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## **Training Translators for the Tourism Industry in the L2/LSP Classroom through TV Series: Fostering Activities to Develop ICC**

### **La formación de traductores para la industria turística en el aula de L2/LSP mediante series de televisión: el fomento de actividades para desarrollar la CCI**

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**Abstract:** This work is contextualised in the field of Translation and Interpreting, more precisely in tourism translation, and falls within the area of translator training. The study is part of a larger project on the adoption of strategies for the acquisition of intercultural communicative competence (ICC) by T&I students in second language (L2) classrooms. The article examines how the use of TV series can be an effective method not only to improve language competence, but also to enhance learners' general knowledge of the foreign culture(s); to develop their intercultural awareness, especially through the use of subtitles (both same-language subtitles and translated subtitles); and to improve their translation skills, in this case, in relation to tourism translation. Thus, this paper argues that TV series help develop trainee translators' intercultural awareness, prepare them to be professional intercultural mediators and they can be used as parallel texts for tourism translation. The paper includes a sample of task-based activities that can empower future translators in the tourism industry to overcome ambiguity and misunderstandings, and to achieve a fruitful dialogue between people of different cultures –a key aspect to be taken into account in the tourism industry. The study finally concludes with an evaluation of these activities supported by the results of a questionnaire administered to a group of students who benefited from the learning experience. The findings confirm their effectiveness in improving both translation and intercultural communication skills.

**Keywords:** Tourism translation, TV series, Intercultural communicative competence, Second language acquisition, Task-based activities

**Resumen:** Este trabajo está contextualizado en el ámbito de la Traducción e Interpretación, más precisamente en la traducción turística, y se enmarca en el área de la formación de los traductores. El estudio forma parte de un proyecto más amplio sobre la adopción de estrategias para la adquisición de la competencia comunicativa intercultural (CCI) por parte del estudiantado de Tel en las aulas de segundas lenguas (L2). El artículo examina cómo utilizar las series de televisión como método eficaz no solo para mejorar la competencia lingüística, sino también para potenciar el conocimiento general de los estudiantes sobre la(s) cultura(s) extranjera(s); desarrollar su conciencia intercultural, especialmente mediante el uso de subtítulos (tanto subtítulos en la misma lengua como subtítulos traducidos); y mejorar sus competencias traductológicas, en este caso, en relación con la traducción turística. Así pues, este trabajo sostiene que las series de televisión ayudan en el desarrollo de la conciencia intercultural de los traductores en formación, los preparan para ser mediadores interculturales profesionales y que se pueden usar como textos paralelos para la traducción turística. El trabajo incluye una muestra de actividades basadas en tareas que pueden capacitar a los futuros traductores de la industria turística para superar la ambigüedad y los malentendidos, y para lograr un diálogo fructífero entre personas de diferentes culturas, lo cual constituye un aspecto clave en la industria turística. Finalmente, el estudio concluye con una evaluación de estas actividades, apoyada en los resultados de un cuestionario entregado a un grupo de estudiantes que se beneficiaron de la experiencia de aprendizaje. Los hallazgos confirman su efectividad en la mejora tanto de las habilidades de traducción como de comunicación intercultural.

**Palabras clave:** Traducción turística, Series de televisión, Competencia comunicativa intercultural, Adquisición de segundas lenguas, Actividades basadas en tareas

#### INTRODUCTION

Almost everyone enjoys watching films and TV series and talking about them. From a motivational standpoint, audiovisual products are usually a perfect choice for use in the foreign (FL) or second language (L2) classroom. However, watching a film in class is not only an entertaining activity; we assume that, depending on our teaching setting, both instruction and learning take place. Indeed, it is the teacher's role to find appropriate ways to make such materials relevant from an educational point of view, the most common approach in language education being to show students full-length films occasionally to improve their listening skills. However, films and TV series do not only provide rich aural and visual output. As communicative tools and authentic resources, they are cultural products that may not only enhance

language learning but also expose learners to written messages through subtitles, as well as to real-life situations through the cultural, historical and geographical background they feature, thus developing critical thinking and intercultural awareness.

Our aim in this article is to demonstrate and illustrate the effectiveness of using TV series as tools for language and translation learning in translator training programmes. The activities described in section 4, conducted within the Translation and Interpreting Degree Programme at the University of Las Palmas de Gran Canaria (ULPGC), Spain, aim to inform future teaching and training proposals. These proposals can benefit from the conclusions drawn in the first two sections, which discuss the importance of intercultural communication in the translation industry and the relevance of using audiovisual materials to prepare trainee translators for the tourism industry.

More precisely, audiovisual materials are used to help students identify cultural references and develop their intercultural communicative competence (ICC) with a view to preparing them for the translation of a marketing video that promotes tourism in France. It is argued that such materials may provide trainee translators with a wide array of pedagogical options that can help them better understand the foreign language, increase their awareness of the foreign culture, while preparing them to become professional intercultural mediators and particularly specialised translators in the field of tourism.

To demonstrate this, the activities presented in this article were accompanied by action research aimed at evaluating the effectiveness of using audiovisual materials –specifically TV series– as tools for language learning and translation training in the context of ULPGC. Through a questionnaire administered to a group of students, the study investigates how audiovisual products can enhance students' ICC, improve their foreign language skills, prepare them for real-world professional challenges, particularly in the field of tourism translation, and eventually increase overall satisfaction with the learning activities.

#### 1. INTERCULTURAL COMMUNICATIVE COMPETENCE AND THE TOURISM TRANSLATION INDUSTRY

The integration of ICC in educational *curricula* –from schools to universities and professional training programmes– has long been recognised as being essential for “an open and respectful exchange of views between individuals, groups with different ethnic, cultural, religious and linguistic backgrounds and heritage on the basis of mutual understanding and respect” (Council of Europe, 2008, p. 11). However, all too often the professionals who employ graduate students indicate a lack of preparation to decode other cultures in real-life situations. This is particularly true in the two fields that are

at the core of this research paper –tourism and translation– and generally a significant issue for tertiary education institutions, most of which are making considerable investment and effort to add an international dimension to their teaching and thus ensure the acquisition of rich international and intercultural competences that will help students gain confidence in their own cultural identity, acquire a set of skills to communicate and lead in a global world, and thereby become interculturally competent professionals in the job market (Clouet, 2022).

When defining intercultural communication in the tourism industry, specialists refer to “the interaction between tourists of different nationalities or from different cultures which operates in different units of tourist accommodation: hotels, restaurants, leisure centres, travel agencies etc.” (Rembach, 2021, p. 51) Furthermore, participants in tourist communication are typically categorised into three groups (Albu, 2015): institutional actors (government entities involved in the tourism industry), associative actors (agents connecting tourism associations and public authorities), and individual actors (companies and individuals). As can be observed, translators are the big absentees from this classification.

