

TRANSLATING IMAGES: THE IMPACT OF THE IMAGE ON THE TRANSLATION OF DISNEY'S *ALICE IN WONDERLAND* INTO SPANISH¹

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Translating animated movies is a complex issue as attention has to be paid not only to the close relationship between the sign systems that compose the audiovisual text but also to the target-language audience. The importance of the confluence of different sign systems in audiovisual texts led Toury (1993: 17) to advocate the suitability of the polysystem approach for audiovisual translation since the focus of the study is not the audiovisual text as an entity in itself but rather what it can reveal with respect to the process which gave rise to it, in other words, the choices made by translators and the constraints under which these choices were made. The importance of visual elements in animated films is similar to that of picture-books when it comes to translation. Animated films like picture-books may be seen as illustrated stories where the relationship between the visual and the verbal is emphasised. In her study of picture-books and illustrated books, Oittinen (2003: 131) suggests that “sometimes it is the visual that takes on and tells the story; sometimes the verbal takes over” and the same is the case when dealing with animated films. It is the significant repercussion of the visual elements on the translation of the words that will be the focus of attention in this paper.

The paper is structured as follows. In Section 1, there is a brief introduction to Disney's film *Alice in Wonderland* (1951) and Carroll's novels *Alice in Wonderland* (1865) and *Through the Looking-Glass* (1871). Section 2 is a brief commentary on the characteristics of the film text together with the conceptualization of the

relationship between verbal and visual information in semiotics and translation studies for the subsequent analysis of the examples provided in Section 3. Section 3 is presented as a case study and the validity of the theoretical framework discussed in Section 2 is tested through an analysis of the strategies employed when the relationship between certain visual and verbal elements becomes a potential pitfall for the translator. Section 4 draws conclusions and discusses the findings.

1. *Alice in Wonderland*: an adaptation of Carroll's books

Disney's *Alice in Wonderland* (1951) belongs to Walt Disney Animated Classics series and is based largely on Lewis Carroll's book *Alice in Wonderland* (1865) and on some passages from the sequel *Through the Looking-Glass* (1871). Carroll's novels tell the story of a girl, Alice, who falls down a rabbit hole into a fantasy world. There, she meets incredible creatures with whom she lives nonsensical adventures. These nonsense tales, which come one after another at a dizzy pace, are characterised by a continuous defiance of logic and numerous intertextual references to Carroll's poems and popular nursery rhymes.

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Carroll's novels *Alice in Wonderland* (1865) and *Through the Looking-Glass* (1871) were also accompanied by John Tenniel's illustrations, which became so popular that they were used for numerous adaptations of the novels, including Disney's. Carroll and Tenniel's *Alice in Wonderland* inspired numerous versions for children. Disney's *Alice in Wonderland* (1951) remains one of the best known. Disney resorted to Tenniel's illustrations for the creation of their own fantasy for children. Each of Tenniel's drawings was displayed as a complete screen image. The resulting film text, on the whole, may therefore be considered an extended intertextual reference to the novel. In Disney's film, different episodes from Carroll's *Alice in Wonderland* and *Through the Looking-Glass*, are presented one after the other as independent short stories, told by different characters. They frequently include nursery rhymes, riddles and nonsensical play on words, with Alice as the binding thread of the narrative.

2. Verbal and visual elements in translation

Unlike Carroll's books, Disney's *Alice in Wonderland* is a film text. Like any film text, it can be seen as a complex sign system where independent elements are inextricably linked to one another. Saussure (1983: 71) divides signs into two parts, signifier and signified. He proposes "to retain the word *sign* [signe] to designate the whole and to replace *concept* and *sound-image* respectively by *signified* [signifié]

and *signifier* [significant]”. Signs can be divided into three groups on the basis of the type of relationship between signifier and signified: icons, indexes and symbols (Peirce 1931-1958). There is physical similarity between signifier and signified in the case of icons (Hartley et al. 1994: 138), whereas indexes reflect a cause-effect relationship between signifier and signified (Fiske 1990:149). Symbols, in turn, do not involve any resemblance or cause-and-effect relationship between signifier and signified. The relationship between the two parts of the sign is established by convention and this arbitrariness of the sign leads to connotative systems (Fiske 1990:312).

