

## **The Translation of Pitch Movement in Dubbed Dialogue**

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### **ABSTRACT**

The present article investigates the role of pitch movement in fictive orality with special reference to translation for dubbing. The focus of analysis is placed on how characters say what they say, especially on the way they use tonal patterns to add implicational meaning to their words. By means of a comparative analysis of English and Spanish intonation in a parallel corpus derived from the Spanish dubbed version of a US sitcom, this paper analyses and discusses the extent to which the implicatures attached to source text (ST) pitch movements have been transmitted in the dubbed version or lost in translation. Where loss or variation of meaning is detected, the purpose is to ascertain whether and how such potential losses can be offset in the target language. The findings obtained reveal that a high percentage of the implicatures added by tone in the original version has not been rendered in the target text or has been transferred with significant variations in meaning.

**KEYWORDS:** dubbing, intonation, pitch movement, tone, translation of humour, audiovisual translation, implicatures

### **1. Introduction**

The rendition of intonation in dubbed dialogue remains almost a virgin territory in Audiovisual Translation (henceforth AVT) research. Even though academic studies dealing with this topic have been few and far between, several attempts have been made to single out the major features of intonation in spoken discourse. According to Fodor (1976), intonation has a direct bearing on the meaning intended by the speaker and, in Zabalbeascoa's (2001) view, the tone of voice can determine to a great extent the intention and the attitude that the speaker wishes to convey in speech. Whitman-Linsen (1992:46), who argues that "how we

say something can enhance, impoverish or shift the semantic content of an utterance", describes this suprasegmental trait as the most powerful means of communicating what goes unsaid. In their study of orality, Baños-Piñero and Chaume (2009) highlight the cohesive nature of intonation in the text, insofar as it can organise the discourse and express the underlying flow of thoughts and pace of upcoming ideas. Other scholars such as Solé (1989), Mateo (2014) and Cuevas Alonso (2017), who have explored the translation of intonation at a theoretical level, also point to the cardinal importance of this trait when it comes to conveying and interpreting oral information.

If intonation is part and parcel of spoken discourse, it definitely has to play a paramount role in dubbed speech. Indeed, the way characters say what they say can provide the viewership and, by extension, dubbing professionals (i.e. the translator, dialogue writer, dubbing director and voice talents) with the necessary input to understand the speaker's words correctly. Yet, a difference in intonation can bring about a difference in interpretation and, therefore, in the meaning of the sentence (Büring 2016). Cross-language differences between English and Spanish can also pose an extra challenge. Whereas English conveys a great deal of information by means of intonation, morphological, syntactic and lexical variations often take precedence in Spanish (Ortiz Lira 2000). When interpreting a given message, the challenge for translators is thus twofold. On the one hand, they must spot and identify the meaning attached to intonation in the source text (ST) and, on the other, they need to achieve an equivalent translation (see section 2) by drawing upon the resources offered by their own languages and by overcoming the limitations of the dubbing mode (Chaume 2007).

The communicative exchange, however, does not only entail encoding and decoding a given message (Mateo 2014); it is necessary to carry out a constant interpretative and inferential task that allows transfer of the speaker's meaning in a different cultural context and setting (Pym 2004). Intonation is an integral part of this meaning and, as such, should not be taken for granted in the translation process. It should be understood and interpreted by considering the cultural differences between the source and target audiences (Hatim and Munday 2004).

Let us take the example of the TV show analysed in this paper, the US sitcom *How I met your mother* (CBS, 2005-2014). The underlying purpose of the sitcom is to entertain and amuse viewers and this is achieved thanks to several factors that combine together for a desirable result. The dubbed version also aspires to entertain and amuse Spanish-speaking audiences, but other factors such as a different reception setting, a different cultural context and a

different linguistic situation unavoidably come into play. Does this mean that the differences in intonation can make humour and entertainment fall by the wayside? Not at all. While it may be challenging for translators to transfer the meaning attached to ST pitch movements into a different language and culture, this difficulty does not necessarily imply that humour and entertainment are out of reach. Rather, translators must overcome such difficulties by making decisions, even if they do not always succeed in every possible way. On some occasions, they will just have to replace the ST humour with an equivalent translation in the TT or make use of other strategies such as compensation (see section 2). On other less ideal occasions, they will have to decide whether to prioritise content at the expense of the comic value or, on the contrary, whether to preserve humour and entertainment even if the translation does not reflect accurately every detail of the content. It is precisely intonation that can help them tip the scales in favour of one option or the other. Since intonation sets "the playful frame of humour" (Attardo et al. 2013:8), it makes it easier for the hearer to identify the speaker's humorous intention and to draw the necessary inferences to process humour. In a situation comedy such as the one analysed in this paper, intonation can be imperative to mirror spontaneous-like dialogues and real-life situations as well as to achieve jocular lines (Zabalbeascoa 2001; Padilla and Requeijo 2010; Baños 2013).

By means of a comparative analysis of intonation in a bilingual corpus-based study (see Valenzuela Farías 2013:1061-1083), this paper seeks to address the following question: Is the meaning attached to the ST intonation transmitted in the dubbed version or lost in translation? Since the loss of meaning is not the only consideration relevant to viewers and researchers in Translation Studies (Chaume 2008), one more question emerges at this point: how can the potential losses found in the text be offset? To give an answer to these interrogations, the focus of analysis will be placed on the ST, as delivered by the US actors, and on the Spanish dubbed text, seen as the overall outcome as received by the target audience. Special attention will necessarily be devoted to the translator's and the adapter's tasks,<sup>1</sup> insofar as they are the most directly involved agents in the linguistic deconstruction and construction of the source and target texts. Any modification introduced by the dubbing director, the dubbing actors and even by other agents such as the clients (Templer 1995) is generally based on the Spanish

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<sup>1</sup> It is necessary to make a difference between these two tasks, since they are not always undertaken by the same professional. While in the first stage of the dubbing process the translator produces a rough translation of the original script, in the second stage the adapter or dialogue writer creates a synchronised and naturalistic version of the translated script, which will later on be read aloud by the voice talents in the dubbing studio.

translated script and usually seeks to achieve a more synchronised and naturalistic result (Whitman-Linsen 1992). The task of identifying the meaning added by ST pitch movements to subsequently reflect it in the target text (TT) tends to correspond to the first (translation), and even to the second (adaptation), part of the dubbing process and, therefore, both professionals will be regarded here as the most directly involved agents in the rendition of pitch movements in the written script.

The following sections will highlight the difficulty underlying the translation of intonation in dubbing, especially in comedy, where humour depends to a great extent on people's culture, habits and social status and can rely on different factors in each country (Magazzù 2018). It is precisely such complexity that makes this kind of research of special interest from an AVT standpoint.

## **2. Meaning and Implicating via Intonation**

Two key terms that need further discussion here due to their complex and ineluctable nature are 'meaning' and 'equivalence'. As mentioned above, translation is not just a matter of rendering the ST meaning into another language by using an equivalent. It is about interpreting the text within the cultural and pragmatic context in which the ST is embedded and transferring it into another linguistic and cultural system (Chaume 2008) to provide the closest approximation to the original content (Hatim and Mason 1990). In AVT, the task carried out by translators (and/or dialogue writers) is even more intricate, since they deal with "a semiotic construct comprising several signifying codes that operate simultaneously in the production of meaning" (Chaume 2004:16), thus implying not only the presence of verbal signs but also the presence of nonverbal signs such as intonation. Even though priority has generally been given to the verbal dimension of speech, intonation needs attention on the part of practitioners since its transference from the ST to the TT can be a problematic and challenging task.

