbing process in films.

In the same way, investigating fundamental issues that are reasons for changes in dubbing such as lip movement, adaptation and synchronization. The above was discovered thanks to an interview with a professional in the area and some authors who wrote articles related to this topic, resulting in the completion of this research together with the fulfillment of the proposed objectives.

Keywords: dubbing, adaptation, synchronization, lipsync.

## Resumen

En la presente investigación se lleva a cabo el análisis de la película *La Propuesta*, la cual fue escogida por ser una comedia romántica; además, con algunos conocimientos previos se sabe que en el humor suele haber muchos cambios por el tema cultural. Debido a esto se puede analizar, describir y explicar algunas de las modificaciones semánticas que pueden ocurrir dentro del proceso de doblaje en las películas.

Así mismo indagando en temas fundamentales que son motivos de cambios en los doblajes como movimiento labial, adaptación y sincronización. Lo anterior se descubrió gracias a una entrevista con un profesional en el área y algunos autores que escribieron artículos relacionados con este tema, dando como resultado la realización de esta investigación junto con el cumplimiento de los objetivos propuestos.

Palabras clave: doblaje, adaptación, sincronización, movimiento labial.

**Table of contents**

Thanks to	2
Abstract	3
Table of contents	5
List of tables	6
Introduction	7
Chapter 1: Problem statement	10
1.1 Justification	10
1.2. Research question and objectives	13
1.2.1. General objective	13
1.2.2. Specific objectives	13
Chapter 2: Reference framework	14
2.1. Theoretical Framework	14
Chapter 3: State of art	20
Chapter 4: Methodology and analysis	26
4.1 Humor changes	28
4.2 Nominal changes	31

4.3 Consonantic analogy	34
Conclusion	38
Work cited	41

**List of tables**

Table 1: Technical sheet of the film "The Proposal"	27
---	----

## Introduction

Years ago, the need to cross borders in the cinematographic field arose, therefore, the idea was born to adapt the scripts of the films carrying out the dubbing in order to reach more population. The purpose of this research is to analyze and explain the concepts of adaptation and synchronization in regards to the dubbing process from English to Spanish, in the same way, the possible semantic changes that the translator is forced to do to maintain synchronization in the visual part of the films (lip sync). In addition, the message must be as natural and near to the cultural characteristics of the country where the film will be published.

To develop this idea, some fragments from a romance comedy movie are analyzed. The movie is a 2009 film by director Anne Fletcher called *The Proposal*, which will allow us to break down and exemplify the ideas and concepts previously mentioned.

Taking into account the aforesaid, some authors who have developed concepts and ideas about translation, dubbing, adaptation, synchronization and lip sync from practice and experience are taken as a reference, such as Marlen Patricia Rodríguez Daza, Wilson Gastón Guerrero Méndez, Luís Javier Garro Mora (2006) and Fernando Cantu Diaz (2003). Starting with the definition of the dubbing, which consists of changing the original script for a new one, taking into account that there is a coordination of time and phonetics. In this context, the adaptation of the dialogue, the background sound environment, the tone of the voice, the synchronization between the lips and the voice are included.

In this investigation, the adaptation has an important role. According to María José Cháves García (28), doctor in French philology, adaptation is a solution whose purpose is to decrease the number of foreign dialogues in the original versions. So that the importance remains within the dialogues; and although for her it is a rough option, it is very used to avoid unconformities with linguistic barriers. To complement the above, Fernando Cantu Diaz (2003) says that the translator is in charge of adapting the original dialogue to neutral Spanish, adjusting the words and taking into account the time intervals to the lips movements of the actors in the movie.

As support, three sound engineers are cited and define synchronization as a process where the sound and the image have to coincide, keeping in mind to maintain rhythm, the emotion, among others, but changing the amount of syllables if it is required; and as clarified by Rodríguez Daza, Guerrero Méndez (et al (32)) (2006) "all this synchronization forms are associated with an Acoustic Credibility Model (MAC (because of its acronym in Spanish)) of the voice in the grammar framework of phonaesthetic expression, which influences visual perception of the actor's face who appears speaking on screen".

Furthermore, Fernando Cantu Diaz (2003) makes some references about the process to carry out the synchronization, saying that "to achieve the synchronization of the actor's voice with the image, it works with short dialogue segments (takes) which are cyclically repeated over and over (loop) in a monitor; the actor must read the parliament that he/she has to say, while listening to the original dialogue through headphones and in the same way, to be able to synchronize the voice with the chapter's lip sync".



The ideas proposed by the mentioned authors were read and analyzed. Critical and personal thoughts could be developed to answer the problem questions established. However, to support the search for articles and documents that would complement the aforementioned ideas and which would help in answering the doubts, it was the purpose to find a person who would give his point of view respect to the dubbing industry, who would tell his experience from practice and about the internal process to carry out a dubbing. For this reason, it was possible to talk with Andrés Camargo, a voice actor who worked for 4 years in companies as a dubbing actor. Although he no longer works in this job, his time in the recording rooms could give him the ease of enlightening us and providing us a perspective very close to the real one.

