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## FREQUENCY OF USE AND FUNCTIONS OF ITALIAN AND SPANISH INTERJECTIONS IN FILM LANGUAGE AND THEIR IMPACT ON THEIR SPANISH DUBBING

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### Abstract

In a previous publication (Zamora and Alessandro 2013) it was shown that certain single-word, and mostly multi-word interjections are more often used specifically in the Italian linguistic system, and therefore in film languages, than in the Spanish one. In Spanish, other linguistic resources with the same pragmatic and discursive function are used. Through the data obtained from our previous investigation and from a descriptive analysis of a Italian-Spanish film corpus based on original and dubbed movies, the objectives of this work are, on the one hand, confirming the frequency of use of primary interjections in both film languages above in order to know the role and the importance of this linguistic resource in the orality of both languages; on the other hand, verifying which procedures or patterns have been applied by the translators when dealing with this special class of words.

**Keywords:** Dubbing. Descriptive approach. Interjections. Frequency of use. Translation techniques.



## 1. Introduction

Interjections are considered one of the main orality markers, since they are an essential resource for conveying spontaneity to the speech. Thus, special attention should be paid to this element when translating oral texts, or texts reproducing oral speech, as it is the case for film texts.

For the Italian into Spanish translator, the translation of interjections entails a series of problems arising from the peculiarities of both linguistic systems. In a previous work (Zamora and Alessandro 2013), we lay bare that the source system and the target system are not equivalent with respect to the specific interjection function and values. In particular, several aspects can be noticed: a) the range of primary interjections available in both languages is divergent; b) the frequency of use is significantly lower in Spanish; c) the illocutionary acts and/or metadiscursive functions fulfilled by the various interjections is sometimes dissimilar in both languages.

As a result, the translator, when transferring these orality markers from Italian to Spanish, faces a dilemma: on the one hand, following the recommendations and guidelines governing the cinematographic audiovisual translation, the translator is forced to preserve the interjections in his rewriting, in order to maintain the prefabricated orality (Chaume 2001: 78–79); on the other hand, if the goal is to achieve a credible target text (Chaume 2005: 145–148), the translator should then reduce the number of occurrences of said interjections, due to the difference concerning their percentage of use in the two languages, replacing them with other functionally similar linguistic elements, particularly with other discourse markers or pragmatic phraseologisms (Zamora and Alessandro 2013).

Therefore, while dubbing interjections is a question that has often gone unnoticed or that has still not been given enough attention, it is really a challenge and an obstacle. The translation solutions for the dubbing of interjections, as well as other linguistic elements that play an essential role in the construction of orality, require rigor and practical knowledge. In this regard, Cuenca (2006: 21) emphasizes that, when facing interjections, the translator must take into account the linguistic and cultural characteristics of both languages and interpret semantic and pragmatically these forms in their contexts of use, so as to produce the same effect with the dubbed version.

Bearing this in mind, the objectives of this article are:

- a) to corroborate a first hypothesis: the disparity regarding the frequency of use and the variety in the range of primary interjections used in both linguistic and cultural systems and the corresponding film language;
- b) from a descriptivist approach, although including some calls for action, to find out what translation techniques used in the translation of primary interjections, what are the trends and what is the impact they have on the target product;
- c) to confront the translational approach received by primary interjections in dubbing, including some guidelines for the translation of the interjection *eh*, particularly in the sequence X, *eh*. This type of discursive unit, as will be discussed later, is most commonly used in both languages.

In order to achieve these goals, an empirical study based on data from a filmic corpus has been made. The configuration of such corpus is detailed in the section dedicated to the study design (§ 2). These data were subjected to a quantitative and qualitative analysis in order to obtain some initial results that contribute to clarifying how these resources work and the implications of translating film texts from Italian into Spanish. In this regard, it should be noted that the literature on this matter is rather limited to date. Capanaga (2002) and Magazzino (2007; 2008) research are worth mentioning; they focus on dubbing interjections from Spanish to Italian. As regards the dubbing of primary interjections in other languages, they are of great interest contributions from Cuenca (2006) and Matamala (2008). The latter bases her study on two subcorpora, one consisting of monolingual Catalan fiction series and of other bilingual English / Catalan. Matamala notes that the number of expletives is greater in the source versions of original productions –4.84%– than in dubbed productions –3.19%. However, on the written scripts the percentages are similar in both languages –3.01% versus 3.03%– which suggests that, when filmed in the original version, texts are interpreted in a more oral fashion, for actors can add, omit or modify interjections. On the other hand, the number of occurrences registered in written scripts remains almost unchanged in the dubbed version, due to the restrictions imposed by phonetic synchrony and isochrony.

## 2. Study design: materials and methodology

As advanced in the introduction, our study is based on data drawn from a film corpus which, in turn, is made up of two subcorpora:

- a parallel bilingual corpus –the original Italian version and the dubbed version in Spanish, consisting of the films: *Manuale d'amore* (G. Veronesi 2005) and *Ex* (F. Brizzi 2009), with an overall length of 236 minutes.
- a monolingual corpus, consisting of two Spanish films: *Tres bodas de más* (J. Ruiz Caldera 2013) and *Ocho apellidos vascos* (E. Martinez–Lazaro 2014), which add up to 192 minutes of shooting.

The corpus is in electronic format and consists of film DVDs and text files with the transcripts of the postproduction script in the original language and, in the case of the Italian films dubbed in Spanish, also the translated version.

Both the Italian films and the Spanish comedies share: a) the contemporary socio–historical context; b) similar frames based on daily experiences; c) an analogous textual typology, where face to face interaction predominates; and d) the use of a highly colloquial register, to which the protagonists resort in order to convey a relationship of familiarity. It is worth mentioning that, despite it being prefabricated orality, gender comedy facilitates the reproduction on screen of the features of spontaneous and colloquial orality, diamesic dimension and linguistic register respectively, in which the interjections have a high frequency of use and find their breeding ground.

