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**AN ANALYSIS OF THE  
TRANSLATION OF CULTURAL  
REFERENCES IN THE ENGLISH  
SUBTITLES OF *OCHO  
APELLIDOS VASCOS***

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## **ABSTRACT**

This MA thesis aims to classify the cultural references found in the Spanish comedy film *Ocho apellidos vascos* and to analyse the translation solutions used for their translation in the English subtitles. To do this, a corpus consisting of the cultural references found in the original version as well as their translation into English has been used. The analysis has been based mainly on establishing the types of cultural references that have been found and determining the solutions chosen by the translator in order to translate them. It was also studied whether a possible relation could be established between the type of cultural reference and the translation solution used. The results of this study show that the translator has carried out a foreignizing translation but always trying to maintain the original humorous load in the target text. Moreover, the subtitling restrictions seem to have influenced some of the translator's decisions.

Keywords: cultural references; subtitling; humour; audio-visual translation; translation solutions

## **RESUMEN**

El objetivo de este trabajo de Fin de Master consiste en clasificar las referencias culturales encontradas en la comedia española *Ocho apellidos vascos* y analizar las soluciones de traducción utilizadas para su subtitulación al inglés. Para ello, se ha utilizado un corpus formado por las referencias culturales encontradas en la versión original, así como su traducción al inglés. El análisis se ha basado principalmente en establecer los tipos de referencias culturales encontradas y en determinar las soluciones por las que ha optado el traductor para traducirlas. Se ha estudiado también si podría establecerse una posible relación entre el tipo de referencia y la estrategia de traducción empleada. Los resultados que se han obtenido muestran que el traductor ha llevado a cabo una traducción extranjerizante pero siempre intentando mantener el tono humorístico original en el texto meta. Además, las restricciones derivadas de la subtitulación parecen haber influenciado algunas de sus decisiones.

Palabras clave: referencias culturales, subtitulación, humor; traducción audiovisual; soluciones de traducción

## **1. INTRODUCTION**

The aim of this essay is to identify the presence of cultural references in the Spanish comedy film *Ocho apellidos vascos* (Martínez Lázaro, 2014) as well as to analyse the translation solutions that have been used for the translation of these elements in the English subtitles. The main reason to choose this topic was the interest in the problems that the translator might have encountered when translating the film into English and the solutions chosen to overcome them. Since the main objective of the essay is to study the translation of the film's cultural references, the maintenance of humour will not be a main focus of analysis. However, taking into account the comic nature of the film, which influences a great number of the cultural references that have been found, its mention, although brief, will be unavoidable throughout the analysis.

This essay will begin with a theoretical framework in which several definitions of cultural reference by different authors will be provided, as well as a classification of its types based on Nida's theory (1964) and a list of translation solutions following Haywood et al's (2009). Then, a literature review will be provided in which a discussion on the different studies on the translation and subtitling of cultural references by different authors will be tackled. The following section will provide information concerning the most important aspects of the film as well as its humoristic particularity. This will be followed by a methodology section in which the specific objectives, the description of the corpus and the stages of the research will be explained. Subsequently, the analysis of the cultural references found in the film will be conducted and the results obtained will be presented. Finally, the essay will conclude with a final conclusion and the bibliography.

## **2. LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **2.1. Definition and classification of cultural references**

As Franco Aixelá (1996) explains in his thesis, until the 70s, practically all translation studies were focused on reproducing the original text, understanding that in any target language there should be translations or equivalent terms for elements decontextualized from the source text without paying attention to the culture implicit in these elements. Only Nida, in 1945, referred to the existence of "cultural foreign words" that could lead to translation problems.

After Nida's (1945) first approach and his classification of these cultural elements into five categories: Ecological, Material, Social, Religious and Linguistic (Nida, 1964), different authors began to focus on the translation of cultural items. This gave rise to numerous studies that offered different definitions and classifications while some authors also proposed different strategies aimed at translating these elements from a source language to a target language. Although many linguists, such as Mayoral Asensio (2000: 75), claim that there is not an established definition of cultural references, there are many different researchers that have proposed different definitions for these items.

To begin with, Vermeer (1983) refers to these elements as "culturemes", a term also adopted by Nord (1997) who defines them as "social phenomenon of a culture X that is regarded as relevant by members of this culture and, when compared with a corresponding social phenomenon in a culture Y, is found to be specific to culture X" (Nord, 1997, p. 34). In reference to language, Newmark (1988) introduces the term "cultural language" to refer to a language that contains specific vocabulary related to a culture and suggests a classification based on Nida's (1964) approach into five groups: 1) Ecology, 2) Material, 3) Social, 4) Organizations, procedures, customs, activities and concepts and 5) Gestures and habits. (p. 95).

Baker (1992, p. 21), in turn, calls these culture-bound terms "culture-specific concepts" and defines them as "source-language words [that] express concepts totally unknown in the target culture" (Baker, 1992, p. 21). She classifies them based on their relation with social customs, religion or food. In addition, Franco Aixelá (1996) names them as "Culture-Specific Items" and expands on the scope of their definition by alluding to the fact that all aspects of a language can be considered cultural elements, and not only those who belong to specific culturally marked fields such as gastronomy or art. According to this, he explains that the term "culture specific item" can be used as well to refer to those lexical items that exist in both the source and the target culture even though they have different meanings or values. In his own words: "in translation a CSI does not exist of itself, but as a result of the conflict arising from any linguistically represented reference in a source text which, when transferred to a target language, poses a translation problem" (Franco Aixelá 1996, p. 57). To illustrate this, he includes an example provided by Frank & Bödeker (1991) in which the month April, in the English tradition, is associated with spring and the blossom of flowers. In contrast, in Spain or Germany, the

month associated to these characteristics would be May and even, in certain cultures, April would be considered a month marked by hurricanes.

Robinson (1997) uses the term “realia” which can be defined as “words and phrases that are so heavily and exclusively grounded in one culture that they are almost impossible to translate into the terms [...] of another” (Robinson, 1997, p. 222). However, the Bulgarian translators Vlahov and Florin (1986) were the first to study the realia more in depth coining the current sense of the term. In their work, they provide a classification in three categories (Geographic, Ethnographic and Political and social realia) that is extended by Mikutyté (2005) into geographic realia, ethnographic realia, political and public realia, situational realia, intertextuality and proper nouns.

The term “culture-specific references” is used by Antonini (2007) and he classifies them into six broad categories which are “education system, food and measurements, sport, institutions, famous people, and events, [and] the legal system” (Antonini, 2007, p.160) Another term commonly used is “Culture-bound term”, which is defined as “extralinguistic references to items that are tied up with a country’s culture, history, or geography, and tend therefore to pose serious translation challenges” (Díaz Cintas and Remael, 2007, p. 200).

Even though many approaches have been made by so many different authors, there is no agreement on the main characteristics of cultural elements. Nonetheless, it seems that there are some aspects such as their origin in the source culture and the fact that they pose a problem in translation that are commonly accepted by the majority. Despite this lack of agreement on the term, in this essay they will be referred under the term “cultural references”.

## **2.2. Translation solutions to render cultural references.**

Concerning translation, the purpose of this field has always been to reproduce any kind of text to make it available to speakers of other languages and it has been typically focused on the translation of written or spoken texts. As Franco Aixelá (1996) affirms, the process of translation is a “complex rewriting process” (p. 52) and it can be considered even more difficult when it involves the translation of cultural elements. About this, Nida (1964) proposes three main strategies for their translation: conversion, addition and omission.

With regard to this, Newmark (1988) proposes a much more complex classification which includes thirteen translation solutions: transference, naturalization, cultural equivalent, functional equivalent, descriptive equivalent, componential analysis, synonymy, through-translation, transposition, modulation, compensation, couplets and notes. Baker's (1992) classification follows Reiss's (1989) approach and focuses on the achieving of equivalences in the target language. Thus, she proposes a list of strategies which include the translation by a more general word, translation by a more neutral word, translation by a loan word, translation by paraphrasing, translation by omission and translation by cultural substitution. Moreover, about the use of a loan word, she added that an initial explanation would be required.

One of the approaches that have been more followed by scholars is Venuti's (1995) taxonomy by which translation strategies are divided into foreignization or domesticating based on their orientation towards the source culture or the target culture about which Baker (2010) argues that both types of techniques can be used in the same translated text. In connection with this, Ramière (2006) postulates that the majority of the classifications of translation solutions follow a common progression going from the most foreignizing to the most domesticating one, something that sometimes is only implicit in the order in which they are presented as in Ivir (1987) and Newmark (1995).

Continuing with Franco Aixelá (1997), his classification is ordered based on the level of intercultural manipulation going from conservation (which includes repetition, linguistic translation, orthographic adaptation, extratextual and intratextual gloss) to substitution (including synonymy, absolute universalisation, limited universalisation, naturalisation, autonomous creation and deletion). Davies (2003) considers it as "one of the most clearly expounded taxonomies" (Davies, 2003, p.70) although the examples he provides are confusing in Davies's opinion. Based on this, she proposes another classification closely related to Franco Aixelá's (1997). Thus, she selects seven translation solutions: preservation, addition, omission, globalization, localization, transformation and creation.

Another approach to take into account is Harvey's classification (2003), which is based on only four main strategies which are functional equivalence (described by Weston (1991) as "the ideal method of translation" (p. 23)), transcription, formal equivalence and descriptive translation. Finally, a most recent classification is that by Haywood et al. (2009, p. 73) which offers a list of six strategies ordered from the most

oriented towards the source culture to the most oriented towards the target culture similarly to Venuti's (1995) approach being exoticism the first one, followed by cultural borrowing, calque, communicative translation, deletion and cultural transplantation.