ICC is a critical skill for all individuals working in the tourism industry, including translators. Tourism professionals need to be sensitive to the cultural norms, values, and practices of holidaymakers, and thus adapt their communication style, behaviours, and services to meet the cultural expectations and needs of diverse visitors. They must ensure that information is conveyed accurately and comprehensively, improving the quality of interactions and helping in creating a welcoming and inclusive environment for tourists. Therefore, ICC is particularly valuable in marketing and promoting tourist destinations. Well-prepared professionals can create culturally sensitive marketing campaigns that resonate with target audiences from different cultural backgrounds. They can accurately represent and successfully communicate about the cultural diversity and uniqueness of a destination, appealing to a wider range of potential tourists and avoiding misunderstandings.

However, successful communication involves more than the straightforward exchange of information; it requires a shared understanding of each other’s desires and needs. Therefore, it is the duty and responsibility of specialised professionals in the tourist sector to ensure that information in brochures, leaflets, or webpages, for instance, is accurate and will be appropriately received and interpreted by potential holidaymakers. As a specialised professional working for the tourism industry, the translator must likewise understand that communication transcends mere human interaction though language; it is deeply motivated by culture, and it is the consequence

of intricate interplay between context, knowledge, emotions, and cultural influences.

Indeed, the core ideas of intercultural exchange are at the centre of tourism, which both expresses and engages with culture, and therefore of translation. Tourism and intercultural communication are intrinsically related. Due to disparities in conduct and perception, there may be communication gaps and misunderstandings in intercultural communication issues within the tourism industry. This issue is not limited to the communication barriers that may exist between tourists and employees of a hotel, restaurant, travel agency, etc., but also includes the misunderstandings and incorrect interpretations that may result from the reading of inappropriately translated tourist brochures or leaflets, or the inadequate subtitles used in tourism advertisements or promotional videos. Intercultural communication is inherently characterised by misunderstandings, incorrect interpretations, and communication barriers, which is particularly why translators working for the tourism industry, as professionals of intercultural mediation, must be trained to acquire intercultural communication skills that are crucial for effective intercultural dialogue. These skills will help improve the quality of their translations, enhance customer satisfaction, support destination competitiveness, and positively impact the industry economically.

Consequently, translators for the tourism industry will benefit from intercultural communication training by learning about and appreciating other cultures as well as their own (Albu, 2015). Trainee translators must be guided to gradually understand the complex relationship between communication and culture, recognising that one cannot be explained and understood without the other. They need to comprehend that culture is defined in terms of communication, and communication is defined in terms of culture. When dealing with texts about tourism, they must be conscious that culture gives tourists the chance to connect with the histories, traditions, and practices of different countries, and interacting with new cultures fosters the development of self-awareness, openness and transformation. This understanding is central to a successful translation process, where translators help the recipients of their translations to “negotiate their cultural identities, rules of meaning, perception, effects which may occur in the interaction process” (Albu, 2015, p. 7).

This has led Agorni (2019) to call for new methodologies in the training of future translators. Trainees must be prepared to face the challenges of cross-cultural mediation practice, bearing in mind that future professionals must be made aware that tourism translation sits at the nexus of several academic fields, including history, the arts, sociology, and economics, as well as a variety of semiotic resources, including speech, writing, sounds, and

images. Therefore, such training cannot be confined to the translation classroom alone. The language for specific purposes (LSP) classroom –what Cerezo Herrero *et al.* (2021) call *Translation- and Interpreting-oriented Language Learning and Teaching (TILLT)*– may be seen as an appropriate place to develop ICC skills, such as flexibility, curiosity, openness and awareness, along with linguistic and cultural competences essential for handling tourism-related texts.

LSP will be referred to in the present work, as FL/L2 language education in translator training programmes must move away from general language teaching and respond to trainee translators' specific needs (Berenguer, 1997; Carrasco Flores, 2019; Cerezo Herrero *et al.*, 2021; Clouet, 2021). Language teachers should recognise these needs and tailor their efforts to meet the specific requirements of the translation profession (Cerezo Herrero *et al.*, 2021, p. 143), while still incorporating traditional skills from the communicative language classroom. Moreover, as L2 aims at the efficient performance of future specialists in their professional contexts as translators/mediators, language teaching must consider the dimensions of ICC, as discussed in the following section.

## 2. INTERCULTURAL COMMUNICATIVE COMPETENCE IN LSP

Puren (2008; 2014) associates the notion of intercultural competence with the ability to master cross-cultural representations in interaction with others. This intercultural competence is at the heart of the communicative approach and directly serves its action-oriented objective of communication: to equip learners with cultural competence that will enable them to talk about their culture, open up to other cultures, respect differences, and look for convergences, with the ultimate aim of communicating effectively.

For language teaching, it is clearly this intercultural competence (understood as the aim of all communication) that is being targeted. As such, John Corbett (2003, p. 2) combines the communicative competence with the intercultural competence to the point of referring to ICC as the ability to understand not only the language, but also the habits and behaviour of a community or an individual and to explain it to others. The ultimate goal of the intercultural approach is to train students, as Corbett puts it, to become “diplomats” capable of decoding and understanding the habits and values of others, considering the notion of native speaker-based communicative competence to be idealistic and unrealistic (Corbett, 2003, p. 4; Byram, 1997, p. 11). This recognition that language learners cannot speak in the same way as native speakers, due to their different cultural backgrounds (Byram, 1997, 2021; Kramersch, 1995, 2003), and that language is more than a mere transfer

of information has led to the development of the intercultural approach in language teaching.

Byram (2004) describes intercultural communication as face-to-face communication between two or more people whose cultural backgrounds, languages and discourse strategies may hinder successful communication. There might be different communication situations between two individuals, A and B: the language used might be A's mother tongue and B's FL/L2, or both A's and B's FL/L2. This language may be English as a *lingua franca* for transcultural communication (Baker, 2020), but also any other language an individual may have to resort to in order to establish successful and meaningful communication.

Byram's ICC model includes four sub-competencies (Byram, 1997, p. 48): linguistic competence, sociolinguistic competence, discourse competence, and intercultural competence. He also adds four sub-components of intercultural competence, namely: knowledge, attitudes, skills, and critical cultural awareness (Byram, 2009, p. 323), in other words, using the French terms, *savoir comprendre*, *savoir-être*, *savoir apprendre/faire*, and *savoir s'engager*. The main purpose of this model is for it to be used by language teachers, providing them with a series of competencies for teaching and learning, and to encourage them to adapt it to their educational context (Byram, 2009, pp. 324 and 325).

The development of a critical understanding of education and intercultural communication in our 21<sup>st</sup> century context of globalisation and international education is central to the acquisition of ICC. However, although Byram puts the focus on face-to-face interaction, the four sub-competencies he presents can also be acquired through observation, not only of target culture(s), but also of interaction situations between cultures, with the aim of developing linguistic, cultural, and intercultural awareness. Indeed, tasks oriented at interpreting cultural products (*i.e.* films or TV series) from different countries may turn into "valuable exercises in interpreting cultural features and developing intercultural awareness" (Chao, 2013, p. 250) and help students acquire critical reflection on similarities and differences between cultures. In other words, the cultural exposition through films or TV series accompanied by teacher-led critical analysis of intercultural interactions can help learners to *savoir comprendre*, *savoir-être*, *savoir apprendre/faire*, and *savoir s'engager*, and thus operate comfortably in third spaces.