When selecting the films, apart from the type of film genre, their commercial success has been taken into account. *Tres bodas de más* and *Ocho apellidos vascos* ranked first in box–office draw for domestic films in 2013 and 2014 respectively (source: *El blog del cine español*). *Manuale d'amore* ranked third in 2005 for its earnings in Italy, and *Ex* was the thirteenth most watched national and international film in the transalpine country in 2009 (source: ISTAT – in cifre Culture). Regarding its impact on Spain, *Manuale d'amore*, released on late 2005, has been one of the most watched Italian films: it remained on the movie listings for six months and reached a total of 349,830 viewers, surpassing other contemporary films as *Caro Diario* (N. Moretti 1993, released in Spain in 1994) –134.421–, *El último beso* (G. Muccino 2001; released in Spain in 2004) –113.774–, *La habitación del hijo* (N. Moretti 2001) –147.030– and *Malena* (G. Tornatore 2000; released in Spain in 2001) –197.372–, as indicated in the qualified films database of the Spanish Ministry of Education, Culture and Sport. The same source reveals that *Ex*, released in Spain in 2009, attracted 129,219 spectators to the theater, surpassing the figures of other films exhibited in those years, such as *No basta una vida* (F. Ozpetek 2007) –20.789– and *Háblame de amor* (S. Muccino 2008; released in Spain in 2009) –15.391–.

The small size of the corpus is justified by the meticulous work that the manual sampling carried out for the extraction of data has required: it was necessary to watch each film carefully to locate each of the interjections, cut

the fragments in which they appear using the Windows Movie Maker software, and file those fragments in order to have a rigorous data base available to proceed with further analysis. After this process, each textual version of the original sample was analyzed independently and, as far as the bilingual corpus is concerned, the data from the original versions in Italian had to be compared with their corresponding versions dubbed into Spanish.

This article includes a selection of these textual samples in order to illustrate the issues they addressed. Each sample is presented in a box where various pieces of information are provided:

- The original film;
- The time code (TCR) to locate the segment to which we refer more easily in the feature film;
- Type of shot in which the interjection was set out, in order to determine whether the restrictions of lip synchronization and isochrony may have influenced the solutions adopted in the dubbing;
- The context in which the scene takes place;
- Transcription of the fragment in the original version in Italian (I.O.V);
- Transcription of the text in the Spanish dubbed version (S.D.V.).

The collected data has been subjected to a quantitative and qualitative analysis divided into the three main phases listed below along with the objectives they helped to achieve:

- 1st phase: comparison of the number and type of primary interjections in the original versions in both the linguistic and cultural systems;
- 2nd phase: discussion of the translation techniques applied, following the classifications proposed by Hurtado Albir (2001) and Marti Ferriol (2013), as well as which trends (Toury 2005; Marti Ferriol 2013) have prevailed in the translation of interjections in general, except for the sequence *X, eh*, in the dubbed versions;
- 3rd phase: taking into account the high frequency of use in both languages and multi-functionality of the interjection *eh* (Zamora and Alessandro 2013), we intend to find out the techniques used and the possible trends in the translation of this interjection in the *X, eh* sequence in the target texts, where *eh* is used as a metadiscursive marker.

Before proceeding to the analysis of translation of interjections patterns in the films under study and present the results at each stage, we consider it appropriate to define our object of study (§ 3). To this end, we come back to some of the considerations in Zamora and Alessandro (2013) about, on the one

hand, the relationship established between interjections, discursive markers and pragmatic phraseological units, and, on the other hand, some aspects that characterize the functioning of interjections within the discourse.

### 3. Primary interjections

In order to define the term interjection, we start from the basis: morphologically, it is a grammatical category; whereas at the textual or discursive level, it can function as a discourse marker (Briz 1993; Bazzanella 1995; Portolés 1998, Martín Zorraquino and Portolés 1999, Blas Arroyo 1995, Briz, Pons and Portolés 2000, López Bobo 2002–2003) or as a pragmatic phraseological unit (Zamora and Alessandro 2013). To substantiate this claim, we take Almela Pérez (1982) as a starting point, for whom the interjection is an autonomous factitive lexical unit. It is a lexical unit because, like idioms, the interjection is part of the “repeated discourse” (Coseriu 1977) and as such it is fixed, but unlike idioms, which at the semantic level belong to the sentence and therefore are usually formed by a group of words, the interjection belongs to the lexeme sphere, normally formed by one single word; autonomous, for its ability to take another element, although the interjection is not taken by any constituent of the syntagmatic chain; and factitive, as its meaning is completed in relation to the co-text / context, as with the pragmatic phraseologisms.

Regarding the relationship between interjection, discourse marker, and pragmatic phraseologisms, if we differentiate between metadiscursive functions—to direct, guide and organize the interaction—and the illocutionary functions—to fulfill complete speech acts—we believe that discourse markers preferably respond to metadiscursive functions, while pragmatic phraseologisms often play illocutionary functions. Interjections, meanwhile, are able to perform both functions, depending on the type of interjection and of situational, paralinguistic, kinetic and proxemics factors (Zamora and Alessandro 2013: 55). In this regard, the words of Poggi (1995: 414) in a study focused on the interjections of the Italian language are eye-opening. It emphasizes that a specific interjection like *Oh!*, depending on its intonation and context, can play an illocutionary act, expressing agreement or confirmation, which can be paraphrased with *Altro che!* Also, when it functions as an ironic comment expressing surprise or admiration, it could be paraphrased with *Ma guarda!* or *Non l'avrei mai immaginato!* and other equivalent idioms. Poggi does not indicate that this paraphrasing sequences are pragmatic phraseologisms, but intuitively, quite rightly, that they fulfill the same functions as interjections (Zamora and Alessandro 2013: 60).

With regard to terminology, interjections have traditionally been divided into two types: one, called primary interjections; another, secondary

interjections. Currently, a number of linguists believes that both groups not only belong to the repeated speech, but should even be considered within the phraseology field (Almela Pérez 1982; Santamaria 2000; Cuenca 2006; Sancho Cremades 2008; Rivas 2010, among others).

Accepting the said subdivision, we delimit our study to the primary interjections, having a significant frequency of use in both the languages concerned and therefore in the film corpus that we have analyzed. In particular, the subject of this investigation are the Italian interjections *–eh, ah, oh, uhm, uh, uf, ehi–* and the Spanish *–eh, ah, ay, uh, uf, oh–*. As mentioned above, these are characterized by accompanying an illocutionary act, and play different and varied metadiscursive functions (1), or by forming a speech act on their own (2).

(1)

FILM: <i>Manuale d'amore</i>	TCR: 44:15
Context: Marco and Barbara, a marriage in the midst of a crisis, come back home after having dinner with some friends who have small children. In the car, Barbara suggests Marco the possibility of having a child. Type of shot: medium shot and off screen.	
(I.O.V.) Marco: Barbara, dai, così si risolve la crisi!? Ma così uno si molla definitivamente, parte una crisi che è una causa di divorzio per tutta la vita! Andiamo, dai! Scusami, <i>eh</i> , scusami!	
(S.D.V.) Marco: Barbara, piensa! ¿¡Así se resuelve una crisis!? ¡Así uno se separa definitivamente, para siempre, se mete en un pleito que es causa de divorcio para toda la vida! ¡Venga, por favor! ¡Perdona, <i>eh</i> , perdona!	