As pointed out by Leemann (2012:5), "the extraordinary characteristic about intonation is that it carries meaning". The meaning attached to intonation can be linguistic or paralinguistic. In general, it is regarded as linguistic insofar as it is integrated into the grammar of a language and as paralinguistic insofar as it can convey attitudinal and emotional content (Ladd 2008). Linguistic and paralinguistic meanings can add different nuances to the speaker's words depending on the context and become a rich source of information for both the addresser and

the addressee. This meaning, however, is not always expressed explicitly. As explained by Bach (2012:47), "a speaker can say something without meaning it, by meaning something else or perhaps nothing at all. A speaker can mean something without saying it, by merely implicating it". The implicatures (see Grice 1975) added by intonation can affect the content in varying degrees. When the speaker's use of intonation changes the denotative content of the original sentence, word or phrase, intonation affects propositional content. Conversely, when the speaker's intonation adds implicatures to the denotative content of the sentence, it affects presuppositional content rather than propositional content (Wennerstrom 2001).

Now, as shown by Gutt (1991), the concept of implicature needs to be understood in relation to the notion of context. He argues that translation is based on the interpretative resemblance between two languages that provides the receiver with communicative clues to interpret the text correctly. It is thanks to the relationship between context and language that communication and interpretation take place. This is the reason why Pym (2010:35) adds the idea of 'context' to his description of implicatures by stating that "what is being said (the actual words of the source text) is not what is being meant (the implicature produced by these words interacting with a specific context)". The inferential task that audiovisual translators must carry out when interpreting intonation must necessarily be linked to the context in which the sentence *has been* uttered but also to the context in which the sentence *will be* uttered in another language, aimed at entertaining a different audience in a different culture and in a different setting. Such divergence, however, does not mean that the equivalence between two languages is unattainable. Equivalence should be seen as the closest approximation to the source-language meaning (Hatim and Mason 1990), one that is adequate and acceptable in the target language (Rojo 2009) and achieves the same value as the ST in terms of form, reference or function (Pym 2010).

The notion of 'equivalence' lies at the very root of translation and for many years has raised a storm of controversy in academic circles. From the impossibility of translation to the many factors that determine the equivalence between the source and target texts, this term "has been developed and adapted to fit in with current trends" (Rojo 2009:32), thus giving rise to different types of equivalence that focus on "broader contextual categories such as culture and audience in both ST and TT" (Hatim and Munday 2004:40). Transferring the meaning attached to the ST intonation by an equivalent in the dubbed text is not always a straightforward task and translators must adopt the role of decision-makers and problem-

solvers to operate "in the interest of the culture into which they are translating" (Toury 1995:12). The ST intonation might need to be rendered by other linguistic or paralinguistic resources in the target system, might not even need a translation if the same meaning is transmitted by the same intonation feature in the TT or might be lost in the dubbed version. Yet, we agree with Chaume (2008) that the loss of semantic content is part of the difficult translation process and there are some strategies that translators can use to solve this problem. Compensation, defined as the "procedure whereby the tenor of the whole piece is maintained by playing, in a stylistic detour, the note that could not be played in the same way and in the same place as in the source" (Vinay and Darbelnet 1972:189), is one of them. Compensation does not recoup a loss in meaning but can achieve an effective translation in another part of the text or by using different resources. It can become especially useful for translators who must handle humour, given its challenging and creative nature (Perego 2014), and a good strategy to mirror spontaneous-like dialogues in dubbed sitcoms (Baños 2013).

In this study, cross-language differences are noticeable between English and Spanish, especially concerning the use of intonation in the context of a TV sitcom. In order to consider the TT equivalent to the ST the implicatures attached to ST pitch movements should have been rendered (or compensated for) in the dubbed version either by means of intonation or by other effective resources. The purpose of this paper is to explore the extent to which the implicatures added by intonation in the ST have been transmitted in the dubbed version or lost in translation. Where loss or variation of meaning is detected, we investigate whether and how such potential losses might be offset in the target language.

The focus will be placed on those cases in which the implicatures added by intonation can carry semantic implications, i.e. the character's intonation modifies the denotative content of the original sentence, word or phrase and thus affects propositional content. Attention will also be devoted to the implicatures added by intonation in the ST that can affect presuppositional content, more specifically, to those cases in which they can contain implicit information, i.e. the character's tone of voice adds implicit information to the denotative content of the sentence; and they can serve a specific stylistic and comic purpose in the dialogue, i.e. the character's intonation is strategically used in the ST to sound humorous or witty (see section 4.2).

### **3. The Study of Intonation from a Threefold Perspective**

#### *3.1 The Three Ts*

Intonation has usually been described in terms of the choices that the addresser must face in spoken discourse. Authors such as Halliday (1967), Tench (1996) and Wells (2006) argue that a total of three subsystems operate simultaneously in intonation to give meaning to the linguistic construct. Firstly, speakers must decide the structure of their utterance by dividing it into meaningful chunks (Tonality). Secondly, they need to choose the most prominent word that will bear the nucleus (Tonicity). Last but not least, speakers have to decide the trajectory of their sentence by adopting a particular Tone or pitch contour. This trio of subsystems, also labelled as 'The three Ts' (Halliday 1967; Wells 2006), plays a pivotal role in speech as an essential carrier of information and helps the listener grasp the meaning that the addresser wishes to convey.

From a translational perspective, however, several difficulties might arise when trying to reflect in the TT the meaning attached to the ST intonation. The examples provided below illustrate that, although the communicative value of *tonality*, *tonicity* and *tone* in the ST can often be transferred in the TT by means of intonation, it may sometimes be necessary to draw upon other morphological, syntactic or lexical resources in Spanish to convey what the speaker intends to express intonationally in English. Let us consider the following pairs of sentences in both English and Spanish:

Table 1: Example of tonality (adapted from Tench 2011)

<b>ENGLISH</b>	<b>SPANISH</b>
a) She bathed and fed her daughter //	Bañó y dio de comer a su hija.
b) She bathed / and fed her daughter //	<u>Se</u> bañó y dio de comer a su hija.

Tonality is related to the organisation of information into intonation units (Tench 2011). In Table 1, whereas the first English clause (a) presents just one piece of information, the second utterance (b) is divided into two different units. The contrast in meaning resulting from the segmentation of the utterance is easily perceived by English speakers intonationally. In Spanish, however, such difference in meaning needs to be reproduced by a shift in the grammatical structure of the sentence (Solé 1989). In this particular case, the translation of the

verb 'to bathe' into Spanish will indicate whether the subject is performing the action on herself (*se bañó*) or on another person (*bañó a su hija*). This means that if there is no boundary between the two coordinate clauses in English (a), the action of the verbs 'to bathe' and 'to feed' is performed by the same person ('she') but perceived by just one object ('her daughter'). If, on the contrary, there is an intonation break located between the two clauses (b), both verbs are performed by the same subject ('she') but perceived by two different objects ('she' and 'her daughter'). In this example, the meaning expressed intonationally in oral English cannot be just reflected intonationally in oral Spanish but also grammatically.

