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## TRANSLATING SLANG FOR DUBBING: A DESCRIPTIVE CASE STUDY OF *JACKIE BROWN* (ENGLISH-SPANISH)

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**ABSTRACT:** The use and creation of slang have been widely studied from linguistic, sociolinguistic and translational points of view. It is a burning field of study, since slang has always been linked to society and its individuals. Moreover, its study should avoid subjective approaches, an easy temptation, since it is associated with stereotypes, social groups or classes and even with races or age. This paper aims to study the translation of slang for the dubbed version of *Jackie Brown* (1997), a film directed by Quentin Tarantino. The study was carried out extracting all slang samples of the original film and comparing them with the replacing segments in the Spanish dubbed version. Data were extracted taking into account linguistic, textual, functional and pragmatic factors; and both a quantitative and qualitative analysis of the data was carried out to draw the final conclusions.

**KEYWORDS:** Slang, linguistic variation, pragmatic reward, audiovisual translation, dubbing.

**RESUMEN:** El uso y la creación del slang han sido ampliamente estudiados tanto desde el punto de vista de la lingüística como de la traducción. Este resulta ser un ámbito de estudio candente, en tanto que el uso y la creación del slang deben su origen a, y están estrechamente vinculados con, la sociedad y sus individuos. Además, su estudio debe rechazar acercamientos subjetivos, una tentación difícil de evitar, ya que este fenómeno se asocia con estereotipos, grupos sociales e, incluso, razas o edad. Este estudio analiza las muestras de slang extraídas de la película *Jackie Brown* (Tarantino 1997) en su versión original en comparación con los segmentos de la versión doblada al español. Los datos se extrajeron teniendo en cuenta factores lingüísticos, textuales,





*Translating slang for dubbing: A descriptive case study of Jackie Brown*

funcionales y pragmáticos para llevar a cabo un análisis tanto cualitativo como cuantitativo y derivar las conclusiones finales.

**PALABRAS CLAVE:** *Slang*, variación lingüística, recompensa pragmática, traducción audiovisual, doblaje.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

The study of slang has always been difficult to approach. A **definition** of the term is first needed to conduct the following research. Eriksen (2010) points out that definitions in dictionaries lack the sociological aspect surrounding the term and advocates definitions made by researchers in the field. I will take the definition proposed by Eble<sup>1</sup> as a starting point for highlighting the social aspect of its use: '[slang is] an ever changing set of colloquial words and phrases that speakers use to establish or reinforce social identity or cohesiveness in society at large' (Eble 1996: 11) and that is how the term *slang* will be understood throughout this paper.

Its **classification** is not an easy task either. In order to compile data from a linguistic and textual approach, the classification presented in Graha (2010: 21) seems useful. Slang is classified there according to how it emerges, that is, according to the linguistic procedures that can be observed when comparing slang with standard language. According to Graha's classification, slang can emerge from (1) a syntactic procedure (observed, for example, in *ain't got nothing*) or (2) a lexical procedure, which can be semantic (observed, for example, in *motherfucker*) or formal (observed, for example, in *kinda*).

Nevertheless, this purely linguistic approach is not enough to understand the different types of slang from a translational point of view, since it ignores the situational and communicative context in which slang takes place. For the purpose of this study, the linguistic approach mentioned above is complemented by the taxonomy presented by Mayoral (1990: 36), who talks about slang varieties according to the medium, Behavior, ethnic or geographic origin, individual, gender,

<sup>1</sup>Other authors, such as Mayoral Asensio (1997) and Calvo Ferrer (2010), have also dealt with the definition of the term *slang*.





Tamayo Masero, A.

age, time, socioeconomic or cultural position, profession, topic and text genre or text type. Both taxonomies complement each other and are useful to gather data from a linguistic as well as contextual and situational point of view.

To fully comprehend how slang can shape the way speakers interact with one another, there is a need to understand why slang would be used, that is, the different **functions** it can fulfil within the audiovisual text. In this respect, Eriksen's synthesized taxonomy characterizes slang in accordance with its purpose. The author points out that slang can be used to:

- Establish group relations and identity
- Separate one group of people from another
- Rebel against standard language through the use of words and expressions that are not defined in standard language
- Lead a conversation towards informality
- Suggest 'insider-knowledge' with the people to whom you are speaking
- Show the speaker's attitude through the use of words and expressions that differ from standard language. Eriksen (2010: 25-6).