(2)

FILM: <i>Ex TCR:</i>	21:07
CONTEXT: Elisa tells her friend Roberta the priest marrying her is Don Lorenzo, a former boyfriend of hers. Type of shot: close up.	
(I.O.V.) Roberta: Senti, è passata una vita da quando vi siete mollati e poi l'hai lasciato tu, scusa! Elisa: Ma che c'entra!? Io mi sento in imbarazzo, no? Roberta: E gliel'hai detto a Corrado? Elisa: No. Glielo dovrei dire, vero? Roberta: <i>Eh!</i>	
(S.D.V.) Roberta: Pero, mujer, hace un siglo que lo dejasteis, además lo dejaste tú, perdona. Elisa: ¿Y eso qué importa? Igualmente me siento incómoda con él. Roberta: ¿Y ya se lo has dicho a Corrado? Elisa: No. Debería decírselo, ¿verdad? Roberta: ¡ <i>Sí!</i>	



In both Italian films (Table 1) and Spanish (Table 2) the percentage of usage of interjections that accompany an illocutionary act, functioning as discourse marker, is much higher compared to the cases in which they constitute a complete illocutionary act per se (tables 3 and 4).

Film	Number of interjections going with illocutionary acts	Total
<i>Manuale d'amore</i>	252	458 de 591 (77.5%)
<i>Ex</i>	206	

Chart 1. Number of interjections going with illocutionary acts in the Italian films in the original version.

Film	Number of interjections going with illocutionary acts	Total
<i>Tres bodas de más</i>	77	244 de 277 (88.1%)
<i>Ocho apellidos vascos</i>	167	

Chart 2. Number of interjections going with illocutionary acts in the Spanish films in the original version.

This percentage is higher in the Italian films, in which the number of occurrences of interjections which are an illocutionary act per se is double compared to what is found in the Spanish films (Tables 3 and 4).

Film	Number of interjections as complete illocutionary acts	Total
<i>Manuale d'amore</i>	52	133 of 591 (22.50%)
<i>Ex</i>	81	

Chart 3. Number of interjections executing complete illocutionary acts in the Italian films in the original version.

Film	Number of interjections as complete illocutionary acts	Total
<i>Tres bodas de más</i>	16	33 of 277 (11.9%)
<i>Ocho apellidos vascos</i>	17	

Chart 4. Number of interjections executing complete illocutionary acts in the Spanish films in the original version.

In particular, the Italian interjection *eh* has a number of pragmatic values that the Spanish counterpart is lacking (Zamora and Alessandro 2013). As shown in (2), in Italian *eh* expresses agreement and conviction, with a hint of reproach. In the target language it has been replaced by the interjection adverb *sí*, which does not have the same pragmatic load, thus carrying a loss of illocutionary force. Supposedly, it being a close up shot, restrictions imposed by isochrony in the target version have inclined the translator to use a monosyllabic term as in the original, instead of using a pragmatic phraseological unit such as *ya lo creo* or *diría que sí*, which are the functional equivalents to the Italian interjection *eh* for this context, but whose enunciation takes longer.

4. Statement and analysis of the results

4.1. Results of the 1st phase: Total number of interjections in Spanish and Italian original version and the dubbed versions in Spanish

The total number of interjections and their average per minute are higher in the Italian films (Table 5) than in the Spanish ones (Table 6), and the difference is substantial.

Film	Number of interjections	Total
<i>Manuale d'amore</i>	304	591 (2.50/min.)
<i>Ex</i>	287	

Chart 5. Total number of interjections in the Italian films in the original version.

Film	Number of interjections	Total
<i>Tres bodas de más</i>	93	277 (1.44/min.)
<i>Ocho apellidos vascos</i>	184	

Chart 6. Total number of interjections in the Spanish films in the original version.

When analyzing the dubbing into Spanish (Table 7), in both films the amount of interjections is lower than that in the Italian original versions, but still far superior to the number of occurrences present in the Spanish film productions (figure 1).

Film	Number of interjections	Total
<i>Manual de amor</i>	205	422 (1.78/min.)
<i>Ex</i>	217	

Chart 7. Total number of interjections in Italian films dubbed into Spanish.

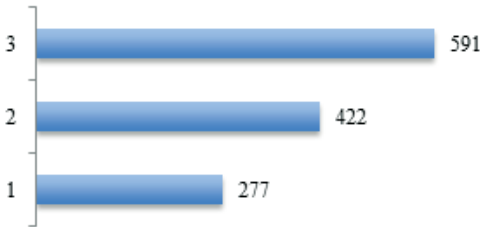


Figure 1. Total number of primary interjections in the three versions.

With regard to the range and the number of interjections present in the Italian original versions (Figure 2) and the Spanish original versions (Figure 3), it is found that in both languages the interjection with the highest number of occurrences is *eh*. Also, it is noted that the gap between the usage of said interjection and the others is much more significant in Spanish films in Italian ones, in which there is less disparity and a greater variety. These data confirm our initial hypothesis, that is, the range of primary interjections which have both languages is divergent and frequency of use is higher in Italian.

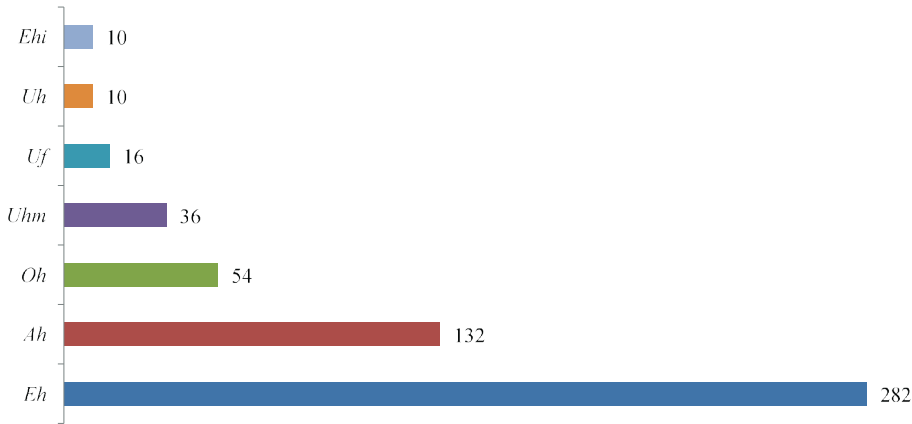


Figure 2. Expletives and number of occurrences in the original Italian versions.



