| RESEARCH ARTICLE

Translation Strategies of Cultural References in an Animated Film

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| ABSTRACT

This research focuses on the analysis of the translation strategies employed in the Spanish version of the screenplay of the film Coco (Disney-Pixar, 2017), based on its original English text. The aim of this study is to analyze the translation strategies used in the adaptation of Coco's screenplay from English into Spanish, in order to identify, classify, and evaluate the cultural references according to Newmark's typology, and to determine how these translational decisions preserve, adapt, or transform the representation of Mexican culture in the target version. In other words, it examines how cultural references related to Mexican traditions—such as the Day of the Dead, music, offerings, and religious symbols—are transferred to the Spanish-speaking audience. This study seeks to provide a critical perspective on translation decisions that favor the preservation of cultural identity versus those that opt for adaptation, thus contributing to the field of audiovisual and cultural translation. The research follows a qualitative, descriptive, and analytical approach, and its corpus consists of selected fragments from the original English screenplay of Coco and their equivalents in the Spanish translation, containing relevant cultural references. The findings aim to contribute to the field of translation studies and intercultural research by offering a critical analysis of how Mexican cultural values are represented and conveyed in a globally distributed film.

1. Introduction

Translation, as an interdisciplinary phenomenon, has been defined from different theoretical perspectives. According to Catford (1965, as cited in Nord, 2018), "Translation may be defined as follows: the replacement of textual material in one language (SL) by equivalent material in another language (TL)." (p. 7). This definition highlights the notion of textual equivalence as a central element in the translation process.

Similarly, Nida and Taber (1969, as cited in Nord, 2018) expand on this idea by stating that "Translating consists in reproducing in the receptor language the closest natural equivalent of the source-language message." (p. 7). This implies that translation does not seek literal correspondence, but rather communicative equivalence that preserves the meaning and naturalness of the message.

Wilss (1977, as cited in Nord, 2018) complements this view by considering that "Translation leads from a source-language text to a target-language text which is as close an equivalent as possible and presupposes an understanding of the content and style of the original." (p. 7).

Moreover, Koller ([1979] 1989, as cited in Nord, 2018) adds that "there exists equivalence between a given source text and a given target text if the target text fulfills certain requirements with respect to these frame conditions. The relevant conditions are

those having to do with such aspects as content, style and function. The requirement of equivalence thus has the following form: quality (or qualities) X in the SL text must be preserved." (p. 7). These contributions lay the foundations for understanding equivalence not as absolute identity, but as functional adequacy.

Afterward, the Skopos theory broadens the concept of translation by considering its purpose and function within the target culture. Holz-Mänttäri (1984, as cited in Nord, 2018) argues that Translational action is the process of producing a message transmitter of a certain kind, designed to be employed in superordinate action systems in order to coordinate actional and communicative cooperation" (p. 13).

In the same vein, Reiss and Vermeer ([1984] 2013, as cited in Nord, 2018) define translation as "a new offer of information in the target culture about some information offered in the source culture and language" (p. 25). This perspective positions translation as a communicative and cultural act oriented toward a specific purpose.

Similarly, Hurtado Albir (2001) describes translation as "an interpretive and communicative process consisting of the reformulation of a text by means of another language, developed within a social context and with a specific purpose" (p. 13).

Jiménez and Muñoz-Basols (2021) also highlight the cultural and communicative role of translation, stating that "translation is a fascinating discipline that serves as a meeting point between languages and cultures" (p. 1).

Likewise, Katan (2019) emphasizes the cultural dimension of translation by noticing that "Translation has been presented as intercultural communication [...] culture is inherent in all translating" (p. 22). In this regard, Oittinen (2000) agrees that "translating is always rewriting. It is a creative act, and translators are visible in this process because they inevitably interpret and reimagine the text" (p. 80), emphasizing the translator's active and creative role as a cultural mediator.

It is interesting to note that the aforementioned authors agree that translation is a process involving linguistic transfer and the search for equivalence; that is, the target text (TT) should fulfill a similar function or produce an effect comparable to that of the source text (ST). Furthermore, they point out that translation is a communicative activity, meaning that its ultimate goal is communication—thus, it constantly seeks to overcome linguistic and cultural barriers.