As a conclusion, it can be said that the translation of culture references is a very convoluted process whose complexity can be regarded on the lack of agreement by scholars. As Ramière (2006) affirms, "scholars themselves do not agree on the number of procedures available to translators, or on how to label them". Moreover, all this research has been done mainly based on written translation, which makes even more difficult the great challenge presented by audio-visual translation, a discipline that, derived from globalization and the transmission of audio-visual content between countries, has become increasingly important. In particular, the subtitling discipline, beyond the intended modality for the hearing impaired, has been gaining more and more popularity over dubbing due to the desire of a large part of the audience to keep the original audio. This increasing requirement of subtitles makes its study and research increasingly necessary in order to promote an adequate translation. Added to this, the presence of cultural references presents, without any doubt, a really difficult challenge for translators who need to make use of different approaches in order to provide the best translation possible.

### **2.3. Subtitling and quality assessment models.**

Subtitling constitutes a form of audio-visual translation defined as:

A translation practice that consists of presenting a written text, generally on the lower part of the screen, that endeavours to recount the original dialogue of the speakers, as well as the discursive elements that appear in the image (letters, inserts, graffiti, inscriptions, placards, and the like), and the information that is contained on the soundtrack (songs, voice off). (Díaz Cintas and Remael, 2007)

The production of subtitles is tied to certain parameters related to the synchronicity with image, sound, time and the dimensions of the screen. In this sense, the subtitles must be adapted to what happens in the accompanying visual content as well as to an established duration. In addition, each subtitle cannot be made up of more than 41 characters per line, with a maximum of two lines, which means that on many occasions translators need to omit certain elements of the original text in order to adjust it to these restrictions. All these parameters are analysed in depth in Pedersen (2011).

With regard to the origin of this modality, it can be said that the arrival of sound films in the 1920s prompted its creation. With the arrival of this new type of film, new needs arose when it came to adapting these audio-visual products to the cultures of different countries. These films were spoken, and voices and dialogues prevailed to the detriment of non-verbal communication, which posed a big problem for their international trading. After a long period of experimentation, subtitling and dubbing became the main techniques, and the choice between one or the other was based on the economic resources and preferences of each country.

About the study of subtitles, as stated by Díaz Cintas and Remael (2007), Jakobson (1959) is commonly considered the first to investigate on this field and to provide a distinction between three types of subtitles: intralingual, interlingual and intersemiotic. About this, Zabalbeascoa (1997) says that Jakobson's division does not have clear-cut borders and that the different types of translation should be examine ‘as a matter of degree, where many different factors come into play’ (p. 327). Moreover, Díaz Cintas and Remael (2007) do not refer to intersemiotic subtitles and establish the difference between the intralingual ones, which do not imply a translation, but a written reformulation of the oral text, and can be subtitles for hearing impaired people, subtitles didactics, subtitles for accents of the same language, etc. and interlingual, which is the most common type and involves a translation from one language to another.

Regarding the latter type of subtitle, whose use has been increasing over the years due to the rejection of part of the audience to dubbing and the desire to consume audio-visual content with original audio, numerous studies oriented to the study of the translation of different content and the use of translation solutions to solve different translation problems have aroused. One of these problems, and the focus of research of this paper, is the translation, and consequent subtitling, of cultural references.

On this, there are numerous studies focused on the analysis of the subtitling of many audio-visual content such as Álvarez Sáez’s (2005) and Kostopoulou’s (2015) approaches.

Abdelaal (2019) goes a step further and talks about quality assessment models whose objective is to analyse the quality of subtitles. About this, the NER (Number of words, Editions and Recognition) model happens to be the most used in intralingual subtitling. As Szarkowska, Díaz Cintas and Gerber-Morón (2020) explain, it is based on

the WER (Word Error Rate) model which was focused on the reliability of the target text. However, the NER is able to provide an 'accuracy rate' which is calculated from the combination of the units in the source text and the units found in the subtitles. Moreover, this model is also able to consider edition and recognition errors derived from the subtitling process and to judge their possible impact on viewers only considering as suitable subtitles those whose accuracy rate is over 98%.

Nevertheless, Abdelaal (2019) focuses on the model proposed by Pedersen (2017), the FAR model which stands for "Functional equivalence (do the subtitles convey speaker meaning?); Acceptability (do the subtitles sound correct and natural in the target language?); and Readability (can the subtitles be read in a fluent and non-intrusive way?)." (Pedersen, 2017, p.210). Moreover, Pedersen (2017) argues about its use for the assessment of the quality of interlingual subtitles and explains that, although its use may seem complicated, it presents some advantages such as individual scores for the different areas which can be useful as feedback or as an instructive tool.

#### **2.4. Translation of cultural references in subtitles**

In this section of the essay, five existing academic studies and researches about the translation of cultural references will be described. In the first place, the study by Nedergaard-Larsen (1993) discusses the problems posed by the translation of cultural references in subtitling and discusses the available translation solutions. To do this, she uses a corpus consisting of four French films and their version subtitled into Danish. Her study concludes by stating that the translator carries out a foreign translation intended to remain faithful to the expressions of the original version.

Álvarez Sáez (2005) performs an analysis very similar to that carried out in this paper, since she carries out an investigation on the English subtitling of the Spanish film *Belle Époque*. The corpus of her study consists of two selected cases, "Zarzuela" and "¡Salud y República", out of the 60 cultural references found in the film. This specific selection, she explains, derives from the limited scope of the work. The conclusion that she reaches from her analysis is that the translator has carried out a foreignizing translation, understanding that it has been preferred to maintain the Spanish tone of the film based on the assumption that the audience is voluntarily exposed to the exoticism of the film since they have chosen to watch a foreign film. However, this seems to have

clouded certain translations that, in the opinion of Álvarez Sáez (2005, p. 651), are difficult to understand for the audience.

Kostopoulou (2015) offers a study on the translation of culture-specific items focusing on interlingual and intersemiotic translation following Franco Aixela's (1996) theory on translation strategies. To do this, she uses a corpus made up of the cultural references found in Tassos Boulmetis's 2003 Greek film *Πολίτικη Κουζίνα* (*A Touch of Spice*) and their translation in the English subtitles. From this study, she concludes that the transfer of cultural references constitutes a difficulty for subtitling, especially when there is no similarity between the languages. Also, that the translator usually directly transcribes personal and place names by adding an informative note if their understanding is required and that references to food, drinks or measures are usually translated into English through universalization and non-verbal signs. A last conclusion extracted from her study is that, in cases in which it is considered that the audience is not able to understand a cultural reference considered important for the plot, an explanation - intratextual or extratextual - is provided in the subtitles.

Chęś (2011) analyses the translation of American cultural references in the Spanish and Polish subtitles of Woody Allen's films: *Annie Hall* (1977) and *Mighty Aphrodite* (1995) from which she extracts the cases of cultural references that have been omitted in one of the two translations or that have been translated in such a way that the original reference is lost. Therefore, the corpus of her study consists of 16 cases from *Annie Hall*'s Spanish subtitling and two from the Polish version as well as 9 examples from the Spanish subtitles of *Mighty Aphrodite*. After her analysis, the conclusions obtained show differences between Spanish and Polish subtitling, since, while in the Spanish subtitles there is a tendency to translate cultural references by means of omission, in the Polish subtitles Anglicisms and cultural borrowings are used. Thus, she concludes by saying that the Polish translation is foreignizing while the Spanish one is domesticating.

Finally, Shiryaeva and Lungu Badea (2014) carry out a research on the transfer of cultural references of material type from the English original version into the Russian and Romanian subtitled versions, all taking into account the existing subtitling norms as well as the influence of supporting images on the choice of translation solutions. As a corpus of their study, they use several cultural references of material type extracted from four different films – *Whale Rider* (2002), *The Descendants* (2011), *The Spectacular Now*

(2011) and *The Secret Life of Walter Mitty* (2013) – and their translation in the Russian and Romanian subtitles. The conclusions drawn from their study are that subtitling limitations of time and space affect the translation and that when translating a material cultural element, the choice of the translator regarding the most appropriate translation solution is influenced by several factors. Among these factors, the following are mentioned: the importance of this element and its function in the plot as well as the presence or not of visual support. Lastly, it is also concluded that the only way to maintain a balance between a fully domesticating or foreignizing translation is to evaluate the informative, stylistic and cultural functions of the element that is being translated, taking as a basis its relation to the whole text.

### **3. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

The information included in this section will expand on the authors and their corresponding theories that have served as framework for the study carried out in this paper: González Davies and Scott-Tennents's (2005) definition of cultural reference, Nida's (1964) classification of cultural references and Haywood et al.'s (2009) approach on the translation of cultural references.

#### **3.1 González Davies and Scott-Tennents's definition of cultural reference**

As has been explained in the previous section, there is no agreement on the definition of cultural items. However, in this paper they will be called under the term “cultural references” following the definition by González-Davies and Scott-Tennent (2005):

Any kind of expression (textual, verbal, non-verbal or audiovisual) denoting any material, ecological, social, religious, linguistic or emotional manifestation that can be attributed to a particular community (geographic, socio-economic, professional, linguistic, religious, bilingual, etc.) and would be admitted as a trait of that community by those who consider themselves to be members of it. Such an expression may, on occasions, create a comprehension or a translation problem. (p.166)

### **3.2. Classification of cultural references**

Nida's (1964) theory will be the one selected for the classification of cultural references in this essay. He classifies them into the following categories (p. 91):

- Ecological: concerning climate, geography, natural environment, etc.
- Material: concerning the creation and daily use of products and every item related to culture such as food, clothes, units of measurement, games etc.
- Social: concerning social organisations such as social customs, beliefs, values, social classes, lifestyle, arts, history, politics, etc.
- Religious: concerning religious beliefs and ideological and religious manifestations.
- Linguistic: concerning language features including phonology, syntax, grammar, lexicon, vocabulary and so on.