Figure 3. Interjections and number of occurrences in the original Spanish versions.

#### 4.2. 2nd phase results: Translation techniques applied to interjections in dubbed versions, except for the X, eh sequence

In the dubbing, the literal translation technique prevails, followed by substitution and omission (Figure 4). These results are consistent with a certain tendency to linguistic fidelity. In this respect, it is worth recalling that Toury (1995: 62) indicates that the translation activity generally observes a propensity to keep the source language linguistic structures that do not involve substantial changes in the target language. The preservation of certain Italian interjections in the Spanish dubbed versions presumably does not alter the semantic meaning of the sequence in which it is embedded, although it may not sound entirely natural.

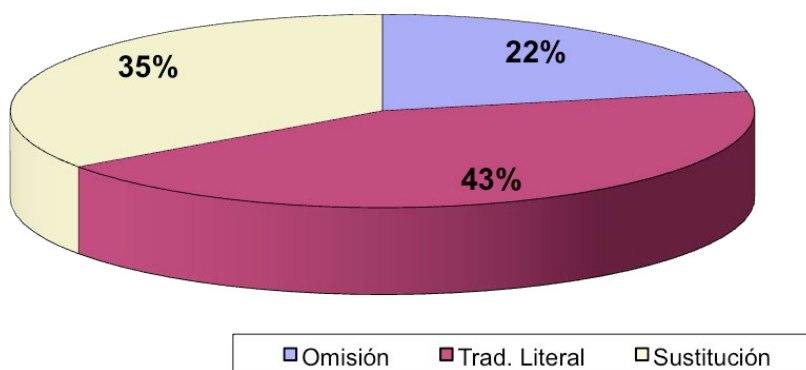


Figure 4. Translation techniques for interjections in Italian films dubbed into Spanish.

When translators have chosen to adopt the substitution technique, in most cases they have chosen to use a different interjection from the one in the original version, or have made use of other constituents or linguistic elements functionally analogous, usually monosyllabic or disyllabic discourse markers such as *oiga*, *sí*, *vale*, *venga*, *qué*, etc., possibly due to adjustments imposed by the phonetic synchrony and isochrony (figure 5).

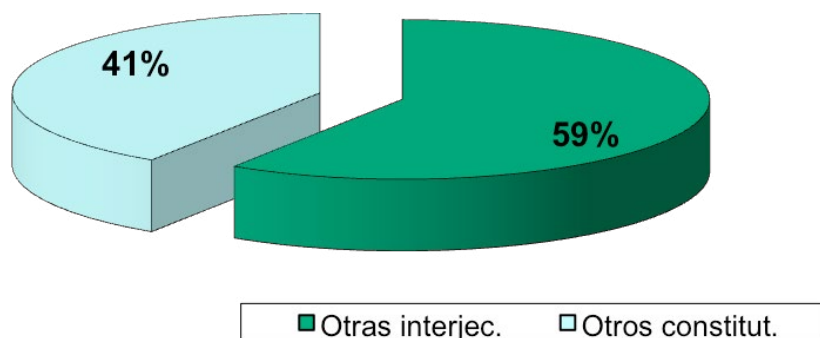


Figure 5. Elements that replace the original interjection when the replacement technique is applied in dubbed versions.

To complete the analysis of the translation techniques applied, it should be noted that in the subcorpus dubbed versions in Spanish only in 34 cases in which an interjection that was not present in the original version is inserted, using the compensation technique.

#### 4.2.1. Examples of the techniques applied

In the table below the transcription of textual samples taken from the corpus under study can be found. These transcriptions show the implementation of the various translation techniques above-mentioned.

– *Literal translation*

(3)

<b>FILM: Ex TCR: 22:14</b>
CONTEXT: Monique, Paolo's girlfriend, after dinner at Elisa and Corrado's place, asks him to walk her to work. Paolo, who feels he is being stalked and threatened by Monique's ex-boyfriend, finds an excuse not to take her. Type of shot: medium shot.
(I.O.V) Paolo: ...perché non ho la macchina e quindi... Elisa: Ma come!? La prima cosa che hai detto è "Scusate il ritardo che non trovo parcheggio". Paolo: Ah, ho detto così!? Elisa: Ah!
(S.D.V.) Paolo: ...porque no he cogido el coche, así que no... Elisa: ¿Cómo que no? Si la primera cosa que has dicho al entrar es "Perdonad el retraso pero no encontraba aparcamiento". Paolo: ¡¿Ah, he dicho eso?! Elisa: ¡Ah!

– *Substitution with another interjection*

(4)

<b>FILM: Manuale d'amore TCR: 01:30:24</b>
CONTEXT: Goffredo, pediatrician, and his nurse Luciana are making love at her house. Andrea, Luciana's husband, who is supposed to be traveling, comes back home and Goffredo has to hide under the bed. Type of shot: close up.
(I.O.V) Andrea: Vado in bagno. Luciana (dirigiéndose a Goffredo): Oh, esci adesso! Sbrigati, abbiamo finito!
(S.D.V.) Andrea: Voy al baño. Luciana (dirigiéndose a Goffredo): ¡Eh, sal! ¡Date prisa, hemos terminado!

— *Substitution with another linguistic element*

(5)

<b>FILM:</b> <i>Ex TCR:</i> 59:02
<b>CONTEXT:</b> During the wedding rehearsal, a friend of the groom's, Corrado, asks the bride, Elisa, in front of Don Lorenzo, the priest, what have they prepared for the bachelorette party. Type of shot: medium shot.
(I.O.V) Amigo de Corrado: Elisa, che avete organizzato per l'addio al nubilato? Elisa: Ma non lo so, ci ha pensato Monique, mi fa una sorpresa. Amigo de Corrado: <i>Ah</i> , ho capito... <i>Ah</i> Don Lore', una sporcacciona di niente...
(S.D.V.) Amigo de Corrado: Elisa, ¿qué habéis organizado para tu despedida de soltera? Elisa: No lo sé, se ha encargado Monique, me dará una sorpresa. Amigo de Corrado: <i>Yá</i> , entiendo... Don Lorenzo, menuda guarra está hecha esa...