Table 2: Example of tonicity (extracted from Tench 1996)

ENGLISH	SPANISH
a) They didn't <b>come</b> , happily.	<u>Menos mal</u> que no vinieron.
b) They didn't come <b>happily</b> .	No vinieron <u>de buen humor</u> .

The choice of the tonic segment within the utterance can also prompt several contrasts in the meaning intended by the interlocutor, as shown in the example of tonicity illustrated in Table 2 (Tench 1996:71). Broadly speaking, even though the nuclear tone in the English language is commonly placed on the last content word in the sentence (Wells 2006), the nucleus can be strategically moved backwards to convey a different meaning or to introduce different implicatures. In this case, the adverb 'happily', if deaccented, alludes to the opinion of the person uttering the sentence. Conversely, if the adverb is accented, 'happily' refers to the mood of the subject performing the action. In contrast with the flexibility of focalisation in English, "in Spanish the rule is to place [the nucleus] on the very last word, regardless of the nature of such word" (Gutiérrez Díez 2005:132). Then, the meaning added by way of tonicity in oral English might need to be reflected in Spanish by other syntactic devices such as word order and changes in the morphological structure or in the lexicon (Solé 1989; Hervey 1998). As put by Gutiérrez Díez (2005) and Mateo (2014), the differences between English and Spanish intonation are generally more noticeable in pitch prominence (tonicity) than in pitch segmentation (tonality) and pitch movement (tone).

Table 3: Example of tone (adapted from Wells 2006)

ENGLISH	SPANISH
Are you angry with them?	¿Te has enfadado con ellos?
a) ↘ Yes.	Sí.
b) ∨ Yes.	No mucho. Un poco.

English speakers can express a different meaning or, as shown in Table 3, refer to various parts of an utterance just by changing the trajectory of their pitch contour (Monroy 2012). In this example, extracted from Wells (2006:30), the speaker can add a different implicature just by varying the movement of the pitch. The answer 'Yes', if uttered with a falling tone (↘), expresses the addresser's opinion with no reservations but, with the use of the implicational fall-rise (∨), the speaker suggests that something has been left unsaid (Wells 2006). Given that, unlike English, the Spanish language tends to present more rigidity in terms of intonation (Ortiz Lira 2000), it is not always possible to simply transfer the contour assigned to the source utterance into the translated sentence or to replace it with another contour in Spanish. This shift in the original pitch movement should rather be represented in Spanish by a change in the words used, namely *Sí* (I am angry with them) and *No mucho* or *Un poco* (I am angry but just to a certain point).

The interaction amongst the three Ts allows the development of a framework that can accommodate the numerous functions that intonation fulfils in a language (Wells 2006). Tonality is mainly related to the delimitation of syntactic structures in the dialogue (grammatical function) and to the organisation of conversation in spoken discourse (discourse function), while tonicity is mostly attributed to the focus of information within the utterance (accentual function). Tone is generally associated with the expression of attitudes (attitudinal function) along with the distinction between clause types and the speaker's degree of certainty (grammatical function), amongst others.

An empirical corpus-based study on the rendition of tonality, tonicity and tone in the Spanish dubbed version of a US TV show (Sánchez-Mompeán 2016) has revealed that most appreciable losses and changes in the meaning added by English intonation take place at tone level. Such findings are highly relevant in AVT and especially suitable for the present

research. For the sake of applicability and considering that the space limitations of this paper make it difficult to delve into each subsystem individually, the analysis will thus be confined to the third category, namely pitch movement or tone.

### *3.2 Tone*

The role of pitch movement will first be examined from the viewpoint of its use in the English language in an attempt to show the attitudinal and grammatical load that tone can bear in spoken discourse. The examples presented below suffice to illustrate the flexibility of English tonal patterns when it comes to communicating different meanings of the same sentence.

The many uses of tones are essential for oral communication, insofar as they provide information that goes beyond word level and help the listener interpret the meaning intended by the speaker. Perhaps the most basic and obvious role of tone in speech is to distinguish clause types (Couper-Kuhlen 1986). This may be one of the reasons why intonation and grammar have very often gone hand in hand in scholarly research (Halliday 1967; Bolinger 1989). Due to the lack of punctuation in oral language, the pitch contour of a given sentence can become the only available means to learn whether the addresser aims at, for instance, stating a fact or asking a question, mainly when no subject-verb or subject-auxiliary inversion is provided. A change in tone can also alter the speaker's level of confidence. In general terms, a fall tends to boost confidence, whereas a rise tends to reduce it, as shown in Example 3.1 below.

#### **Example 3.1**

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a) They are coming to ↘morrow.

---

b) They are coming to ↗morrow?

---

Pitch variation can also play an important role in the search for confirmation. In fact, the receiver is likely to perceive whether the speaker intends to put in a request for information or to seek confirmation just on the basis of the utterances' tone alone. Both the answer offered and the answer expected by the interlocutors are bound to vary in every case. Likewise, the attitudinal import attached to the character's words can also change depending on the tone used: an attitude of interest and feelings of surprise and concern are often linked to the rising

tone in this interrogative type (Chun 2002; Monroy 2012). In fact, some attitudes are more likely to occur with some types of pitch contours (Monroy 2005). A statement, for instance, can sound more casual and involved if uttered with a high fall, whereas it can convey a sense of detachment and reservation with the use of a low fall (O'Connor and Arnold 1973).

As shown in Example 3.2, the descending tone adopted in the former question should trigger (and awaits) an affirmative response such as 'I do!' or 'Of course!', whilst the ascending pitch in the latter sentence indicates that the speaker does not really know if the answer given will be either positive or negative and shows more interest in the response.

### **Example 3.2**

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a) Do you remember my friend ↘Amy? (I am sure you do)

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b) Do you remember my friend ↗Amy? (I am not sure if you do)

---

Tag questions and checking questions can also add different implicatures depending on the movement of the pitch used, as shown in Example 3.3. Tag questions, on the one hand, can reflect variations in the speaker's degree of certainty and act as a potential regulator of conversational behaviour (Cruttenden 1997). The most common way of formulating this type of question is by means of the reversed polarity tag (e.g. 'You live here, don't you?'), although, especially in colloquial conversation, they can also adopt a constant-polarity tag (e.g. 'You live here, do you?'). On the other hand, checking questions such as 'right?', 'huh?', 'yeah?' or 'okay?' tend to serve a confirmatory-seeking role in speech and show the level of confidence attached to the addresser's words.

### **Example 3.3**

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a) You do love me, ↘don't you? (I know you love me)

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b) You do love me, ↗don't you? (I want to know if you love me)

---

The direction of the nuclear tone can also convey finality and non-finality. Complete and definitive sentences usually take a fall, whereas incompleteness is reflected by rising and level movements (Wells 2006). As illustrated in Example 3.4, the same holds true for enumerations as well as for closed and open lists (Monroy 2012), which can indicate the status of information by resorting to descending, ascending or level tones.

### **Example 3.4**

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a) I bought ↗carrots, ↗onions and po↘tatoes. (That is it)

---

b) I bought ↗carrots, ↗onions, po↗tatoes... (Amongst many others)

---

A special type of pitch movement that can introduce significant contrasts in meaning is the fall-rise. Two phenomena under study here are the scope of negation and the dependent fall-rise (Wells 2006). In the first case, as shown in Example 3.5, the use of the falling-rising tone in a negative sentence can impose a limit within the negation, whereas the same utterance produced with a falling tone would involve an unlimited scope (compare a) and b) below).