### **3.3 The translation of cultural references. Haywood et al.'s approach.**

The presence of cultural references in a text must be understood as an important factor for the translation of the text. As Ramière (2006) affirms, the work of a translator is obviously not focused on the translation of individual words regardless of the context, but texts are considered as culturally rooted wholes based on a faction of cultural references shared by the majority of the members of the source culture which, in consequence, may represent a difficulty for translation.

For the translation of these cultural references, many factors are to be taken into account, going from the amount of knowledge about the source culture to specific requirements for the translation. Moreover, two additional aspects must be analysed, namely their impact on the target audience and their importance for the correct understanding of the text. To carry out this task, the translator will decide on different strategies based on the orientation towards the source culture or towards the target culture.

Concerning this, Haywood et al. (2009) offer a range of translation solutions comprehended between two extremal strategies classified upon their culture orientation that will be the one used for the upcoming analysis of cultural references. As was previously mentioned, Venuti (1995) classifies them into "Domesticating" – "an ethnocentric reduction of the foreign text to target-language cultural values, bringing the author back home" (p.20) - or "Foreignizing" – "an ethnodeviant pressure on those values

to register the linguistic and cultural difference of the foreign text, sending the reader abroad.” (p. 20)

Thus, this scale of choices can be classified into six translation strategies ordered from the most biased towards the conservation of source culture features to the most biased towards the conservation of target culture features (Haywood et al., 2009, p. 73):

- **Exoticism:** This strategy is also known as “loan” (Díaz Cintas and Remael, 2007), “repetition” (Franco Aixelá, 1996), or “retention” (Pedersen, 2011) and it is defined as “the extreme option of leaving in the original language elements of the ST [source text] for which suitable TL [target language] equivalents are not available” (Haywood et al., 2009, p. 75). As Haywood et al. (2009) affirm, the use of this solution may be motivated by different reasons such as the desire of maintaining the “essence” of the source culture or even the objective of awakening curiosity about this culture in the target audience. Concerning this, some explanatory information may be included in form of footnotes or a glossary if possible. If some kind of orthographic adaptation to the TL [target language] is involved, it is called transliteration.
- **Cultural borrowing:** It is defined as “the transfer of a linguistic item from one culture to another without translating it (exactly in its original form, transliterated into a different alphabet or with the spelling modified to conform to TL [target language] patterns)” (Haywood et al., 2009, p. 76). This strategy, although very similar to Exoticism, differs from it in that the words used are borrowed words from the source language that were already part of the target language in a certain way.
- **Calque:** It consists on a literal translation of a sequence or word from the source text in the target text making them “unidiomatic in the TL [target language] because they are modelled on the structure of SL expressions.” (Haywood et al., 2009, p. 77).
- **Communicative translation:** It “involves selecting those features of the TL [target language] that will convey the meanings and reproduce the textual effects of the ST [source text] in ways designed to strike the reader of the target text as idiomatic, stylistically coherent and in line with how the content would naturally be expressed by a native speaker” (Haywood et al., 2009, p. 78). This way, the contextual meaning of the original text is provided in the TL [target language] and

ensures that both, the content and the language, are easily understood by the target audience.

- **Deletion:** Also known as “Omission” by Pedersen (2011) and Díaz Cintas and Remael (2007). Through this strategy, a translator opts for the omission of a cultural reference in the target text if it is considered to be untranslatable.
- **Cultural transplantation:** Referred as well as “Naturalization” by Franco Aixelá (1996) or “Transposition” by Díaz Cintas and Remael (2007), it is defined as “a radical form of domestication in which culture-specific elements in the ST [source text] are replaced in the TT [target text] by elements that are specific to the TL [target language] culture”. (Haywood et al., 2009, p. 80).

#### **4. OCHO APELLIDOS VASCOS**

##### **4.1 Brief description of the film**

*Ocho apellidos vascos* is a Spanish comedy film directed by Emilio Martínez-Lázaro and written by Borja Cobeaga and Diego San José which in April 2014 was designated as the most watched Spanish film with an audience of more than 6.5 million viewers. The film was released in March 2014 and it is starred by Dani Rovira, Clara Lago, Carmen Machi and Karra Elejalde.

Regarding the international reception, the film has been included in the catalogue of the streaming platform *Netflix*, making it available in many countries with subtitles in different languages.

Concerning the plot, the film follows Rafa, a stereotypical Sevillian man that one night meets Amaia, a Basque girl with whom he spends the night. The next morning, Rafa discovers that Amaia has left, so he decides to travel to the Basque Country to meet her again. When Rafa arrives at Amaia's house, it is discovered that Amaia had broken her engagement and that she has not seen her father, Koldo, who had been contacted by mistake with Amaia's phone, for many years. His father, a fisherman, returns home after receiving the call thinking that his daughter called to ask him to attend her wedding. However, Amaia decides not to tell him that her engagement was broken and draws up a plan by which Rafa has to pretend to be her fiancé. Rafa decides then, to use the Basque name Iñaki and pretend to be a full-blooded Basque, which makes him get into many comic situations. The original title of the film refers to the eight Basque surnames that

Rafa makes up in order to deceive Koldo and to the prejudicial idea that for someone to be considered a legitime Basque, s/he should be able to prove s/he has at least eight originally Basque surnames.

#### **4.2 The humour of *Ocho apellidos vascos***

By describing the film as comical, it may be considered obvious to underline humour as its main feature. In this case, since it is a Spanish film, its humour is based entirely on ingrained features of Spanish culture. According to this, the viewer will find all types of comic references to regional accents, Andalusian and Basque expressions, the use (and misuse) of Basque language and numerous Basque and Andalusian stereotypes as well as references to the geography and history of Spain.

This frequent use of Spanish culture as a humorous resource is what makes its translation and adaptation to other target cultures and languages a really laborious task that is worth analysing.

### **5. METHODOLOGY**

As mentioned above, the main aim of this essay is to provide an analysis and classification of the translation solutions used by the translator for the translation of the cultural references found in the English subtitles of the Spanish film *Ocho apellidos vascos* following Nida's (1969) and Haywood et al.'s (2009) approaches. To carry out this study, both source and target versions will be compared in order to identify the translation solutions that have been used and ascertain if the cultural references have been preserved or not into the target version.

#### **5.1 Specific objectives**

The specific objectives of the study are the following:

1. Identification and classification of the cultural references in the source text.
2. Analysis of the translation solution that have been applied for the translation of these cultural references into the English subtitles.

## **5.2 Description of the corpus**

The corpus for this study consists of the 205 cultural references that have been found in the Spanish film *Ocho apellidos vascos* and the corresponding 205 textual fragments in the English subtitles.

No transcript could be found of any of the versions so both of them were carefully extracted from the film.

## **5.3. Research stages**

The stages through which the investigation has undergone are the following:

1. Identification of the cultural references in the source text.
2. Classification of the identified cultural references following Nida's theory (1969).
3. Identification of the fragments containing the translation of these cultural references in the English subtitles.
4. Classification of the translation strategies.
5. Analysis and description of the obtained data.
6. Drawing of conclusions.

## **6. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

In this section, the type of cultural references that have been found in the source text will be labelled following Nida's theory (1964) and the translation solutions used in the target text will be classified based on Haywood et al (2009).

Consequently, the types of cultural references will be explained and classified under the different categories while their corresponding target textual fragments will be classified according to the translation solution used. To do this, in the case of the cultural references from the source text, it will be explained which cultural references are part of each category, while, concerning their translations in the target text, some striking examples will be presented corresponding to the different translation solutions: exoticism, cultural borrowing, calque, deletion, communicative translation and cultural transliteration.

With the aim of carrying out an analysis as clear as possible, each case presented will be described in order to provide an appropriate explanation about its context in the source text and the translation solution that has been applied in the target text.

## **6. 1. Types of cultural references found in the corpus**

In the corpus, 205 cultural references have been found of which 93 are social, 77 are linguistic, 31 are material, three are religious and one is ecological.

### **6.1.1. Social cultural references**

Starting with cultural references of social type, all references to places, including countries, cities and neighbourhoods, have been considered as belonging to this type. Hence, words such as "Euskadi", "Argoitia", "Barrio de la Cruz", "Triana" or "Sevilla" have been classified as social references.

Other references grouped under this label are those alluding to origins, such as "vasco", "andaluza" or "sevillano", those related to politics and history, such as "Franco", "ETA" or "Kale borroka", those related with culture and art such as "sevillanas", "Kortatu" or "saeta", and names as surnames such as "Gabilondo", "Igartiburu" or "Clemente"

Within this category there are some cases whose classification happen to be more complex. One of them is the case of the reference to the song "Sevilla tiene un color especial", whose lyrics are adapted by Rafa by replacing "Sevilla" with "Euskadi" when he is in a demonstration for the independence of the Basque Country (00:56:10). In this sense, it has been considered as belonging to the social type since its origin corresponds to the previously mentioned song of the Spanish group "Los del río".

Another term that may raise doubts in its classification is the term "españolazo" used by Amaia to refer to Rafa. In this sense, its political aspect has been considered since this term is used in a derogatory way to designate those who are opposed to independence ideologies and show a clear pro-national ideology. This relation with politics is the reason why it has been considered as social.