— *Omission*

(6)

<b>FILM:</b> <i>Manuale d'amore TCR:</i> 54:50
<b>CONTEXT:</b> Ornella, a really severe police officer, comes inside her building and says hello to the doorman. Type of shot: close up.
(I.O.V) Ornella: Buongiorno, Emilio. Emilio: Buongiorno. Ornella: <i>Ah</i> , tutti quei motorini sul marciapiede non ci possono stare.
(S.D.V.) Ornella: Buenos días, Emilio. Emilio: Buenos días. Ornella: Todas esas motos no pueden estar aparcadas en la acera.

4.2.2. *Impact of the types of shot*

One factor that affects the dubbing of audiovisual texts is the shotlist, based on the types of shots and their significance and influence in the filmic text. As Chaume (2004: 23) states:

El código de planificación es especialmente significativo en la modalidad del doblaje. En los primeros y primerísimos planos, por convención el traductor debe encontrar un texto que se ajuste a los movimientos articulatorios de apertura y cierre de los labios del personaje que en esos momentos aparezca en pantalla. Se trata de la consecución de la llamada sincronía fonética o labial.

The next step is to examine whether the type of shot has conditioned the translation techniques applied in the dubbing. The analysis of the data has allowed to verify that the type of shot, with the articulatory movements of the characters on the screen and the vowel lengthening of the interjection, has influenced, at least in part, the translation techniques employed.

As shown in Figure 6, the interjections translated using the literal translation technique are more abundant in extreme close-ups and close-ups, 24.33% and 43.80% respectively. Especially in the extreme close-ups, the work of the translator is subject to compliance with the phonetic synchrony. Therefore, translation solutions are partially conditioned especially in cases where the lip movement is very obvious, which explains why the translator has opted for a literal translation.

On the contrary, when applying the omission technique (Figure 7), the percentage of close-ups is much lower –12.14%–, medium shots and close-ups prevailing. It is also worth mentioning that the number of shots where lips were not visible, where the characters are off-screen or there is a voice-over, in which the translator is in principle free to rework the text and propose a solution that differs from the original, the use of the literal translation technique is however doubled.

Finally, the application of the substitution technique (Figure 8) prevails in the close-ups –the 38.70%– and the extreme close-ups –25.80%–. Just as happens with the literal translation technique, this type of shots affects the decisions of the translator, who is forced to replace one interjection by another or by another discourse marker, rather than suppress it.

It must be noted that, although it is evident that the type of shot influences the techniques used by the translators and justifies some of the solutions they adopt, in our filmic corpus we have recorded a number of cases where these decisions do not seem conditioned by this factor. We are referring in particular to the significant number of omissions of interjections in extreme close-ups and close-ups (Figure 7) and their preservation in shots where the translator is not limited by the phonetic synchrony or the isochrony (Figure 8). Therefore, it can be said that the type of shot turns out to be a factor that partially affects the solutions adopted but not entirely justifies them. In fact, it can be noticed that translation techniques applied in the voiceovers under study vary depending mainly on each interjection in particular, so that each *eh*, *ah*, *oh*, etc. received different treatment in the dubbing. The equivalence in the target language is subject to both their function in the speech according to their different linguistic and paralinguistic contexts, and the frequency of use of the particular interjection in both languages.



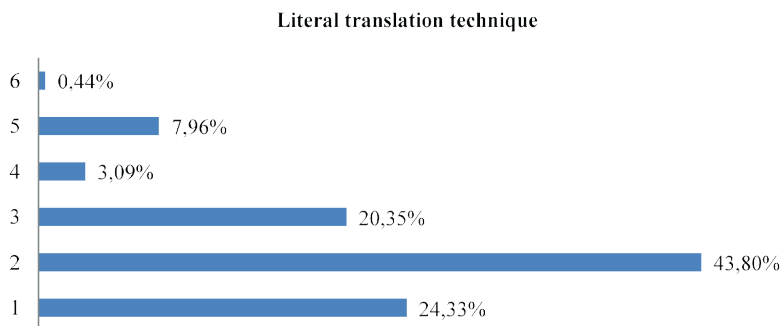


Figure 6. Relationship between the literal translation technique and the type of shot.

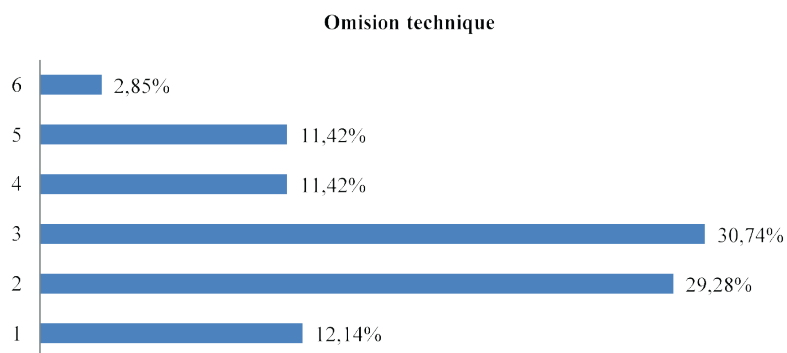


Figure 7. Relationship between the omission technique and the type of shot.

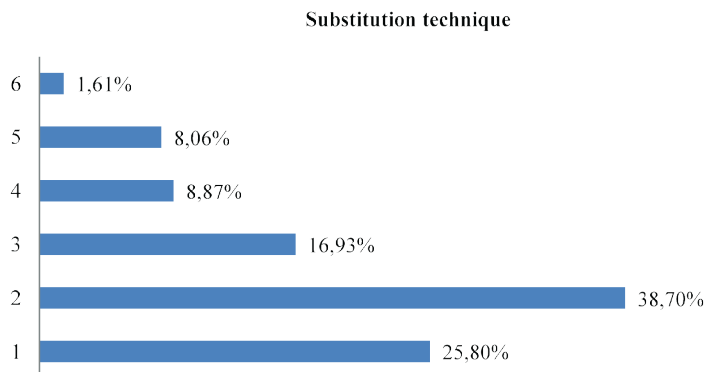


Figure 8. Relationship between the substitution technique and the type of shot.

#### 4.3. 3rd phase results: Techniques and trends in the translation of interjection *eh* in the X sequence, *eh* in dubbed versions

Our focus on the primary interjection *eh* is due to the fact that, as we saw earlier, it holds the highest percentage of use in both the Italian (Figure 2) and the Spanish (Figure 3) original versions. Likewise, it has the advantage of not being as diatopically marked as the interjection *aò*, typical of Roman dialect, or *uè*, used in the Milan area.