On the other hand, it is necessary to mention that there are differences among these authors, which focus on the nature of equivalence, the unit of translation, and the role of context and function.

Catford's (1965) approach to translation stems from linguistics (specifically structuralism) and focuses on linguistic equivalence at the textual level, without deeply considering the cultural context. In contrast, Nida and Taber (1969) adopt a sociolinguistic approach, arguing that the reproduction of the source text (ST) message in the target text (TT) should be achieved through the closest and most natural equivalent; greater importance is given to the effect on the receptor, known as dynamic equivalence (Nord, 2018).

Regarding Wilss (1977), his approach is formally linguistic; translation should focus on the process of comprehension and rewriting. Translator competence and the translator's cognitive process are emphasized. As for Koller ([1979]1989), his approach belongs to translation science. He identifies five types of equivalence: denotative, connotative, text-normative, pragmatic, and formal. Equivalence is understood as a bilingual and bidirectional relationship between ST and TT units (Nord, 2018).

Additionally, Reiss and Vermeer (1984) see translation from a functionalist perspective, known as the Skopos Theory. Translation is guided by a specific purpose or goal (Skopos). The target text (TT) must be appropriate for its intended function; what determines the translation is the target culture, while the source text (ST) becomes secondary. This represents a descriptive and pragmatic perspective (Nord, 2018).

Holz-Mänttäri (1984) considers translation as a model of action. Translation is carried out under a commission in which communication and the translator's role are prioritized (Nord, 2018).

On the other hand, for Hurtado Albir (2001), the translational approach is integrative and textually communicative. Translation is an interpretive and communicative process that consists of reformulating a text by means of another language, developed within a social context and for a specific purpose. This represents a comprehensive and integrative definition of what translation is (Nord, 2018).

Regarding Jiménez and Muñoz-Basols, their approach to translation belongs to the didactics of Applied Linguistics. Translation is considered a pedagogical tool, and its problems and solutions arise within a teaching and learning context. Greater emphasis is placed on its didactic application (Nord, 2018).

Finally, for Katan (2019), the translational approach is cultural and contextual. Translation is viewed as an act of cultural mediation; the translator serves as a bridge between different worldviews (cultures). In addition, Nord (2018) highlights culture and the cognitive filters or "maps" that the translator must manipulate for successful transfer, including non-verbal elements.

2. Culture

In the translation process, the concept of culture is a determining factor; that is, translation must master this aspect, since language and culture are inseparable. As Guix and Wilkinson (1997) rightly stated, "To the extent that translation is a technique, it is possible to make certain generalizations; but to the extent that it is an art, only the translator's intuition and linguistic sensitivity can decide whether the general solution is applicable to each specific case" (p. 297).

Culture, as a system of meanings, constitutes the framework from which communication is interpreted and produced. Geertz (2003) argues that cultural analysis must be interpretative, since "culture is that web, and […] the analysis of culture is therefore not an experimental science in search of law but an interpretive one in search of meaning" (p. 19).

In the same vein, Wirnitzer (2007) emphasizes that "culture is learned, but it is not rigid […] each generation contributes new values, ideas, norms, artifacts, etc., which are added to those already existing" (p. 77). From this perspective, culture is dynamic and evolving, and the translator must recognize this changing nature when interpreting cultural elements in audiovisual texts.

2.1 Culture, Memory, and Translation

The cultural dimension and its complexity are present both in the source text and in the target text. This relates to what Wirnitzer (2007) points out when emphasizing that "a translator must know both the culture from which and the culture into which they translate, be aware of the differences between them, and identify those differences between both cultures" (p. 78). Oittinen (2000) reinforces this idea by stating that "a translation is by no means a facsimile, but rather a form of dialogic encounter between cultures, which always fulfills a social function within the target culture" (p. 78).