## **Chapter 1: Problem statement**

In the cinema boom, the need arose to satisfy viewers in all parts of the world, but one of the main problems is language. For this reason, tools such as subtitling and dubbing were created, so the movies would have greater expansion regardless of the language of each country, seeking comfort and ease for the audience. However, at the moment of adapting a script from one language to another, it implies taking into account aspects that could affect the film, for example, all languages have their own cultural and linguistic characteristics (idioms, synonyms, expressions, humor), which generates changes in the translated script, creating an adaptation, but without losing the intention of the message. Within the modification of the script, carrying out the dubbing process it is very probable that the lip synchronization of the film actor will be affected, and it will not coincide with the voice of the dubbing actor, causing unconformity in people. In this research, it is intended to make an approach to those adaptation problems and how the companies who have worked in that field, throughout history time, have tried to solve this problem.

### **1.1 Justification**

The initiative to carry out this research was the need to find reasons and explanations for the problem, considering that we are modern language learners with knowledge and skills in English and Spanish, we notice that problem in the movies. Therefore, the film *The Proposal* was chosen as part of the investigation, firstly for being part of one of the largest and best-known film industries in the world and for being a

benchmark in comedy. And secondly, several semantic changes were evident throughout the dialogues, such as the use of expressions, synonyms, idioms and humor, which are related to each Spanish-speaking culture and any language in the world.

However, humor is one of the main characteristics when it comes to changes and adaptations; within the big category it can be found different humor variants depending on the country or specifically the culture, as before it was mentioned. Taking into account this observation, it can be very noticeable to talk about concepts as the ones referred to in the keywords, since they complement each other.

To make an approximation to what is intended to be developed within this research, it is pertinent to mention and quickly analyze a small part of a chapter of the famous American series *The Big bang theory*. Before delving, it is important to mention why this series is a suitable example, and for this, there are two reasons. First, *The big bag theory* is within the genre of sitcoms, it has different topics of interest such as science, or specifically physics, which is the central axis of the lives of most of the characters. And the second reason is broken down from the previously mentioned concept, physics. Being a broad field of study, complex to understand for many and exciting for others, it has many technicalities, however, within the conversations and situations that develop throughout the series, there are also noticeable semantic variations for people who work within the field of linguistics and its branches.

Apparently semantic changes are more common than it is believed, and can only be analyzed at the time of doing the exercise of observing the series in its original

language and then in its translation, in this case into Spanish. This same exercise was done with chapter four, season six of the series, a small fraction of this episode where the characters play pictionary. It has an abrupt adaptation that seeks to maintain lip synchronization with the message, however, the visual images that can be observed reveal the change.

In the chapter in its original language (source language), two of the main characters, Sheldon and Penny, argue for the word <Polish> referring to the country, and <polish> for the verb to paint nails. In this case the confusion is due to the upper and lower case of each word. While in the Spanish chapter (target language), the confusion derives from <colonia> synonymous with fragrance, and <Polonia> referring to the country. The change of consonants is noticeable, in addition, the drawing that she illustrates on the board is not related to the word, since she draws a hand and a varnish, not a fragrance.

Based on this, one of the purposes of this work is to describe these changes and analyze how the dubbing and adaptation process in the script is. This is why it is expected to apply the knowledge acquired in subjects during the career. Also to enrich the project with the voice actor Andres Camargo, who shared his experience acquired in his career in different dubbing companies, in order to reinforce this work and provide a contribution based on the theme raised.

Eventually, this research intends to supply usefulness by having pertinent and adequate information, so it is expected to become an aid and contribution to future research in this field. Which is directly or indirectly connected to the topics covered in

this project, as well as to being able to inform those who are related to the film industry, dubbing or translation.

## **1.2. Research question and objectives**

Based on the research done, the question was born: How is translation done in the movies and what impact does it have on the intention of the message within the dubbing?

### **1.2.1. General objective**

To describe how much the message is modified when carrying out the translation for a dubbing and the elements to be taken into account, such as the meaning of the original script and the lip movement of the actors.

Based on the main objective, an approach is given in the different fields for the development of research.

### **1.2.2. Specific objectives**

1. Analyze the synchronization between the actors' lip movements and the script translation.
2. Examine why the original text is modified when it is translated.
3. Describe how the original script is modified.

## **Chapter 2: Reference framework**

### **2.1. Theoretical Framework**

To carry out this project, research was done to support or discard some of the proposed ideas raised from the beginning, to identify the direction that would be given to the investigation. Some articles were found that talk about the key concepts for the development of this document. As a result, it was possible to consolidate the direction of the investigation and support the ideas posed.

To understand better, it is important to define what translation is. Within this concept, there are several ideas and contributions by the author María José Chaves García. Her hard research and experience as a linguist gave her the opportunity to analyze translation as an important process when dubbing. It is of great interest the way in which this subject is exposed, since as she mentions, it goes from the most general to the most specific, starting from the beginnings of translation in film. Also adding some elements that are important for the present investigation, such as verbal and non verbal elements (37).

By proposing these elements, it can be inferred that translation goes beyond producing or expressing a text or speech from the source language to the target language. Something that perhaps many times is not taken into account when analyzing or studying the dubbing of a film, is that translation is not only related to the verbal elements. The non-verbal elements also have their respective changes. For Chaves (36), they are elements that make up the language of the film, however, the analysis of this research is directed to verbal elements, specifically dialogues.