### **6.1.2. Linguistic cultural references**

The cultural references that have been considered linguistic are those that refer to languages such as "Euskera" and "Spanish" and words typical of the vocabulary of the geographical areas involved in the film, Andalusia and the Basque Country.

In this sense, typical terms of the Andalusian community such as "miarma" (typical Sevillian expression and graphic reflection of the popular pronunciation of "mi alma"), "olé" (interjection used to encourage and applaud) and "quilla" (expression used to appeal to other people whose origin lies in the word "chiquillo") have been classified as linguistic references.

Moreover, terms and expressions in Basque have also been considered linguistic references due to their inclusion in the dialogues in Spanish, since they function as a reference to the Basque language.

Thus, words such as "aita", "aupa", "agur" or "ama" have been classified as linguistic references which are used by Basque characters as a mark of their origin and language. In addition, much of the humour of the film also lies in the use of these by Rafa when he pretends to be Basque. Additionally, Rafa combines the use of Basque words and expressions such as "eskerrik asko" and "independentzia" with some that he cannot correctly pronounce, such as "Osendo" instead of "Oso ondo" (very well) and others that imitate Basque by adding typical Basque suffixes such as -oak like "Perfectoak" instead of "perfektua" (perfect), terms that have also been considered linguistic cultural references.

### **6.1.3. Material cultural references**

In this category, all those references to food, drink, games, sports, clothes and units of measurement have been included. Hence, words denoting Spanish dishes such as "migas" and "paella" and those referring to drinks such as "kalimotxo", "crianza" or "txakolí" have been designed as material. In relation to games and sports, references to the typical Basque game "pelota" or "frontón" and mentions to football teams such as "Real Betis" or "Sevilla" have been counted in this group as well. Moreover, related to clothes and units of measurement the terms that have been labelled as material are "faralaes", "920 kilos" and "15 kilos".

#### 6.1.4. Religious cultural references

Only three religious references have been found in the movie: “Virgen de la Macarena”, “Costalero de la cofradía del Divino Creador” and “El Rocio”.

In the case of "El Rocío", which designates the Andalusian religious manifestation, this reference can be also considered of social type since its name designates the village "El Rocio" as well, in Huelva, to which believers go on pilgrimage. However, since it is a celebration of religious origin and whose main objective is to manifest the Catholic faith, it has been decided to classify it under this category.

#### 6.1.5. Ecological cultural references

The only reference that can be labelled in this category is the word “Chirimiri” which makes reference to a weak rain.

### 6.2. Translation solutions

In the translation of the cultural references in the target text there have been found examples of every of the six translation solutions proposed by Haywood et al (2009). Now, the cases corresponding to each solution will be displayed in different subsections.

#### 6.2.1. Exoticism

There have been found 106 cases of exoticism in the corpus, which represent 51.7% of the total. The cultural references that have been translated by means of exoticism are mostly Basque terms and names of places. Regarding the latter, and as will be explained in the following subsection, a distinction has been made based on the possible knowledge of the target audience of these places to classify them as exoticism or as cultural borrowings, understanding as cases of exoticism those that are probably unknown by the audience. Some examples are the following:

- (1) Source text: “No estás en **Euskadi**, Amaia.”<sup>1</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup> In all the examples the word(s) containing cultural references appear in bold type. Emphasis is mine.

Target text: “You're not in **Euskadi**, Amaia.”

(2) Source text: “Tranquilo, que yo soy de **Cáceres**.”

Target text: “Calm down, I'm from **Cáceres**.”

(3) Source text: “Pensaba que, si me quedaba en **Argoitia**, muchas cosas me iba a perder.”

Target text: “I thought that if I stayed in **Argoitia**, I'd lose out on a lot.”

(4) Source text: “Ya he avisado a todos los primos de **Hondarribia**.”

Target text: “I've told all the cousins in **Hondarribia**.”

Regarding the transfer of Basque terms, numerous cases have been found, the most common being "aita", "aupa", “agur” and “eskerrik asko”, which are recurrent in the dialogues between the characters.

(5) Source text: “‘**Aita, Aita**’ ‘**Aita**’ es algo.”

Target text: “‘**Aita, Aita**’ ‘**Aita**’ is something.”

(6) Source text: “**Aita** es algo en el lenguaje de ellos, ¿verdad?”

Target text: “**Aita** is something in their language, right?”

(7) Source text: “¿Cómo estás? **Aupa** ahí.”

Target text: “How are you? **Aupa!**”

(8) Source text: “Hachazo va, hachazo viene y **agur** llaves.”

Target text: “I was busy swinging the axe, and **agur** to the keys.”

(9) Source text: “**Eskerrik asco** pero **agur**.”

Target text: “**Eskerrik asko** but **agur**.”

Within the translation of Basque terms, those referring to food and drink have also been translated by means of exoticism such as (10) and (13). On this, there have also been found cases with terms in Spanish as in (11) and (12).

(10) Source text: “Necesito un **kalimotxo** para aguantar esto.”

Target text: “I need a **kalimotxo** to put up with this.”

(11) Source text: “Viva el fino, la **manzanilla** y las flamencas bonitas.”

Target text: “Hurrah for fino, **manzanilla** and beautiful girls.”

(12) Source text: “¿Por qué no te vienes un día a casa y te preparo unas **migas**?”

Target text: “Come to the house one day and I'll make “**migas**”.”

(13) Source text: “[...] Pimientos rellenos de **txangurro**.”

Target text: “[...] Peppers stuffed with **txangurro**.”

Similarly, references to the Basque language "Euskera" have also been kept in the target text as in (14) and (15). Other cases of exoticism are (16) and (17), which involve the transference of surnames. Finally, in (18), exoticism has been combined with two more translation solutions, namely calque and addition, the latter because the term "club" is added only in the target version.

(14) Source text: "¿Pero por qué cojones no lo dices en **euskera**?"

Target text: "Why don't you say it in Euskera?"

(15) Source text: "¿Qué quieres que hable en **euskera**?"

Target text: "That I speak in **Euskera**?"

(16) Source text: "Pues... **Gabilondo, Urdangarín, Zubizarreta, Arguiñano.**"

Target text: "Well... **Gabilondo, Urdangarín, Zubizarreta, Arguiñano.**"

(17) Source text: "Y luego ya por parte de ama, **Igartiburu, Erentxun, Otegi y Clemente.**"

Target text: "And on my ama's side, **Igartiburu, Erentxun, Otegi and Clemente.**"

(18) Source text: "Y soy socio del **Real Betis Balompié**: socio 14.430."

Target text: "And a member of **Real Betis Football Club**: number 14,430."

### 6.2.2. Cultural borrowing

In the corpus, there have been found 18 cases of cultural borrowing which represent 8,8%.

As it has been anticipated in the previous subsection, the classification of the translation of certain toponyms has been reasoned based on the level of knowledge that the target audience could have regarding these places. When speaking of cultural borrowings, the referred terms happen to be already part of the target culture in one way or another so places such as "Malaga" or "Ibiza", understood as highly international tourist areas, have been considered of this type.

(19) Source text: "Dormir con una vasca es como tirarte tres veces a una de **Málaga.**"

Target text: "Sleeping with a Basque is like screwing a girl from **Málaga** three times."

(20) Source text: "Bueno, eso será lo más típico de **Ibiza.**"

Target text: "That might be typical in **Ibiza.**"

The classification of some terms introduced directly in Spanish into the target text has undergone the same type of distinction. Furthermore, in (23), (24) and (25) the culture reference of the source version has been replaced by another that also belongs to the source culture.

(21) Source text: “¡**Olé, olé y olé!**”

Target text: “**Olé, olé and olé!**”

(22) Source text: “¡Que puede ser de la **ETA**, de algún comando!”

Target text: “She could be an **ETA** terrorist!”

(23) Source text: “Bueno pues en un **frontón**, o en un caserío de estos de los vuestros.”

Target text: “Well, at a **pelota game** or in a farmhouse.”

(24) Source text: “A esta en dos días la tengo yo en Triana, **tocando las palmas.**”

Target text: “In two days I'll have her in Seville, **dancing flamenco.**”

(25) Source text: “Sí, un horterera, pero lo que he ligado yo así no lo ha ligado ni **Bertín Osborne.**”

Target text: “Maybe, but I've scored more than **Julio Iglesias.**”

Thus, in (21) it can be observed that the use of the expression "olé" is maintained in the target text. This term has been considered an instance of cultural borrowing due to its inclusion in the *Oxford English Dictionary*, as may be seen in Figure 1.

The screenshot shows the Oxford English Dictionary entry for "olé, int. and n.2". The entry includes pronunciation information for British and US English, frequency data, origin, and etymology. It also features a list of quotations from various sources, including F. Rothwell, E. Hemingway, R. E. Pickering, and the Chicago Tribune. A sidebar on the right provides navigation options and a list of related terms.

**olé, int. and n.2**

View as: [Outline](#) | [Full entry](#)

Quotations: [Show all](#) | [Hide all](#) | [Keywords: On](#) | [Off](#)

**Pronunciation:** <sup>Brit.</sup> /əʊˈleɪ/, <sup>U.S.</sup> /oʊˈleɪ/

**Frequency (in current use):** ●●●●●●

**Origin:** Of multiple origins. Partly a borrowing from Spanish. Partly a borrowing from French. **Etymons:** Spanish *olé*; French *ollé*.

**Etymology:** < Spanish *olé* bravo (1747; 1541 as *ole*). In quot. 1914 at sense A. via French ... ([Show More](#))

**A. int.**

An exclamation of praise or encouragement, usually associated with Spanish music and dance and with bullfighting; 'bravo', 'well done'.