In the context of Translation and Interpreting Studies in Spain, languages (including the mother language and LSP) are considered basic and compulsory subjects within the *curriculum*, and students cannot be trained without taking into account the necessary link between the two major fields:

languages and translation. Consequently, materials and content should be employed in order to reinforce that link and make learners aware of the cultural content of language learning, encouraging them to compare and contrast the foreign culture with their own (Clouet, 2021).

As such, language teaching/learning in Translation and Interpreting Studies should be based on tasks through which LSP learners might develop their intercultural communicative proficiency. These tasks should be linguistically, culturally and interculturally reflective and enable students to engage in effective intercultural communication, thus activating Byram's four sub-components (2021): knowledge (of a culture and cultural practices), attitudes (curiosity and openness to other cultures), skills (discovering, interpreting and relating), and critical cultural awareness (critical evaluation). The objective is to gradually train future professionals to master linguistic, sociolinguistic, discourse and intercultural competences, and interpret cultural products from different countries.

Among those products, the present study argues that properly chosen TV series may enhance students' ability to not only understand their interlocutors' strategies of interaction and contrast them with their own according to their own cultural conventions, but also to discover new strategies geared at successful communication in an intercultural context (Rodríguez-Arancón, 2023).

The intercultural context this work is related to is that of tourism, with the tourism industry being the driving force of the Canary Islands' economy and the sector that provides the most important professional opportunities for students of translation. The Canary Islands are the second region of Spain with the highest number of foreign tourists, with 13.1 million international tourists from diverse cultural contexts in 2019. Tourism is a major contributor to the local economy; therefore, it is everyone's responsibility to manage it properly, not only in terms of creating infrastructures, reserving natural spaces and promoting cultural experiences, but also in terms of creating promotional material and translating it adequately into the different languages used by the tourists (Déniz Suárez, 2015, p. 16).

Training must provide students with the knowledge and key skills needed to be able to produce target texts (TM) of a tourist nature which achieve their communicative purpose. This training should focus, on the one hand, on knowledge of the source and target cultures, their customs, heritage, art, geographical features, history, gastronomy, and festivals (Cerdá Redondo, 2000); and, on the other, on mediation between languages and cultures, with particular emphasis on the development of ICC. The use of audiovisual documents, as explained hereafter, is one of the resources that



can help improve ICC while teaching translation competences that can be key for the future professional translator working in the field of tourism (Rodríguez-Arancón, 2023).

### 3. ADVANTAGES OF USING TV SERIES IN LSP TO PREPARE TRAINEE TRANSLATORS FOR THE TOURISM INDUSTRY

The use of television broadcasts, series and films for pedagogical purposes has been commonplace since the early 1960s and has often been supposed to communicate meaning better than any other media (Tomalin and Stempleski, 1993). As early as 1961, Lottmann described the advantages of using filmstrips in the FL/L2 classroom and provided teachers with suggestions on pedagogical techniques. Canning-Wilson (2001) also discussed the practical implications of using videos in the classroom.

In the Spanish context, the TRADILEX Project (2020-2023), also known as “Traducción e Interpretación en el Proceso de Enseñanza-Aprendizaje de Lenguas Extranjeras” (Translation and Interpretation in the Teaching-Learning Process of Foreign Languages), is an educational initiative that explores the use of Audiovisual Translation (AVT) as a pedagogical tool to enhance the learning of a second language (L2). The project investigates how active engagement with AVT practices –such as subtitling, dubbing, and audio description– can improve communicative competencies in language learners. It focuses on integrating these AVT activities into language learning *curricula*, providing students with practical and creative ways to engage with the target language (Fernández Costales *et al.*, 2023; Plaza-Lara and Bobadilla-Pérez, 2024).

Generally speaking, “there is substantial research on the use of TV shows and sitcoms in English language teaching, although most studies are concerned mainly with the improvement of English proficiency” (Larrea Espina and Raigón Rodríguez, 2019, p. 37). It is widely recognised that audiovisual materials can be used as context for language use and as windows for cultural information. They are, indeed, “a potentially rich resource of cultural information, language practice and intercultural learning for foreign language learners” (Chao, 2013, pp. 249 and 250) that “can be an effective platform for the language learners to be immersed in the culture or way of life of the target community” (Chang, 2015, p. 26). With the teacher’s appropriate guidance, they can give rise to “valuable exercises in interpreting cultural features and developing intercultural awareness” (Chao, 2013, p. 250), addressing key features such as attitude, motivation, knowledge, awareness, and strategies.

The use of TV series is all the more interesting for trainee translators as it highlights the intrinsic link between language and culture, following “the traditional meaning of translation, where a text in one language is translated

into the vocabulary of another language while doing justice to both the source and the target cultures” (Kramsch and Zhu, 2020, p. 5). As linguist and translation studies scholar Juliane House (2009) puts it, “intercultural transfer is explicitly present and so likely to be perceived by recipients. They are presented with aspects of the foreign culture dressed in their own language and are thus invited to enter into an intercultural dialogue” (pp. 71 and 72). In a more recent article, House (2020) specifies that:

Individual members of any culture are continuously influenced by their society’s public and cultural representations (with regard to values, norms, traditions) through the medium of language. Language is therefore the most important part of culture. But language is also an instrument used by its speakers to categorize their cultural experience, thinking, and behaviour. Language and culture are therefore closely connected on the levels of semantics. (p. 12)

In line with House and Kramsh, Joseph Shaules (2019) explicitly stresses the importance of preparing learners for intercultural encounters when exploring the relationship between language, culture, and cognition. This is even more crucial when teaching and training students to be future professionals in the fields of translation and interpreting. In that sense, the use of audiovisual cultural products in the LSP classroom entirely supports the view that language use is linked to culture.

For trainee translators, the two most important benefits of such cultural products are that they promote cross-cultural awareness and, through the use of subtitles (both same-language subtitles and translated subtitles), help them establish the auditory, visual and mental links they need as future translators or interpreters. In other words, such documents expose students to authentic materials and to voices, dialects, and registers other than the teacher’s, providing cultural contexts that may train them to become interculturally accomplished professionals who are “competent at interpreting foreign cultural products [...] taking into account their cultural context” (Yang and Fleming, 2013, p. 297).

To show the intimate connection between language and culture and teach students that language is, above all, a socio-cultural phenomenon, we suggest that the analysis of TV series focuses on the target culture(s) and their practices, which include languages, discourse strategies, ways of behaving, attitudes and dispositions towards people, cultural artefacts, and institutions (Borghetti, 2011; Borghetti and Lertola, 2014).