However, it is not enough to know what slang is, how it can be formed and why it would be used. For the purposes of this research paper, this concept also needs to be addressed from a translational point of view. Within Translation Studies, the study of slang has always been interesting because this kind of linguistic variation derives from and shows a distinct cultural behavior that can affect the way in which receivers react to the message. Thus, the constraints the translation of slang poses may lead to a target text (TT) that does not fulfil the same function as the source text (ST). In this sense, Eriksen points out some interesting questions when addressing the study of slang within Descriptive Translation Studies (DTS):

Slang seems to be connected to the culture in which it is created, so how are slang words and expressions transferred into another language and culture and does the transfer affect the possibility to maintain the use of slang in the translation? (Eriksen 2010: 6).

The linguistic schools that prevailed in our field until the 1970s considered some language aspects (such as slang) untranslatable.

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*Translating slang for dubbing: A descriptive case study of Jackie Brown*

Such consideration, though, does not fit in with the DTS paradigm nowadays. Every text and its utterances are part of a specific context. These utterances and their context can be more or less alien to the target culture and will show more or less translation problems that can make the process of translation more or less complicated. In most cases, equivalence, as it was understood before DTS, will not be achieved; nevertheless, one cannot affirm that the text and the context in which that text takes part are untranslatable. The fact that translation is carried out on a daily basis and has served as a major tool for human communication since time immemorial is the best proof that everything can be expressed by means of another language, although some losses (pragmatic, humoristic, semantic...) may appear in comparison with the original text, something which is inherent to translation. Instead of speaking about losses, then, equivalence is now understood as the actual way the text is translated, in other words, when a text is considered to be a translation guided by the norms ruling translation in a given space and time, then it is considered to be equivalent to the source text. The process of translation thus entails a constant decision taking. In this sense, we cannot talk about *bad* or *good* translations, but about different translational solutions to the problems posed by a text which would have more or less advantages or disadvantages, and which would follow or deviate from the translation norms in a given space and time.

In summary, the initial theoretical framework for this study has focused on understanding the term *slang* in its different aspects. Only by comprehending and reflecting on all its facets (from its formation at a microtextual level up to its social implications), can one approach a study about its translation.

## 2. METHODOLOGY

After gaining a deeper understanding of the object of study in this paper, four main objectives of this study have been considered. These overall objectives can be summarized as follows:

- To define the type of slang appearing in the film.





Tamayo Masero, A.

- To find how different types of slang can be associated with different general translation techniques or with specific translation techniques used to transfer linguistic variation.
- To find the main function of the slang in the film and analyze if there is homofunctionality<sup>2</sup> in the dubbed version.
- To create and validate a methodology framework that could serve as a basis for further descriptive studies on slang in audiovisual translations.

For the present study, an interdisciplinary and integrating approach has been adopted that can point out the subjectivity and interdisciplinarity of the translational task. In this sense, and always taking a **descriptive methodology** as the starting point, different research models have been taken into account which, together, can shed some light of the complexity of the audiovisual text and its translation.

The **linguistic and textual model** is useful to analyze, at the microtextual level, the changes that go through the translation in order to determine which general translation technique (Martí Ferriol 2010) has been used for each segment. At a textual level, it has been analyzed which translation technique for linguistic variation (Marco 2002) has been used in each case. The concept and characterization of *translation techniques* will be discussed later in this paper.

The linguistic and textual approach has been complemented in this study with the functional model, or *Skopostheorie*, which is based on the assumption that every translation is an action, and every action, by definition, has an intention (Vermeer 2000: 221). When comparing the ST with the TT, this intention can be the same or it can be a different one. In this sense, we will be talking about a homofunctional TT when it fulfils the same function, the same *skopos*, as the ST did. It is clear that not every single segment in the TT will be homofunctional, since some aspects are always inevitably lost in translation, due partly to the obstacles posed by the very text. This, however, would not mean that the main function or intention of the ST cannot be maintained. In other words, the obstacles affecting every text and its translation lead to the

<sup>2</sup>See Marco (2002).





*Translating slang for dubbing: A descriptive case study of Jackie Brown*

necessity of establishing a hierarchy of priorities (global and local) in order to overcome these obstacles and keep the main intention of the text in mind (Zabalbeascoa 1996). On the other hand, it is possible that the TT does not fulfil the same main function as the ST (either because it was not intended to when stating the translation project or because too much was lost in translation). In such case, we would be talking about a heterofunctional TT with respect to the ST. This research is, then, also partly based on the *Skopostheorie* to determine the intention, function or *skopos*, of every analyzed segment in the original and dubbed version. The general intention of the TT will guide translation solutions throughout the text.