1914 F. ROTHWELL tr. 'P. Loti' *On Life's By-ways* 89 Ollé! ollé! exclaim the men, striking their heels on the floor.

1940 E. HEMINGWAY *For whom Bell Tolls* v. 60 'Olé!' someone said. 'Go on, gipsy!'

1966 R. E. PICKERING *Himself Again* vi. 42 L. picked up the little glass, and drained it. 'Olé,' said Charley.

1987 *Chicago Tribune* (Nexis) 31 May Then comes the palmas, or clapping. Suddenly, 'Olé'—the sparks touch off a flamenco flame.

This entry has been updated (OED Third Edition, March 2004; most recently modified version published online September 2019).

[Entry history](#)  
[Entry profile](#)

Previous version:  
OED2 (1989)

**Sort by:** Entry | Date

old-worldism, n.	1885
old-worldiness, n.	1934
old-worldly, adj.	1878
Old World monkey, n.	1835
old-worldness, n.	1886
old year, n.	1582
ole, n.1	1845
OLE, n.3	1990
ole, adj.	1835
<b>olé, int. and n.2</b>	<b>1914</b>
-ole, suffix1	
-ole, suffix2	1852
oleaceous, adj.	1857
oleaginity, n.	?a1425
oleaginous, adj.	?a1425

Figure 1. Definition of “olé” in the *Oxford English Dictionary*.

From: <https://www--oed--com.ujaen.debiblio.com/view/Entry/131003>

Similarly, in (22), the use of the term "ETA" has been equally classified as it is included in this same dictionary. This case also presents addition, a translation technique consisting on the adding of extra-information in the target text that was not present in the source text, by adding the word "terrorist" as a kind of clarification for the target audience.

The screenshot shows the OED entry for 'ETA'. It includes the word's classification as a noun, its pronunciation in British and US English, and its etymology: '< Basque *ETA*, initialism < the initial letters of *Euzkadi ta Azkatasuna*, lit. 'Basque Country and liberty'] a Basque separatist movement in Spain and France, founded in 1959.' Below this, there are three quotations from the *Times* (1963), *Economist* (1969), and *New Yorker* (2004) that illustrate the word's use in context. A '(Hide quotations)' link is visible at the bottom right of the entry area.

Figure 2. Definition of “ETA” in the *Oxford English Dictionary*. From: <https://www--oed--com.ujaen.debiblio.com/view/Entry/58919>

Another case similar to the previous one is (23), which uses the Spanish term "pelota" to translate "frontón", term which is included as well in the OED. Furthermore, this case also presents addition based on the inclusion of the word "game".

The screenshot shows the OED entry for 'pelota, n.'. It features the word's pronunciation, forms (1800s–pelota, 1900s–pelote), and frequency. The origin is noted as a borrowing from Spanish, with etymons 'Spanish *pelota*, *pellota*'. The etymology section explains that it is '< Spanish *pelota* (1196 as *pellota*...'. The main definition is: '1. A ball game of Spanish origin, played in a walled or enclosed court, in which the players catch and return the ball using either their bare hands or a basket-like racket fastened to the hand. Cf. *JAI ALAI* *n.*' A note mentions that the modern professional game of *pelota vasca* ('Basque *pelota*') developed in the Basque Country in the late 19th century. Quotations from 1807 and 1844 are provided. On the right side, there is a sidebar with 'This entry has been updated (OED Third Edition, September 2005; most recently modified version published online December 2020)', 'Entry history', 'Previous version: OED2 (1989)', and 'In this entry: pelota ball, pelota court, pelota play'. A 'Sort by: Entry | Date' table is also visible on the right.

Figure 3. Definition of “pelota” in the *Oxford English Dictionary*. From: <https://www--oed--com.ujaen.debiblio.com/view/Entry/139916>

A striking case is (24), in which the expression "tocando las palmas" has been translated as "dancing flamenco". Instead of translating it by means of calque as “clapping hands”, in order to maintain the semantic content of the source text cultural reference, in this case

belonging to the Andalusian culture, the translator has chosen to translate it by using the Spanish origin term "flamenco", also included in the OED.

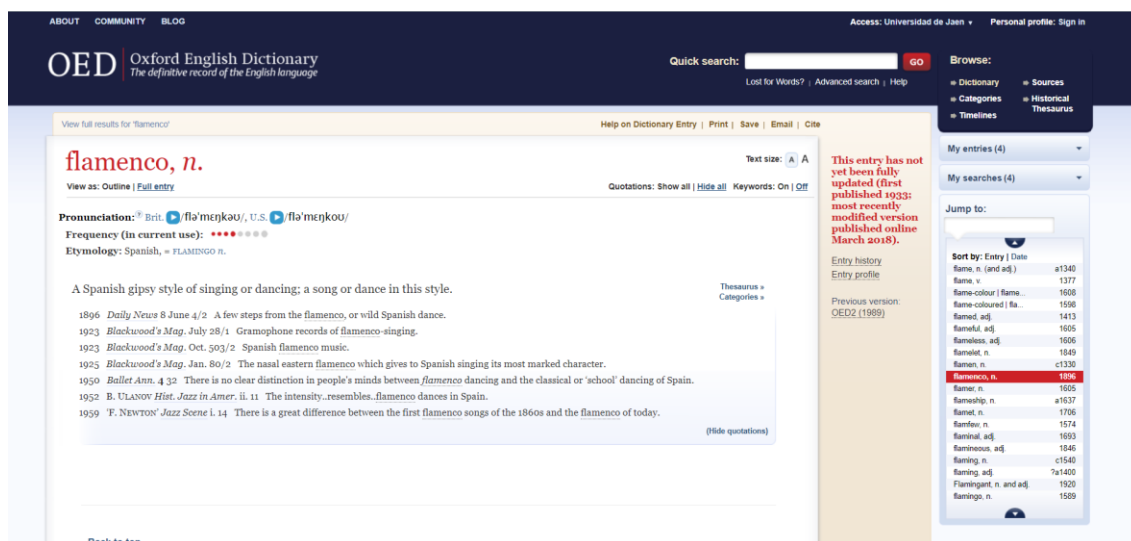


Figure 4. Definition of “flamenco” in the *Oxford English Dictionary*. From:

<https://www--oed--com.ujaen.debiblio.com/view/Entry/71026>

Finally, another example which is also worth mentioning is (25). In this case, the original version contains a reference to the Spanish singer and TV personality Bertín Osborne. However, given that he is not well-known outside of Spain, the translator chose to replace this reference by another cultural reference corresponding to another Spanish singer, Julio Iglesias, due to his international fame.

### 6.2.3. Calque

There are 33 cases of calque in the corpus which represent 16.1% of the total from which some examples have been extracted:

(26) Source text: “‘A divertirnos un poco’, con lo que me gustan a mí los **andaluces** y la gomina.”

Target text: “‘Have some fun’, the way I love **Andalusians** and hair gel.”

(27) Source text: “Dile si quieres a la ama y al **sevillano** ese con el que anda que invito yo.”

Target text: “Tell her and that **Sevillian** she’s with that it’s on me.”

(28) Source text: “Ya está, **ospa** de aquí.”

Target text: “That’s it. **Let’s go.**”

(29) Source text: “Lo primero es la salud, y luego la **independentzia.**”

Target text: “First, health, then **Independence.**”

(30) Source text: “El **Comando G.**”

Target text: “**G cell.**”

(31) Source text: “**Euskadi tiene un color especial, Euskadi tiene un color diferente.**”

Target text: “**Euskadi has a special color! Euskadi has a different color!**”

They can be divided into two categories. The first, and the most numerous, would be those cases in which sentences have been literally translated into English word by word but being able to maintain the meaning in the ST, such as (26) or (27). Here, there would also be those that, in the original version, offered a contrast because Basque terms were introduced in Spanish sentences. In the target version, these terms have been translated directly into English as in (28) and (29)

The second category includes those references that have been literally translated into English losing completely the original meaning. These are (30) and (31). In (30), "Comando G" is translated as "G cell". This phrase is said by Rafa when, acting as a member of the *kale borroka*, he says that he belongs to a commando. When asked about it, Rafa says that he belongs to "Comando G", which is an allusion to a Japanese anime series that was broadcasted in Spain during the 80s. This reference is lost in the English version when it is translated as "G cell", which does not correspond to the English title of the anime series *Gatchaman*. Besides, in (31), Rafa sings a song whose lyrics "Euskadi tiene un color especial, Euskadi tiene un color diferente." are literally translated into English as "Euskadi has a special color! Euskadi has a different color!". The lyrics in the original version refer to the 1991 song *Sevilla tiene un color especial* by Los del río, so by translating the lyrics into English, this reference is lost.

#### 6.2.4. Deletion

There are 25 cases of deletion in the corpus, which represent 12.2%. Some examples are provided below:

(32) Source text: “**Aita**, es que creo que está habiendo un lío.”

Target text: “I think there’s a mix-up...”

(33) Source text: “Mira, **aita**, que acabas de llegar [...]”

Target text: “Look, you’ve just arrived.”

(34) Source text: “Esta ropa está bien si vengo de recoger la aceituna en **Puente Genil**.”

Target text; “They're fine for picking olives.”

(35) Source text: “Me pillas sin ajo de **las Pedroñeras** para las migas.”

Target text: “I've got no garlic for the ‘migas’.”