The filmic sign system differs from other sign systems in that it combines these other systems (such as body language and verbal and visual communication) and makes them interact in a cohesive way in order to establish meaning in the text. This combination of meanings from different semiotic systems is what Kress and van Leeuwen (1996) call multimodality and Chaume (2004a:16) states that these sign systems conventionally adopted by a cultural community form the different codes which are transmitted by different channels of communication. On this basis, the audiovisual text is “a semiotic construct comprising several signifying codes that operate simultaneously in the production of meaning” (Chaume 2004b:16). Among those codes, the linguistic, which occupies a predominant role in any audiovisual text and refers to verbal information transmitted through the oral discourse (acoustic channel) (Chaume 2004a: 30) and the iconographic, which includes indexes, icons and symbols which are transmitted through the visual channel, take on special significance for an analysis of *Alice in Wonderland*.

In addition, audiovisual texts are characterised by the coexistence of different channels of communication: oral (voices) and visual (writing and pictures) (Delabastita 1989: 196, Lorenzo et al. 2003:271). For their translation the interaction between image and spoken word is crucial, as Chaume (2004c: 50) claims that “synchronization undeniably has a direct impact on the translation process”. According to Fodor (1976:9) the requirements for a satisfactory synchronization include a faithful and artistic rendering of the original dialogue –character synchrony–, the closest possible approximation of the new sounds to the visible lip movements –phonetic synchrony–, and bringing the style of delivery on the new version into optimal artistic harmony with the style of acting –content synchrony.

However, Chaume (2004c) does not consider that content synchrony or the semantic relation between the translated words and the images and music are a type of synchronization. In this regard, the term synchrony may be misleading, since it refers to the functional-systemic term of coherence. As he (2004c:45) points out:

Translation must not only follow the source written text, but also the events on screen. In other words, it must be coherent with the communicative situation established on screen (context of situation). To achieve this, the translator has several cohesive links at his or her disposal (ellipsis, recurrence, substitution, conjunction, collocation, etc.), which help to produce a translation coherent with on-screen action, and which do not fall within the area of synchronization.

In a similar vein, Zabalbeascoa (2003: 314) suggests the importance of considering the types of relationships between words, pictures and other items that may have a bearing on the translating process, whether they appear simultaneously, contiguously, or even if they are separated by a considerable lapse of time. He (2003: 314-315) proposes some of the types of relationships by which any number of text constituents might relate to each other, regardless of whether they belong to the same or different channels and/or codes (verbal or non-verbal sign systems):

Complementarity	When the various elements (verbal, visual or whatever the combination happens to be) are interpreted interdependently, i.e. they depend on each other for a full grasp of their meaning potential and function(s).
Redundancy	Repetitions (total or partial) that are regarded as unnecessary, superfluous or dispensable.
Contradiction (or incongruity)	Defeated expectations, or some sort of surprising combination to create such effects as irony, paradox, parody, satire, humour, metaphor, symbolism.
Incoherence	Inability to combine elements meaningfully, or as intended (of the script), the subtitling (techniques, norms, display), or the sound (i.e. revoicing, mixing, editing, special effects, music)
Separability	Features displayed by elements of a channel or sign system whereby they manage to function (better or worse) autonomously or independently from the AV text, as when the soundtrack is made into a successful audio recording.
Aesthetic quality	Text author's intention to produce something of beauty by means of a certain combination of elements.

The degree of dependency between certain text items is relativized in the case of separability, whereas in complementarity, the semiotic and pragmatic value of an element may change and lead to certain puns depending on whether or not it is in the company of other elements (Zabalbeascoa 2003: 315). The analysis of complementarity and coherence in the dubbed version of *Alice in Wonderland* is the focus of attention of the following section.

3. Semiotic analysis of *Alice in Wonderland*

The present study concentrates on the dubbed translated version of *Alice in Wonderland*. In this film, coherence with the communicative situation established on screen is essential and, as will be seen, keeping it may be problematic for the translator in certain particular ways. The following examples of complementarity (1-7) illustrate the translator's difficulties in reconciling the source text with the target text:

Example 1

(00:31:25) Caterpillar: *A, e i o u, a e i o u, a e i o u, o, u e i o a, u e i a, a e i o u...* **Who are you?**
Alice: I- I- I hardly know, sir! I changed so many times since this morning, you see...
Caterpillar: **I do not see.** Explain yourself.
Alice: Why, I'm afraid I can't explain myself, sir, because I'm not myself, you know...
Caterpillar: **I do not know.**
Alice: Well, I can't put it anymore clearly for it isn't clear to me!
Caterpillar: You? Who are you?
Alice: Well, don't you think you ought to tell me- cough-cough, cough-cough, who you are first?
Caterpillar: **Why?**
Alice: Oh dear. Everything is so confusing.
Caterpillar: **It is not.**
Alice: Well, it is to me.
Caterpillar: **Why?**
Alice: Well, I can't remember things as I used to, and...
[...]
Alice: Well I must say I've never heard it that way before...
Caterpillar: I know. I have **improved** it.
Alice: Well, cough-cough-cough, if you ask me...
Caterpillar: You? Huh, who are you?
Alice: Cough-cough, cough-cough, A-choo! Oh!
Caterpillar: You there! Girl! Wait! Come back! I have something important to say!
Alice: Oh dear. I wonder what he wants now. Well...?
Caterpillar: Keep your temper!
Alice: Is that all?
Caterpillar: No. Exacitically, what is your problem?
Alice: Well, it's exacitici-, exacitit-, well, it's precisely this: I should like to be a little larger, sir.
Caterpillar: Why?