In the case of the analyzed animated film, the translator faces the task of translating concepts deeply rooted in Mexican identity—such as the Día de Muertos (Day of the Dead), the ofrenda, or the alebrijes—for a global audience. Although these elements may be unfamiliar to foreign viewers, their proper translation allows for the preservation of cultural authenticity without losing intelligibility.

2.2 Culture and Audiovisual Translation

Audiovisual translation presents particular features that distinguish it from other types of translation. According to Díaz Cintas (2007), "Subtitling may be defined as a translation practice that consists of presenting a written text, […] that endeavours to recount the original dialogue of the speakers" (p. 8).

In Oittinen's (2000) words, "adaptation and translation are not, as is often argued, separate matters, but parts of the same whole: all translation involves adaptation, since when translating we always think of our future readers" (p. 76).

This is especially relevant in audiovisual translation, where visual, musical, and cultural factors influence the translator's decisions. In fact, Oittinen (2000) notes that "translating children's literature is not only about words; it often involves translating the whole situation, including illustrations, music, or theater" (p. 115), which can be applied to the case of the film Coco, where music and visual symbols are fundamental to express Mexican identity.

Wirnitzer (2007) highlights that "our daily life takes place within a cultural framework predetermined by legal norms, social conventions, culinary traditions, folk songs, business hours, television programs, and many more" (p. 84). Consequently, the audiovisual translator must be aware of how these norms and customs influence the filmic message and how they may be perceived by audiences from other cultures.

In Coco, humor, songs, and Mexican traditions intertwine to construct a symbolic universe that reflects the country's cultural identity. Translating these elements involves a constant negotiation between the local and the global, between the literal and the interpretive, with the translator acting as a cultural mediator.

As Wirnitzer (2007) states, culture "is not something rigid" (p. 77); therefore, the translator must adapt to cultural variations with both discernment and creativity. In animated films of this kind, translation strategies such as adaptation, contextual explanation, and cultural borrowing are essential for conveying the essence of the message and keeping Mexican identity alive for international audiences.

3. Cultural references as a translational challenge

Cultural references are among the greatest challenges for translators, as they represent the intersection between language and culture. Wirnitzer (2007) defines cultural references as "those elements of discourse that, by referring to specific features of the source culture, are not understood at all […] by members of the target culture" (p. 83).

In this context, Oittinen (2000) emphasizes the importance of empathy with the target audience, stating that "loyalty to the child reader is a crucial factor; not only loyalty to the original author, but also to new readers and their needs" (p. 78). This statement can be extrapolated to the case of Coco, where the translator must balance fidelity to the original text with an understanding and sensitivity to the Spanish-speaking audience. In the film, these references are manifested in expressions such as "mijo", "chamaco", and "calaca", which reflect both the emotional closeness and cultural traits of Mexicans.

The translator, therefore, must apply strategies that balance the naturalness of the target text with the preservation of the original cultural meaning. As Wirnitzer (2007) explains, "the culture refers to the phenomenon, while the cultural reference refers to its linguistic expression" (p. 82); thus, translating involves not only transferring words but also interpreting cultural symbols.

3.1 Newmark's Classification of Cultural References

Peter Newmark (2010) considers the translation of cultural elements to be one of the greatest challenges in the translation process, as these elements reflect the identity and values of a linguistic community. Therefore, the translator must recognize

them, understand their meaning within the original context, and select the most appropriate strategy to transfer them into the target language without losing their cultural significance. In the author's words, "the translation of all cultural words is governed by a few general considerations. First of all, the translator must recognize and accept the cultural achievements to which the source text refers and, then, respect all foreign countries and their respective cultures" (Newmark, 2010, p. 136).

Inspired by Nida's proposal, Newmark (2010) establishes a classification of cultural references into five main categories that guide the choice of the most suitable translation procedures. The author himself states: "Drawing on Nida's ideas […] I will try to classify them and provide some typical examples: (1) Ecology, (2) Material culture, (3) Social culture, (4) Organizations, customs, activities, procedures, concepts, and (5) Gestures and habits" (p. 135).