A consequence directly derived from the modality of audio-visual translation, subtitling, is the reduction of text, which is related to the use of the translation solutions involving omission. The need to reduce the size of the text that appears on the screen is due to several reasons, one of them is that viewers need more time to read than to assimilate speech. In addition, they must have time to observe what is happening on the screen, so they need the provided text to be quickly readable and understandable apart from conveying the necessary information.

Because of that, there are certain restrictions that must be followed when creating subtitles. In this sense, it is considered that the average reading speed of a person is 160 words per minute, which implies that the recommended reading speed is 16 characters per second. In addition, each line should have no more than 39 characters, and, as the maximum number of lines per subtitle is 2, a subtitle cannot have more than 78 characters. Moreover, each subtitle must remain on the screen between 1 and 6 seconds.

In this corpus, most of the cases of deletion that have been found consist in the omission of Basque words as in (32) and (33). Among these cases, 11 of them involve the omission of the word "aita". Additionally, there are cases in which the omitted references are terms in Spanish, such as (34) and (35) which are geographical references that the translator has omitted in the target text. One of the reasons why the translator has decided to use this solution to translate these cases is possibly influenced by the subtitling space and time restrictions mentioned above. Apart from that, the translator has probably considered that the omitted elements did not affect the plot of the film and has decided to omit them to comply with subtitling norms. In reference to (34) and (35), the translation of these examples may also have been affected by the geographical nature of the references and the difficulty of transferring them assuming a low knowledge of the Spanish geography by the target audience.

### 6.2.5. Communicative translation

There have been found 18 cases of communicative translation in the corpus which represent 8.8% of the total. Some striking cases are the following:

(36) Source text: “¿Con un pasamontaña y una **quiscurriña**?”

Target text: “With a balaclava and a **Basque flag**?”

(37) Source text : “Si tú no has pasado nunca de **Despeñaperros**.”

Target text: “You've never left **Andalusia**.”

(38) Source text: “A esta en dos días la tengo yo en **Triana**, tocando las palmas.”

Target text: “In two days I'll have her in **Seville**, dancing flamenco.”

(39) Source text: “Pero si tú y yo nos liamos la primera noche, ‘**miarma**.’”

Target text: “We did on the first night, ‘**my love**!’”

In (36) the Basque term “ikurriña” is mispronounced by Rafa giving rise to the word “quiscurriña”, which creates a phonologic pun. This confusion, and therefore its humorous implications, are both lost in the subtitled version, when it is translated as “Basque flag”, intending to favour the understanding of the target audience. Both examples (37) and (38) show the substitution of a cultural reference from the source culture by another referent belonging to this same culture, but more easily understandable by the target audience. Consequently, a foreign connotation is still attributed to the element in the translated version, but at the same time, it is more easily understandable by the target audience. Finally, in (39) the Andalusian expression “miarma” is translated as “my love”, which causes the reference to the Andalusian culture to be lost, although its meaning is maintained in the target text, resorting to a domesticating translation solution.

### 6.2.6. Cultural transplantation

Finally, only four cases of cultural transplantation have been found in the corpus representing 1.9% out of the total:

(40) Source text: “Mira, esto es lo que te hace un atún de **920 kilos** de Costa de Marfil.”

Target text: “Look, this is what a **2,000 lb.** tuna does to you on the Ivory Coast.”

(41) Source text: “Una ronda te apuesto a que saco un bonito de más de **15 kilos**.”

Target text: “I bet you a round I'll catch a **30 lb.** bonito.”

(42) Source text: “¿Pero esto qué es, una manifestación o un **apartamento en Fuengirola?**”

Target text: “Is this a demonstration or a **Springsteen concert?**”

(43) Source text: “- ¡**Camarero!**

- ¿**Qué?**

- ¡**Una de trucha!**

- ¿**Una de trucha?**

- ¡**Trucha policía, poca diversión!**”

Target text: “- **Knock, knock!**

- **Who's there?**

- **Laura!**

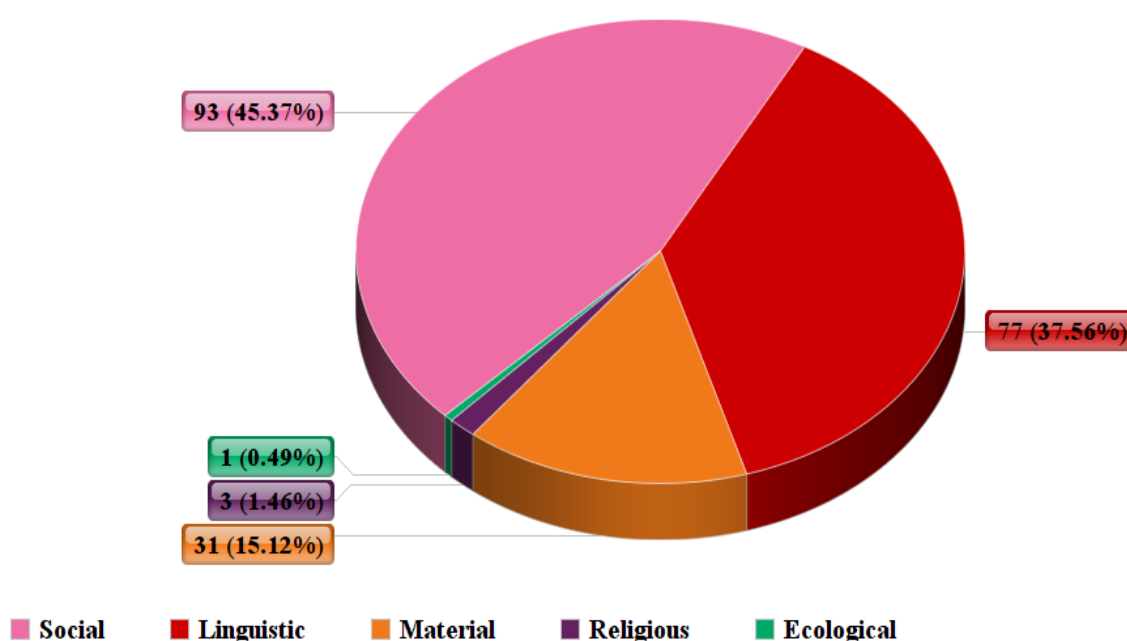
- **Laura who?**

- **‘Laura Norder’, cops at the door!**”

As can be seen, in (40) and (41) the reference to the unit of measurement “kilo” is replaced by pound (lb), completely losing the original references and bringing it closer to the target culture. The same occurs in (42) and (43), in which the reference is replaced by another belonging to the target culture, generating a communicative situation equivalent to the original in the target culture, but now much more familiar to the target audience. Thus, in (42) when Rafa refers to the apartment in Fuengirola, in reference to being in the front line, this joke is altered in the target version by replacing it with a reference to a Springsteen concert. In (43), the humorous effect has a linguistic element, a pun based on the phonetic resemblance between "trucha" and "mucha" and on the meaning of the resulting expression which makes reference to a high number of policemen. In the English subtitled version, another pun is created between "Laura Norder" and "Law and order", an expression used by the police when breaking into somewhere. This joke involving questions and answers and based on rhyme is known in both cultures. The translator opted for a domesticating translation to maintain the humorous effects at the expense of sacrificing the cultural scenario.

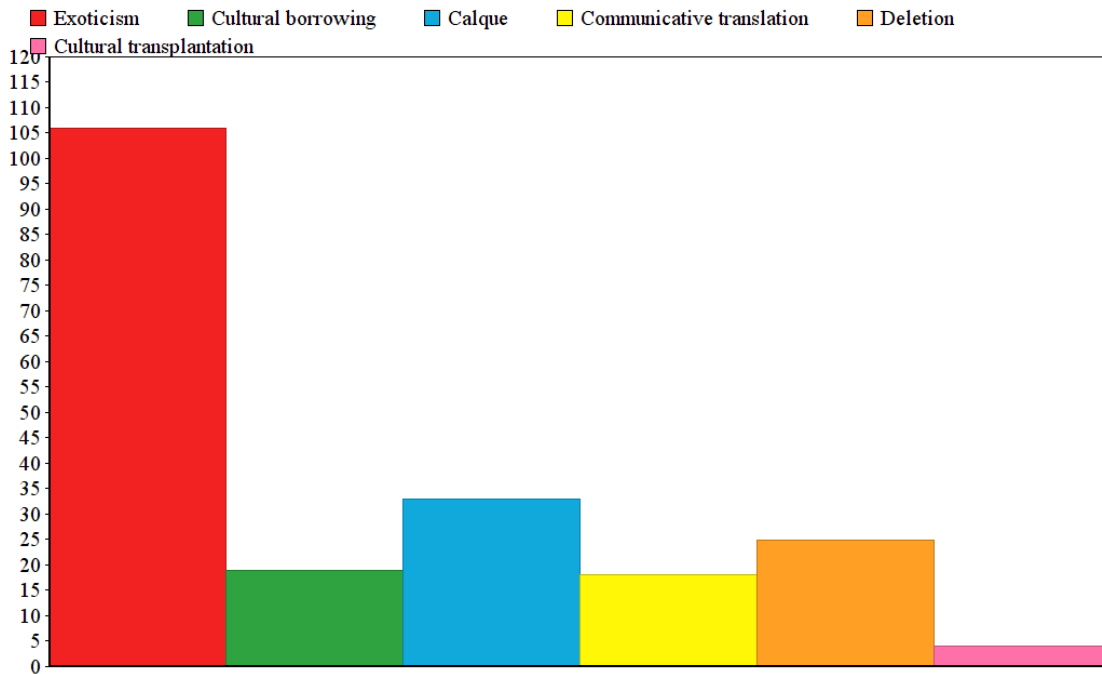
### 6.3. Discussion

The total sum of cultural references found in the corpus is 205 which can be classified into 93 social cultural references, 77 linguistic cultural references, 31 material cultural references, three religious cultural references and only one ecological cultural reference. The following graph reflects the data corresponding to the frequency of each category of cultural reference. Thus, it can be seen that cultural references corresponding to the social type make up almost half of the total (45.37%) being the most frequent in the film. Succeeding, the linguistic type references would be the second most common, with a percentage of 37.56%, whereas the remaining 17.07% would be divided between the three minority types: material (15.12%), religious (1.46 %) and ecological referents (0.49%).