### **Example 3.5**

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a) He doesn't eat ↘anything. (He eats just certain things)

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b) He doesn't eat ↗anything. (He eats nothing)

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In the second case, the fall-rise can indicate that a certain clause is contingent upon another clause and in turn that the utterance is not complete. The implicatures attached to the use of this nuclear tone in conversation are manifold and can vary depending on the situational context.

The relevance of tone in the interdisciplinary study of AVT in general and of dubbing in particular is underscored by the key role of pitch movement in dialogic interactions. As shown in this section, it can identify clause types, distinguish a request for confirmation from a request for information, add attitudinal content, represent the speaker's degree of certainty by means of question-tags and checking questions, indicate the status of information and convey implicatures by the use of the fall-rise.

## **4. Corpus and Methodology**

### *4.1 Parallel Corpus*

The parallel corpus analysed in the present paper is composed of two different sub-corpora consisting of aural instances drawn from the US sitcom *How I met your mother* (ST) and their corresponding translations into the Spanish target text (TT). The same episode was investigated for each of the nine seasons, which aired on CBS from 2005 to 2014. Episode

number 17 was selected arbitrarily for the comparative analysis and examined in full length. In sum, nine original and nine dubbed episodes, featuring a total duration of approximately 400 minutes analysed in both languages, were singled out for examination. Table 4 shows the number and the title of the episodes included in the parallel corpus under study.

Table 4: Episodes selected for the comparative analysis

<b>Number of season</b>	<b>Number of episode</b>	<b>Original title</b>	<b>Spanish title</b>
1	17	Life Among the Gorillas	La vida entre gorilas
2	17	Arrivederci, Fiero	Arrivederci, Fiero
3	17	The Goat	La cabra
4	17	The Front Porch	La prueba del porche
5	17	Of Course	Por supuesto
6	17	Garbage Island	La isla de basura
7	17	No Pressure	Sin presiones
8	17	The Ashtray	El cenicero
9	17	Sunrise	Amanecer

The crucial role of intonation as a valuable carrier of orality made it imperative to find fictional texts able to give the impression of reality from a prosodic standpoint and to emulate spontaneous-like dialogues regardless of the prefabricated nature of the audiovisual construct. The situation comedy was thus selected for the analysis because it is the genre that most faithfully represents naturally-occurring interactions (Baños 2013), real-life situations (Padilla and Requeijo 2010) and very often resorts strategically to intonational devices to create hilarious situations (Zabalbeascoa 2001). Intonation can certainly be used as a humour-making tool in oral speech. Authors such as Attardo et al. (2003) and Hidalgo Navarro (2011) have emphasised its key role to help the speaker convey irony and sarcasm and to sound humorous. Even though the challenges posed make the translation of humour a very difficult task, audiovisual translators can resort to similar or different strategies in the TT to maintain the comic value and bring enjoyment to the audience. In fact, as put by Perego (2014:12), "losses can be mitigated, humorous instances can be relocated, and further layers of meaning can be added in the target texts" for the sake of entertainment.

## *4.2 Methodological Issues*

The focus of the present paper is placed on the rendition of pitch movement in Spanish dubbed dialogue. The aim of the research is to explore whether the implicatures added by intonation in the ST have been transmitted in the dubbed version or lost in translation. If any significant loss or variation of meaning is detected, the idea is to determine how such losses might be offset in the TT. For this purpose, the oral delivery of a total of 32 fictional characters participating in the nine episodes selected, of which 27 are played as secondary roles by guest actors and 5 as major roles by the protagonists of the show (including the narrator), have been sifted through intonationally. Detailed examples are provided in section 5 below.

The study of pitch movement from an AVT perspective was conducted both quantitatively and qualitatively in three consecutive stages:

1. Taking the original aural text as a starting point, the first step was to cut every single utterance with the programme MP3 Cutter and introduce the audio files in the speech recognition software SFS/WASP (version 1.54), developed by Mark Huckvale (University College London), in order to obtain the waveform and pitch track of every voiced sentence (see Figures 1 and 2). Even though this software was the tool used to analyse the pitch contour of the utterances under scrutiny, additional aural inspections were conducted by the researcher to double-check the accuracy of the findings.<sup>2</sup> Double-checking is always advisable, since non-diegetic sounds and background noises might vary or alter the pitch track extracted from the speech analysis tool.

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<sup>2</sup> The pitch contour generated by the software is reliable but should be taken as an approximate guide, providing a basis for further aural inspection and interpretation.

Figure 1: Introduction of the audio file in SFS/WASP

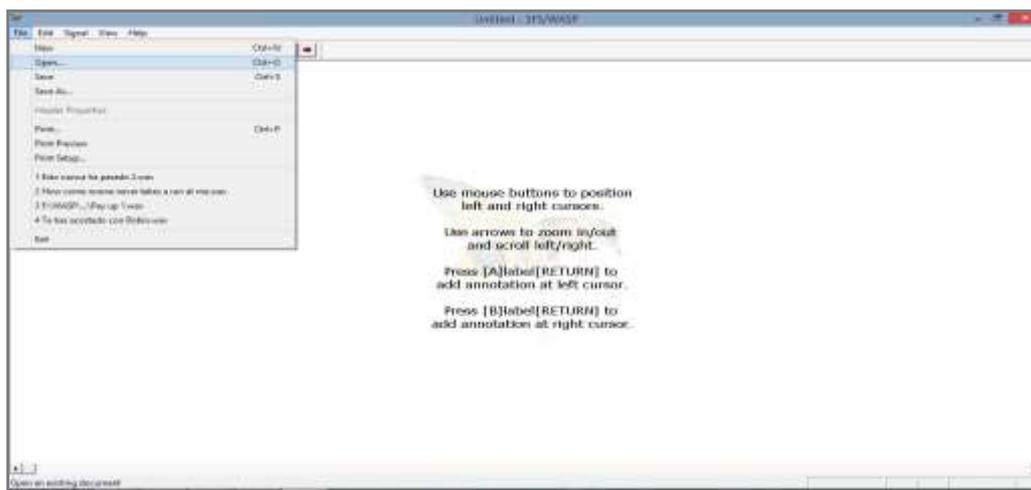
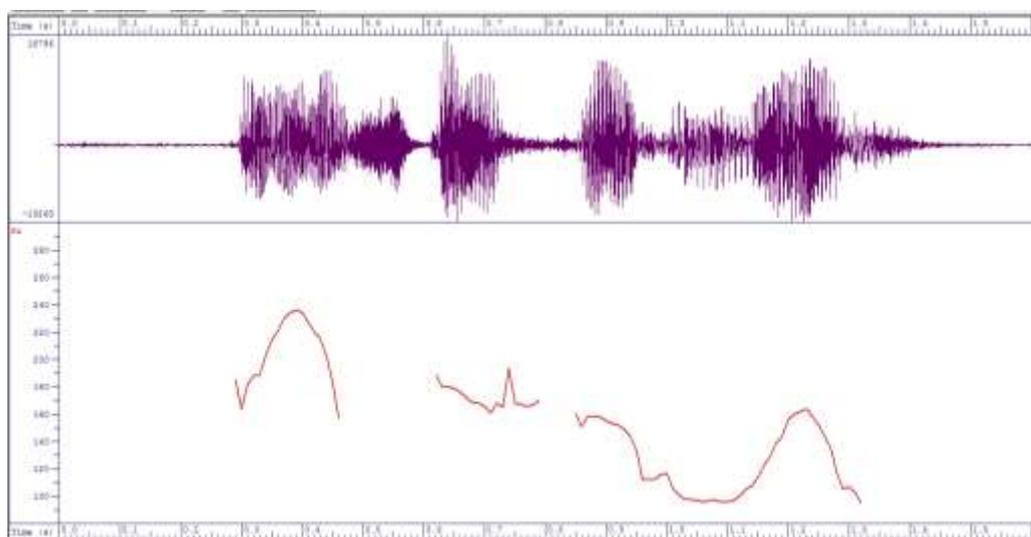