The first category, ecology, encompasses elements of the natural environment such as flora, fauna, climate, or geographical features. Newmark (2010) explains that these terms are usually "politically and commercially neutral," and recommends their transfer accompanied by a culturally neutral term to facilitate understanding (p. 136).

The second category, material culture, includes objects, products, and artifacts that reflect the daily life of a community, such as food, clothing, housing, or transportation. The author emphasizes that "food is for many the most sensitive and important expression of national culture; food terms are exposed to the widest range of translation procedures" (Newmark, 2010, p. 137). In such cases, the translator may resort to strategies such as naturalization, cultural equivalence, or explanatory glosses, depending on the target audience.

The third category, social culture, includes lifestyles, professions, leisure activities, and social relationships. According to Newmark (2010), "one must distinguish between denotative and connotative translation problems" (p. 139), since many of these words carry meanings loaded with cultural or historical implications that may not have a direct equivalent.

The fourth category comprises organizations, customs, and concepts, which include institutional, political, religious, or artistic terms. Newmark (2010) notes that "the political and social life of a country is reflected in its institutional terms," and that if a term is "transparent," it may be translated literally; however, if it lacks a direct equivalent, "the recognized official translation should be used, or the term should be transferred" (p. 140). In this sense, the translator must decide whether to use literal translation, transference, or functional equivalence, depending on the reader's familiarity with the source culture.

Finally, the fifth category, gestures and habits, includes nonverbal behaviors or everyday actions that hold symbolic value within a culture. Newmark (2010) clarifies that "there is a difference between giving the description and giving the function of a gesture or habit […] the latter must be provided for reasons of ambiguity" (p. 143). This implies that the translator should prioritize the communicative function of the gesture over its literal description to avoid cultural misunderstandings.

4. Methodology

This research is grounded in a qualitative, descriptive, and analytical approach, as it seeks to examine how Mexican cultural references are represented, adapted, and preserved in the Spanish translation of the film Coco (Disney–Pixar, 2017). Unlike quantitative methods, which aim to measure or generalize results, qualitative research focuses on the in-depth interpretation of cultural and linguistic phenomena within their context. As Patton (2015) states, "Qualitative research inquires into, documents, and interprets the meaning-making process." (p. 39). This approach allows for an exploration of how the translator constructs the cultural meaning of the source text in order to make it clear and recognizable in the target culture.

Patton (2015) explains that the qualitative method seeks to understand how people construct meaning based on their experiences. In the case of this study, the analysis centers on how the translation of Coco interprets and conveys Mexican cultural experiences to a Spanish-speaking audience. This interpretive process aligns with what the author describes as an exercise in human understanding, given that "The essence of being human is integrating and making sense of experience" (Patton, 2015, p. 39).

Consequently, qualitative research is characterized by its reflective and subjective dimension, in which the researcher plays an active role in the construction of knowledge. As Patton (2015) notes, "Qualitative inquiry is personal. The researcher is the instrument of inquiry." (p. 40). This implies that observations, interpretations, and conclusions are mediated by the researcher's own experience, who analyzes the data through their cultural and linguistic lens.

According to Patton's (2015) framework, the qualitative researcher must maintain ongoing reflection on their role and on the ways their identity influences data collection and interpretation. In Patton's words, "Reflection on how your data collection and interpretation are […]is a part of qualitative methodology." (2015, p. 40). In this regard, the analysis of translation strategies in Coco is carried out from a critical and culturally informed perspective of the Mexican context, allowing for an understanding of the implications of each translational decision within the process of cultural mediation.

Moreover, continuous observation and questioning are essential foundations of the qualitative method. Patton (2015) argues that "when in doubt, observe and ask questions. When certain, observe longer and ask many more questions" (p. 35). This principle guides the analytical work of this study, in which selected fragments from the original English script and their corresponding Spanish version are carefully examined. Through detailed comparison, the cultural references are identified and classified according to the typology proposed by Newmark (2010), allowing for the recognition of the translation strategies used to maintain cultural coherence between both versions.