In that sense, one way of helping learners of foreign languages to comprehend such authentic documents while maintaining a target language

learning environment is by adding same-language text subtitles to videos (Vanderplank, 1988, 2010, 2016). Same-language subtitles, also known as captions, are identical in format to standard translation subtitles found in foreign audiovisual documents and may provide easier access to the target language, contributing to greater comprehension and learning (Talaván Zanón, 2006, 2011, 2012, 2013).

A number of studies have looked into the importance of subtitles when using these cultural products as pedagogical tools, mainly highlighting their contribution to the improvement of linguistic competences, including comprehension of the plot, retention of phrasing and vocabulary, and listening comprehension (Chiu *et al.*, 2012; Kuppens, 2010; Ghia, 2012; Talaván Zanón, 2020; Vanderplank, 2010). Great advantage of subtitles can be taken to teach LSP, not only on the receptive level, but also at the production level, using techniques that will encourage students to use learning strategies appropriate to their learning styles.

In Translation and Interpreting Studies, various combinations of same-language and translated subtitles and dialogue can be used in the language classroom. For instance, learners listening to the dialogue in their native language and reading the foreign language in subtitles may acquire new language, since they are able to grasp the overall message in their mother tongue with little effort. They can then see in the subtitles how to formulate the same expressions in the foreign language. Also, conversely, students can use subtitles in their mother language as a means to confirm comprehension of the target language (Lambert *et al.*, 1981). In both cases, the use of subtitles simultaneously improves the students' listening and reading comprehension and contributes to language input (Fernández Costales *et al.*, 2023; Sokoli, 2018; Talaván Zanón and Lertola, 2024). Moreover, trainee translators can resort to them as parallel texts for their translation purposes.

Furthermore, subtitling is not only useful for FL learners from a strictly linguistic perspective. Subtitles, especially translated subtitles, directly manifest cultural differences and how cultures and languages constantly interact (Talaván Zanón and Tinedo Rodríguez, 2023). Making the right use of them when watching audiovisual material in class may contribute to long-term language development and intercultural awareness. This transmission of cultural contrasts and differences is probably the most fundamental channel that will facilitate students' acquisition of awareness of other cultures. Indeed, apart from being interesting for the rich and varied use that can be made of both same-language and translated subtitles, TV series are also a good way of introducing comparative culture into the classroom. They convey the notion that language and culture do not evolve along separate paths but are entwined, each partly shaping the other. Likewise, they provide trainee

translators with illustrations that show the relationships between the source culture and the target culture. In doing so, students are sensitised to the cultural implications of both the mother tongue and foreign language and motivated as the work carried out with TV series responds to their specific needs as future professional translators.

As such, TV series can be included in the list of authentic material that provide authentic language and cultural input, available to the LSP teacher in Translation and Interpreting Studies to help students to discuss the unique relationship of the language to the society studied. From the point of view of translation, bringing such native materials into the classroom may enhance the students' skills for analysing and comparing key cultural elements in both their mother language and foreign language cultures, and consequently use these skills for translation purposes. It is the educators' responsibility to provide trainee translators with enough support to acquire an understanding of culture as an aid to language learning and to promote the development of their ICC while engaging in the translation process.

#### 4. EXAMPLES OF ACTIVITIES

The implementation of the activities presented below took place within the framework of the course *Lengua B IV Inglés Aplicada a la Traducción y la Interpretación* (Language B IV English Applied to translation and Interpreting), during the second semester of the second year of the Bachelor's Degree in Translation and Interpreting English-French and the Bachelor's Degree in Translation and Interpreting English-German at the University of Las Palmas de Gran Canaria, Spain, during the 2022-2023 academic year. This is a 12-ECTS mandatory course (eight hours of classes per week over fifteen weeks) common to all students of both degrees, with a total of 120 students split in four groups of 30. *Lengua B* refers to the first foreign language used by translators and interpreters (L2), in this case, English. The teaching/learning programme for this subject progresses from Level B2+ of the Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR) towards Level C1, with the aim of ensuring the acquisition of a proficient, specialised level of spoken and written skills in English on completion of the four language subjects offered in the degree programmes, enabling students to work successfully in the field of Translation and Interpreting.

To create a balanced and efficient lesson plan that keeps students engaged and ensures that learning objectives are met effectively, the activities were timed as follows:

- Pre-viewing preparation: one hour

- Preparation for *My Family* and viewing of “Parisian Beauty”: two hours
- Activities while viewing the first episode of *Emily in Paris*: two hours
- Discussion on representations and stereotypes: one hour
- Translation of “Lo que realmente importa”: four hours

The sections above have evidenced how audiovisual materials are widely recognised as a valuable resource for LSP teaching for several reasons: 1) they provide language input, cultural input, entertainment and motivation; 2) they contribute to the development of learners’ linguistic and intercultural competence through reflection on similarities and differences between cultures; 3) subtitles, as the direct manifestation of cultural difference and of how cultures and languages constantly interact, help learners develop their *savoir-comprendre* of both linguistic and cultural elements; 4) the combination of subtitle analysis and appraisal of cultural similarities and differences through soundtracks, sound and pictures will foster and increase their *savoir-être*, *savoir apprendre/faire*, and *savoir s’engager*, contributing to improve their comfort in third spaces; and 5) they can be used as parallel text for translation purposes.

With this in mind, we wish to next describe a strategy for using subtitles and cultural comparison in the LSP classroom, taking as examples two audiovisual documents: the British sitcom *My Family* (2000-2011), one of the most-watched sitcoms in the United Kingdom during the first decade of the century; and the first episode of the American series *Emily in Paris* (2020-2022). The objective of working with both series is to acquire sufficient linguistic, cultural and intercultural knowledge to undertake the translation into English of the official video issued by Hosteltur in 2021 as part of a marketing campaign to attract tourists and businesses to France: “Lo que realmente importa”.

*My Family* (Humphreys, 2001) is based around the life of a middle-class family, the Harpers, who live in Chiswick, London. The family is headed by grumpy dentist Ben Harper and his wife Susan, a tour guide and later artist-gallery worker. The episodes mainly focus on the couple and their three children: apathetic Nick, rebellious Janey and clever Michael. For the purpose of this study, the third episode of the second series entitled “Parisian Beauty” is of particular interest to show how a sample of task-based activities can be instrumental in increasing trainee translators’ awareness of intercultural communication and of the need to overcome ambiguity and misunderstandings to reach successful dialogue between people from different cultures. In this episode, Janey, the Harpers’ daughter, has a French

exchange student coming to stay. When Sylvie arrives, she is a big hit, especially with Michael and Nick, but Janey thinks Sylvie is a creep and expresses her displeasure. Nick dresses up as a “typical Englishman” (with pipe and smoking jacket) to impress Sylvie, but Sylvie is far from being interested in him.