Figure 2: SFS/WASP pitch track (bottom) and waveform (top) of the sentence *They are gonna stop global warming*



Then, all the utterances were examined to identify cases of tonal behaviour (strictly on the basis of the original actors' performances) that could require special attention when rendered into the target language from a translational perspective because

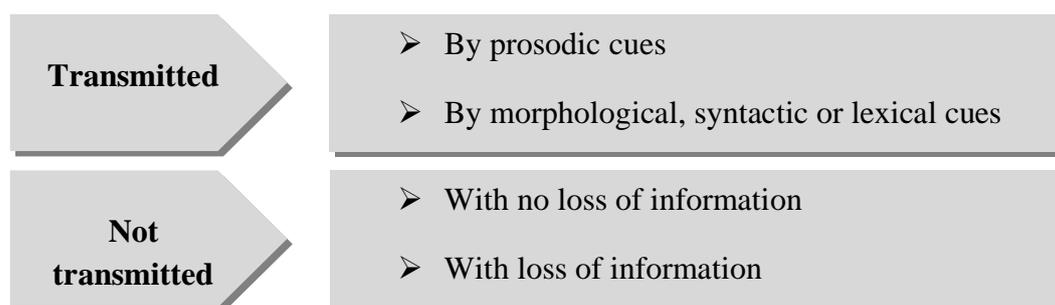
- (a) they carried semantic implications: the speaker's use of intonation could change the denotative content of the original sentence or word (e.g. 'anyone' uttered with a falling tone can refer to 'nobody' but with a falling-rising tone means 'not everybody');

(b) they contained implicit information: the character's pitch movement added implicit information to the denotative content of the sentence (e.g. tag questions uttered with a falling tone can seek confirmation, whereas a rising tag generally asks for information because the speaker is not entirely sure about the answer);

(c) they served a specific stylistic and comic purpose: the speaker's tone of voice was strategically used in the original version to sound humorous or witty (e.g. the checking question 'right?' with a twofold meaning that leads to a case of potential ambiguity in English, thus making the audience laugh).

2. English utterances meeting at least one of these criteria were identified and extracted from the original corpus. These samples were then compared to their translated counterparts in Spanish to ascertain whether the implicatures attached to the ST intonation had been transmitted in the dubbed dialogue. After the aural and visual comparison of English and Spanish contours, the Spanish instances were divided into two distinct groups, namely 'transmitted' and 'not transmitted', depending on whether or not the examples belonging to groups (a), (b), and (c) were rendered in the TT and considered equivalent in both texts. If the original content was 'transmitted', samples were classified into two more groups depending on whether the meaning attached to the source contour had been reflected in the TT 'by prosodic cues' or 'by morphological, syntactic or lexical cues'. If it was 'not transmitted', the data obtained were classified into 'with no loss of information' (i.e. the meaning attached to intonation is not transmitted in the TT, but equivalence between both texts is achieved) or 'with loss of information' (i.e. the meaning attached to intonation is not transmitted in the TT and equivalence between both texts is not achieved). This distinction was easily made thanks to the attitudinal, grammatical as well as prosodic comparison between the English and Spanish utterances.

Figure 3: Classification of the data obtained



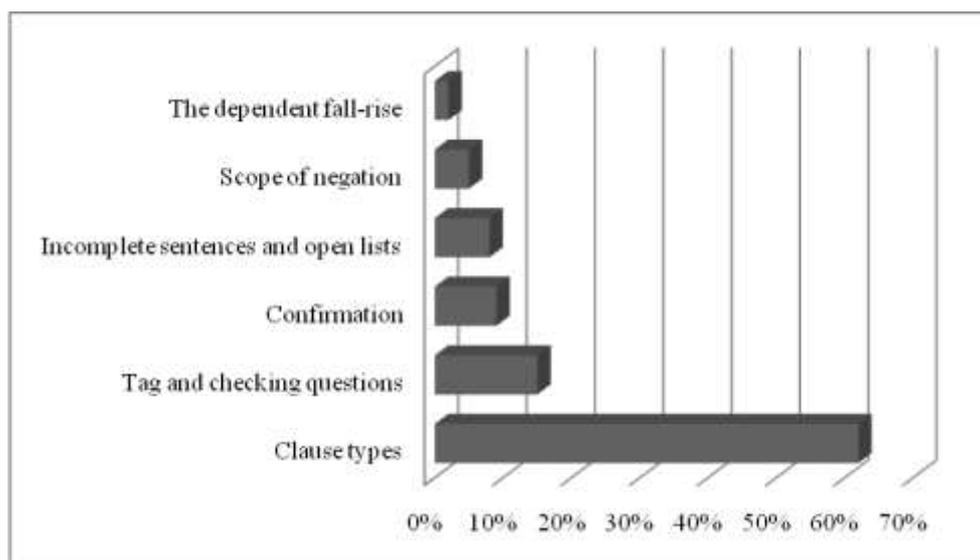
When classifying the data obtained, due account was necessarily taken of other acoustic and visual factors such as paralanguage, body language and synchronisation, insofar as they could constrain the practitioners' task or even offset any potential loss of information in the TT. In fact, an analysis of intonation in AVT should not obviate the specificity of the audiovisual text. The interaction between image and words requires closer attention on other audiovisual aspects such as the synchronies at play in dubbing, namely isochrony, lip-sync and kinesic synchrony (see Chaume 2012:66-75) as well as the shooting code (e.g. the presence of close-ups). Moreover, in the construction and deconstruction of intonational meaning other factors operating simultaneously in the audiovisual text can exert a substantial impact on the practitioners' task. For instance, the signifying codes "involved in the production of significance" (Chaume 2004:13), the situational context as well as the key role of kinesics, proxemics and other prosodic features such as tempo or loudness can be regarded as valuable sources of information in speech.

3. After completion of the comparative analysis between the English and Spanish versions and the classification of data into the different categories proposed, the focus of analysis was placed on the fourth group shown in Figure 3 (i.e. not transmitted > with loss of information) to explore the major difficulties encountered by practitioners when dealing with the translation of pitch movement and to propose alternatives that could offset the losses found.