Data collection is based on a corpus composed of fragments from the original script and its Spanish translation, selected for their cultural relevance and representativeness in relation to Mexican identity. This procedure aligns with Patton's (2015) view that "Fieldwork is the central activity of qualitative inquiry." (p. 109). In this case, fieldwork is understood as immersion in the filmic text and its sociocultural context, analyzing the elements that contribute to the transmission of cultural values through audiovisual translation.

According to Patton's (2015) conception, qualitative research stems from experience and constant reflection, integrating theory and practice in a dynamic manner. Therefore, in this study the analysis of translation strategies is complemented by a theoretical review that contextualizes the decisions made by the translator of Coco within the cultural translation models proposed by Newmark (2010). The methodological process thus combines systematic observation with contextual interpretation, upholding the qualitative principle that data must be analyzed within their context of production and reception.

Following Patton (2015), the qualitative researcher becomes an active participant who observes, analyzes, reflects, and learns from the phenomenon under study. In this way, the analysis of Coco's script from a translation studies perspective offers an interpretive lens that reveals how translation strategies can preserve, transform, or reinterpret Mexican cultural identity within a global cinematic context.

5. Sample

The sample of this study consists of a selection of 24 fragments from the original English script of the film Coco (Disney–Pixar, 2017) and their equivalents in Spanish. These fragments were chosen because they contain culturally significant references relevant to the translational analysis, representative of Mexican identity and of the ways in which translators adapt or preserve these elements when rendering the film for a Spanish-speaking audience.

Each fragment was analyzed considering four aspects: the original English text, its Spanish translation, the cultural reference involved, and its classification and description according to Newmark (2010), taking into account the translation procedures used (transference, equivalence, modulation, loan, or literal translation).

Table 1
Analysis of cultural references and their classification according to Newmark (2010).

English Fragment	Spanish Fragment	Cultural Reference	Classification According to Newmark
Never were truer words spoken. This calls for A TOAST! To our friendship!	Nunca se han dicho palabras más ciertas ¡Esto merece un BRINDIS! ¡Por nuestra amistad!	Brindis	Gestures and habits
To our friendship. I would move Heaven and Earth for you, mi amigo. Salud!	Por nuestra amistad. Movería el cielo y la tierra por ti, mi amigo ¡Salud!	Salud	Gestures and habits
Perhaps it was that chorizo my friend…	Probablemente fue ese chorizo mi amigo…	Chorizo	Material culture
You were going to give me your blessing…	Ibas a darme tu bendición…	Bendición	Organizations, customs, activities, procedures and concepts

They throw him into a cenote, an inescapable sinkhole behind the estate.	Lo arrojan a un cenote, un pozo sin salida detrás de la propiedad.	Cenote	Ecology
'Cuz I don't just want to get de la Cruz's blessing.	Porque no solo quiero la bendición de De la Cruz.	Bendición	Dead metaphor- Literal translation
Arre papá! Hey!	¡Arre papá! ¡Hey!	¡Arre papá!	Gestures and habits
Not bad for a dead guy!	¡No está mal para un muerto!	Muerto	Stock metaphor
No manches! You played with Ernesto de la Cruz, the greatest musician of all time?	¡No manches! ¿Tocaste con Ernesto de la Cruz, el mejor músico de todos los tiempos?	¡No manches!	Gestures and habits
Definitely "Remember Me."	Seguro "Recuérdame"	Recuérdame	Stereotyped metaphor
Make 'em listen, chamaco! You got this!	¡Haz que te escuchen chamaco! ¡Tú puedes!	Chamaco	Gestures and habits
He will listen… to the music!	Él escuchará… ¡a la música!	Música	Social culture
SEÑORAS Y SEÑORES / BUENAS TARDES, BUENAS NOCHES	SEÑORAS Y SEÑORES / BUENAS TARDES, BUENAS NOCHES	Saludo	Gestures and habits
For music is my language and the world is my family	Pues la música es mi lengua y el mundo es mi familia	Familia	Adapted metaphor
I have a great-great-grandson!	¡Tengo un Tataranieto!	Tataranieto	Social culture
Offerings of bread, fruits, flowers, instruments…	Ofrendas de pan, frutas, flores, instrumentos…	Ofrendas	Gestures and habits
I hope you die very soon.	Espero que mueras muy pronto.	Muerte	Social culture
¡No way!	¡No manches!	¡No manches!	Social culture