In the Spanish film corpus prepared by Magazzino (2008: 160), *eh* represents 45.64% of the total primary interjections inventoried; followed by *ah* –33.11%– and *ay* –15.88%–. In our Spanish original version subcorpus, the percentage of use of the interjection *eh*, calculated with the data in Figure 3 and being 277 the total of interjections in Spanish (Table 6), is even higher –60.28%– as compared with what was recorded in Magazzino's corpus, and the number of other interjections occurrences is significantly lower: *ah* –11.91%–, *ay* –6.13%–, and *uf* –5.77%–.

In the subcorpus of Italian films, with a total of 591 interjections (Table 5), the frequency of the use of *eh* is also high –47.71%–, although lower than in the Spanish corpus. On the other hand, if we weight up the usage of *eh* against the number of occurrences of other interjections, the fact that the disproportion in Italian films is slightly lower than in the Spanish films is verified: *ah* –22.33%–, *ay* –9.13 %–, and *uf* –6.09%–.

We focused the analysis on *eh* when it appears in the sequence X, *eh*, the interjection being systematically at the end of the discursive unit as closing, separated from the rest of the statement by a virtual pause. This interjection in said sequence, following the contributions of Blas Arroyo (1995), Bazzanella (1995: 238–241), Poggi (1995: 422) and Lopez Bobo (2002–2003: 192), essentially serves four functions in the speech:

- a) request for confirmation that the information has been assimilated by the interlocutor, functioning as verification and to control reception;
- b) request for further information;
- c) modulation strategy, reinforcing or mitigating any illocutionary act (advise, order, threat, request, etc.);
- d) from the inter-declarative dimension, it can function as an interactive complicity marker. In fact, Blas Arroyo (1995: 97 and 104) indicates that its usage in the same utterance can sometimes be repetitive and abusive; Martin Zorraquino and Portolés (1999: 4199) suggest that in this case, the interjection has the task of guiding the listener through the information processing.

#### 4.3.1. Usage of the sequence *X, eh* in our subcorpus

It is found that, in the Spanish original films (Table 8) and the Italian original films (Table 9) subcorpora, the number of occurrences of this type of sequence is very high, especially in Spanish, where it exceeds 80% of total cases where the interjection *eh* appears.

Spanish original version corpus	
TOTAL <i>eh</i>	167
<i>Eh</i> (other functions)	33 (19.77%)
<i>X, eh</i>	134 (80.23%)

Chart 8. Occurrences of the interjection *eh* in the Spanish films original versions.

Italian original version corpus	
TOTAL <i>eh</i>	282
<i>Eh</i> (other functions)	134 (47.52%)
<i>X, eh</i>	148 (52.48%)

Chart 9. Occurrences of the interjection *eh* in the Italian films original versions.

#### 4.3.2. Translation techniques applied in the dubbing of *X, eh*

As opposed to the prevalence of the literal translation technique –43%–, followed by substitution –35%– and omission –22%– present in the dubbing of primary interjections in general (Figure 4), in the translation *eh* embedded in the *X, eh* sequence shows a reverse trend. In a high percentage of cases the omission of the interjection technique is chosen (figure 9). Accordingly, the guidelines have been different: while for the rest of interjections literal translation prevails and therefore the general tendency to linguistic fidelity predominates, in the dubbing of *X, eh* omission prevails and, therefore, standardization, since the transfer of this orality marker has often been avoided in the target version.

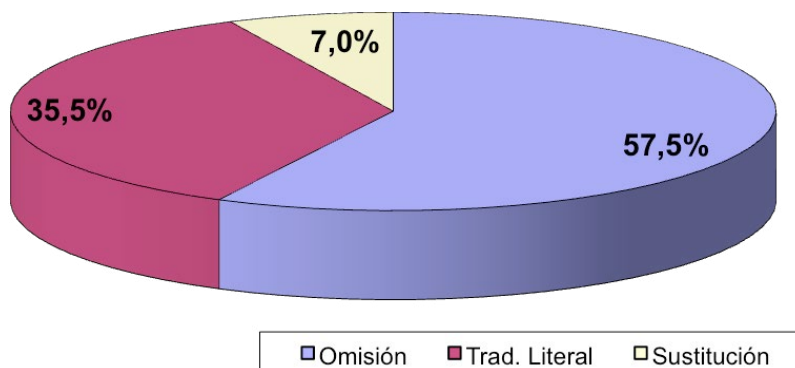


Figure 9. Translation techniques applied to the interjection *eh* in the sequence *X*, *eh* in dubbed versions.

It is striking that, while the sequence has a higher frequency of use in the original Spanish versions, will then be deleted in a considerable percentage of the Italian versions dubbed into the same language. Especially if we take into consideration that, as has already been shown, when dubbing the rest of interjections the trend of maintaining the interjection predominates, either through the literal translation technique or through substitution (Figure 4). Interjections are preserved despite the fact that both the percentage of use and the range of interjections inventoried in the Italian original versions are much higher than those recorded in the Spanish original versions.

#### 4.3.2.1. *Examples of the techniques applied*

In order to show the results of the application of the above-mentioned techniques, a selection of samples taken from the filmic textual corpus is presented below, showing the different techniques applied in the translation of the interjection *eh* in the sequence *X*, *eh*.

— *Literal translation*

(7)

FILM: <i>Ex TCR</i> : 44:53
CONTEXT: Corrado and Elisa are deciding where to have the guests seated at the wedding reception. Type of shot: medium shot.
(I.O.V) Corrado: E se zia Renata e zia Lella le metto al tavolo con le amiche tue? Elisa: No, Corrado, scusa, ma poveracce, pensa che palle! Corrado: Ho capito, amo', ma dove le metto queste due vecchie? Elisa: Ma scusa, mettiamole al tavolo con i tuoi, <i>eh!</i> ? In fondo sono le sorelle di tua madre. Corrado: Ho capito, ma si odiano. Elisa: Si odiano, <i>eh!</i> ?
(S.D.V) Corrado: ¿Y si pongo a la tía Renata y a la tía Lella en la mesa de tus amigas? Elisa: No, Corrado, perdona, les van a dar la lata todo el banquete. Corrado: Muy bien, ¿pero dónde meto a estas dos ancianitas? Elisa: ¿Y por qué no las pones en la mesa con tus padres, <i>eh?</i> Al fin y al cabo son hermanas de tu madre. Corrado: Es verdad, pero se odian. Elisa: ¿Se odian, <i>eh!</i> ?