Oruga: ¿**Quién eres tú?**
Alicia: Ya-ya-ya no lo sé señor. He cambiado tantas veces que ya no lo sé.
Oruga: **Tampoco yo lo sé.** Explicáte.
Alicia: Es que no podré explicarme, señor. Porque yo ya no soy yo.
Oruga: **Te has enredado.**
Alicia: No puedo explicarme con más claridad porque tampoco lo entiendo yo.
Oruga: ¿Tú? ¿Quién eres tú?
Alicia: Antes de decirle a usted quien soy yo, ¡aja, aja, oh, oh! Diga usted quién es.
Oruga: ¿**Yo?**
Alicia: Sí, porque todo está tan enredado.

Oruga: ¿Enredado? Y ¿qué?

Alicia: Que no puedo acordarme de las cosas como antes...

[...]

Alicia: Pues yo nunca lo he oído recitar en esa forma.

Oruga: Lo sé. La he **mejorado** mucho.

Alicia: Señor... ajé, ajé, ajé. Achús. Yo creo que...

Oruga: ¿Tú? ¿Quién eres tú?

Alicia: Ajé, ajé, ajé (tos). ¡Oh!

Oruga: ¡Oye, niña! ¡Niña, oye, ven acá! Tengo algo importante que decirte.

Alicia: ¡Qué lata! ¿Qué cosa quiere decirme? ¿Qué quiere?

Oruga: No te enojos.

Alicia: y ¿eso es todo?

Oruga: No. Exactamente, ¿qué es lo que te preocupa?

Alicia: Exactica, exactica oh... pues es precisamente esto, me gustaría crecer un poco más.

Oruga: ¿Por qué?

The scene, based on “Advice from a Caterpillar” (*Alice in Wonderland*, Ch. V), presents a caterpillar in babouche and smoking an Arabic pipe while singing a song with an Arab tune. The Caterpillar starts to talk to Alice while he blows smoke rings in the shapes of certain letters and figures.

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Firstly, there are three instances in which the Caterpillar asks Alice who she is and the question is always accompanied by smoke rings which form the letters: *U-R-U* (Picture 1). The letters function as pictographs since their names, when read out, more or less form the utterance “who are you?”. By contrast, the values of these letters are lost in Spanish since the letters *U-R-U* do not stand for anything in the target language. However, the presence of visual elements leads the translator to include the pronoun *tú* in the question *¿quién eres tú?* in order to achieve cohesion between the verbal message and the visual message. Even though the pronoun could be omitted in Spanish, the translator opts for its inclusion so that the number of letters shown in the picture coincides with the number of words spoken in the dialogue. In addition, the lengthening of the sound /u/ in *tú* in the verbal code allows the maintenance of the complementarity relationship with the smoke letter *U* found in the source text.

Picture 1



Similarly, in the case of the letter Υ /wai/ which substitutes the adverb *why* /wai/ (Picture 2), the translator has to adapt the script, in order to maintain the coherent relationship between the verbal and the visual code in the source text. A double meaning of *y* is achieved as the adverb *why* is translated into Spanish, firstly, as the personal pronoun *yo* and, secondly, as the conjunction *y*, both words beginning with the letter Υ in Spanish.

Picture 2



The translator, in turn, is not able to show the relationship of complementarity between the verbal and the visual elements in the case of *I have improved it* (Picture 3). The word *improved* is lengthened by the Caterpillar in the source text and this is reflected by the two smoke rings in the shape of an *o*. However, the Spanish version cannot lengthen the *o*-sound in *mejorado* since the stress falls on the *a*-vowel instead of the *o*-vowel.

