Introduction

European Spanish AVT texts translated from English tend to vulgarize. Do Latin American subtitles avoid vulgarization strategies and tend to sanitize instead to accommodate their greater, heterogenous audience?

* **fuentes2019approach**
  + “Sounds films would not fully spread among cinemas in Spain and Argentina until 1931” (4)

Define swearwords.

* **landau1984dictionaries** 
  + “Most slang is colorful, irreverent, or facetious, but it is not to be confused with taboo words. Although slang is often meant to shock the staid or discomfort the pretentious, it is not intended essentially to violate the properties of common decency, although it may (…) Many taboo words are not slang, and most slang expressions do not deal with sexually or scatalogically offensive concepts” (38)
  + “there are no criteria to establish what can be offensive, when and where, or who might find a certain word or expression offensive” (233)

Tolerance of swearwords across cultures.

* **scheu1998analysis**
  + “All languages have swear-words and the kind of swearing in any given language may reveal to us something about the values and beliefs of the speakers of that language, as there exist intercultural differences on how, when, why, and even to whom swear-words are used” (390).

Spain is more tolerant of swearwords.

* **valdeon2015ab**
  + “In fact, European Spanish is certainly more tolerant of taboo words than British and American English in most contexts, including media. For example, the rather strict television regulations that characterize the US and the UK mark a sharp contrast with the Spanish situation, where some conventions are supposed to be observed but, in reality, swearwords are used all the time at any time of the day or night” (381).
* **valdeon2020swearing**
  + “it may be argued that the results support the view that the offensiveness and frequency of swearwords vary across languages and cultures” (11)
  + “In fact, in connection with native speakers of Spanish vis-à-vis other Western languages, it has been claimed that speakers of European Spanish swear much more than other European” (Allison, 2001, 43; Rox Barasoain, 2008: 360).
  + “European Spanish speakers being more tolerant of swearing than Anglophone speakers” (5)
* **scheu1998analysis**
  + “It is not very uncommon at all to hear swearwords amongst members of the Spanish Parliament in any of the sessions of the Congress” (391)
* **pavesi2022reception**
  + “The Spanish participants’ overall assessment of swearing reveals a considerable tolerance for swear words, both in dubbed dialogue and in original, domestic clips” (8)
  + “the Spanish group appears to accept swearing more readily than the Italian group in domestic products as these respondents’ reactions to swear words in Spanish films were significantly more tolerant than those by Italian speakers to similar items in Italian films” (9)
  + “the Spanish speakers accepted swear words more readily than the Italian respondents” (10)

Gap in the literature: Swearing in Latin America is not studied because it is comprised of 19 (Spanish-speaking) countries. There is no standard language or culture that encompasses all of Latin America, so to study the entirety of it as if it had a monolithic culture with specific values towards swearwords is misguided. Although it is true that there is linguistic and cultural variation within Spain, that variation pales in comparison to the variation present across Latin America.

Standardization of language and culture.

* **moreno2019variedades**
* De igual manera que se disocian los conceptos que se acaban de mencionar, hay que evitar la identificación del “español estándar” con la modalidad castellana. Históricamente, las normas de estandarización del español se construyeron sobre la base del español de Castilla (castellano), pero ese criterio de estandarización ha cambiado completamente. Desde finales del siglo XX, la elaboración y difusión de la norma ortográfica, gramatical y léxica se hace desde una entidad internacional: la Asociación de Academias de la Lengua Española. Para ello, se tiene en cuenta que la realidad del español es policéntrica y que existen diversos modelos de referencia para el uso culto de la lengua, según el área dialectal de que se trate. Las normas actuales del español se crean teniendo en cuenta esa multiplicidad de normas regionales, que se aceptan para sus usos cultos. No obstante, los hispanohablantes mantienen sus respectivas modalidades en el plano oral, sin perder la conciencia de que las distancias lingüísticas entre variedades no afectan gravemente a la intercomprensión general ni a la identificación de una gran comunidad conocedora y usuaria de una misma lengua (27)

Neutral Spanish

* **fuentes2019approach**
  + “all audio-visual translation for the entire Spanish-speaking market was carried out in several Latin-American countries, and this eventually gave rise to a particular linguistic variation labelled ‘neutral Spanish’, which still characterizes Latin-American Spanish dubbing today” (2)
  + “Hollywood’s excessive standardization of output – in order to increase profitability – often left audiences feeling that films did not represent them and that the characters, plots and stories depicted were a barrier rather than something they could identify with” (5)
  + “when Hollywood studios decided to start making Spanish-language versions, they never even considered the fact that different varieties of Spanish, with different accents, different meanings for identical words and different systems of reference for cultural terms, existed in each Spanish-speaking country” (6)
  + “a high-level meeting of consuls from sixteen Latin-American countries, held in San Francisco in 1931, to agree on the use of a unified version of Spanish in Spanish-speaking films. This may well have been the first formal attempt at agreeing and regulating ‘neutral Spanish’ for audio-visual translation purposes. The Mexican consul did not attend the meeting, in protest at the alleged Spanish colonialist connotations of the meeting. None the less, Mexico would later sign up to the agreement” (6).
  + It could be deduced from this that the major Hollywood studios prefer to release dubbed films because that allows them to treat the whole of Spanish-speaking Latin America as a single market – thus saving them time, work and, above all, money – instead of carrying out customized audio-visual translations (not only dubbing, but also subtitling) for different Latin-American countries. Thus, ‘neutral Spanish’ is favoured as the language variety in a single dubbed version that supposedly caters for all Spanish-speaking Latin-American countries” (10)
  + “in 1988, the Argentinian government issued a degree (the Decreto Nacional 1.091/1988) regulating the legal, fiscal, technical and linguistic aspects of the dubbing process for audio-visual productions, including TV series and feature films: ‘se entenderá por ‘idioma castellano neutro’, al hablar puro, fonética, semántica y sintácticamente, conocido y aceptado por todo el público hispano parlante, libre de modismos y expresiones idiomáticas regionals de sectores. Su utilización no deberá desnaturalizar las obras, particularmente en lo que se refiere a la composición de personajes que requieran de lenguaje típico” (12-13)