## **5. Analysis of Results**

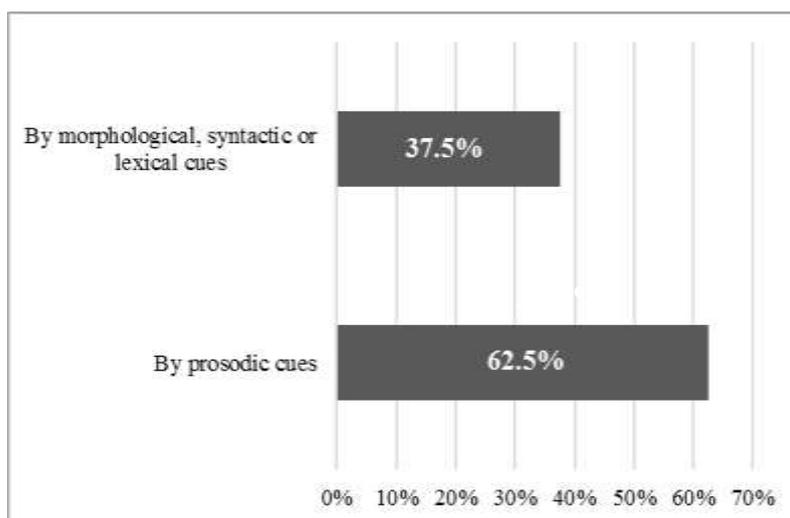
As far as the English corpus is concerned, an aural and visual inspection of contours in the nine episodes analysed reveals that a total of 65 instances carry semantic implications, contain implicit information or serve a specific stylistic and comic purpose that might be deemed as problematic when translated into Spanish. The data obtained are categorised according to the main role that pitch movement fulfils within the utterance. As illustrated in Figure 4, the quantitative results show that a predominance of tonal meaning is associated with clause types (61.5%). This is hardly surprising if seen as a reflection of the great amount of grammatical content that can be conveyed by the trajectory of the pitch. In fact, as stated by Couper-Kuhlen (1986:148), "[clause type] is surely the most frequently cited evidence for the grammatical function of intonation". A minor occurrence was identified in the other five parameters under scrutiny (38.5%).

Figure 4: Uses of pitch movement in the ST



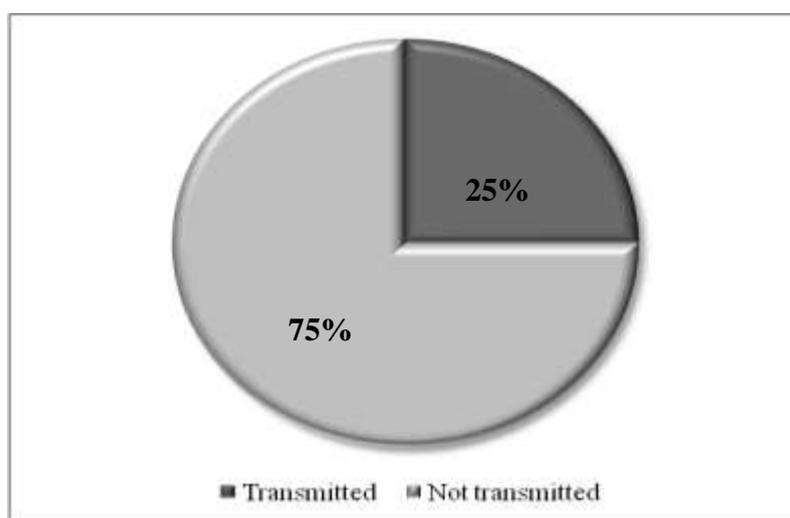
The results obtained were divided into two clean-cut groups, as suggested in Figure 3 above, depending on whether or not the implicatures attached to the ST tone were transmitted in the dubbed corpus. On the one hand, the group labelled as 'transmitted' consisted of all those cases in which the translated text managed to convey the implicatures added intonationally in the English text. All original sentences were analysed individually to determine what implicatures had been added by pitch movement and compared to their dubbed counterparts to ascertain whether and how they had been reflected in the Spanish text. The comparative analysis between the ST and the TT revealed striking findings. A look at the percentages included in Figure 5 shows that most of this content has been transmitted by prosodic cues (62.5%) rather than by morphological, syntactic or lexical cues (37.5%). It thus emerges that the target language often resorts to prosody to convey the implicatures attached to the ST pitch movement.

Figure 5: Classification of 'transmitted' information in the TT



On the other hand, those instances that failed to reflect the meaning added by tonal patterns were collected under the label 'not transmitted', as illustrated in Figure 6. The latter group also includes two types of instances, namely those showing no dramatic loss of information (i.e. cases of loss of emphasis, suspense or emotional content), in which the verbal content of the sentence is not altered, and those implying a new interpretation or bringing about drastic changes in the intention of the original character, in which the verbal content of the utterance tends to be altered dramatically.

Figure 6: Percentage of transmitted and non-transmitted instances in the TT



As shown in Table 5, these data confirm that, in proportion to the number of instances 'transmitted' in the TT (25%) and especially to the number of occurrences which, despite not being transmitted in the Spanish version, show no dramatic loss of information (9%), the

cases of tone that fail to render the information transmitted intonationally in the ST are remarkably high (66%). What emerges from such figures is that a great deal of the implicatures introduced by using pitch movement in English have not been conveyed in Spanish, thus giving rise to new interpretations or leading to shifts in the speaker's intention. Table 5 illustrates the total amount of transmitted and not-transmitted instances in the categories under examination and as compared to the whole corpus.

Table 5: Transmitted and non-transmitted instances in the TT

CATEGORY	Total	Transmitted	Not transmitted	
			No loss	Loss
Clause type	61.5			
% Within category		12.5	12.5	75
% of Total		31.25	83.3	69.8
Tag and checking questions	15.4			
% Within category		20	0	80
% of Total		12.5	0	18.6
Confirmation	9.3			
% Within category		66.7	16.7	16.7
% of Total		25	16.7	2.3
Incomplete sentences and open lists	7.7			
% Within category		40	0	60
% of Total		12.5	0	7
Scope of negation	4.6			
% Within category		100	0	0
% of Total		18.75	0	0
The dependent fall-rise	1.5			
% Within category		0	0	100
% of Total		0	0	2.3
<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>25%</b>	<b>9%</b>	<b>66%</b>
			<b>75%</b>	

A look at the results at hand shows that the most problematic uses of tone in the TT are the rendition of clause types, with only 12.5% samples transmitted, and of tag and checking questions, with just 20% instances transmitted. Conversely, the scope of negation and the

rendition of confirmation appear to pose a lower number of problems for practitioners, who have managed to reflect the majority of the implicatures attached to the trajectory of the pitch in the sentence (100% and 66.7%, respectively), generally thanks to the situational context. Bearing in mind the main purpose of this paper, attention will be devoted to those examples that have not been transmitted in the target version (75%) in order to evaluate the difficulties encountered by the translator.

As noted above, one of the most basic and obvious roles of pitch movement in spoken discourse is to draw distinctions between clause types. Although, apparently, this should not cause special difficulties for practitioners, several changes in the illocutionary force of utterances were identified in the Spanish corpus. The immediate outcome of such shift is the alteration, to the detriment of the target viewers, in both the aim of the utterance and the speaker's intention. This is illustrated in Example 5.1.<sup>3</sup> Here, the character, Ted, resorts to a rising tone to elicit information from the addressee, Marshall. Ted tells his friend that he kissed Robin just before she took her plane to Russia and really needs to know what Marshall thinks about that. In Spanish, the original question has been substituted by a statement with the use of a descending movement on the nucleus. The result is unavoidably different, given that the character is no longer requesting information, no longer expecting an answer on the part of the listener and no longer showing interest. Additionally, the subsequent answer to Ted's question ('No, I'm not shocked') becomes a correction in Spanish, thus changing the perception of the source and target audiences. An interrogative sentence such as *¿No te sorprende?* ('Aren't you surprised?'), uttered with a low rising tone, could offset this loss.