In order to understand the problems, or constraints, that can make the TT not share the same function as the ST, the concept of *constraint* will be discussed later in this article along with the taxonomy used to classify such restrictions appearing in the segments containing slang in the corpus.

The above discussed linguistic, textual and functional approaches have been complemented, in the present research, with the **pragmatic approach**. Authors such as Leech (1983) and Sperber and Wilson (1986) have dealt with this concept and have seen it as a subfield of linguistics dealing with how people comprehend and produce utterances in a specific speech situation. These authors have distinguished between two intents in each utterance, namely, the informative intent (or sentence meaning) and the communicative intent (or speaker's meaning). Martínez Sierra (2008) sees, in this approach, analytical tools that can be useful in Translation Studies. This author defines Pragmatics as the branch that studies (1) interpersonal and social acts when language is involved, (2) the relationship between language and context and (3) the shared knowledge systems that make communication possible. From this point of view, there is a necessity for the speaker and the receiver to share background information about the world that can make communication possible. When translation comes into play, the text is addressed to a second receiver and thus, the information that the speaker and the original receiver shared in the original communication act might not be shared any more. In this sense, a greater information processing might be needed in some cases for the communication to be as successful as it is between the original speakers. This greater information processing does not necessarily lead to a greater cognitive effect. Thus, the greater





Tamayo Masero, A.

amount of information shared by the agents involved in communication, the more probabilities they will have for the information to have similar relevance and, thus, similar pragmatic reward. The term *pragmatic reward* is understood in the present paper as the result obtained by the receiver of an utterance through the cognitive effort made to process the information in order to understand the communicative intent of such utterance (Martínez Sierra 2008). This approach has helped in segmenting the data into different categories, taking into account the possible loss or gain of pragmatic reward in every utterance.

There are two basic notions in AVT that are necessary for the analysis of the target text in the present piece of research. In the following subsection the concepts of *translation technique* and *constraints* are discussed along with the taxonomies used in this respect for the present study.

### 2.1. Translation Techniques

A comparison between the ST and the TT reveals, at a microtextual level, the **translation technique** used to translate the segment containing slang. Vinay and Darbelnet (1958) were the first authors to introduce such a concept within the field of comparative stylistics. In this sense, the linguistic and textual model above explained focuses on translation techniques taking the comparative stylistics as a starting point. Hurtado (2001: 268-71) proposes a list of 18 techniques that can be observed when comparing the ST with the TT. Martí Ferriol (2010: 92-4) takes Hurtado's classification of general translation techniques and adapts it to the particularities of audiovisual translation. Thus, Martí Ferriol lists a total of 20 techniques: loan, calque, word-for-word translation, one by one translation, literal translation, accepted equivalent, omission, reduction, compression, particularization, generalization, transposition, description, enlargement, amplification, modulation, variation, substitution, adaptation and discursive creation<sup>3</sup>. Although Hurtado's translation techniques' list has been widely used, I believe Martí Ferriol's classification adapts very well to the specific case of AVT, taking into account the specific characteristics of this type of translation. It is worth

<sup>3</sup>For an extensive definition and characterization of each technique, see Hurtado and Molina (2002) and Martí Ferriol (2007 and 2010).





*Translating slang for dubbing: A descriptive case study of Jackie Brown*

mentioning that, although translation techniques are deduced by mere observation of both finished products, ST and TT, their classification should not be understood as something rigid and unalterable. Some translations can be seen to fit into one technique or another, or even in between techniques. Some degree of flexibility when listing techniques used for the translation of segments containing slang has been allowed, since the very act of translation and its study should not advocate rigid boundaries.

Discussions about techniques used for the translation of slang, with slang itself being a specific problem with specific possible solutions, have also been held within DTS. Marco (2002) talks about **techniques used when translating linguistic variation** in literary translation. For the purposes of this paper, slang has been considered as a kind of linguistic variation and I believe the classification proposed by Marco (2002) for literary translation is also suitable for audiovisual translations. This author proposes a list of three dichotomic pairs:

(1) Translations with or without markers: the first choice would imply an intention to recreate aspects of the source language that deviate from the standard language but not necessarily using incorrect language, while the second choice would imply a translation in a standard register.

(2) Translations with or without transgression: the first option would imply some form of transgression of the accepted linguistic norm, that is, some form of non-normative language. The second option would imply a normative language, that is, completely correct utterances.