— *Substitution with another interjection*

(8)

FILM: <i>Manuale d'amore TCR</i> : 42:33
CONTEXT: Marco and Barbara talk about their marriage going through a crisis. Barbara, following Marco's recriminations, starts crying. Type of shot: voice-over.
(I.O.V) Marco: Barbara, guarda che sei permalosa però, <i>eh!</i> Non ti si può dir niente, Barbara!
(S.D.V) Marco: ¡Ah, qué susceptible que eres! ¡No se te puede hacer una broma, Barbara!

– *Substitution with another constituent*

(9)

<b>FILM: Ex TCR: 01:42:54</b>
CONTEXT: During the wedding ceremony, at the moment when Elisa has to say <i>I do</i> , she remains silent for a split second and thinks about Don Lorenzo, former boyfriend of hers, who has not replied yet to whether he still loves her. Type of shot: medium shot.
(I.O.V) Elisa: Ma tu ieri non hai risposto alla mia domanda. Don Lorenzo: Elisa, per favore, ora ti sposi e poi ne parliamo, <i>eh?</i>
(S.D.V.) Elisa: Espera, tú ayer no respondiste a mi pregunta Don Lorenzo: Elisa, por favor, ahora cástate y luego lo hablamos, <i>¿vale?</i>

– *Omission*

(10)

<b>FILM: Manuale d'amore TCR: 01:33:55</b>
CONTEXT: Goffredo goes to his lawyer Luigi's office and asks him to call his ex-wife Margherita. Type of shot: close-up.
(I.O.V) Goffredo: Tu adesso mi chiami questa zoccola di terza categoria e le fai due domande in viva voce, che io devo ascoltare. Primo, perché mi ha lasciato? Secondo, se è vero che non mi ama più. Luigi: Guarda che non è il caso, <i>eh!</i>
(S.D.V.) Goffredo: Vas a llamar a esa zorra de tercera categoría y vas a hacerle dos preguntas con el altavoz, porque quiero oírlo. Primera, ¿por qué me ha dejado? Segunda, ¿si es verdad que ya no me quiere? Luigi: Oye, no me parece oportuno.

## 5. Corpus film (prefabricated orality) versus actual oral corpus

To conclude our analysis, we compared the extracted data from the filmic corpus under study, based on a prefabricated orality, with data extrapolated from two real oral corpus: the *Lessico di dell'italiano frequenza parlato* (Corpus LIP) (De Mauro Mancini, Vedovelli, Voghera 1993) for Italian, and the *Corpus de conversaciones coloquiales*, conducted by Antonio Briz and the Val.Es.Co. group (2002), also known as the Val.Es.Co. Corpus.

In Figure 10 the percentage of use of each one of the interjections object of our study in the Italian original versions of our filmic corpus and in the LIP (De Mauro et al. 1993: 531) are compared. The data coincide as far as

frequency is concerned, except for the fact that in the LIP *umh* outnumbers of appearances of *oh*. However, the two corpora differ in the percentages of use: in the oral corpus, the interjection *eh* accounts for 67.97% of all interjections and exceeds by 20 percentage points the inventory in the filmic corpus. For the rest of interjections, in the LIP, the frequency of use is inferior from the frequency shown in film language. The interjection *uf* is not included in the LIP, and for that reason is not included in the chart.

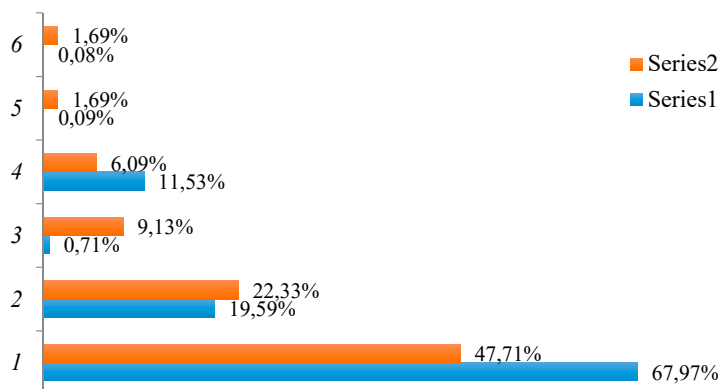


Figure 10. Percentage of usage of interjections in the corpus LIP and in the original versions in Italian.

Unlike in Italian, where some overlap between the data of orality prefabricated filmic corpus and the results of the real spoken corpus, in Spanish a greater divergence with respect to the frequency of use is observed for each one of the interjections (figure 11). The difference regarding the frequency of use of *eh* in the corpus Val.Es.Co. is rather significant, for it is much lower than what is recorded in the Spanish original film subcorpus. Also, a reverse trend is observed when comparing it to the Italian (Figure 10). Likewise, a disparity seen in the usage of the interjections *ay* and *ah*, which is higher in the real oral corpus than in the film corpus. Therefore, such a frequent usage of the interjection *eh* in the film corpus as compared to the oral corpus draws our attention, for it constitutes a certain disproportion in the range and variety of interjections used in the former, which could affect somehow the authenticity and naturalness that prefabricated orality intends to capture. In this regard, it should be noted that from the range of interjections inventoried in the corpus Val.Es.Co. only those that have a higher percentage of use in the filmic corpus and constitute our object of study have been taken into account; therefore 118

occurrences interjection of Val.Es.Co. –corresponding to *mm*, *hm*, *uy*– are not reflected in the data in Figure 11.

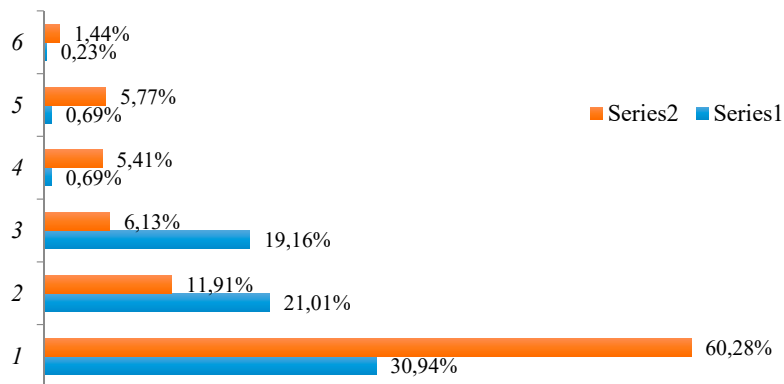


Figure 11. Percentage of usage of interjections in the corpus Val.Es.Co. and in the original versions in Spanish.