### **Example 5.1**

S07E17 (TCR: 00:04:29)

---

**English (EN):** Are you ↗shocked?

---

**Spanish (SP):** Estás escandaliz↘ado.

---

**Back translation (BT):** You are shocked.

---

Similarly, in the next example Robin finds out that Lily was directly involved in her breakup with Ted. Since she can hardly believe what her friend has just come clean about, Robin puts in a request for information that evinces her interest and surprise. As regards the Spanish

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<sup>3</sup> All the examples (audio and visual files) under analysis in the present paper are available upon request.

version, the rising tone of the yes-no question has been replaced by a falling contour, thus turning the interrogative into a statement and losing the information-seeking nature of the original utterance. Not only do the purpose and intention of the speaker end up being completely altered in the TT, but the attitudinal import in Robin's words will also be perceived differently by the target viewership. As in the previous example, the same meaning could be transmitted by adding a questioning mark.

### **Example 5.2**

S04E17 (TCR: 00:15:16)

---

**EN:** So if it weren't for you, Ted and I might still be ↗ dating?

---

**SP:** O sea que si no fuera por ti, Ted y yo aún seguiríamos ↘ juntos.

---

**BT:** So if it weren't for you, Ted and I would still be dating.

---

Other significant implicatures can be added by pitch movement in the dialogue, as shown in Example 5.3. In this case, Barney asks a rhetorical question that reinforces the jocular effect of his words and underscores a very characteristic trait of his personality. Following the premise that "certain aspects of someone's language performance trigger beliefs and evaluations in the hearer about that person" (Culpeper 2001:12), it seems that Barney's utterance manages to activate the prior knowledge of the audience about his usual lack of subtlety and this certainly results in a humorous situation (reinforced by the use of canned laughter). Different implicatures, however, are suggested in the TT. The substitution of the rhetorical question by a declarative sentence as well as the shift in the polarity of the utterance (the negative interrogative has been translated as an affirmative statement) convey the opposite sense. It could thus be argued that the way characters say what they say can really have an impact on their characterisation within the fictional context. An alternative to maintain the original implicatures and to sound humorous in the target language could be a question such as *¿Cómo decirlo sin sonar sutil?* ('How to put this without sounding delicate?').

### **Example 5.3**

S06E17 (TCR: 00:04:15)

---

**EN:** How do I not put this ↗delicately?

---

**SP:** Lo diré deli↘cadamente.

---

**BT:** I will say it delicately.

---

In Example 5.4, the speaker, Marshall, asks for information and expects an answer on the part of the listener, Lily. Judging by his intonation (i.e. low falling tone), the character sounds interested in the response but also worried about the possible answer, given that, even though he does not know what Lily did, his expectations appear not to be very positive. By turning the question into an exclamation uttered with a high falling tone in the TT the grammatical as well as the attitudinal functions of pitch movement undergo semantic modifications in the Spanish utterance. In fact, the Spanish translation seems to suggest that Marshall is surprised about something that Lily already did and his exclamation contributes to reinforcing his attitude. Perhaps a question such as *¿Qué has hecho?* ('What have you done?') would become a suitable option to reflect the implicatures that are lost in the TT.

### **Example 5.4**

S08E17 (TCR: 00:15:31)

---

**EN:** What did you ↘do?

---

**SP:** ¡Qué hi↘ciste!

---

**BT:** What (a horrible thing) you did!

---

On other occasions, statements uttered with a falling contour, which generally involves a stronger sense of certainty and definiteness (O'Connor and Arnold 1973; Monroy 2012), have been translated into questions, thus inescapably reducing the speaker's level of confidence in the dubbed version. Example 5.5 is a case in point. Here, Barney's level of confidence is bound to be perceived in a different way by English and Spanish viewers. While he sounds extremely self-confident and convinced in the original version, he shows a more doubtful and uncertain attitude in the translated version due to the ascending contour used by the character in Spanish. This loss could be offset by getting rid of the questioning tone in the target version, e.g. *Llevo razón* ('I'm right').

### **Example 5.5**

S07E17 (TCR: 00:07:19)

---

**EN:** I'm \right about this.

---

**SP:** ¿A que tengo ra↗zón?

---

**BT:** I am right, am I not?

---

In addition to clause types, the implicatures transmitted by question-tags and checking questions were sometimes not rendered in the dubbed text. This is shown in Example 5.6, where Marshall elicits a request for information by uttering the tag with a rising tone and expects an answer on the part of the receiver, Barney. In Spanish, the use of a falling nuclear tone and the absence of a tag question such as *¿no?* at the end of the sentence lead the speaker taking for granted that Barney did not actually break any laws. Consequently, both what the character really means and what the target audience perceives end up being altered in the TT. The speaker's real intention when uttering this sentence could thus be transmitted in Spanish by adding *¿no?* or *¿verdad?* at the end of the sentence, both uttered with a low rise.

### **Example 5.6**

S03E17 (TCR: 00:06:10)

---

**EN:** How can I help you as your lawyer? You didn't break any laws, ↗did you?

---

**SP:** ¿Y cómo puedo ayudarte como abogado? No has infringido ninguna \ley.

---

**BT:** And how can I help you as a lawyer? You have not broken any law.

---

In conversational exchanges checking questions are frequently employed by speakers to check whether the addressee is keeping track of the conversation or to make sure that the recipient understands what is being said. In Example 5.7, Barney draws upon a checking question with a twofold meaning: as an interjection to check the accuracy of his answer and as an adjective to indicate position. Because this double entendre would not be feasible in Spanish and isochrony hinders a more elaborated translation, the translator must opt for one of the two meanings. In this case, the rising tone and in turn the checking question have been prioritised and maintained in the dubbed version. Even though this option unavoidably sounds less hilarious, it serves the questioning purpose of the original utterance.

### **Example 5.7**

S02E17 (TCR: 00:16:11)

---

**EN:** Which pedal is the gas?

[...] Middle, left, ↗right?

---

**SP:** ¿Cuál es el acelerador?

[...] El central izquierdo, ¿ver↗dad?

---

**BT:** The middle left, right?

---

Checking questions can also be used to seek confirmation during the conversation. In Example 5.8, for instance, the character's level of confidence is very high (low rising tone), and the answer expected to his question is affirmative. Nevertheless, in Spanish the whole utterance has been turned into a question with a high rising tone in a way that his level of confidence is sharply reduced and, since the character seems to be asking for information, the answer expected might now be either affirmative or negative. The best solution to accomplish the original purpose of the speaker might be the addition of the question *¿verdad?* or *¿no?*, which, according to Monroy (2012), is regarded as the most natural and common way to translate this type of interrogative into Spanish.