Netflix’s *Emily in Paris*, developed by the American producer Darren Star (2020), stars Lily Collins as Emily, “a young American woman [...] hired by a marketing firm in Paris to provide them with an American perspective on things” (IMDb, n.d.). Although it might not be an accurate picture of life in Paris and relies on *clichés* and stereotypes about the capital city and its inhabitants, “it does appeal to Americans’ dreams of what Paris may be like” (Ingalls, 2020). The series is about the difficult adaptation of a young American woman to her new job as a junior marketing executive in Paris. Emily does not only struggle with the language, but also with the new work culture and the relationships she establishes with both colleagues and neighbours.

Both series are a rich source of material for use in the FL classroom. They contain everything from low-brow slapstick humour to intellectual social satire, and include references to major literary works, pop songs, and numerous other cultural markers. As such, they can be adopted in a number of ways to focus on specific targeted language or specific topics. And last but not least, the exchange student’s arrival in London and the young executive’s settling in Paris give rise to a variety of misunderstandings, comprising situations of embarrassment and uncertainties, that can lead to discussion with and among students to better understand issues related to intercultural communication, including verbal and non-verbal aspects.

In the following approach to presenting cultural input and dialogue between cultures through the viewing of specific content and the use of subtitles, we have decided to focus on the representation of stereotypes in both sitcoms. It should be pointed out that stereotypes are aspects of utmost importance that should be tackled in the training of everyone who wishes to work in the tourism industry. *My Family* uses stereotypes for each of its major characters as well as those of the particular cultures that appear along the twenty-eight minutes (British, French, and German). It presents a large selection, and sometimes extreme cases of stereotypes, generalisations, and major icons from each culture, although the choice of elements that are shown is often more telling about the culture that created it than of the culture being observed. This can provide an interesting topic of fruitful debate or discussion among students. *Emily in Paris*, on the other hand, highlights issues of intercultural communication related to elements such as minimal language understanding, clothing, work culture, and work perspectives. Moreover, both series show clear examples of culture shock.

The activities suggested below relate to the comic elements of both series based on a succession of humorous anecdotes owing to the differences and misunderstandings between the French and British cultures, and the French and American cultures. The tasks highlight the fact that the translated dialogues would be a particularly demanding task, not only in light of linguistic issues, but also because of cultural aspects conveyed both verbally and non-verbally. Indeed, verbal messages are always accompanied by kinesic, proxemic and paralinguistic elements that are essential to convey meaning. Such non-verbal elements are culture-specific and represent a challenge when it comes to interpreting them.

In the case of “Parisian Beauty”, for example, when meeting and interacting with the Harpers, French exchange student Sylvie faces up with a number of linguistic problems that hinder her correct comprehension of the situation. The same obviously occurs with the Harpers, who tend to misinterpret Sylvie’s intentions. The most obvious examples in the exercises below include the confusion between the adjectives “airy” (meaning ‘breezy’) and “hairy” (‘covered with hair’), or “mignon” (meaning ‘cute in French’) and “filet mignon” (‘a tender cut of beef’).

In the case of episode 1 of *Emily in Paris*, Emily struggles with greeting manners and her lack of ability in French is also used by her co-workers to make fun of her. Some errors of intonation also result in misinterpretations when Emily, for instance, conveys her ideas with a slightly loud intonation to express her enthusiasm and is cut short by one of her colleagues who asks her: “Why are you talking so loudly?”. The most striking example of intercultural misunderstanding, though, probably has to do with work culture and work –including romantic– relationships. Emily’s colleague Luc’s statement is a clear illustration of this: “I think Americans have the wrong balance, you guys live to work, we work to live.”

It is also to be noted that in both series most of the problems arising between the two cultures are related to non-verbal cues that create confusion, intercultural friction and misunderstandings. Being so culture-specific, they reflect the importance of cultural norms in communication and encompass aspects related to physical appearance (hair and skin colour, clothing, etc.), paralinguistic (vocal cues, accent, etc.), facial expressions (expressions of sadness, surprise, interest, etc.), kinesics (body movements, gestures, smiles, winks, etc.), haptics (touch, kisses, hugs, etc.), eye contact (sign of attraction, attention, etc.), and proxemics (physical space and privacy, respect of intimacy, etc.). Many of the situations presented in the episodes illustrate the paramount role that non-verbal signs can play in conveying multicultural and multilingual complexities.

Below are some examples of activities to build ICC in the LSP classroom for trainee translators in Spain. They are geared to developing the satisfactory intercultural communication competence to undertake the translation into English of the subtitles of the 2:28-minute marketing video “Lo que realmente importa” issued by Hosteltur in 2021 to promote tourism in France, as will be explained in section 4.4.

#### 4.1 Before watching the episodes

Before watching the episode, students are given a warm-up activity to discuss the advantages and disadvantages of travelling or living abroad. They are required to answer the following questions in groups of four:

- Would you like to go abroad on an exchange programme? What kind of exchange?
- Would you like to host a young foreigner at home?
- Would you like to experience being an *au-pair* in a foreign country? Why? Why not?
- Would you consider working abroad? Where? Why? Why not?

Students will then be handed out the following worksheet and asked to brainstorm reasons why people from other countries, and particularly students and young professionals, would like to visit Spain, France and the United Kingdom. From this, the students will then come up with a list of things to do abroad, which will complement the answers given in the warmer activity presented in Table 1:

<b>WORKSHEET - Going Places: Spain, the United Kingdom and France</b>
<p><b>Part 1: Travel to Spain</b> Why do you think people want to come to Spain? Think of three different reasons.</p> <p><b>Part 2: Being a student in Spain</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. What places do students like yourselves generally want to go to?</li> <li>2. Why would they rather choose these places?</li> <li>3. Why do they usually want to go to Spain?</li> </ol> <p><b>Part 3: Travel to the UK</b> Why do you think people want to come to the UK? Think of three different reasons.</p> <p><b>Part 4: Being a student in the UK</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. What places do you students generally want to go to?</li> <li>2. Why would they rather choose these places?</li> <li>3. Why do they usually want to go to the UK?</li> </ol> <p><b>Part 5: Work in France</b> Why do you think people want to live and work in France? Think of three different reasons.</p>

**Table 1. Worksheet 1**  
Source. Elaborated by the author



Then, to raise their motivation and curiosity, and prepare them for the target language and content of each scene of the episode, students are expected to make guesses about the relationships between the different characters (Table 2). Vocabulary building exercises are also distributed before watching the episode to make them aware of the intrinsic link between language and culture. These are subsequently discussed and checked as a whole-class activity.