"And right here, in this very plaza, the young Ernesto de la Cruz took his first steps toward becoming the most beloved singer in Mexican history!"	"Y aquí mismo, en esta misma plaza, el joven Ernesto de la Cruz dio sus primeros pasos para convertirse en el cantante más querido de la historia de México."	Plaza de la Cruz	Ecology
"And now let's hear… 'Un Poco Loco'!"	"Y ahora vamos a escuchar… ¡'Un Poco Loco'!"	Un poco loco	Material culture
"¡Ladies and gentlemen, please welcome… LOS CHACHALACOS!"	"¡Señoras y señores, con ustedes… los CHACHALACOS!"	Chachalacos	Ecology
"Look who it is… EL SANTO!"	"Miren nada más… ¡EL SANTO!"	El Santo	Material culture
"Are those… alebrijes? But those are-"	"¿Son… alebrijes? Pero ésos son-"	Alebrijes	Material culture
"I need my spirit guide, Pepita."	"Necesito a mi guía espiritual, Pepita."	Pepita	Social culture

6. Analysis

The analysis of the selected fragments from the Coco script demonstrates the relationship between audiovisual translation and the preservation of Mexican cultural identity. According to Newmark's (2010) classification, the cultural references identified in the corpus correspond to the following categories: ecology, material culture, social culture, organizations and customs, and gestures and habits. Each of these categories reflects specific translational decisions that seek to balance loyalty to the source text with clarity and naturalness in the target language.

First, the references related to gestures and habits, such as "brindis", "salud", or "arre papá", demonstrate the use of cultural equivalence as a fundamental strategy. According to Newmark (2010), this method involves "reproducing a cultural situation by means of a functionally similar equivalent" (p. 135). In these cases, translators succeed in preserving the cultural load of expressions characteristic of Mexican speech, conveying their social function in contexts of celebration or familiarity. Therefore, preserving expressions such as "salud" or "no manches" maintains the informal and affectionate tone of the original discourse and reinforces cultural authenticity.

Regarding references related to material culture—such as "chorizo", "alebrijes", "El Santo", or "Un Poco Loco"—there is a clear preference for borrowing and transference. Newmark (2010) recommends these procedures for terms that are untranslatable or closely tied to national identity, in order to preserve their cultural character. Keeping words such as "chorizo" or "alebrijes" allows the target audience to maintain direct contact with cultural realities specific to Mexico, strengthening the film's visual and symbolic component. In this sense, borrowing functions as a moderate foreignization strategy that maintains the essence of the original without hindering comprehension. With respect to social culture—expressed through words such as "chamaco", "música", "familia", and "tataranieto"—the translation combines literal and equivalent methods. According to Newmark (2010), literal translation is acceptable when the terms have a clear semantic and functional equivalent. This occurs with music and family: although their meaning is universal, the translation preserves the emotional and cultural resonance of the source text. Conversely, "chamaco" is maintained as a borrowing to reinforce Mexican linguistic identity.

Within the category of organizations, customs, activities, and concepts, the references "bendición" and "ofrenda" represent the link between religion, tradition, and family identity. Functional equivalence is the strategy most commonly used in these cases, since the aim is to preserve the symbolic and spiritual value these terms hold within the context of Día de Muertos. Newmark (2010) explains that religious terms "tend to be translated either through transference or functional equivalence depending on the receiver's familiarity with the concept" (p. 141). In this way, the translation adheres to the semantic and emotional weight of Mexican culture, helping maintain the authenticity of the message.

The method most frequently used for references belonging to the ecology category—such as "cenote", "Plaza de la Cruz", or "Chachalacos"—is direct transference. Newmark (2010) notes that "transference retains the foreign term, adding a brief cultural

descriptor if necessary" (p. 137). This analysis shows that no additional explanations were added in the translations, which suggests confidence that the Spanish-speaking audience would identify these terms through context or cultural knowledge. This reflects a tendency toward preserving the original cultural reference without resorting to domestication strategies.