Picture 3



Another example where the homophony embedded in the image of the letter is lost can be found in the use of the letter C (Picture 4). Homophony is one of the four types of wordplay proposed by Delabastita (1996) and it occurs when two words have identical sounds but are spelt differently. Delabastita (1996: 128) defines wordplay as “the general name for the various *textual* phenomena in which *structural features* of the language(s) used are exploited in order to bring about a *communicatively significant confrontation* of two (or more) linguistic structures with

more or less similar forms and more or less different meanings". As Yaguello and Harris (1998: 3) point out wordplay reveals an innate intuitive linguistics in speakers and:

presupposes that one knows the rules and how to bend them, how to exploit the ambiguity which characterizes natural languages, as well as the creativity which they allow. For children, language-learning is inseparable from word games, which thereby take on educational value (mainly self-educational as it turns out).

Whereas in the source text the pun comes from the acoustic similarity between the name of the letter *C* /si:/ and the pronunciation of the verb to *see* /si:/ in *I don't see* in the dubbed version there is no relationship between the translation, *tampoco yo lo sé*, and the picture of the letter C and consequently the play on the image is lost in the dubbed version.

Picture 4



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Furthermore, a case of homophony is also observed between the noun *knot* and the negative adverb *not* (Picture 5). The image of a knot, which appears twice, firstly accompanies Caterpillar's sentence "I do not know" and, secondly, "it is not". Both the original and the dubbed version have looked for a relationship between the script and the image. The source text plays on the ambiguity of /nɒt/ as found in the noun *knot*, and the adverb *not*. The dubbed version, in turn, cannot rely on the ambiguity of /nɒt/ and, consequently, the translator opts to show the indexical relationship between the two elements: the verbal, the word *enredado*, refers to the visual, the picture of a knot.

Picture 5



Likewise, the same scene presents another episode where the smoke rings tell a story by picturing units of meaning.

Example 2

(00:33:32) Caterpillar: Hmm! *How doth the little crocodile improve his shining tail. **And pour the waters of the Nile, on every golden scale.** How cheer... how cheer... Ahem!*

Alice: Hihihihi!

Caterpillar: *How cheerfully **he seems to grin, how neatly spreads his claws.** And welcomes little fishes in, with gently smiling jaws.*

Alice: Well I must say I've never heard it that way before...

Caterpillar: I know, I have improved it.

Alice: Well, cough-cough-cough, if you ask me...

Oruga: Dice: El pequeño cocodrilo para aprender sus cantares usa **las aguas del Nilo con sus notas musicales.** Con hipo..., con hipo...

Alicia: ¡Jijijiji! Uh

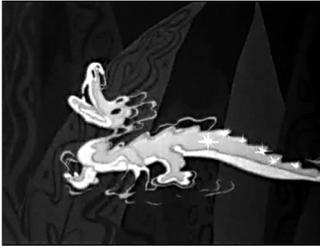
Oruga: **Con hipócrita modestia, sus garras pone a indicar** a los tiernos pececillos por donde deben entrar.

Here, the Caterpillar asks Alice to recite a poem and she starts Lewis Carroll's "How doth the little crocodile", which appeared in Carroll's novel *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*. The translation of a poem inevitably involves difficulties for the translator since whenever a poem is translated into another language, any minimal change in its sequence may disturb its aesthetic realisation (Campos 1992: 32). Furthermore, in this case the poem is complemented by illustrations that, in certain cases, force the translator to choose between two meanings. The role and function of the illustrations in the source text is to make an interpretation based on the audible text and as Oittinen (2003: 131) suggests:

words and pictures may tell things simultaneously, side by side, or they may take turns. Whatever the relationship, the illustration of a story always adds to the narration by giving extra information, such as cannot be given by words: details about setting in time, place, culture, society as well as characters and their relationships.

The poem describes a cunning crocodile which captivates fish with a charming smile. The beginning of the poem, *how doth the little crocodile improve his shining tail*, is accompanied by the visual element of a smoke ring whose shape reminds the reader of a crocodile and its tail (Picture 6). The relationship between the linguistic and the iconographic code in the original and in the dubbed version is manifest as both texts refer to the figure of a crocodile.

Picture 6



Nevertheless, the smoke ring of a golden musical note conditions the translator's choice for the translation: *and pour the waters of the Nile, on every golden scale* (Picture 7). The original poem plays on the polysemy of the word *scale*, which may refer either to "one of the thin, flat horny plates forming the covering of certain animals, as snakes, lizards, and pangolins" (Webster's encyclopedic unabridged dictionary of the English language 1996: 1273) and which would be *escama* in Spanish; or to, "a succession of tones ascending or descending according to fixed intervals, esp. such a series beginning on a particular note" (Yerkes 1996: 1274), *escala de notas musicales* in Spanish. However, the visual element of a golden note in the audiovisual text leads the translator to opt for the musical meaning, *notas musicales*, instead of *escamas*, subordinating the linguistic code to the iconographic code.