Graph 1. Types of cultural references found in the corpus.

Concerning the solutions used by the translator for the translation of these cultural references, a total of 106 cases of exoticism have been found - including one in which exoticism and calque techniques have been combined -, 19 cases of cultural borrowing, 33 cases of calque, 18 cases of communicative translation, 25 cases of deletion and four cases of cultural transplantation.



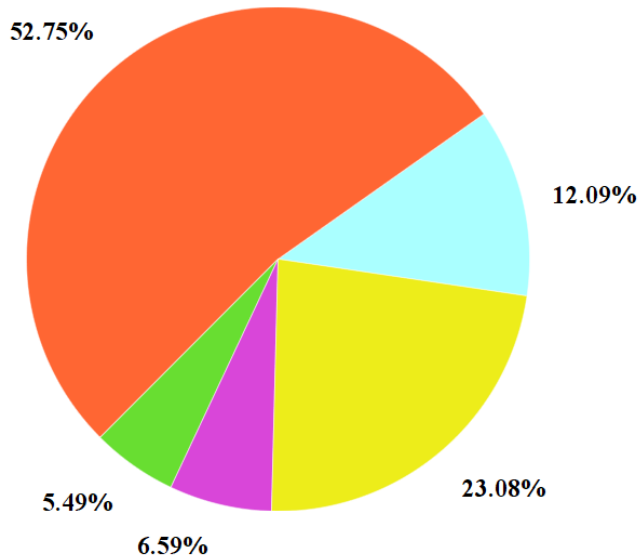
Graph 2. Translation solutions found in the corpus.

Graph 2 offers a similar view as Graph 1 in order to visually compare the use of the different solutions involved in the translation. Hence, as can be clearly seen, exoticism is highlighted as the translation solution that has been the most commonly adopted by the translator. If the numeral quantity is shifted into percentages, it is obtained that exoticism occupies 51.7% of the total followed by calque (16.1%), deletion (12.2%), cultural borrowing, (9.3%), communicative translation (8.8%) and cultural transplantation (1.9%).

Regarding the relationship between the type of cultural reference and the solution most frequently used for the translation of each category, the following results are obtained:

- Pertaining to cultural references of social category, it has been found that 48 of the 93 total cases have been translated by means of exoticism, 21 through calque, 11 through cultural borrowing, six through communicative translation and five through deletion, without any case of cultural transplantation. These data are shown as percentages in Graph 3.

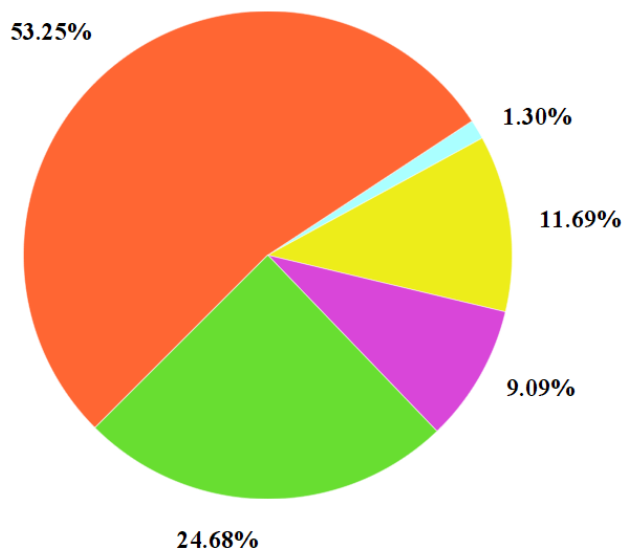
■ Exoticism    ■ Cultural borrowing    ■ Calque    ■ Communicative translation  
■ Deletion



Graph 3. Translation solutions used for the translation of social cultural references.

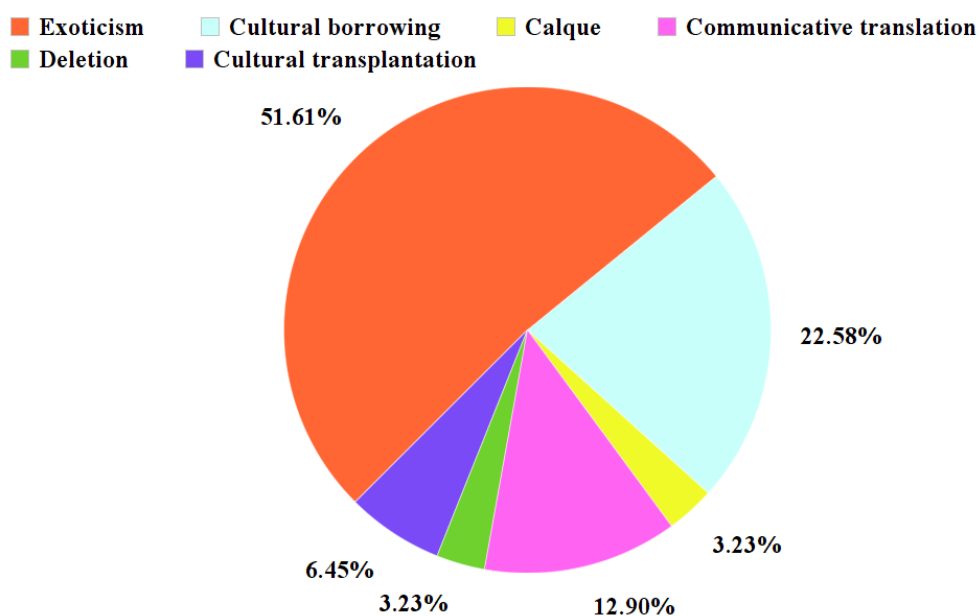
- For linguistic references, it has been learnt that 41 of them have been translated by means of exoticism, 19 by deletion, 9 by calque, 7 by communicative translation and 1 by cultural borrowing with no cases of cultural transplantation. Graph 4 is provided in order to show the equivalent percentages.

■ Exoticism    ■ Cultural borrowing    ■ Calque    ■ Communicative translation  
■ Deletion



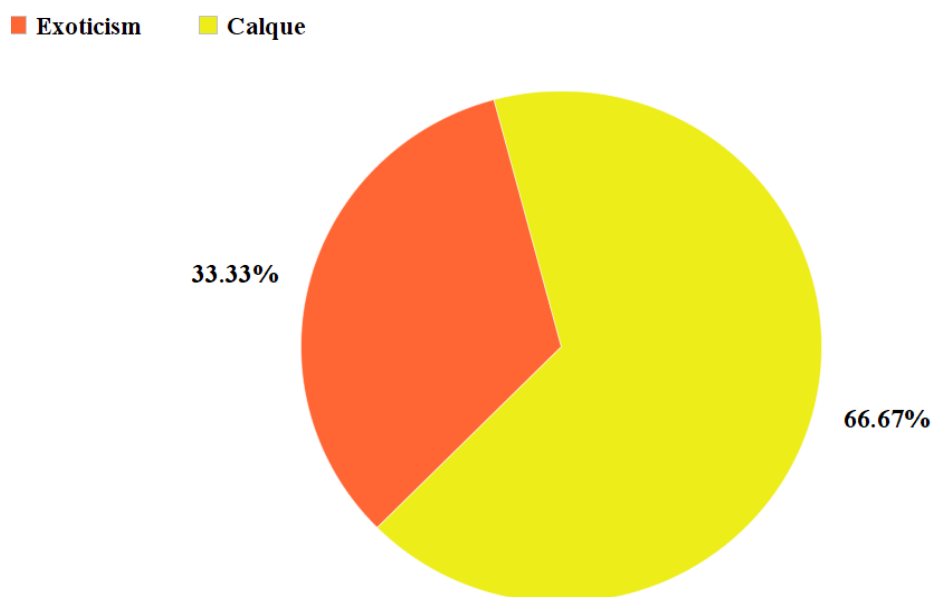
Graph 4. Translation solutions used for the translation of linguistic cultural references.

- With respect to material cultural references, a total of 16 cases have been translated by means of exoticism, 7 by using cultural borrowings, 4 through communicative translation, 2 through cultural transplantation, one by means of calque and another one by deletion. The correspondent percentages are presented in the following graph.



Graph 5. Translation solutions used for the translation of material cultural references.

- In the case of cultural references of religious category, two have been translated by means of calque and the remaining one has been translated through the use of exoticism.



Graph 6. Translation solutions used for the translation of religious cultural references.

- Finally, concerning ecological references, the only case of this category found in the corpus has been translated by communicative translation, so this solution occupies 100%.

Another aspect to take into account in the analysis of cultural references is whether or not they appear reflected in the visual channel. Since what has been analysed is an audio-visual text, this is a characteristic that must be taken into account. Thus, in the film, six cases of visually supported cultural references have been identified:

1. In the first case, the cultural reference is "rebujete", which itself is a mispronunciation of "rebujito", a typical Andalusian alcoholic drink. The translator has decided to keep this term in Spanish, adopting exoticism, in the English subtitles, since while pronouncing this word, Amaia points to the drink on the table with her head, which makes it easy for the target audience to perceive what she refers to.