Among the many types of translation, Chaves and Cristina Marín Gallego, throughout their work coincide with audiovisual translation. For Marín (8), "it is an intercultural communicative act and it is about transferring an audiovisual text from one language to another, a text that is going to be broadcast in cinema, television ... "

Although subordinate translation is also correct when speaking of films for addressing extralinguistic topics such as lip sync and time, Marín characterizes audiovisual translation as more specific. For example, for having a visual and auditory channel, different types of signals have the most accurate adjustment and synchronization possible. Between those types of signals are moving and still images, text, dialogue, narration, music or noise, which makes this type of translation necessary. Another important point is that within this type of translation, all the people involved fulfill a purpose in performing the dubbing. In other words, the translator is not the only one who has the responsibility of delivering a good final work; actors, directors and adjusters also have an important intervention in dubbing.

One of the authors consulted, Fernando Cantu Diaz (2003), he is a business administrator, specialized in marketing. He proposes a dubbing perspective given by the experience that he obtained when he decided to create a voice dubbing company, and defines dubbing as a technique that consists of substituting a dialogue for a new one, in a way that perfectly reflects the synchronization in the mime of the original dialogue. Cantu mentions that the practice of dubbing is essential for the film industries, whether for television commercials, films, documentaries, soap operas or cultural programs.

He clarifies that performing a dubbing is not easy and there are indicators that producers request and they must be met, for example (tessitura, tone, flexions and

expressiveness of the voice). On the other hand, Cantu talks about three types of dubbing, such as dubbing in the same language that it is used when a scene has been recorded, but the dialogue is post produced with effects and everything that the scene shows, the dubbing to other languages that it is the one made in movies or any production that it wants to be internationalized, finally the dubbing in cartoons that is to record the voices of cartoons, in other words, the script. It is clarified that the purpose established in the research is focused on dubbing to other languages, specifically to the Spanish language because as Spanish speakers, the analysis is developed from the original language (English) to target language (Spanish).

Moreover, for ease and comfort of the public, dubbing was created replacing subtitling, generating greater quality in the movies. For this reason, dubbing according to Rodríguez Daza, Guerrero Méndez (et al (12)), three engineers of sound, "it is a fundamental process in the production of audiovisual movies, recently used by professionals in the field to solve problems in recording and present the production in various languages".

Considering that dubbing is a solution that is widely used today by the specifications mentioned by the previous authors, adaptation is also another type of solution mentioned by Chaves. But this is a measure aimed at reducing linguistic barriers within the cinema, with the aim of eliminating those foreign parts within the dialogues, often reducing the verbal elements. Although dubbing and adaptation are concepts that are linked within the arduous process to internationalize films, the different perspectives vary by the profession and occupation of each of the authors. Also these have one point in common, overcoming when translating a language.



According to Fernando Cantu Diaz (2003) the adaptation of the dialogues to other languages is the most frequent, since each language has its own characteristics and linguistic structures. The translator must be in charge of adapting the original dialogue to neutral Spanish. He must adjust the words, taking into account the time intervals and the lip movements of the characters.

Adaptation is a process that is performed in the script to fit a text from one language to another. Taking into account that each language has its own cultural characteristics, there is the need to modify the source text for more understanding. In this case, English and Spanish are obviously different in their structure, as it happens when syntax and semantics are considered, for example in idioms, expressions, humor, etc. and for this reason there is the necessity to adapt these texts. Since idioms, expressions, humor, etc. are different in each language, for example in English and Spanish. Due to this, the cinema makes these adaptations so that the film has a greater reception in the region where it is presented. It is also thought about the synchronization of the audio and video with the target text.

The aspects to take into account at the moment of dubbing such as synchronization and lip movement are also discussed. The authors share the definitions of these aspects in the same way, for example:

The author Fernando Cantu Diaz (2003), clarifies that the synchronization in the dubbing is of utmost importance for the projection of the films, because it reflects the quality of the dubbing and also part of the success that the film may have. The synchronization must be in time, in mimicry and in phonetics to the original dialogue.

Therefore it is important that there is a correct relationship between the image and the sound, with that union it is spoken of synchronization or audiovisual synchronism. This implies that throughout the film, both the image and the sound must respect their time and space. According to Rodríguez Daza, Guerrero Méndez (et al (37)) "To synchronize audio and video, it must be taken into account how many frames per second are being recorded, and also it has been able to determine what the sampling time will be for the audio".

Lip synchronization refers to adapting the translation to the lip movements of the character on stage, the idea is that there is coordination between the lips of the actor or actress with the voice that is heard, which should achieve the greatest similarity of voice to the original actor; also taking into account the situation and expressions in which it occurs. Rodríguez Daza, Guerrero Méndez (et al (32)) clarify that:

*At the moment of dubbing, it is very important that the actor or actress maintain the emotionality in relation to the person that appears on the screen, and in which later on at the sound level it is developed from a recording studio, in the same way the voice of the actor or actress who doubles in proportion to the gesticulating aspect of the actor or actress seen in the image; visually the lip synchronicity should not be lost when adding the word (as sound) to the image, this synchronicity has a development time of both dramaturgical spaces and the image itself, which are linked to visual phonetics (phonetic synchronism).*

Fernando Cantu Diaz (2003) shares the same concept of lip synchronization. He adds that this recording system, that allows the lip movements of one actor in the film to

ANALYSIS OF THE ADAPTATION AND SYNCHRONIZATION IN THE DUBBING PROCESS TO "THE PROPOSAL" MOVIE

be synchronized with the one in the recording studio, was invented by Jacob Karol in 1990. This process took a long time, after many trials it was possible to reach such perfection of said lip synchronization. This has made it possible to enjoy the film without the dialogue demeriting anything. This idea arose from the need to reach more populations regardless of the language of each country.