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Picture 7



The rest of the poem is summarised by the image of the smoke forming a mischievous grin and the image of the claws of a predator calling three little fishes to come into its jaws. The source text reinforces the verbal code in the narrative through the visual representation of the keywords (*grin*, *claws* and *jaws*), whereas the dubbed version excludes some of these keywords to maintain the original rhyme and rhythm and instead relies on the visual channel to perform the action narrated in the poem (Pictures 8, 9 and 10).

Picture 8



Picture 9



Picture 10



The impact of images on translation and the complementary relationship between words and pictures can also be observed in:

Example 3

(00:16:40) Dee and Dum: *But mother Oyster winked her eye and shook her heavy head. She knew too well this was no time to leave her oyster bed.*

Mother oyster: **The sea is nice, take my advice, and stay right here.**

Dee and Dum: La madre ostra sin tardar el peligro adivinó. Con la experiencia del herald a sus hijas advirtió.

Madre Ostra: **De gente hambrienta os debéis cuidar y por ningún motivo los vayáis a acompañar.**

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The scene unfolds with Dee and Dum telling the story of “The Walrus and the Carpenter” from Carroll’s *Through the Looking-Glass* (Chapter IV), where the story of a mother Oyster protecting her little babies is told. Dee and Dum claim that mother Oyster knew that *this was no time to leave her oyster bed* while the image shows a calendar with the word *March* and the letter R blinking in red (Picture 11). In this case, the translator cannot modify the image on screen, however, the Spanish audience may interpret *March* as referring to the month *Marzo* thanks to the visual element of a calendar sheet and the resemblance between the words *March* and *Marzo*.

Picture 11



Furthermore, in the example there does not seem to be any relationship between mother Oyster's words and the picture, as Baumgarten (2008: 12) points out:

The visual information is interpreted as contributing to the meaning of the utterances and vice versa because viewers will always involuntarily try to establish a meaningful relationship between the two layers of information they are presented with. This is not to say that all co-occurrences of visual and verbal information are cohesive, but rather that the link between the verbal and the visual information need not be linguistically explicit and still can be cohesive.

Thus, the source and the target audience have to rely on their general knowledge of the best months for eating seafood to be able to make sense of the visual and verbal information. Taking into account that the months with the letter R in their names, both in English and Spanish, are said to be the best for eating seafood, as they coincide with the time of the year when the quality of the seafood is at its best, the audience may understand mother Oyster's concern when her innocent newborn babies follow the walrus.

Another point in *Alice in Wonderland* where the relationship between verbal and visual elements plays a crucial role is found in example 4, in the scene of "Golden Afternoon" (*Alice in Wonderland*, Ch. I):

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Example 4

(00:25:30) Alice: Why curious butterflies!

Rose: You mean **bread-and-butterflies**.

[...]

Rose: Girls, girls! We shall sing: 'Golden afternoon'. That's about all of us! Sound your A, Lily!

Lily: *Laaaa...*

Pansies: *Mimimimi...*

Daisy: *Lalalala...*

Iris: *Hahahahahahaha...*

Dandelions: *Poem, poem poem, poem...*

All flowers: *Little bread-and-butterflies kiss the tulips, and the sun is like a toy balloon. There are get up in the morning glories, in the golden afternoon. There are dizzy daffodils on the hillside, strings of violets are all in tune, Tiger lilies love the dandelions, in the golden afternoon, the golden afternoon. There are **dog and caterpillars** and a copper centipede, where the lazy daisies love the very peaceful life they lead.*

Alicia: ¡Pero qué mariposas tan raras!

Rosa: ¿Te refieres a **las mariposas pancake?**

[...]

Rosa: ¡Niñas! Todas cantaremos *La Fiesta del Jardín*, es la que mejor nos sabemos. Danos el tono Lirio.

Lirio: Laaa

Pensamientos: Miiii

Margarita: Laaaa

Lirio: Hahahaha

Diente de león: Pompompom

Todas las flores: Es la fiesta del jardín por las tardes cuando el sol comienza a declinar y las flores que son perezosas no se pueden despertar. Los narcisos visten siempre de gala, las violetas vienen de postín, y los tigres y los dientes de león vienen juntos al jardín. **Las orugas y langostas** siempre vienen a reñir y las dulces margaritas sólo piensan en dormir.