Localization. Translators working from another language/culture into European Spanish must only observe one country’s cultural and linguistic norms i.e., Spain. However, translators localizing subtitles for a Latin American audience have to produce target texts that are intelligible for 19 countries, all of which have different linguistic and cultural norms. Although it is true that linguistic and cultural variation exists within a singular country (that is, Spain’s linguistic and cultural landscape is not a monolith), it is understandable that producing a target text meant to reach *at least* 19 different countries with unique linguistic and cultural norms, all of which have variation within themselves as well, is a more daunting task.

* **fuentes2019approach**
  + “In 1991, Disney started a new business and language strategy, producing two Spanish versions (one for Spain in European Peninsular Spanish, the other in ‘neutral Spanish’, made in Mexico) of the film *Beauty and the Beast* (Gary Trousdale & Kirk Wise, 1991) [*La bella y la bestia* (1991)]” (17-18)
  + “*The Incredibles* (Brad Bird, 2004) [*Los increíbles* (2004)] was dubbed into Mexican Spanish, Argentinian Spanish… and European Peninsular Spanish” (18)
  + “*Ratatouille* (Brad Bird, 2007) and *Cars* (John Lasseter, 2006) were released in four different Spanish versions: European Peninsular Spanish, Mexican Spanish, Argentinian Spanish and Latin-American ‘neutral Spanish’” (18)
  + “the films *Wall-E* (Andrew Stanton, 2008) and *Up* (Peter Docter, 2009), Disney/Pixar reverted to producing only two dubbed versions, one for Spain and another – made in Mexico in ‘neutral Spanish’ – for all Latin-American countries” (18)
  + In particular, AVT was first carried out in Puerto Rico and Mexico, later in Argentina and, to a lesser extent, Venezuela and Colombia” (1)

Vulgarization of Spanish target texts in AVT is common:

* **valdeon2020swearing**
  + “swearwords were omitted or toned down in just 13.91% of the cases, whereas swearwords replaced neutral words, were added or were replaced by stronger taboo words in 42.35% instances” (5).
  + “Overall vulgarization strategies clearly outnumber the toning down/omission of swearwords and equals the number of cases where the swearwords found in English are preserved in Spanish” (5)
* **valdeon2015ab**
  + “Although the learners had been encouraged to be as inventive and spontaneous as possible in order to sound natural in Spanish, they created Spanish texts that reproduced the informal tone of the original, but tended to avoid taboo words. This clearly runs counter to the choices made by professional translators, who favored a higher frequency of swearwords in both the dubbed and subtitled versions” (375).
  + “If we consider the whole series, the increase went from 18 in the English programs to 46 in the Spanish dubbed versions” (380).

Gap in the Literature:

* **fuentes2019approach**
  + “Research on audio-visual translation (AVT) has to date focused almost exclusively on Europe, with hardly any research on Latin-American countries” (1)

Research Design

Rationale

This research attempts to fill in the gap in AVT research by investigating the degree to which swearwords are maintained in Latin American subtitle translations from English. It has been found that European Spanish tends towards vulgarization, but given the greater audience that Latin American subtitles are subjected to, translators may sanitize texts as to accommodate the larger, heterogenous cultural norms across various audiences.

Research Question

Given the tolerance towards swearing in Spain, will Spanish subtitles reflect the tolerance by sanitizing swear words less frequently than their Latin American counterparts in *The Wolf of Wallstreet*?

Research Hypothesis

Latin American subtitles will sanitize swear words more frequently than their European Spanish counterparts in the translation of *The Wolf of Wall Street.*

Data

*The Wolf of Wall Street*. Four different subtitle translations. Two localized for Spain, two localized for Latin America. 100 swearwords were identified from the movie, selected chronologically beginning at the start of the movie.

Methodology

Identify swearwords in the original English script. Find the matching subtitles in the four translations. Identify if the swearword has been sanitized (omitted or lighten the original impact of the swearword), or if the original swearword’s intensity has been maintained or vulgarized.

Data Analysis

A logistic regression was used to predict if a certain localization is associated with a more sanitized translation. The categorical predictor is if a swearword has been sanitized (coded as 0 = not sanitized and 1 = sanitized). The categorical predictor value is for which locale the subtitles were translated for (Spain or Latin America).

Results

Bar graph showing raw data.

Statistical Analysis

Bar graph showing coefficients.

Discussion

Future Research

* Finish coding the current movie.
* Greater sample size exploring more movie subtitles.
* Code the data with more details (e.g., more nuanced, such as the method used to sanitize the swearword, or if there is evidence of vulgarization).
* Investigate origin of translations for Latin American subtitles
  + Is a certain country associated with less sanitization and more fidelity to original?
* Investigate other localizations that are aimed at homogenous cultures