### Chapter 3: State of art

Dubbing fulfills an important factor in films that are adapted to Spanish, and even more so when the central theme to adapt is from North American humor to Latin American humor. This is why, in this work, the film *The Proposal* is taken as an example, analyzing the semantic changes throughout the entire film.

Also as a reference, it is related to the work of Débora Simeone (2018), a master in specialized translation, who talks about the problems present in audiovisual projects, as well as a study of humor in *Modern Family*, a television series of American comedy created by Christopher Lloyd and Steven Levitan in 2009. As mentioned, dubbing has difficulties when adapting the script from one language to another, and from one culture to another.

Because of this, Simeone talks about the dialect by mentioning different problems at the moment of doing the dubbing. Simeone sticks out that on various occasions the translator encounters linguistic elements such as jargons that are not easy to adapt, since the essence of the dialogue can be lost, and especially when it comes to comedy. As an example, she takes chapter 1, of the season 1, at minute 5:00 from the series, which one of the characters says: "LOL, Laugh Out Loud, OMG, Oh My God, WTF, Why the Face" but the translation is: "MMR, Me Muero Risa, ADM, Ay Dios Mio, QMD, Que Me Dices". As it is evident, the jargon in the source language is known but in the target language it does not make any sense, which causes meaning to be lost and the humor disappears.

Another example she explains is from chapter 2, of the season 1, at minute 2:20, one of the characters says: "He looks like Little Bo Pee on that thing" and the translation is: "Venga ya, parece Little Bo Pee con ese trasto". Little Bo Pee refers to a nursery rhyme doll from the United States, however for Spanish speakers it is not known. For this reason, the translator respects the name and changes the final part "on that thing" in the modification to Spanish, but this causes both the sense of the sentence and the humor to be completely lost.

In addition, it is essential that the person who doubles knows both humor cultures, because in English something can be funny, but in Spanish it can be offensive. And as the project talks about script changes, moreover it must be taken into account gesture communication, since it does not always mean the same in both different cultures. This is also important in a comedy movie, because the gesticulation is part of the entertainment, and if it is not interpreted in the best way from the source language, it can become an insult to the target language.

It should be made clear that whatever film is to be dubbed, it will always have changes, either to synchronize the lips with the actor or at the moment to reproduce the movie, the script makes sense and coherence. Furthermore, the humor also varies depending on the area or country where the film is planned to be shown, hence the script must be changed to generate feelings in the audience (laughter, love, hate, fear). By this means that dubbing is not just reading and translating the script, but it is necessary to dramatize and make a correct interpretation, involving work, a lot of creativity and above all the talent on the part of the voice actors. This makes the

difference between just dubbing and the art of dubbing, which consists of being completely faithful to what the movie wants to project to the public.

When talking about dubbing, translation, adaptation or synchronization, there are several sources that gather information with different objectives and approaches, through analysis and research. Although it is known, this work has a broad approach, where it is analyzed why there are semantic changes and how they happen when dubbing a film in the English-Spanish languages, referring to any type of modification, in any kind of word within the film to treat. However, you can find documents that analyze only one word type and in different languages.

Maria Josep Cuenca (20), in her work titled "Interjections and Pragmatic Errors in Dubbing" allows us to understand the aforementioned. According to her:

*Interjections have been generally defined as a peculiar word type, peripheral to language and similar to nonlinguistic items such as gestures and vocal paralinguistic devices. In addition to the theoretical and descriptive challenges that interjections imply, they can be associated with important problems for translation, since many languages share identical or similar forms or word-formation processes, but the conditions of use of the interjections are not the same.*

When Cuenca refers to the interjections being one of the translation problems, it is valid to affirm that the main problem is the cultural factor. These types of words, regardless of whether they are small idiomatic units, can modify the meaning of the original version and give a different or erroneous interpretation. Given the case, the

translator must be contextualized with the different languages and cultures, in order to make a correct interpretation, taking into account that they are two concepts that work together when translating, dubbing and adapting.

On the other hand, Cuenca mentions that there are two groups of interjections: the primary ones that are units of simple vowels, and the secondary ones that are words or phrases (21). Both have their respective semantic changes, however, it is pertinent to mention an example to better understand the author's idea:

Fiona: What do you do?

Gerald: I am training to be a priest.

Fiona: **Good Lord.**

Fiona: ¿A qué te dedicas?

Gerald: Estudio para sacerdote.

Fiona: ¡**Santo cielo!**

The previous example is taken from the film *Four Weddings and a Funeral* (1994). When observing it can be said that they are secondary interjections, since they have more than one word, in addition, a different interpretation is displayed in Spanish translation, to be exact, there is polysemy. So in the original version, the interjection *Good Lord* refers to an expression of surprise, while *¡Santo cielo!* also refers to surprise but in a religious field; these expressions may vary in meaning depending on the country and the cultural context.

The previous idea is also shared by the authors Gilbert C. F. Fong and Kenneth K. L. Au, since they mention that most of the problems in dubbing fall on the person who

makes the translation. This is due to a translation of very poor quality. Fong and L. Au (...) mention the opinion of a French critic, Marcel Martin, who described films dubbed into another language as "an evil expression of art (161)". Some of the problems caused by dubbing are the lip movement of the actors completely asynchronous with the sound, the corporal language or the tonality of the voice does not match and this can cause the message intention to be lost.