In the Introduction (§ 1), and previously in Zamora and Alessandro (2013), we stated that in the Italian system there is a greater tendency to use primary interjections than in Spanish. The extrapolated data of the two real speech corpora confirmed such statement, as shown in Figure 12. The number of interjections employed per minute in said corpora matches the results extracted from the film subcorpus (Tables 5 and 6). As is the case regarding the Italian original films with respect to the Spanish ones, also the amount of interjections in the LIP corpus is much higher compared to that recorded in the Val.Es.Co. corpus. This increased amount is observed even though the LIP includes text types including non–bidirectional face to face conversations (homilies, meetings, conferences, etc.), thus the total number of interjections could be even higher.

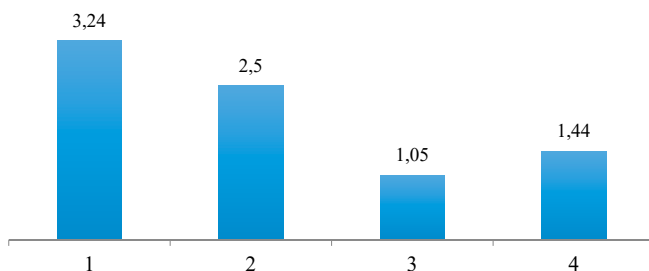


Figure 12. Number of interjections per minute.



## 6. Conclusions

Regarding the first objective, if we compare the data gathered from both original version subcorpora, a higher frequency of use and a more varied range of primary interjections is found in the Italian film corpus than in the Spanish one. Results corroborate the data collected from the comparison between actual oral corpus from both languages, LIP and Val.Es.Co.

As for the second objective, the primary interjections generally found in Spanish dubbing, except for the case of *X*, *eh*, tend to be kept, thus the prevalent techniques are literal translation and substitution with other primary interjection. The application of these techniques, on the one hand, helps to ensure orality, as do other functionally analogous constituents, such as discourse markers and pragmatic phraseological units. However, on the other hand, the low usage rate of the omission technique generates a superabundance of interjections in dubbing. This superabundance, compared to a smaller frequency of use in the Spanish original version subcorpus, can lead to a loss of naturalness in the target version.

Likewise, it can be noticed that the application of one technique or another does not seem to obey a systematic common thread, but rather an arbitrary criteria, although more comprehensive studies corroborating this are needed. In this regard, it should be noted that our study was conducted from the final filmic text, as it appears on screen, since written screenplays for these films were not available. It is therefore possible that certain decisions on the transfer of interjections in dubbed versions should not be attributed solely to the translator, but also to the adjuster, the actors and the director of dubbing while recording the soundtrack in the target language may have influenced the final script.

In cases of literal translation of interjections, some restrictions regarding the dubbing process should generally be taken into account, which may involve phonetic lip sync and isochrony, as occurs in the close-ups and extreme close-ups. Although the enunciation of an interjection takes a split second, these restrictions may have influenced certain translation solutions, such as not being able to replace a monosyllabic interjection for a polysyllabic discourse marker or a pluriverbal pragmatic phraseme, although they would have appeared more natural in the target language (Zamora and Alessandro 2013). It should also be borne in mind that interjections usually are inserted at the beginning or the end of the parliament of the actors, this being an important factor since, as noted by Richart Marset (2011: 102), in the dubbing adjustment process the beginning and end of a sequence are extremely important for the viewer's perception of lip coincidence.

As far as the third objective is concerned, the translation techniques used for general interjections do not coincide with those applied in the dubbing of *eh* when inserted in the sequence *X, eh*. In this case, however, a strong tendency towards the omission of this interjection is observed, being its much higher percentage –57.5% (figure 9) – than what is found in the dubbing of other interjections –22% (figure 4) –. These data are striking, considering that the *X, eh* sequence is the one with a higher frequency of use in the target language: 134 occurrences (Table 8) of a total of 277 interjections (Table 6), representing therefore 48.3 %. If the appropriateness of removing the interjection *eh* as discourse marker is doubtful in the dubbing of films from Spanish into Italian (Magazzino 2008), the more doubtful it is in the dubbing from Italian into Spanish, being the *eh* interjection, as we have indicated, more recurrent in the Spanish original film subcorpus.

This recourse to the omission technique is supposed to respond to a strong trend towards the standardization in the treatment of this orality marker. However, as we have pointed out for the dubbing of primary interjections in general, if the lip sync and isochrony restrictions partially affect their translation, they should also affect the interjection *eh* in the sequence *X, eh*. This is another factor that justifies a certain reluctance regarding its repeated omission. As it happens in the dubbing of the rest of interjections, also preservation, substitution and omission of the interjection *eh* in the translation process of the *X, eh* sequence, *eh* has been usually carried out arbitrarily. Sometimes it is kept, others replaced and sometimes omitted for no apparent reason.

Finally, it should be noted that despite the aforementioned overabundance of interjections in Spanish dubbed versions and the application of translation techniques that sometimes are not entirely justified, there has not been any negative impact on the reception in Spain of the two Italian films which, as pointed out at the beginning of this article, have had an acceptable commercial success. This is due to the film text, which in its audiovisual nature is a complex product, a result of the combination of different codes that, along with the linguistic code, facilitate the transmission of the message, supplying or disassembling, in some cases, possible inconsistencies in the translation of some elements. The viewer is subjected to multiple stimuli and does not detect such inconsistencies. However, although apparently the primary interjections provide no referential meaning, their presence guarantees the naturalness of the communicative exchange and they are necessary to capture in the filmic texts the pragmatic and metadiscursive functions they fulfill in actual speech. As noted by Blas Arroyo (1995: 103 and 144), the interjection is, in many occasions, an essential illocutionary tool to complete the message to be conveyed.

In this sense, we believe that the results presented in this work, despite the small size of the corpus and in the absence of more thorough investigations, are a preliminary contribution that informs about the obstacles that the translation of interjections in the language combination Italian / Spanish generates and some guidelines to act upon those obstacles. The results of this research may be of interest both in the educational field and in the professional sphere, not only for dubbing, but also for other types of texts in which a prefabricated or fictive orality has to be captured, as is the case of literary translation. We therefore claim the usefulness of the object of study addressed in this article and, as a result, the need for further research.

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