### **Example 5.8**

S01E17 (TCR: 00:14:36)

---

**EN:** So I should still buy that plane ticket, ↗right?

---

**SP:** Entonces, ¿compro el billete de a↗vión?

---

**BT:** Then, shall I buy the plane ticket?

---

Incomplete sentences also merit the translator's attention. Non-finality is indicated in both English and Spanish by means of a level (→) or a rising tone that signals that there is more to come. Unfinished sentences can be inserted in the text to change the subject and to move on to another topic, to introduce a note of suspense or to denote an interruption. This is the case in Example 5.9. Marshall is unable to complete his utterance because he is suddenly interrupted by Ted. Although the collocation 'irreversible damages' makes it easier for the audience to predict what might naturally come next, the level tone ending also makes the viewer aware that the utterance is actually incomplete (O'Connor and Arnold 1973). As far as

the Spanish version is concerned, the incomplete statement has been turned into a complete sentence with the use of a falling tone and the addition of the word *daños* (damages). The fact that adjectives are normally placed before the noun in English and the reverse is true in Spanish might explain why the translator/dialogue writer has felt the need to fill in the gap. Once again, the translator must give priority to one of the two options by deciding whether it is more important to include the word 'irreversible' or to reflect the original interruption by leaving the utterance incomplete.

### **Example 5.9**

S01E17 (TCR: 00:01:07)

---

**EN:** I'm saying that the coffee industry is causing irre→versible...

---

**SP:** Estoy diciendo que la industria del café está causando daños irrever↘sibles.

---

**BT:** I'm saying that the coffee industry is causing irreversible damages.

---

The tone adopted by the character can also leave a list open or closed. In Example 5.10, the speaker intentionally leaves the list open with the use of a level tone to indicate that the person he is referring to, Don, has many more qualities than the three adjectives stated. Unlike the English version, in Spanish the character indicates that the sentence is complete (closed list) and that there are no more options. The last item, uttered with a falling tone, makes the addressee aware that the speaker has closed the list and that the utterance is complete. In this case, even though the denotative content of the sentence is clear in Spanish, the implicatures added by intonation in the ST are not accurately reflected in the translation. To offset this loss the translator should get rid of the conjunction *y* ('and') and resort to ellipsis (*Es gracioso, es listo, es guapo...*).

### **Example 5.10**

S05E17 (TCR: 00:01:58)

---

**EN:** Robin, that guy is awesome. He's funny, he's smart, he's →handsome...

---

**SP:** Oye, Robin, este tío es fenomenal. Es gracioso, es listo y es ↘guapo.

---

**BT:** Hey, Robin, this guy is awesome. He's funny, he's smart and he's handsome.

---

The dependent fall-rise can also add significant implicatures to the dialogue. In the following example, the clause 'but it's so cold' is not complete in itself and is then attached to another

clause known as 'trailing' (Wells 2006:69). To indicate that there is still more to come, the dependent clause usually takes a fall-rise. If the implicatures introduced by the fall-rise in the speech are not grasped by the translator/dialogue writer, the meaning of the whole utterance might vary, as it is the case in the Spanish translation of Example 5.11. Here, the clause *pero hace mucho frío* ('but it's very cold') is a complete statement independent from the following sentence and, accordingly, it takes a falling tone. This clause, however, seems to be dependent on the sentence *odio decirte esto* ('I hate to say this'), thus implying that what Marshall hates to say is that it is so cold and not the fact that there is only one way to make it through the night. To compensate for this loss the translator will have to make the sentence *odio decirte esto* independent from the rest of the utterance by replacing the adverb *mucho* ('very') by *tanto...que* ('so...that').

### **Example 5.11**

S02E17 (TCR: 00:09:36)

---

**EN:** Dude, I hate to say this, but it's so cold there's only one way that we're gonna make it through this night.

---

**SP:** Tío, odio decirte esto, pero hace mucho frío, y solo hay una forma de que podamos sobrevivir a esta noche.

---

**BT:** Dude, I hate to say this, but it's very cold, and there's only one way that we can make it through this night.

---

## **6. Discussion of Results and Conclusions**

This study corroborates that tone is indeed one of the most useful resources for characters to convey additional meaning in the source version, given that just by changing the intonation of an utterance it is possible to introduce different implicatures and resolve potential cases of ambiguity (Halliday 1970). According to our findings, the dubbed text is characterised by a higher occurrence of 'not-transmitted' instances (75%), of which 66% do imply a significant loss or change in the implicatures attached to the original utterances. What emerges from this percentage is that only one quarter of the meaning implied by pitch movement in the English speech has been reflected or compensated for in the Spanish translated version. Drawing on the results obtained in this research, it could be argued that the most problematic uses of tone in the TT are the translation of clause types and of tag and checking questions, as opposed to

the scope of negation and confirmatory-seeking questions, which have more often than not been grasped by the practitioners and rendered into Spanish.

The analysis has also revealed that the flexibility of English contours has sometimes restricted the practitioners' leeway in the TT, thus favouring standardisation at the expense of prosodic creativity and humour. As shown in the examples above, it is not always easy to reflect in Spanish the meaning added intonationally by the original speaker, given that it is not always possible to exploit the same resources in the target language (e.g. the double entendre in Example 5.7). This fact evidences that translators must go through a complicated process in which they need to take decisions and solve several problems not only related to what characters say but also to how they say what they say.

As for those instances that have been 'transmitted' in the TT, 62.5% have been reflected in the dubbed version prosodically, while 37.5% have been conveyed by means of morphological, syntactic or lexical devices. These data suggest that in those cases in which the implicatures added by tone in the ST can be transferred intonationally in the TT practitioners have drawn upon pitch movement to reflect this content.

Translation as a process and translation as a product are inextricably interconnected. The unsuccessful rendition of pitch movement identified in the dubbed corpus could thus be extrapolated from the choices made by the translator throughout the whole process. The major problems encountered by the practitioners might be related to the grammatical and attitudinal content transmitted by tonal patterns as well as to their influence on the meaning of the words uttered. This makes it necessary to carry out a constant interpretative and inferential task, which will enable the translator to grasp the implicatures attached to the character's pitch contours. As noted by Mateo:

communication is not simply a matter of a producer's encoding and a receiver's decoding a message, but rather of interpreting the speaker's meaning, which is embedded in a given social setting and inextricably linked to his/her intentions (2014:115).

Due to cross-language intonational differences, rendering the implicatures attached to pitch movement from one linguistic system to another can pose certain difficulties that, if unresolved, might exert a negative impact on the meaning intended by the speaker, on the

target audiences' perception and on character portrayal. Becoming aware of "the way prosodic features are exploited for communication" in both the source and target languages is precisely one of the keys to producing "plausible, pragmatically efficient, and reliable, target texts" (Mateo 2014:132).

Given that the loss of meaning is not the only consideration relevant to the viewers of TV series, this study has also tried to ascertain whether the dubbed product can be enjoyed despite the losses found in the analysis. Even though several losses have been identified in the TT, it could be argued that viewers can very often retrieve the meaning lost with the help of other information coming from the situational context, the visual channel, the dubbing actors' performance and other paralinguistic and prosodic features.<sup>4</sup> Cases in which comprehension is affected and the losses have not been offset are generally scattered across a whole episode, which could help to preserve the viewers' cinematic illusion.

Although several conclusions have been drawn from the present study, there are certain limitations that need to be emphasised. Future (ongoing) work incorporates, for instance, the inclusion of other nuclear and pre-nuclear patterns than can hold sway over the semantic content of the utterance and the examination of other pivotal subsystems such as tonality and tonicity along with other prosodic features, namely rhythmicity, tempo or pitch-range – potential developments that can evidence that intonation is an extensive and rich field of research and application in AVT.

## **Acknowledgements**

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<sup>4</sup> A reception study would prove particularly useful here in order to offer more empirical evidence about this aspect.

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