Figure 5. Amaia making reference to the *rebujito*. (00:03:13)

2. Here, the cultural reference is the word "flamencas" which Joaquín pronounces when he sees Amaia dressed in the typical Andalusian folk costume. Although this word is already part of the target language as a cultural borrowing, the translator has translated it as "girls" resorting to communicative translation. However, the visualization of Amaia wearing this dress offers visual support to the original reference.



Figure 6. Amaia wearing the flamenco dress. (00:03:23)

3. The next reference is "Clemente" when Rafa is pretending to be Basque and Koldo asks him for his Basque surnames. After saying the first seven, Rafa takes a look

at the bar and sees an old photo of the players of the Basque team, Athletic club, and uses the surname of one of the players, Clemente. The translator maintains this name into the target version even though references to the surnames of famous people from Spain tend to be lost for a receptor who ignores Spanish culture. However, in the case of Clemente, by showing the picture of the football team, the target audience may be able to understand what kind of reference has been made.

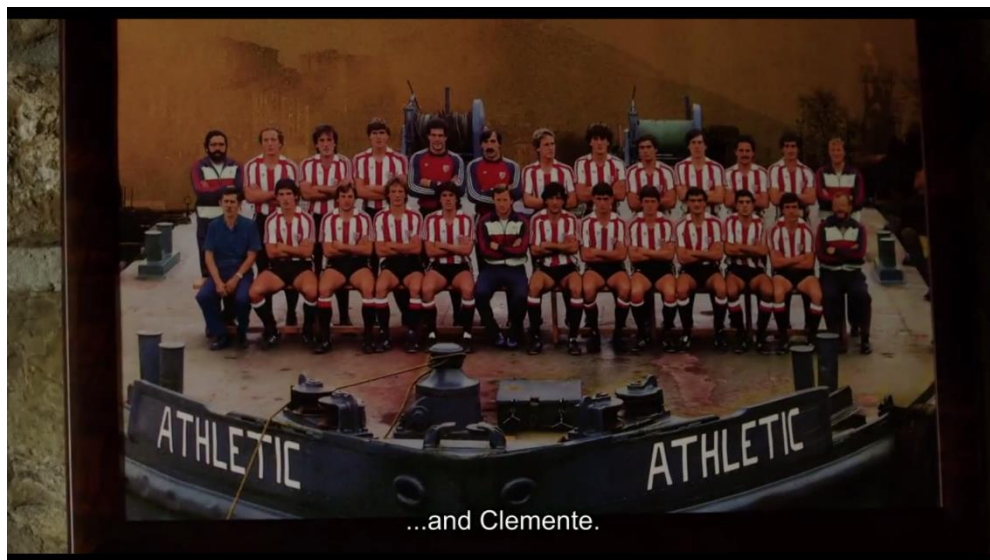


Figure 7. Picture of the Athletic Club players. (00:33:28)

4. In the film, there are several references to the so-called "kale borroka", a term that refers to the acts of street violence carried out in the demonstrations for the independence of the Basque Country. In this case, Rafa refers to this group on his way to a demonstration together with some members of this movement. In the target text, the translator has opted for maintaining the original term in Basque given that this image and the ones before and after, all offer visual support to the reference.



Figure 8. Rafa and Amaia in the demonstration for the independence of the Basque country. (00:53:32)

5. In the following case, the reference to the drink *txakoli*, a typical wine from the Basque Country, is maintained in the target text by means of exoticism. This reference is visually supported by the image since Amaia is shown taking the bottle of wine from the table and pouring some of its content into her father's glass.



Figure 9. Amaia pouring *txacoli* in Koldo's glass. (00:58:20)

6. In this case, the cultural reference is found in the word "pucherito", a common way of calling stew in Andalusia, used by one of Rafa's friends. The image offers a visual support because Rafa's friend carries a pot that he places in front of Rafa

and Joaquín, which shows the target audience that the reference is a type of food. In spite of this, the translator has opted for its translation as “stew” by means of communicative translation.



Figure 10. Rafa and his friends at the bar. (01:32:51)

As in four of the six cases the translator has carried out a foreignizing translation, this apparently could show a tendency to this type of translation when there is visual support.

As was previously stated, humour in *Ocho apellidos vascos* resides almost entirely in characteristics of the Spanish culture, so it is not surprising that the most predominant type of cultural reference is the social type. Thus, throughout the film many places of the Spanish geography are named and reference is made to various aspects of its art and history. Furthermore, based on the plot of the film, it is not surprising either to find that the second most predominant type is linguistic, since most of the plot takes place in the Basque Country and the characters often introduce Basque words in their speech.

Regarding translation solutions, what can be extracted from this compendium of information is that the predominant translation method is exoticism, which is reflected in the large number of Basque terms and place names that the translator decided to maintain in the original language in the target text. What this shows is that the cultural references included in the film made up a very important part of its plot and humour, which can also be noticed in graphs 3, 4 and 5, which show that most of the social, material and linguistic references have been translated by means of exoticism. However, the fact that calque occupies the second place may evince that the translator has chosen to carry a, in Venuti's

terms, foreignizing translation. This is also evidenced by the low use of cultural transplantation, with only four cases in total. Yet, this can also be explained by the decontextualizing effect of this technique and the rejection it can cause in the target audience.

Regarding the status of deletion as the third most used, it can be seen that most of the omitted references are Basque words that the characters include in their speech but that do not offer an important meaning or a prominent reference. Therefore, the motivation for using this technique in these cases may have been subjected to the established subtitling rules and/or to a personal decision of the translator.

Finally, the presence of images as visual support for cultural references is limited, with only six cases, but it certainly demonstrates its functionality in transmitting elements of the original language to the target audience and the importance of context in the use of exoticisms and cultural borrowings in the target language.

As an overview, it can be concluded that the translation of *Ocho apellidos vascos*, although mostly effective, can represent a problem for both the translator and the target audience due to the string presence of culturally loaded terms and the overuse of the exoticism technique.

## **7. CONCLUSIONS**

The film *Ocho apellidos vascos* stands out for a large presence of cultural references belonging to the Basque and Andalusian traditions and to the Spanish culture in general. This exaggerated use of references is based on expressions, stereotypes and prejudices that are intended to produce a comic effect on the audience. In this sense, the translator tries to convey this characteristic humour to the target text, although in some cases this is a really difficult task.

To begin with, one of the main conclusions I have reached is that the translator carries out a foreignizing translation, since the technique that has been most commonly used is exoticism. The type of cultural reference in which the use of this strategy stands out more clearly is the social one, more specifically, in the geographical references within this category. Here there is a tendency to use the exoticism technique to translate names of places belonging to the Basque and Andalusian cultures, while those places that could

be considered more international are translated by means of cultural borrowing. Another aspect that supports the consideration of the translation for the English subtitles of this films as mainly a foreignizing one is the very infrequent use of cultural transplantation, which has been used in only four of 205 cases to translate the unit of measurement kilogram as pound (lb) and to translate cultural references whose nature would pose a problem of understanding for the target audience.

Another conclusion drawn from the data obtained is that the translator seems to have made an effort to maintain the humorous tone of the film since, although it is a foreignizing translation based on the keeping of most of the words and expressions in the original language, in some cases the translator makes sure to resort to whatever strategy is necessary in order to maintain the humour in the scene, which explains why examples of all the strategies proposed by Nida (1964) have been found. An example of this would be the use of cultural transplantation in the translation of "un apartamento en Fuengirola" by "a Springsteen concert" in which the translator has preferred to lose the original reference, whose context is probably unknown to the target audience, and translate it in a totally domesticating way in order to preserve the humorous load of the scene.

A last conclusion concerning the omission of several cultural referents, - mostly linguistic ones -, in the target text, is that it has probably been based on the combination of the spatial and temporal restrictions presented by the subtitling modality and a personal decision by the translator who has possibly considered that these elements were removable because they did not have any humorous load or because their absence did not compromise in any way the correct understanding of the audio-visual text.

In summary, I consider that the translator has carried out an adequate subtitling since most of the humour in the film and its cultural content have been competently transferred without losing the characteristic features of the original version. It could be said that the understanding of the target audience had been risked by the introduction of elements of the source language directly into the target language but, even though, the obtained translation is effective and faithful to the original. This is an aspect that deserves to be highlighted. In my opinion, the use of exoticisms is, without any doubt, a quite precise decision for the translation of such a markedly cultural text whose plot and characters are so deeply focused on the use of these references. Although it is true that sometimes this decision may lead to the loss of contextual information for the target audience, the translator is able to compensate this loss in certain cases by adding

additional information such as in the case of the translation of "ser de la ETA" as "be an ETA terrorist" for which the use of the foreign word is compensated with the addition of a clarification.

As a closing remark, I think it would be interesting for future research to apply a similar analysis to versions in other target languages in order to check if the trend in the translation of cultural references is influenced by the language to which it is translated or by the relation between the cultures involved.

Finally, it is necessary to state further that, although the information provided in this paper offers an overview of the trends in the translation of cultural references, these results are uniquely applicable to the translation from Spanish into English of the film *Ocho apellidos vascos*. Moreover, the subtitles that have been analysed in this essay have been provided by *Laserfilm*, a Spanish company created in 1995 that has already subtitled more than 16,000 audio-visual products and that has produced the subtitles for films from renowned studios such as *20th Century Fox*, *Sony Pictures* or *UNIVERSAL*. Consequently, the conclusions previously stated can only be applied to the subtitling of the film provided by *Laserfilm* and not to any other subtitling, whether professional or amateur.

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