The scene is based on an intertextual reference to Carroll's poem "All in the Golden Afternoon". In the example, the flowers recite the poem. The lyrics refer to the butterflies as *bread-and-butterflies* playing on the strong resemblance of their wings to a pair of slices of **bread** with **butter** (Picture 12). The translator opts for referring to them as *mariposas pancakes*, keeping the visual synchrony and giving his Latin American origin away. Whereas the Iberian Spanish translation would have opted for *mariposas de pan con mantequilla*, the Latin American Spanish version shows the North American influence by the introduction of the American term *pancake*.

Picture 12



Moreover, coherence is highly respected in the source text where the role played by the visual elements is to perform the poem. The rhythm of the song does not allow a literal translation of the poem and the relationship between visual and verbal elements is occasionally broken. In the source version the song's lyrics begin by narrating what can be seen on the screen, a group of butterflies flying over the tulips and kissing them. The dubbed version only mentions the organization of a party and avoids referring to what is shown through the visual channel.

Another example in which the textual cohesion between the elements of the narration is not achieved in the target text is the scene in which the flowers sing *dog and caterpillars*, which is translated into Spanish as *las orugas y langostas* (caterpillars and locusts). In the source text there is a play on words by the association of the word *caterpillar*, which is made up of CAT + PILLAR, with the image of a cat hissing in the shape of a caterpillar (Picture 13). In the dubbed version, there is no

possible play on words in the case of the word *oruga* and, in addition, there is no relationship between the iconic and linguistic code, as the images of a dog and a cat illustrated in the visual channel are not related to the animals (*caterpillars* and *locusts*) mentioned in the Spanish lyrics.

Picture 13



Alice in Wonderland is, as has been seen, characteristically full of episodes that display dazzling wit. Examples of the clever use of words are also shown in the scenes based on “The Cheshire Cat” (*Alice in Wonderland*, Ch. VI), “A Mad Tea-Party” (*Alice in Wonderland*, Ch. VII) and “Bill the Lizard” (*Alice in Wonderland*, Ch. IV) (examples 5 -7).

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The first episode presents Alice asking the Cheshire Cat to help her to find the way back home. The Cheshire Cat is an intertextual reference of Carroll’s to Pindar’s fictional character and to his distinguishing grin in *Pair of Lyric Epistles* (1792).

Example 5

(00:54:40) Alice: Oh, Cheshire Cat, it’s you!
Cheshire Cat: **Whom did you expect, the White Rabbit, perchance?**
Alice: Oh, no, no. I- I- I’m through with rabbits. I want to go home! But I can’t find my way.
Cheshire Cat: Naturally. That’s because you have no way. **All ways here you see, are the queen’s ways.**
Alice: But I’ve never met any queen.
Cheshire Cat: You haven’t? You haven’t? Oh, but you must! **She’ll be mad about you, simply mad!**
Hahaha! *And the momeraths outgrabe...*
Alice: Please, please! Uh... how can I find her?
Cheshire Cat: Well, some go this way, some go that way. But as for me, myself, personally, I prefer the **shortcut.**

Alicia: ¡Gatito risón, si eres tú!
Cheshire Cat: Mm, **¿a quién esperas, al Conejo Blanco, quizás?**
Alicia: No, no. No quiero que me hables de él. Yo me quiero ir, pero no sé por dónde.
Cheshire Cat: Claro que no sabes, porque aquí nadie sabe nada. **Sólo se puede saber lo que dispone la reina.**

Translating images: The impact of the image on the translation...

Alicia: Pero yo nunca he visto a una reina.
Cheshire Cat: ¿Qué? ¡No, no es posible! ¡Oh, **le vas a gustar mucho, muchísimo**. Le vas a encantar! Y los momerats también...
Alicia: ¡Oye, ven! ¿Por dónde está la reina?
Cheshire Cat: Pues... a veces por aquí, y a veces **por acá**. Pero como yo soy gente importante siempre entro **por acullá**.

In example 5, Alice shows her surprise at bumping into the Cheshire Cat who asks her, “*whom did you expect, the White Rabbit, perchance?*” In this case, the verbal message is supported by the image of the tail of the Cheshire Cat forming a pair of rabbit’s ears over his head (Picture 14). The same strategy is used when the Cheshire Cat refers to “*the queen’s ways*” and he forms the queen’s hairstyle over his head with his legs (Picture 15).

Picture 14



Picture 15



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This case shows the importance of visual elements for the exchange of information and its puns are particularly witty. For example, the Cheshire Cat says that the queen “*will be mad about you*”. In the source text, the Cat plays on the polysemy of the word *mad*, which may refer both to the insanity of the queen or to her delight in meeting Alice. Although the Spanish version could have kept the play on words by translating it as *la vas a volver loca*, the dubbed version restricts the meaning to *le vas a gustar muchísimo* (she will really really like you).