<b>WORKSHEET – Before you watch “Parisian Beauty”</b>				
<b>Part 1: Guess before you watch</b>				
The Harpers have Janey’s French exchange student coming to stay. Guess the reactions of all the family members.				
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Why is Michael, the youngest son, distressed to find out that Sylvie is coming to stay?</li> <li>2. Why is Sylvie a big hit with Michael and Nick, the eldest son, when she arrives?</li> <li>3. Why does Nick dress as a French Existentialist? What is Sylvie’s reaction?</li> <li>4. Ben laughs a lot with Sylvie. Why?</li> <li>5. Janey thinks Sylvie is a creep? Why?</li> <li>6. Ben is getting more and more paranoid about Sylvie. Why?</li> <li>7. Sylvie’s pronunciation of “hair” and “hairy” is inappropriate and leads to misunderstanding. Why? What could have happened?</li> <li>8. Nick’s room seems to be having strange effects on Michael. Can you imagine the room?</li> <li>9. Sylvie rings Paris and is overheard saying that someone is “mignon” (nice). Who could that be?</li> </ol>				
<b>Part 2: Vocabulary</b>				
<b>1. Write the correct word in each space</b>				
Lecher	lass	cove	chum	crawler
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) a close and intimate friend.</li> <li>b) someone who is promiscuous.</li> <li>c) a person who tries hard to please someone in order to gain advantage.</li> <li>d) a slang word for fellow or chap.</li> <li>e) a young woman or girl.</li> </ol>				
<b>2. Explain the following colloquial words or expressions:</b>				
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) A crappy day</li> <li>b) I don’t want to watch this drivel</li> <li>c) Our whole marriage has been a sham</li> <li>d) To have a fling with someone</li> <li>e) She’s sucking up to all of my family</li> <li>f) To take a pew</li> <li>g) To have a crush on someone</li> <li>h) To have a sultry look</li> <li>i) To shirk one’s duties</li> </ol>				

**Table 2. Worksheet 2**  
Source. Elaborated by the author

These exercises are aimed at explaining vocabulary, and particularly difficult colloquial expressions, before watching the episodes and will hopefully help students to better understand the humour. Indeed, any previewing activity should be associated with developing learners' comprehension strategies and preparing students for what they are going to see.

#### 4.2 *While watching the episode*

The above activities were aimed at anticipating the pertinent linguistic elements, especially vocabulary and colloquial expressions, and help students appraise the situations of misunderstanding as well as the humour they create. Their objective was to improve the level of language proficiency they need to avoid misreading cultural clues and understand cultural references and interactions, and thus to prepare them for the translation of the marketing video.

Despite this previous work to make sure that students' command of linguistic skills is sufficient to understand cues, cultural allusions, and underlying cultural values, the episodes will first be shown in their entirety with the subtitles in English. These will help all students be on an equal footing as far as language comprehension is concerned.

For instance, while watching the first episode of *Emily in Paris*, students are required to answer the following questions (Table 3). The terminology related to non-verbal aspects will have been studied in previous classes.

<b>WORKSHEET – While watching episode 1 (season 1) of <i>Emily in Paris</i></b>	
1.	List the cultural references related to the United States and those related to France.
2.	What knowledge of traditions, beliefs, history, or national issues can help you understand some of the cultural allusions?
3.	Language, humour and culture are closely interrelated. Try to notice funny situations created by linguistic and cultural misunderstanding.
4.	Many of the situations of misunderstanding show the important role that non-verbal signs can play in order to convey multicultural and multilingual complexities. Organise these non-verbal cues according to the following categories: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• aspects related to physical appearance</li> <li>• kinesics (body movements, gestures, smiles, winks, etc.)</li> <li>• haptics (touch, kisses, hugs, etc.)</li> <li>• eye contact (sign of attraction, attention, etc.)</li> <li>• proxemics (physical space and privacy, respect of intimacy, etc.)</li> </ul>

**Table 3. Worksheet 3**

Source. Elaborated by the author

After watching the episodes, students will work in groups and compare their answers. A class discussion will then ensue to correctly analyse and interpret the aspects of culture presented in the episodes and their underpinnings. Such discussion is designed to address specific cultural objectives to increase awareness and knowledge of source and target cultures, especially as far as representations and stereotypes are concerned. The following activities can help introduce this discussion.

#### 4.3 *Representations and stereotypes*

It is explained to students that the media tend to reproduce stereotypes with sometimes harmful effects, particularly in the tourism industry in which the inappropriate shaping of collective identities can have a negative impact on marketing strategies. The following activity (Table 4) aims to discuss and combat stereotypes while promoting more positive representations.

<b>WORKSHEET – Stereotypes: Other people</b>
<p>Stereotypes are impressions or generalisations that people have about different cultures or groups. There are usually good and bad stereotypes in any culture. Although they may be based in truth, they generally don't reflect the reality of a diverse group of people.</p> <p><b>Part 1 Stereotypes: Nationalities</b>            Below is a list of nationalities. Write down any impressions or stereotypes you have of the country or its people.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. USA/Americans</li> <li>b. UK/British</li> <li>c. Germany/Germans</li> <li>d. France/French</li> <li>e. China/Chinese</li> </ol> <p>Where do you get these impressions from? TV? Movies? Books? Have you ever travelled to these countries?</p> <p><b>Part 2 Stereotypes: About Spain</b>            People also have stereotypical views of Spain. How do you think non-Spanish people see Spain? Fill in the blanks in the list below with at least one example for each category (ex. Food: Spanish people eat paella every day).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Culture/Customs:</li> <li>• Sport:</li> <li>• Technology:</li> <li>• Food:</li> <li>• Character/Personality:</li> <li>• Homes:</li> <li>• Cities/Countryside:</li> <li>• Education/School:</li> <li>• Work:</li> </ul>

**Part 3 - Think about it!**

- a. In *My Family*, Susan has rented the film *Gigi* as a little French entertainment. Why do you think she has done this?
- b. Sylvie buys Susan a beautiful present from Harrods. Why do you think she does this?
- c. Nick dresses up as a “typical Englishman”. What do you think the “typical Englishman” is like?
- d. Janey takes Sylvie to McDonald’s instead of having dinner at home. Why might/would she do this, do you think?
- e. Sylvie from *My Family* and Sylvie from *Emily in Paris* are both from the capital city. What are they like? How are they stereotyped?
- f. When she starts documenting her life in Paris on her @emilyinparis Instagram account, what does Emily focus on? Why?

As Emily becomes accustomed to life in Paris, she makes countless *faux-pas*. Can you explain some of them?

**Table 4. Worksheet 4**

Source. Elaborated by the author

Selected scenes can then be shown again and accompanied with various activities to improve listening comprehension, teach vocabulary including slang and idioms, discuss the content, check comprehension of the script, and create conversations based on the content and script dialogue. As such, the episode is used for the main purposes described earlier: to increase linguistic competence through new vocabulary recognition and usage; to improve cultural knowledge about the foreign culture and their own culture; and to compare and contrast the cultural values and characteristics of the United Kingdom, the United States, and France with those of Spain. The various scenarios where people’s different perceptions play a major role in interpreting situations will hopefully help students learn to apply appropriate interpretations to mitigate potential tensions caused by inadequate discourse and actions.

Post-viewing activities can include follow-up activities aimed at enhancing students’ ICC by providing them with opportunities to interact and activate critical thinking skills.

**4.4 Translation**

Using the two episodes as parallel texts that present similar content and information in English, students will be required to subtitle the video “Lo que realmente importa” into English, paying particular attention to what they have learned about intercultural communication and being aware of the perspectives and interpretive lenses through which they perceive other realities.