But the authors also attribute these problems to the wrong direction by the director of the dubbing and the mediocrity of the voice actors. If they had a good direction, surely the quality of the dubbing would improve. However, there is an aspect of the loss of meaning that no matter how good the translation or the direction of the dubbing is; it is inevitable that this will become the same. This is the inability to translate the accents and dialects of the original script and language. Therefore, in order to mitigate this problem, the production must be improved and the plot strengthened, also adding a suggestive nuance to the story can help, and finally transmitting the cultural identity of the place where the film was developed.

As can be seen from the above, Simeone believes that dubbing frequently has to face difficulties with some linguistic elements that vary in their adaptation due to cultural issues. For her part, Cuenca believes that exist different challenges, but she differs with Simeone in the field of translation, due to the similarity that there is in languages with the processes of word formation, with the exception of interjections that are related to cultural factors that depend on the translator for a correct interpretation. Additionally, Gilbert C. F. Fong and Kenneth K. L. Au affirm the previous idea. The translator is responsible for dubbing problems, and although they depend on whether or not there is



a correct or acceptable adaptation and message, other subjects are also involved in the dubbing, such as the director or the actors at the time of talking about dubbing problems.

Thanks to the mentioned authors and the analysis carried out, the following points can be concluded for this section:

1. Dubbing is an essential process when speaking of the same film in two different languages. However, it is no secret that it may face difficulties due to different linguistic-cultural elements.
2. Within the grammatical categories, interjections are a problem that can be present in the translation, no matter how small they are, they can modify or change the meaning or sense of any cinematographic work.
3. The translator, the dubbing director and the voice actors are important subjects in the dubbing process. On the other hand, elements such as lip movement, synchronization with sound, body language and tonality of the voice must be prioritized and properly developed in the dubbing.
4. Any cinematographic work implies modifications in some parts of its content, due to the need for lip synchronization, sense or coherence of the script.

#### **Chapter 4: Methodology and analysis**

The methodology to be developed in this research is based specifically on the objectives of this work and has a qualitative, descriptive and analytical approach. On the other hand, within this section some categories, techniques and modifications intrinsically related to dubbing, adaptation and translation will be exposed.

As a first step, a synopsis of the film *The Proposal* is presented with the most important information and the main idea of this cinematographic work. Margaret is a powerful, strict, and highly successful editor from New York who, due to a problem with her US visa, faces possible deportation to her native Canada. For years, she has had an assistant (Andrew) who has aspirations to be able to move up in the company where they both work. Then, the astute Margaret occurs to tell her bosses that she is engaged to Andrew, her assistant, to avoid deportation and to keep her visa in the United States, nevertheless, Margaret exploited Andrew and he never got the promotion.

Andrew agrees to participate in the farce, but with some conditions among those is that he will get a better position in the company. They must begin to know everything about the other, because the immigration agent is going to ask them questions to verify that it is not fraud. However, Andrew knows everything about Margaret, but she does not know anything about him. Therefore, the "couple" decide to go to Alaska to meet his peculiar family, and the executive Margaret is accustomed to having everything under control, she is immersed in different situations; she also realizes that her assistant is the son of a very wealthy family with many businesses.

ANALYSIS OF THE ADAPTATION AND SYNCHRONIZATION IN THE DUBBING PROCESS TO “THE PROPOSAL” MOVIE

With wedding plans on the way and an immigration agent watching over them, Margaret and Andrew agree to follow through with the spoken plan despite the consequences. Days after, Margaret realizes that she is really in love with Andrew; therefore she decides not to marry him, because she does not deserve him. Finally she leaves and she gives herself to the immigration agent. At the end when she leaves Andrew realizes that he is also in love with her, he runs to find her and now they are really engaged for love.

Before starting the analysis for the film, the technical sheet is briefly shown with additional and interesting elements of the film, which will allow a greater approach and understanding in the following analysis.

<b>Title</b>	The Proposal
<b>Writer</b>	Peter Chiarelli
<b>Director</b>	Anne Fletcher
<b>Country</b>	United States
<b>Year</b>	2009
<b>Gender</b>	Romantic comedy
<b>Main characters</b>	Sandra Bullock - Margaret Tate Ryan Reynolds - Andrew Paxton Betty White - Grandmother Annie

**Table 1:** Technical sheet of the film “The Proposal”

In the adaptation of a script from one language to another, the text must be modified because the changes are presented for a better understanding of the target language. As mentioned above, this is due to the culture of each country, which is why in this chapter some of the changes that were found in the film *The Proposal* will be grouped. These changes are divided into three categories, depending on the type of change and the techniques used in the text modification.

The following analysis categories are proposed because they were the most common in the findings.

- Humor changes
- Nominal changes
- Consonantic analogy

#### **4.1. Humor changes**

The first category is humor changes from source language to target language. This analyzes the meaning of jokes or humor in audiovisual works and depends on purely cultural aspects. In the same way, the translator needs the skills and knowledge necessary to be able to interpret all those extralinguistic or humorous elements, with the aim that the same load of humor remains.

In the following 9 examples, the analysis of this category is supported, based on specific sections of the movie *The Proposal*.