(3) Artificial or natural translations: an artificial translation would imply that it cannot be associated with any linguistic variation found naturally, that is, the translation is carried out through a mixture of dialectal features from different origins, while a natural translation tries to reflect a real language with linguistic variation that can actually be found in the target culture, that is, it uses real target language dialects.

The presence of these translation techniques of linguistic variation has been taken into account to gather data from the segments containing slang.







Tamayo Masero, A.

## 2.2. Constraints

In this paper, constraints or restrictions are understood as the problems posed by a text, which do not allow a literal or natural translation for a given segment. Such constraints can affect the strategies and techniques used when translating a text. Moreover, the presence of such problems can, ultimately, lead to translation solutions that create a heterofunctional TT with respect to the ST. Since the audiovisual text has the specificity of transferring information through two different channels (visual and acoustic), it is worth considering the specific problems or constraints that may appear in such a text. In this sense, Martí Ferriol (2007 and 2010) proposes a taxonomy with five specific constraints of audiovisual texts. Martí Ferriol includes the following constraints: 1) *professional*, imposed by the working conditions a translator must meet, depending on the execution of a certain assignment; 2) *formal*, inherent to the professional techniques and practices due in dubbing and subtitling; 3) *linguistic*, associated with dialectal variation, idiolects, registers and spoken language; 4) *semiotic or iconic*, associated with filmic language and of semiotic type and 5) *socio-cultural*, due to the simultaneous existence of different cultural systems in the linguistic and iconic messages (Martí Ferriol 2007: 176). In this study, every slang sample shows, by definition, a linguistic constraint. Nevertheless, it is also important to analyze whether this linguistic constraint interacts with other types of constraints in order to evaluate the possible explanations for given recurrent solutions in translation (for example, losses, compensations and so on). Martí Ferriol also proposes a ‘void constraint’ case for the cases in which none of the above mentioned constraints can be observed. That would not apply to any of the samples studied, since they all deal with the linguistic obstacle posed by the very presence of linguistic variation, that is, the inherent substandard features that characterize slang.

The methodology used for this study, based on all the approaches and concepts mentioned above, was carried out following a quantitative and qualitative analysis of the data. Data were recorded by watching both the original and the dubbed version of the film and by comparing both versions in the following chart, based on a model designed by Martí Ferriol (2010):



<b>VARIABLE</b>	<b>TYPE OF INFORMATION IT PROVIDES</b>
<b>NUMBER</b>	Number of the sample. All samples have been numbered according to order of appearance in the film.
<b>TCR</b>	Time Code Recording. Time when the sample starts. Format hh:mm:ss.
<b>SOURCE TEXT</b>	Source text (in English) of the sample.
<b>TARGET TEXT</b>	Target text (in Spanish) of the sample.
<b>SLANG TYPE</b>	Based on Graha's taxonomy (2010: 21) and Mayoral's taxonomy (1990: 36). See above, section Introduction.
<b>CONSTRAINT</b>	Based on Martí Ferriol's taxonomy (2010: 83-6). See above, section Methodology, subsection Constraints.
<b>GENERAL TECHNIQUE</b>	Based on Martí Ferriol's (2010) classification of translation techniques (up to 20). See above, section Methodology, subsection Translation Techniques.
<b>LINGUISTIC VARIATION TECHNIQUE</b>	Based on Marco's (2002) classification. See above, section Methodology, subsection Translation Techniques.
<b>ST FUNCTION</b>	Refers to the specific function the slang performs in the sample. Based on Eriksen (2010: 25-6). See above, section Introduction.
<b>TT FUNCTION</b>	Refers to the specific function the translation of the slang performs and whether it is homofunctional with respect to the ST. Loss or gain in pragmatic reward in comparison with the ST will also be discussed.
<b>COMMENTS</b>	In this column, relevant comments are added in those samples where such information can be helpful for a qualitative analysis

Table 1. Chart for collection of data



Tamayo Masero, A.

The information and variables included in this chart have helped determine norms in translation (Toury 1999) throughout the qualitative analysis according to the kind of translation techniques found, and thus, establishing the homofunctionality (or not) of the dubbed version with respect to the original version. A quantitative analysis of the data has also been necessary in order to determine the frequency of use of some techniques or the frequency of homofunctional segments in both versions. Thus, when a given translation technique is repeatedly observed throughout the translation, it could indicate that there is a translation norm for the translation of slang for dubbing. Nevertheless, this indication should be validated with similar studies. The frequency of use of some techniques will be relevant to determine translation norms, strategies and method.