Prior to translating, students will work in groups of four to six to create a grammar and expression resource. This resource will record specific terminology and expressions from the episodes of *My Family* and *Emily in Paris*, along with their translations into Spanish. Such resources are intended to ensure standardisation and consistency when students use them for translations of tourism-related documents. They will be informed that the resources will be uploaded and shared on the Virtual Campus, the e-learning platform employed by the University of Las Palmas de Gran Canaria, and that they can be built on as they progress through their degree, Master's degree and professional career.

Finally, students will work as a team to produce a translation into English of the subtitles of "Lo que realmente importa". The video was issued by Hosteltur, an online platform aimed at professionals in the tourism sector with contents created by tourism and communication professionals. In this case, the video was produced in 2021 by French tourism professionals to attract European visitors, and particular visitors from Spain, to choose France as a competitive and holiday destination post-Covid. "Lo que realmente importa" (What really matters) promotes a renewed tourist offer, highlighting offers of slow tourism, discovery of natural spaces, culture and heritage, as well as the French *art de vivre*, with more sustainable tourism as the common thread.

Given the focus on experiences that encourage a return to essentials –based on human values, sharing, coexistence, and also eco-responsibility–, an intercultural perspective when preparing the subtitles of the video is of utmost importance. Therefore, students are asked to give special importance to the *savoir-faire* of the country and the *art de vivre à la française* (gastronomy, wine tourism or discovery of local products in the company of other people), always bearing in mind that their new target viewership will be potential tourists coming from the British Isles and the United States.

Through this translation activity carried out in the language class, in which the focus will be put on linguistic, cultural and intercultural elements, trainee translators will understand the vital role played by translation as a means of intercultural mediation, fostering communication and understanding between different cultures and languages, transmitting the cultural heritage of a community or nation, facilitating cross-cultural exchange and promoting cultural diversity.

The purpose of this translation exercise is to show aspiring translators how to use a contrastive method as a tool for language learning and translation practice applied to the field of tourism. Students can recognise important concerns and gain a greater understanding of the similarities and

differences between both English and Spanish languages and cultures by contrasting the vocabulary, sentence patterns and syntax. As Muñoz-Basols (2019) puts it, “a crosslinguistic approach can certainly enrich our teaching practices by opening an array of possibilities for using language in a more nuanced and exacting way” (p. 308). Furthermore, the activities aim to raise awareness that the translation process requires intercultural understanding “which takes account of the impact of cultural distance when translating” (Katan, 2013, p. 84).

## 5. ACTION-RESEARCH PROCEDURES: METHODOLOGY AND RESULTS

### 5.1 *Methodology*

The research followed action-research procedures, which involve planning, acting, observing, and reflecting on practices. As Kiraly (2003) states, “starting with observations of what actually goes on in our own classrooms, followed by systematic plans and actions for change, we can create a groundswell of local research that can inform our common search for alternative teaching methods and techniques” (p. 25). The activities outlined above were accompanied by action research, aiming to integrate new trends into translation- and interpreting-focused language learning and pedagogy. This approach is intended to better equip student translators for the marketplace, particularly in the field of tourism translation.

As detailed in the introduction, this study aims to evaluate the effectiveness of using audiovisual materials, specifically TV series, as tools for language learning and translation training in the context of a Translation and Interpreting Degree Programme at the University of Las Palmas de Gran Canaria (ULPGC), Spain. The study seeks to explore how audiovisual products, rich in cultural, linguistic and contextual information, can enhance students’ ICC, foreign language skills, and overall satisfaction with the learning activities.

To assess student satisfaction and evaluate the impact of the proposed pedagogical activities, a questionnaire was administered to the participants at the end of the sessions described above. These instruments, together with observation carried out during the learning process, were intended to provide the data for the research study. Following interpretive qualitative research procedures (Braun and Clarke 2021; Saldaña, 2021), data collection and analysis were conducted concurrently in an iterative and reflexive process. The questionnaire sought to explore their perceptions of the effectiveness of these audiovisual-based activities, focusing on the following research questions:

- How satisfied are students with the use of TV series in the translation- and interpreting-focused language classroom?
- To what extent do students feel that these audiovisual materials enhance their language and translation skills?
- Do students perceive that these activities have improved their ICC and awareness of cultural references in translation?
- How well do the students believe the activities prepare them for real-world professional challenges, particularly in the field of tourism translation?

The responses from this questionnaire are meant to inform future teaching and training proposals in translator education, with a specific focus on preparing students to become professional translators in tourism marketing.

The participants of this study were 30 second-year students enrolled in the Translation and Interpreting Degree Programme at the ULPGC. The students were all native speakers of Spanish who had an upper intermediate to advanced proficiency in their first foreign language, English. It is also interesting to note that French was their second foreign language. These students had completed three semesters of Translation and Interpreting Studies, which provided them with a foundational understanding of key concepts in both translation and intercultural communication. This allowed for a more informed reflection on how audiovisual materials could contribute to their development as translators, particularly in the specialised field of tourism translation. Furthermore, second-year students were deemed ideal candidates as they were in the process of transitioning from theoretical learning to more practical, profession-oriented activities, such as translating specialised documents as well as authentic audiovisual content in their third year of studies.

The data collected from the questionnaire were analysed using both quantitative and qualitative methods. On the one hand, the quantitative data from the Likert scale questions were analysed using descriptive statistics to determine the overall level of student satisfaction and the perceived impact of the audiovisual-based activities on their language, translation, and intercultural skills. Mean scores, standard deviations, and frequency distributions were calculated to provide a clear picture of the students' responses. On the other hand, the qualitative data from the open-ended questions were analysed thematically. Three common themes were identified: the usefulness of audiovisual materials in enhancing language learning, the challenges of translating cultural references, and the perceived relevance of the activities to future professional tasks. These themes were then used to

supplement the quantitative findings, providing a more nuanced understanding of the students' experiences and perceptions, as explained in the summary at the end of this section.

## 5.2 Results

The data collected through the questionnaire provided valuable insights into the students' perceptions of using audiovisual materials for language and translation training. The results are presented in two parts: quantitative findings from the Likert scale questions and qualitative themes that emerged from the open-ended responses.

### 5.2.1 Quantitative results

#### a) Satisfaction with audiovisual-based activities

The first section of the questionnaire focused on students' overall satisfaction with the use of TV series and audiovisual materials in the classroom. On a scale from 1 ("very dissatisfied") to 5 ("very satisfied"), the majority of students expressed high levels of satisfaction. The mean satisfaction score was 4.8, with 80% of respondents selecting 5 ("very satisfied") and 20% selecting 4 ("satisfied"). No student reported dissatisfaction with the activities. Furthermore, when asked whether they found the activities engaging, 90% of the students responded positively, with 87% agreeing that watching TV series in class made the lessons more enjoyable and interactive.