Another example of a play on words can be found when the Cheshire Cat shows the way to go and see the queen, and says that he “*prefers the shortcut*”. A shortcut is a route to save time but if the word is divided into two, one gets: SHORT + CUT; and it is precisely a short cut that the Cheshire Cat makes when he cuts the trunk of the tree to open a door (Picture 16). This pun is not possible in Spanish so the translator opts for replacing it with the introduction of the poetic adverb *acullá* (yonder), which was used in the Spanish archaic expression: *aquí, allá y acullá* (here, there and everywhere).

Picture 16



Example 6 further illustrates the prevalence of nonsensical plays on words in *Alice in Wonderland*.

Example 6

(00:44:50) Alice: Oh, yes. I was sitting on the riverbank with uh... with you know who...

Mad Hatter: I do, hehehe?

Alice: I mean my **C - A - T**...

Mad Hatter: **Tea**?

[...]

White Rabbit: Oh, my poor watch! Oh, my wheels! My springs! **But- but- but- but, but- but-but...**

Mad Hatter: **Butter!** Of course, we need some butter! Butter!

Alicia: ¡Ah, sí! Estaba yo sentada junto al arroyo con... usted sabe con quién...

Sombreroero: ¿Lo sé yo? He he

Alicia: Sí, estaba con mi **G-A-T**...

Sombreroero: ¿**Té**?

[...]

Conejo Blanco: ¡Oh, mi pobre reloj, mis rueditas, mis resortes! Pero, **man man man**

Sombreroero: ¡**Mantequilla!** Pero, claro, necesita mantequilla. ¡Mantequilla!

Liebre: Mantequilla.

The Mad Hatter and the March Hare are characters portrayed as crazy creatures whose discourse is full of nonsense as in this case. When the Mad Hatter does not understand whom Alice was sitting with on the riverbank, she points out that she was with her cat, spelling the word *cat*. Then, the Mad Hatter exploits the homophony of the letter *T* /ti:/ to ask for some tea /ti:/. The same strategy is applied in the dubbed version, since the pronunciation of the word tea in Spanish, *té* /te/, matches with the name of the letter *T* /te/.

The same strategy of using the ending of the previous speaker's discourse is used in this example when the White Rabbit complains about having his watch broken saying *but- but- but* and the Mad Hatter uses the word *but*, to form a

new word: *butter*. However, the translator cannot use literal translation in this case, as the translation of *but* in Spanish would be *pero* and it would not make sense in the context of the tea party. Consequently, the translator opts to use *pero* once to register the Rabbit's protest and substituting *man*, the beginning of the word butter in Spanish, *mantequilla*, for the subsequent repetitions of the conjunction *but*.

Similarly, Carroll's expertise in playing on words is also shown in the episode of "Bill the Lizard" (*Alice in Wonderland*, Ch. IV), where Alice comes into the White Rabbit's house and after drinking from a little bottle she finds her head up the chimney. Example 7 shows the White Rabbit and Dodo thinking of a way to pull Alice out of the house.

Example 7

<p>(00:22:12) Dodo: Who? Me? Don't be ridiculous! What we need is eh... a lizard with a ladder! White Rabbit: Hmm? Oh! Bill! Bill! Eh, we need a lazzerd with a lizard, a lizard a bb...b... can you help us? Bill: At your service, governor! Dodo: Here, my lad? Have you ever been down a chimney?</p>
<p>Dodo: ¿Quién, yo? Eso es absurdo, eh. Lo que necesitamos es... un lagartijo con escalera. Conejo Blanco: ¿Un qué? ¡Bill, Bill! Lagarto: Voy, voy. Conejo Blanco: Necesitamos un escortijo con lagartera, digo un acertijo, ¿nos ayudas?</p>

In the source text, Carroll plays on the phrase *a lizard with a ladder* when the White Rabbit switches the word order beginning the phrase with the word *ladder*. Due to his agitation, he gets the two words, *lizard* and *ladder*, mixed up, creating a new word, *lazzerd*, which takes the consonants of the lizard and the vowels and the repetition of the consonant from ladder:

$$L+I+Z+A+RD + L+A+DD+E+R = L+A+ZZ+E+RD$$

Likewise, the translator reproduces a similar play on words between the animal, *lagartijo*, and his ladder, *escalera*, in the dubbing version. In this case, he uses the word pattern of *lagartijo* (lizzard) for the creation of the neologism *escortijo*, which combines the beginning of the second word (*escalera*) with the ending of the first word (*lagartijo*) in the following way:

$$LA+GAR+TI+JO + ES+CA+LE+RA = ES+COR+TI+JO$$

The translator emphasises the nonsense of the phrase by saying that it is an *acertijo* (riddle). The addition of this word in the Spanish version contributes to make up a rhyme, as in the English-language version, between the neologism, *escortijo*, and the word added, *acertijo*.