With respect to the metaphors present in the corpus—"bendición" and "muerto"—these examples illustrate how the translator preserves the metaphorical value of the language. Newmark (2010) distinguishes between dead, stock, and adapted metaphors, and argues that some "resist literal translation and may be rendered through various procedures" (p. 151). In Coco, the translation tends to maintain metaphors literally when their meaning is understandable in both languages, as occurs with "bendición", which can mean both approval and permission. This reveals a balance between semantic fidelity and cultural sensitivity.

7. Results

The results obtained from the analysis of the Coco (Disney-Pixar, 2017) script and its Spanish translation allow us to observe the close relationship between the translation strategies employed and the representation of Mexican cultural identity. Based on Newmark's (2010) classification of cultural references, 24 fragments containing significant cultural content were selected and distributed across five categories: ecology, material culture, social culture, organizations and customs, gestures and habits.

The analysis shows that the predominant strategies were cultural equivalence, transference, and borrowing, while literal translation and functional equivalence were used less frequently. These decisions demonstrate a general tendency toward preserving the cultural value of the original rather than domesticating it, which serves as a means of respecting the cultural diversity of the source text.

In the category of gestures and habits, which includes expressions such as "salud", "arre papá", and "no manches", there is a recurrent use of cultural equivalence. This strategy maintains the naturalness of the colloquial register and the emotional tone of the original, reflecting Mexican popular speech. According to Oittinen (2000), translating involves "thinking about future readers" (p. 76), and in this case, the translator adapts orality for a Spanish-speaking audience without losing cultural authenticity.

Regarding references to material culture—such as "chorizo", "alebrijes", or "El Santo"—borrowing or direct transference was employed. According to Newmark (2010), these procedures are appropriate when terms hold an untranslatable identity value. By preserving them, the translation respects Mexican cultural specificity and reinforces the connection between language and the film's visual symbolism.

The elements of social culture, including "música", "familia", "chamaco", and "tataranieto", show a balance between literal translation and functional equivalence. Literal translation allowed for the preservation of universally intelligible terms, while the use of borrowings such as "chamaco" reinforces Mexican linguistic identity. This reveals an intention to maintain emotional closeness and a sense of family, which are central pillars of the film's cultural message.

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Finally, in the ecology category, which includes terms such as "cenote", "Plaza de la Cruz", and "Chachalacos", the translation relies almost exclusively on direct transference, without glosses or adaptations. This suggests that the translator trusts the film's visual context and the audience's familiarity with natural and geographical Mexican references.

In conclusion, the results indicate that the translation of Coco achieves a balance between cultural fidelity and linguistic accessibility, prioritizing strategies that preserve cultural references without hindering comprehension. This approach aligns with Oittinen's (2000) idea that "translation is always rewriting" (p. 80), and with Nord's (2018) functionalist theory, which emphasizes the target text's adequacy for its communicative purpose.

Thus, the translation strategies used not only ensure cultural understanding in the target text but also reinforce the symbolic representation of Mexico for a global audience. The final result is a translation that maintains a balance between the authenticity of the original message and the naturalness of cinematic discourse in Spanish.

8. Conclusion

The study shows that cultural equivalence is the strategy most frequently used in the translation of Coco, complemented by literal translations and borrowings depending on the type of reference. This combination reflects a clear intention to preserve the values and symbols of Mexican culture while maintaining fluency in the target text. In this case, the translation successfully conveys cultural identity without altering the original message, allowing the target audience to appreciate Mexico's cultural richness from a more accessible and emotionally resonant perspective.

What Newmark (2010) defines as conscious intercultural translation—where the translator acts as a bridge between two symbolic worlds—is precisely what occurs in the translational work of Coco. The translation not only conveys a message but also preserves the cultural memory of a people when strategies such as borrowing, transference, and equivalence are used in balance. In this way, the film celebrates not only life and death but also the linguistic and cultural diversity that distinguishes Mexico.

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