The first example that justifies the above is found at minute 6:41, Andrew, the assistant of Margaret, says after leaving the office of Bob, an employee of the company,

and seeing that he was angry because he was fired: "he has crazy eyes", but in Spanish it is modified to "creo que enloqueció". If the speech in English "crazy eyes" is analyzed, it can be found that in Spanish it can be interpreted in different ways, for example "ojos locos", but in this case it refers to the fact that the person lacks sanity. The second example within this category is at minute 21:31 , when Margaret proposes to her assistant Andrew, so that she is not deported from New York to Canada, she says "would you please, with cherries on top, marry me?" and in Spanish it is translated to "Por favor, ¿serias tan gentil de ser mi esposo?". If the phrase "with cherries on top" is translated literally into Spanish, it can be seen that it does not have an acceptable meaning; that is why it was modified with the phrase "tan gentil" to refer to her being lovingly treated.

The third example from the movie, in the minute 26:22, Andrew says to Margaret when he gets the baggage off the car and gives them to her when they traveled to Andrew's house "you're gonna wanna use your legs to leave that one" and in Spanish says "cuidado no te vayas a romper la espalda". In this case, the phrase is modified because the expression in English when implementing the literal translation into Spanish would not have coherence, however, in both English and Spanish it does not lose the meaning, since they refer to hurting that hurts. Also as it is evident in the fourth example in the minute 34:44, when in the family meeting at the house Margaret and Andrew are telling how he had supposedly asked her to marry him, and Margaret says referring to Andrew: "like a little tiny bird" but in Spanish says "petrificado" as it is an expression in English, when it is translated literally into Spanish, it is not understood and loses its humor in the film.

The fifth example, in the minute 39:17 Andrew says in English "completely" and in Spanish says "no veo nada" referring to his eyes closed when Margaret was coming out of the bathroom to bed in sexy pajamas, but actually he had his eyes open. In this case, the modification is made to accommodate lip sync without losing coherence with the scene. The sixth example, in the minute 48:42, Margaret says "Pluck my eyes out!" and in Spanish she says "parece pelicula de terror" when in a bar they were celebrating Margaret's bachelorette party and the stripper invites her to dance. This expression in English is not used in Spanish and if it is translated literally, it loses the sense of the sentences and the humor of the scene.

The following two examples are the most notorious in the modification of English to Spanish in the humor of the film. The seventh example is in the hour 1:09:22, Margaret was riding a bicycle through the forest and sees Annie, Andrew's grandmother, who is doing a dance around a campfire and invites Margaret to sing. Margaret improvises a song and in a part of the song she says "to the sweat drip down my balls" but in Spanish says "este baile me da sed". Then, in the same song, in the eighth example, she says in English "to all you bitches", but in Spanish she says "piojosas como usted". In the same way, at the moment to make a literal translation it would be "el sudor que gotea por mis bolas" and in the second sentence "a todas las perras". As evidenced, these are vulgar expressions for hispanic speakers, which would cause the complete loss of humor in the song and in the scene.

The last and ninth example, but not least of this category, is found in the hour 1:31:53, when Andrew says in English "is a gigantic pain in my ass" and in Spanish says "es un dolor de cabeza" referring to Margaret after abandoning him at the altar and

reading a farewell letter that she leaves to him in bed. As mentioned in the previous examples, in English he says an expression that for hispanics would sound vulgar, and instead of generating humor, it would generate displeasure in the viewer. It is known that it is a slang, also that this does not have a literal translation and it has normally been accepted as the translation of the slang "to be a pain in the ass".

#### **4.2. Nominal changes**

The second category is the nominal change, it can occur when a word from the source language is a little shorter or longer than the literal translation to the target language. In this way, if the real meaning is left an asynchrony can be generated with the image and lip movement of the film actor. Besides, the main objective of the dubbing is to try to avoid any desynchronization of the image and the sound. Then, synonyms are used or finally the word is changed for another trying not to change both the sense or the orientation of the phrase.

The analysis of this category was made following 8 examples based on specific sections of the film.

A clear example found in the movie is at minute 22:41, when Andrew is with Margaret on the plane on the way to his parents' house. He said "Tribal ink" referring to a type of tattoo but in the Spanish translation it says "Nativo". This was possibly changed because despite the two words that the actor says, they are said very quickly. Therefore saying "tribal tattoo" or "tribal in ink" would cause a notorious

desynchronization and this can annoy the viewer, so it was simply switched to "native" which matches almost perfectly with the actor's lips.

The second example of nominal change is observed when Annie, Andrew's grandmother, says "Satan's Mistress" at minute 24:48, while in the Spanish version who makes the voice says "Maléfica". The voice actress lengthens the word a little bit to fit well with the image, because with the literal translation it would be very long, "amante de satanás" and it would not correspond to the image. The third example is at minute 25:55 when Margaret says "Honey" referring to her supposed boyfriend, and in the dubbing she does not say this word, but says "Tesoro" which would have the same intention but is not the translation of that word. As mentioned, all this is done in order to have a good synchronization regardless of the grammar or the changes that have to be made.

The fourth example of nominal change can be seen at minute 28:44. In the scene is Andrew, his grandmother, his mom and Margaret on a boat on the way home. In the English version Margaret says "Who are you people?", clearly referring to all the people who are with her at that moment and not just one person. On the other hand, in the version dubbed in Spanish she says, "Quién es tu familia?", she is referring only to Andrew. Probably this change occurs trying to fit the sound with the video or image, because if it were translated literally, it would be more or less "people, who are you?" which would be much longer than the image, that is why the nominal change "people" is made to "tu familia".