### 3. CORPUS

The corpus for this piece of research comprises just one film; it is a case study. Nevertheless, it would be of great interest to analyze a larger corpus of this same director or of this same genre in order to have more significant conclusions that can enrich a descriptive study.

The corpus used for the present study was the film *Jackie Brown* (Tarantino 1997). Tarantino has been one of the most influential directors in the 90's and in the first decade of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. The peculiarities of his films, such as his suggestive temporal structure, his allusions to pop culture and his use of the different cinematographic shots make the films and their director worth studying.

This particular film has been selected because of the two well differentiated social groups taking part in the film, namely, weapon dealers and the police, who are supposed to use two different registers due to their profession or social position. Moreover, the main character, Jackie Brown, gets involved in both social groups, which leads one to think she would be using different slang for different purposes when dealing with one or the other social group.

The film's genre also contributed to the selection of this one particular work. *Jackie Brown* is considered to be Tarantino's Blaxploitation work. Blaxploitation is a cinematographic movement that originated in





the USA in the 1970s and, originally, had the African American people as the target audience and centre figure in films. Pam Grier, the main actress in the film, is, in fact, one of the muses of this genre.

All these considerations lead to assume that there would be specific slang, phraseology and terms that could be associated with specific social groups of African American people in the USA. But not only that, the fact that this social group does not form a community in the target culture was a crucial point in deciding to study how the specific language associated with a specific social group was translated into a culture in which this group does not exist.

From this corpus, a total amount of 378 samples have been extracted. Data have been gathered using the table presented above and taking all above mentioned translational approaches into account. Then, samples were divided into three different charts depending on the function the TT performs in comparison with the ST:

<b>CHART 1</b>	Samples in which replacing segments are homofunctional
<b>CHART 2</b>	Samples in which replacing segments lose pragmatic load
<b>CHART 3</b>	Samples in which replacing segments gain pragmatic load

Table 2. Division of samples into charts

Thus, the first chart shows samples in which the TT is homofunctional, the second chart shows samples in which the TT has lost pragmatic load and the third chart shows samples in which the TT has gained pragmatic load. All three charts are explained in detail in the following section.

#### 4. RESULTS

As mentioned above, the data have been divided into three different charts. Firstly, samples were found to be homofunctional when the same function or intention was observed for the ST and the TT





Tamayo Masero, A.

segments. Secondly, samples in the dubbed version were found to have lost pragmatic load when the pragmatic reward the original receiver achieves, due to the presence of slang, cannot be achieved by the receiver of the translation. And finally, samples in the TT were found to have gained pragmatic load when the pragmatic reward achieved by the receiver of the translation, due to the presence of slang, is greater than that of the original receiver. The results offered in this paper should be validated with a reception study that presents actual data about the reward obtained by the receivers of the original and translated texts. Such research might be carried out in the future but, for the time being, this piece of research limits its study to the replacing and replaced segments from a pragmatic point of view.

As mentioned above, the list of 20 translation techniques by Martí Ferriol (2010) has been used for this study. To make it suitable for the research in audiovisual translation, this author adapts the taxonomy of Hurtado (2001), who provides accurate definitions for each technique. For a better understanding of the results provided by the analysis of each chart I present some of the definitions of the most frequently used techniques for the translation for dubbing *Jackie Brown* by Hurtado and Molina (2002: 510):

TECHNIQUE	DEFINITION
<b>Amplification</b>	To introduce details that are not formulated in the ST: information, explicative paraphrasing
<b>Coined equivalent</b>	To use a term or expression recognized (by dictionaries or language in use) as an equivalent in the target language
<b>Discursive creation</b>	To establish a temporary equivalence that is totally unpredictable out of context
<b>Modulation</b>	To change the point of view, focus or cognitive category in relation to the ST; it can be lexical or structural
<b>Particularization</b>	To use a more precise or concrete term
<b>Reduction</b>	To suppress a ST information item in the TT

Table 3. Definitions of most frequently used techniques





#### *4.1. Samples in which Replacing Segments Are Homofunctional*

From the 378 samples in the film, 238 are found to be homofunctional in comparison with the ST. This means a 63 per cent of all samples. The techniques more often used to achieve homofunctionality are coined equivalents (152 cases), discursive creations (96 cases) and modulations (76 cases).