4. Conclusions

This study has shown that in the translation of films it is essential to be aware of the fact that the visual and the verbal sign systems interact, most notably in the case of cartoons where images can be modified to interact with words and create puns, wordplay and visual plays. The choice of linguistic elements is inextricably linked with the choice of the visual elements in the audiovisual text. This relationship between the linguistic and the iconographic code should not be broken as a consequence of the process of translation, since, as Oittinen (2003: 129) points out, “translating is always a combination of a whole and its parts”.

Although in translation studies the focus primarily lies on the verbal dimension of any text, in the case of *Alice in Wonderland* the translator’s task becomes especially arduous due to the strong cohesion between different semiotic sign systems and modes of discourse. In Carroll’s novels, Tenniel’s illustrations play a fundamental role by illustrating the verbal textual elements by means of pictures and by emphasizing a specific narrative element. This interdependence between the verbal and iconic codes is reproduced in Disney’s audiovisual adaptation, which also resorts to Tenniel’s original pictures for the portrayal of the main characters. In addition, Disney opts for reinforcing the role of the visual elements, which frequently plays an essential role in the plays on words.

Seventeen cases of puns which interact with images have been observed in the seven examples presented. The following table shows the examples and the cases with the key words referring to the elements analysed according to the following factors.

- the original meaning is modified,
- the translation is modified according to the visual component,
- the complementary relationship is maintained.

Example (Episode)	Case	Elements analysed	Modification of the original meaning	Translation modified according to the visual component	Complementarity relationship maintained
1 (Advice from a Caterpillar)	1.1	URU/ who are you	No	Yes	Yes
	1.2	Y/ why	No	Yes	Yes
	1.3	ImprOOve	No	No	No
	1.4	C/ see	No	No	No
	1.5	Knot/not	Yes	Yes	Yes

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Example (Episode)	Case	Elements analysed	Modification of the original meaning	Translation modified according to the visual component	Complementarity relationship maintained
2 (How doth the little crocodile)	2.1	Scales	Yes	Yes	Partially
	2.2	Grin Claw Jaw	Yes	Yes	Partially
3 (The Walrus and the Carpenter)	3.1	The sea is nice, take my advice, and stay right here.	No	No	Yes
4 (Golden Afternoon)	4.1	bread-and-butterflies	No	Yes	Yes
	4.2	dog and caterpillars	Yes	No	No
5 (The Cheshire Cat)	5.1	whom did you expect, the White Rabbit, perchance?	No	No	Yes
	5.2	The queen's ways	No	Yes	Yes
	5.3	She will be mad about you	Yes	No	Yes
	5.4	the shortcut.	Yes	No	No
6 (A Mad Tea-Party)	6.1	C-A- T/Tea	No	Yes	Yes
	6.2	But/Butter	Yes	Yes	Yes
7 (Bill the Lizard)	7.1	lazzerd with a lizard	No	Yes	Yes

- In all cases except one (7.1), the translation maintains the rhyme.
- In 7 out of 17, the translation has modified the original meaning; and in 4 of them it has been modified according to the visual component.
- In 6 out of those 10 cases in which the original meaning is not modified, the translation is done according to the visual component.
- 10 out of 17 cases show modifications according to the visual components.
- In 11 out of 17 cases, the translations maintain coherence and the verbal message is a representation of what can be seen on screen. However, the complementarity relationship between words and pictures is partially maintained in 2.1 and 2.2, where polysemy has led the translator to opt for the meaning of the word represented on screen.

- 5 (cases: 1.1, 1.2, 1.4, 1.5 and 6.1) out of 17 cases belong to the wordplay category of homophony; and in two cases (1.2 and 6.2) the translator has been able to rely on homophony to make the wordplay effect in the target text.

Overall, the analysis shows how the translating process is strongly influenced by the complementarity relationship established by the network of meanings consisting of verbal and visual elements. However, on some occasions the translator has had to modify the source text breaking cohesion with the visual information in order to keep the rhyme or synchrony. Finally, the nonsense rhyme (example 7), is based on wordplay, where verbal elements are decisive. The translator has recreated the plays on words resorting to the same linguistic strategy as the source text, using phonetic similarity in the creation of nonsensical words.

Notes

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