A fifth example can be seen in the hour 1:11:50. In the scene, Margaret and Andrew are in a store and the one who attends them is called Ramon. At this moment, Andrew says to Margaret "Fun fact about Andrew number 11". In Spanish the dubbing is as follows "dato curioso de Andrew número 9". The word "eleven" and the word "nueve" coincide in the final sound and the gestures are the same. By contrast, if "eleven" and "once" had been translated in this way it does not fit the image of the scene. Based on this same analysis, example number six is found. In the hour 1:45:07, this scene shows Ramon being interrogated by the immigration agent, who asks him a question. Ramon responds "Seventeen" and in the Spanish version was changed to "noventa y tres", in the middle of the word they coincide and in the final sound as well, which does not happen with "diecisiete", which would be the exact translation. The nominal example number seven also joins. In the hour 1:45:17, this scene shows Margaret being interrogated by the immigration agent, who asks her a question. She responds "red" and in the Spanish dubbing is "verde", it fits perfectly with the position of the actress's mouth and with the sound; for this reason there is no real word "rojo".

To finish this nominal category is example 8. It can be found in the hour 1:12:00, in the scene where Andrew and Margaret are being cared for by Ramón. Andrew says "Thanks, buddy" which literally translates to "Gracias, amigo". But in the Spanish dubbing he says "Gracias, Ramon" with this time it is adjusted, that is to say, the length of the sentence. As mentioned, all of this is done in order to have good timing regardless of grammar or changes that have to be made.

### 4.3. Consonantic analogy

Within the knowledge acquired in the professional career of Modern Languages are the concepts related to phonetics, especially in the subject "Semantik und Wortschatz" in German class. This allowed us to know and classify consonants and vowels by groups depending on their sound. Although this section is mostly closer to consonants, at the end a small example will be described regarding vowels.

Throughout the development of this third category, the concept of consonant analogy is contemplated, referring to the written and phonetic similarity of consonants. Considering that each language has its own alphabet, many coincide due to the historical origin in the linguistic families. In addition, some of the phonetic classifications of the consonants are slightly mentioned, which allowed us to find the connection between both languages and after that, to carry out the corresponding analysis. In this case, the English and Spanish languages will be specifically analyzed as it has been carried out throughout this document, revealing six examples that were found in the film *The Proposal*.

The first consonant analogy belongs to the occlusive - velar group, with the letter g. The occlusive term is characterized in stopping the flow of air and then releasing it. On the other hand, the velar term refers to the flow of air that approaches and touches the back of the palate.

The context of this first example found in the movie, it happens when Margaret and Andrew are in the room of Andrew's parents' house. They are ready to sleep and he says "can you just go to sleep?" to which Margaret responds "fine". After this, at

minute 39:40, it can be heard from Andrew, who says in English "great" while in the Spanish dub the word is changed to "gracias". Among the common characteristics, it can be seen that both examples are characterized by being only a unit of meaning, in addition to starting with the consonant g, which is the reason that visually lip sync is seen at the beginning of the word.

Later, an example very similar to the previous one is found with the consonant b, belonging to the occlusive - bilabial group, which is articulated with both lips. Before finding this second example, Margaret and Andrew are back in the room, ready to sleep and she starts talking about some of her likes and experiences that no one knows about her. At minute 58:28, the word "bitch" is the protagonist, in the original language of the film, its meaning is strong and offensive to the receiver, while in Spanish the word is modified by the word "bruja", which is usually softer within cultures in Spanish-speaking countries. Again, it is observed that there is similarity in its first letter, due to the speed with which the word is mentioned in Spanish, it can easily go unnoticed in the eyes of the viewer. The above idea is supported by the Multicultural Context English classes at the university, because the main topic was culture. Although this concept is huge and brings together many subtopics, it was learned that culture also involves paying attention to the words by which one person offends another, because they have changes of meaning according to each culture.

The next illustrations were taken from the final part of the film and in this case the third example differs a bit from the previous ones because it does not have similarity in its first consonant, but they are consonants that belong to the same group in the phonetic classification. The consonants "P" and "B" are part of the occlusive - bilabial

group, explained previously. To understand the context of this part of the film, Margaret and Andrew are being questioned by the immigration agent who has followed the steps to find out if their marriage is a sham or not. Among the questions is the way they are affectionately called, to which Margaret responds "puppy" in the hour 1:44:33, while in Spanish the word changes to "bebé". The analogy here is in the lip synchronization that is observed when beginning the word with consonants of the same phonetic group. Continuing in the same context mentioned above, a second later, specifically in the hour 1:44:34, the fourth word to analyze is "pumpkin" spoken by Andrew and dubbed "primor"; the same rule is put into play. Letter "P", occlusive - labial consonant has high similarity in lip movement with the same number of syllables. Regarding their meaning, they are two words that, if translated and understood literally, do not have much relationship. However, as a curious fact for English-speaking people, "pumpkin" in addition to being the plant or fruit associated with Halloween, is also used as a romantic nickname between couples, synonymous with "corazón" or "cielo" in Spanish.

The fifth example is said by Margaret and it is another word as she usually calls Andrew; the words mentioned are "monkey" and "amor" in the hour 1:44:36. The consonant in common in this case is "M", it belongs to the bilabial and nasal group that happens when the air passes through the nose. In this example something particular happens that can be observed carefully, in the dubbing the word "amor" the sound is lengthened to achieve synchronization with the original audio, resulting in a very close adjustment between what is seen and what is heard.