When the techniques of modulation and discursive creation are observed, a functional equivalent (rather than a linguistic equivalent) is sought, that is, the translator aims to achieve a similar function, a similar reaction, a similar pragmatic reward to that associable with the ST when choosing to use these two techniques. This search for a functional and pragmatic equivalent makes both texts, ST and TT, homofunctional. Moreover, it is also observed that, in some segments, compensatory techniques are used. In other words, the hypothetical loss suffered by the use of a reduction when translating slang (for example in the translation of ‘I *ain't* saying nothing...’ for ‘No te he dicho...’) can be compensated by the use of an enlargement (for example, in the translation of ‘...about you *shooting* anybody’ for ‘...que te *cargues* a nadie’) within the same segment. That is, the fact that a technique that implies a loss in functionality is used does not mean that the whole sample must have a loss in functionality if such loss can be compensated by other means.

In the 378 samples, there are only 12 cases showing a linguistic transgression<sup>4</sup> in the TT, whereas there are many cases of transgression in the ST, most of them linkable to the slang emerging from syntactic procedures and associable with a specific social position. These linguistic transgressions are very difficult to transfer into another language, for they are part of a culture and its transfer would lead to a much domesticated translation. Once again, modulation and discursive creation are the techniques most often used to compensate the difficulty of showing those transgressions in the TT without using strategies that are too domesticating and could cause a non-wanted reaction in the target receiver.

<sup>4</sup>See above, section Methodology, subsection Translation Techniques.





Tamayo Masero, A.

In the following table, some samples of homofunctional segments are shown. The underlined words or expressions refer to the slang appearing in the film.

NUMBER	37	48	83
TCR	00:11:40	00:13:33	00:18:29
SOURCE TEXT	Man, he's a big one. <u>You're all tight?</u>	You ain't got to do nothing, man.	All you have to do is lay in here and hold on to this <u>motherfucker</u> , alright? And I'm going to tell them I'm opening up my trunk to show 'em my goods. I open up the trunk, you pop up, rack this <u>motherfucker</u> .
TARGET TEXT	<u>Joder</u> , qué grande es. <u>¿Sois colegas?</u>	Está tirado, tío	Mira, <u>negro</u> , sólo tienes que tumbarte ahí dentro con esta <u>belleza</u> en tus manos, ¿vale? Les diré que llevo la mercancía en el maletero y en cuanto lo abra, les apuntas y cargas esta <u>hija de puta</u> .
SLANG TYPE	Lexical semantic procedure and syntactic procedure  Variety according to position and individual	Syntactic procedure  Variety according to position, Behavior and individual	Syntactic procedure and lexical semantic procedure  Variety according to position, Behavior and individual
CONSTRAINT	-	-	-





*Translating slang for dubbing: A descriptive case study of Jackie Brown*

<b>GENERAL TECHNIQUE</b>	Modulation (joder)	Discursive creation (Está tirado)	Enlargement (negro)
	Discursive creation (¿Sois colegas?)		Modulation (belleza) Coined equivalent (hija de puta)
<b>LINGUISTIC VARIATION TECHNIQUE</b>	With markers No transgression Natural	With markers No transgression Natural	With markers No transgression Natural
<b>ST FUNCTION</b>	Separate one group of people from another Rebel against standard language	Show the speaker's attitude through the use of words and expressions that differ from standard Language	Show the speaker's attitude through the use of words and expressions that differ from standard Language
<b>TT FUNCTION</b>	TT is homofunctional	TT is homofunctional	TT is homofunctional
<b>COMMENTS</b>	Modulation to maintain functionality	Very natural translation	The translation of "motherfucker" into "belleza" contributes to the naturalness of the utterance to maintain functionality

Table 4. Samples in which replacing segments are homofunctional

*4.2. Samples in which Replacing Segments Lose Pragmatic Load*

From the 378 samples, 103 show a loss in pragmatic reward, which is a 27.2 per cent of the total. The most often used techniques are reduction (98 cases) and coined equivalent<sup>5</sup> (30 cases). In 47 of these 103 samples, the loss in pragmatic reward is partly, or completely, due

<sup>5</sup>This translation technique can also imply a loss in pragmatic reward in the sense that, sometimes, the term chosen in the target language can be informatively equivalent (it might appear as equivalent in a bilingual dictionary, for example) but it may not fulfill the same communicative intent as the term in the source language.







Tamayo Masero, A.

to the difficulty of transferring the slang emerging from a syntactic procedure.