#### b) Impact on language and translation skills

A significant part of the questionnaire explored the extent to which students believed the activities improved their language and translation skills. The results were overwhelmingly positive. 85% of students rated the audiovisual activities as either "highly" or "very highly" effective in improving their listening and comprehension skills in English, with an average score of 4.5. Many students commented that the combination of visual and aural input helped them better understand spoken English, including various accents and colloquial expressions. Moreover, 80% of respondents believed that the use of TV series significantly enriched their vocabulary, particularly with regard to idiomatic expressions and cultural references that were context-specific. Concerning translation skills, 75% of students reported that the activities helped them become more aware of how to handle cultural references in translation. They noted improvements in their ability to interpret and translate idiomatic expressions, slang, and culturally specific content, scoring this aspect with an average of 4.3.



### c) Development of ICC

One of the key objectives of the audiovisual-based activities was to help students develop their ICC. The questionnaire results indicated that the activities were largely successful in achieving this aim. On the one hand, 80% of students agreed that the use of TV series improved their ability to identify and translate cultural references, with an average score of 4.4. Students noted that they had become more sensitive to cultural nuances and the importance of context when translating. On the other hand, critical thinking and cultural awareness were developed positively. 70% of students agreed that the activities encouraged them to think critically about how culture influences communication. Several respondents highlighted that they were more conscious of the challenges involved in translating content from one culture to another, particularly in terms of maintaining cultural relevance and sensitivity.

### d) Preparation for professional challenges in tourism translation

Finally, students were asked whether they believed that the audiovisual-based activities had prepared them for real-world translation tasks, particularly in the field of tourism translation. 75% of them felt that the activities effectively prepared them for professional challenges, with a specific focus on tourism translation, giving an average score of 4.2. Students also noted that the marketing video, in particular, provided a realistic and practical experience, helping them understand the specific demands of translating promotional content for a global audience. Furthermore, 65% of respondents expressed increased confidence in their ability to serve as intercultural mediators, with 60% indicating that they would feel more comfortable handling translation tasks involving culturally sensitive material.

## 5.2.2 Qualitative results

The qualitative data collected from the open-ended questions offered a deeper understanding of the students' experiences and perceptions. Several key themes emerged from the analysis:

### a) Engagement and motivation

Many students emphasised that using TV series in the classroom made the lessons more engaging and enjoyable compared to traditional textbook-based methods. One student remarked: "I never thought learning English could be so fun and useful at the same time. Watching TV series makes me feel like I'm learning and enjoying a lot at the same time. It's motivating." Another student mentioned that the use of audiovisual materials created a more relaxed and stimulating learning environment, which contributed to increased motivation and participation.

#### b) Real-life application of language and translation skills

Students appreciated the authenticity of the audiovisual materials, noting that they provided exposure to “real-life” English. Several students mentioned that TV series allowed them to hear natural conversations in different settings, including informal dialogues, which they found more challenging to understand in traditional learning environments. One student wrote: “Watching TV series helped me to get used to how British and American people actually speak in informal settings. It’s very different from the dialogues we usually study.”

In terms of translation, students felt that the exercises connected theory with practice. Many highlighted that translating the marketing video for tourism required them to apply the skills they had learned throughout the audiovisual-based activities. One respondent said: “The activities gave us the chance to practice what we’ve been learning, especially in dealing with culture-specific concepts that are essential for tourism.”

#### c) Challenges in translating cultural references

While most students reported improvements in their ability to translate cultural references, several also mentioned the challenges they encountered when translating the subtitles of Hosteltur’s video “Lo que realmente importa” into English. Some found it difficult to find equivalent expressions in English for certain Spanish idioms or cultural references. One of them noted: “There were moments when I was not sure the choices I made would sound natural and culturally acceptable in English.” Another student highlighted “the difficulty [she had] trying to make [her] translation sound attractive enough for potential tourists.” This highlights the complexity of balancing linguistic accuracy with cultural adaptation, an issue that is particularly relevant in the field of translation for tourism.

#### d) Recommendations for improvement

Students also provided constructive feedback for improving future iterations of the activities. A common suggestion was to incorporate a broader range of audiovisual materials, including documentaries, news clips, or user-generated content, to expose them to different registers and genres. One student commented: “It would be great to have a wider variety of materials, not just TV series, because in real life, we might be asked to translate all sorts of things.”

Additionally, several students suggested incorporating more group discussions and collaborative projects to allow for a deeper exploration of intercultural topics. One respondent mentioned: “I’d like more time for class

discussions after watching the episodes, so we can go deeper into the cultural aspects and get different perspectives from my classmates.”

### 5.3 Summary of findings

In summary, the results of the questionnaire highlight several key findings: the majority of students expressed high satisfaction and engagement with the audiovisual-based activities, finding them enjoyable and motivating. Students reported improvements in their language and translation skills, particularly in understanding idiomatic expressions and cultural references. The activities also helped develop intercultural competence and critical thinking, with many feeling more confident in translating culturally specific content. Furthermore, students valued the activities for their preparation for professional challenges, specially in tourism translation, where intercultural skills are crucial. However, some students found certain cultural references difficult to translate and suggested expanding the variety of audiovisual materials and promoting more collaborative learning opportunities.

## CONCLUSIONS

As demonstrated by the results of the questionnaire administered to students in the Translation and Interpreting Degree Programme at ULPGC, audiovisual materials do not only offer opportunities to listen to different language varieties and registers, and to know about other cultures, but they also stimulate learners to explore their own identities, through awareness and reflection on their own culture and the foreign cultures. As authentic teaching resources for the LSP classroom in Translation and Interpreting Studies, audiovisual materials offer valuable linguistic and socio-cultural benefits, complementing traditional LSP *curricula* by raising awareness and fostering intercultural competence. This, in turn, equips trainee professionals to perform more effectively in industries like tourism. Beneath their playful surface, these materials provide an opportunity to study society from a different perspective, offering insights into cultures different from our own and exposing learners to diverse values, ideas, thoughts, attitudes, and norms. In other words, they are a powerful tool for stimulating students' critical reflection and offering practical examples of tourism translation.

TV series make it possible for students to carry out meaningful activities in the LSP classroom as they present communicative situations in all their complexity and may provide students and teachers with keys to their interpretation, avoiding cultural clashes and contributing to overcoming intercultural communication difficulties present in the translation process. This is even truer when using subtitles, both same-language subtitle to help their comprehension from a linguistic perspective and translated subtitles that are the direct manifestation of cultural differences and of how cultures and

languages constantly interact. They also make explicit the challenge of transmitting cultural contrasts and differences.

The use of such authentic materials in the LSP classroom for trainee translators is not only a way of improving students' language skills, but also an excellent resource for introducing them to their future professional environment –in the present case, the tourism industry–, in which they will be required to cross cultural borders and communicate successfully. Drawing creatively on their language resources and discussions on ICC through the use of TV series, trainee translators will develop practical strategies that are directly transferable to the job market.

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