The last words to analyze correspond to the sixth example and they are "bird" doubled to "preciosa", found in the hour 1:44:39. It is a word spoken by Andrew and it is

another way of calling Margaret in a loving way. Particularly in this example it is necessary to analyze both the beginning and the end of the word because it is what makes the lip sync to be maintained. As already mentioned, the consonants "B" and "P" are from the occlusive - bilabial group, very easy to distinguish and pronounce for English and Spanish-speaking people. One of the analogies in this example is found in its first letter and although the word in Spanish has more syllables, the audio in English and Spanish fits without any problem because the speed with which the word is spoken is also present here. On the other hand, the final sound of the word "bird" is "D", from the occlusive-dental group, the latter meaning that it is articulated with the tongue against the upper teeth. In this part, it is important to remember that, as mentioned at the beginning of this category, there is also a vocalic participation with respect to the word "preciosa". The vowel "A" is summarized in an open sound that does not obstruct the vocal tract, having as a common point that when pronouncing the final part of both words the mouth remains slightly open.

## Conclusion

Throughout this text, the objectives that were planted in the Introduction were confirmed in the analysis of the film *The Proposal* in 2009, directed by Anne Fletcher. It was possible to affirm and to argue the changes that must be made for the dubbing, depending on the culture and lip sync that are necessary and intrinsically are present throughout the script's dubbing.

At the beginning of this investigation, information and new ideas were obtained thanks to an interview with Mr. Andres Camargo, dubbing actor, who said that it is very difficult to keep the original translation of the script. Because of this, what is said must be perfectly in synchronization with the lips of the actor in the scene. He argued that for the viewer it is of the utmost importance that there is good synchronization, otherwise it could generate discomfort and loss of focus of attention. Definitely this interview gave a direction to the investigation and a clearer picture was seen where to go, since it was the first contact with the world of dubbing.

Taking into account the above, it was possible to obtain new ideas for this analysis. As a next step, the development of the film was carried out, because there was already a reference to analyze: lip movement and synchronization. Three types of very noticeable changes were evidenced in the dubbing process. They were also mentioned in the methodology chapter, and were categorized as follows: by humor, by nominals and by consonantic analogy.

Because the film belongs to the romantic comedy genre, humor is analyzed as the first category. Within this section it is essential to have a broad knowledge of the two

cultures that will be used for dubbing. In English, some words or expressions can be funny, but in Spanish they can be ordinary or on the contrary, they can be very simple. Also when it is referring to changes, the gestures of the actors are important for good timing, as it is part of the entertainment. As an example based on the above, it is evidenced at minute 28:05, where Margaret went down some stairs to a small dock to get on a boat. When she arrives, Andrew, waiting for her downstairs, tells her "I'm hundred years old now" and in Spanish says "ya me hice viejo". Changes are made to accommodate both the humor of the culture and the movement of the lips.

The next category was called nominal and was cataloged based on lip synchronization, taking into account the length of each phrase or word. This is called nominal because it focuses more than anything on changes of proper names, numbers, people or things. As it can be seen in the following example found at minute 2:42, when Andrew arrives at the office and another worker says something to him, he answers "captain obvious". In Spanish he says "señorita obvia". The change is made in a noun with a specific denomination for another completely different but that is still nominal.

The last category is related to the phonological system and arose thanks to the similarity found in the sounds of some words, however, words can be different in their meaning and writing. Throughout the development of this category, it was observed that although the words have phonetic similarity, they differ in their writing and meaning. In addition to being a necessary process to achieve acceptance and agreement in the dubbing made. To clarify the above, the following example, found at 1:38:31, explains it. Margaret prepares her things to leave the office and she asks one of the workers for a favor and she says "I need for you to send the boxes in my office to this address". The

word extracted from this sentence is "boxes" doubled to "paquetes". The consonants "P" and "B" belong to the same occlusive-bilabial group which allows visual synchronization at the beginning of the word.

When extracting the categories that were to be developed and analyzed in the project, the categories of grammatical changes and the absence of words also emerged as possible categories. However, as more changes were seen, it was concluded that they were in the categories which were actually chosen for the development of this work. Besides, they were not a differentiating type to identify as a single category.

Through all this analysis, it is not intended to give the idea that talking about changes and modifications refers to a wrong dubbing process. With exchanges or alterations of the words and phrases, synonymous or very similar words are used either in sound or gesticulation, since it must be done for synchronization and capture the attention of the viewer.



**Works Cited**

Cantu Diaz, Fernando. *Negocio de los doblajes*. Universidad autónoma de Nuevo León, 2003.

Chaves García, José María. *La traducción cinematográfica: el doblaje*. Universidad de Huelva, 2000.

Cuenca Maria Josep. *Interjections and Pragmatic Errors in Dubbing*. Translators' Journal. 2006.

Gilbert C. F. fong and Kenneth K. L. Au. *Dubbing and Subtitling in a world context*. The Chinese University of Hong Kong. 2009.

Marín Gallego, Cristina. *La traducción para el doblaje de películas multilingües: Babel*. Universidad de las Palmas de Gran Canaria, 2007.

Rodriguez Daza, M. Guerrero Mendez, W. Jarro Mora, L. *Proceso de sincronización y doblaje para cine es sistema sonido 5.1*. Universidad de San Buenaventura, 2006.

Simeone, Débora. *El doblaje del inglés al español del humor en la serie televisiva Modern Family: estudio de recepción*. Universitat Oberta de Catalunya, 2018.