Most of the samples with loss in pragmatic reward show an artificial translation without markers of linguistic variation (92 of 103 samples). This artificial translation is sometimes shown by a kind of language which is very typical in films, but rarely found in reality, the so-called dubbese (Chaume 2004).

Some of those losses are justified by the presence of other constraints in the audiovisual text other than the linguistic constraint inherent to any slang sample, most of them formal constraints.

It is worth mentioning that the sociocultural context in which the film takes place cannot be modified by the translator and the communicative situations in the film cannot always find a suitable functional equivalent in the target culture. That is why many translated samples do not perfectly match the audiovisual text in the way the ST does. I believe the target receiver understands these matters when watching a film with these characteristics, nevertheless a loss in pragmatic reward is sometimes inevitable.





*Translating slang for dubbing: A descriptive case study of Jackie Brown*

In the following table, some samples with loss in pragmatic reward are shown. The underlined words or expressions refer to the slang appearing in the film.

NUMBER	52	81	88	148
TCR	00:14:26	00:18:12	00:18:52	00:46:07
SOURCE TEXT	He <u>ain't gonna</u> like that. Beaumont <u>ain't</u> got a doin' time <u>kinda</u> disposition.	They <u>don't</u> want <u>no</u> trouble. You might argue about price and <u>shit</u> , but you <u>ain't gotta</u> worry about them shootin' you in the back.	Man, I <u>ain't</u> ridin in no <u>godamn</u> trunk for <u>no</u> minute, man	The same guy who put my <u>ass</u> in jail.
TARGET TEXT	No le va a gustar nada. Beaumont no tiene carácter para aguantar una condena.	No suelen buscarse problemas. A lo mejor te regatean un poco el precio, pero no hay que preocuparse por si te pegan un tiro por la espalda.	No pienso viajar en un <u>jodido</u> maletero ni un minuto.	El mismo tío que me metió en ella.
SLANG TYPE	Syntactic procedure and lexical formal procedure  Variety according to position, Behavior and individual	Syntactic procedure and lexical semantic procedure  Variety according to position, Behavior and individual	Syntactic procedure and lexical semantic procedure  Variety according to position, behavior, individual and gender	Lexical semantic procedure  Variety according to position, Behavior and individual
CONSTRAINT	-	-	-	Formal





Tamayo Masero, A.

GENERAL TECHNIQUE	Reduction (no le va a gustar)  Reduction (no tiene caracter para aguntar una condena)	Omission (a lo mejor te regatean un poco el precio)  Reduction (pero no hay que)	Reduction (no pienso viajar)  Coined equivalent (jodido)  Reduction (ni un minuto)	Reduction (que me metió)
LINGUISTIC VARIATION TECHNIQUE	Without markers No transgression Artificial	With markers No transgression Natural	With markers No transgression Artificial	With markers No transgression Natural
ST FUNCTION	Establish group relations and identity	Establish group relations and identity	Suggest 'insider-knowledge' with the people to whom you are speaking	Show the speaker's attitude through the use of words and expressions that differ from standard language
TT FUNCTION	TT loses pragmatic reward	TT loses pragmatic reward	TT loses pragmatic reward	TT loses pragmatic reward
COMMENTS	Slang emerging from syntactic procedures is very difficult to transfer	Relatively long segment with little amount of slang in TT in comparison with ST	The coined equivalent 'jodido' results in a conventional translation, which turns out to be dubesse (dubbed film language), since, in the target culture such slang is not usually used as an adjective appearing before a noun	Lost due to formal constraint

Table 5. Samples in which replacing segments lose pragmatic load





#### 4.3. Samples in which Replacing Segments Gain Pragmatic Load

From the 378 samples, only 37 show a gain in pragmatic reward, which is a 9.8 per cent of the total. There are 12 cases of particularization, 11 cases of discursive creation, 8 cases of amplification and 8 cases of modulation. In 29 of these 37 samples, the ST does not show any slang whatsoever. In all cases, when gaining pragmatic reward, a natural (rather than artificial) translation is observed.

It can be argued that a gain in pragmatic reward is a risky translational option, since it can modify the original characterization of the characters. Nevertheless, that is not the case in this film, for the gains in pragmatic reward are used as a compensatory strategy for those segments in which a loss in pragmatic reward was inevitable.

In the following table, some samples with gain in pragmatic reward are shown. The underlined words or expressions refer to the slang appearing in the film.

NUMBER	113	119	195
TCR	00:27:24	00:30:02	01:04:06
SOURCE TEXT	Bad knees	Jackie, do you know a guy named Beaumont Livingston?	C'mon, don't lie
TARGET TEXT	Tengo las rodillas <u>jodidas</u>	Jackie, ¿conoce a un <u>tipejo</u> llamado Beaumont Livingston?	<u>No cuela...</u>
SLANG TYPE	-	-	-
CONSTRAINT	Formal	-	-
GENERAL TECHNIQUE	Enlargement (jodidas)	Particularization (tipejo)	Modulation (no cuela)
LINGUISTIC VARIATION TECHNIQUE	With markers No transgression Artificial	With markers No transgression Natural	With markers No transgression Natural
ST FUNCTION	-	-	-





Tamayo Masero, A.

TT FUNCTION	Added pragmatic reward	Added pragmatic reward	Added pragmatic reward
COMMENTS	Although it is one of the first utterances of this character, the enlargement does not modify its characterization, because in other subsequent scenes, the style of the utterances of this character is very similar to the style of this segment	Slang of TT tries to suggest 'insider-knowledge'	TT adds the function of showing the speaker's attitude through the use of words and expressions that differ from standard Language.

Table 6. Samples in which replacing segments gain pragmatic load

## 5. CONCLUSIONS

The results explained above lead to affirm that the objectives of this research have been accomplished: the type of slang appearing in the film has been defined, different types of slang have been associated with different techniques and the functionality of the slang in the film and its homofunctionality in the dubbed version have been discussed. Furthermore, I believe the methodology in this study could serve as a starting point for further studies dealing with the translation of slang or of other types of linguistic variations in any audiovisual translation mode.

The general conclusions for this study can be summarized as follows:

- In general terms, the dubbed version of *Jackie Brown* into Spanish is a homofunctional translation in which the priority is to make utterances sound natural and credible.





*Translating slang for dubbing: A descriptive case study of Jackie Brown*

- The techniques most often used to maintain the functionality of the TT are the coined equivalents, modulations and discursive creations.
- In most cases in which the TT loses pragmatic reward there is slang in the ST at language levels that can cause problems in translation (like at a syntactic level with the slang *ain't* or the lack of subject at the beginning of the sentence; or at a lexical level with the apocopate or aphaeresis form in *fella*, *gonna*, *ya* or *nigga*). These samples are translated artificially, without linguistic variation markers and using a reduction technique.
- The pragmatic loss in specific segments with slang does not necessarily lead to a loss in the pragmatism of the whole scene. Other visual or linguistic elements (apart from the slang) in the film help maintain the pragmatism of the scenes.
- The gain in pragmatic reward of some TT segments compensates for the losses of previous or later segments. This compensation strategy does not lead to a change in the characterization of characters.
- Few linguistic transgressions are observed in the TT. This places the dubbed version somewhere in between domestication and foreignization, making it possible to fit with the sociocultural context in which the story takes place.
- When transgressions are observed in the TT, they either 1) help compensate for the losses in pragmatic reward or 2) help maintaining the functionality of segments with much slang in the ST.

The general conclusions regarding the translation of slang in the film can be summarized as follows:

- After the analysis, it can be deduced that the method used for the translation of the slang, using Hurtado's taxonomy (2011: 252-3), is the interpretative-communicative method, that is, a domesticating translation. This statement can be made based on the homofunctionality of both versions and based on the techniques observed. Nevertheless, a more exhaustive analysis of the translation problems in the film (other than slang) should be carried out to confirm this statement.





Tamayo Masero, A.

- The presence of social groups that do not exist in the target culture (and the presence of the slang associated with those groups) does not mean that the text is untranslatable or that the scenes (or the film in general) can lose pragmatic load. The images, photography, shots, editing, plot and suprasegmental features in the utterances compensate for the loss of those elements.

As a final remark, it is worth mentioning that this research paper cannot, by any means, present a set of norms used to translate slang from English into Spanish in audiovisual texts for various reasons. On one hand, it is the case study of just one film and, in that sense, it can only go so far. On the other hand, this study analyses only one type of AVT, namely, dubbing. Nevertheless, I believe it can serve as a model for future research in order to be able to present the current norms in translating slang in audiovisual texts.

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*Linguae - Revista de la Sociedad Española de Lenguas Modernas*, 1 (2014), 315-340





*Translating slang for dubbing: A descriptive case study of Jackie Brown*

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