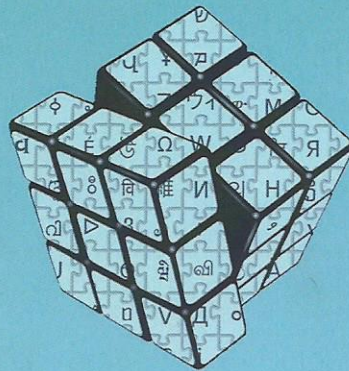


Translation, Interpreting and Intermediation in Legal and Institutional Environments

María Pilar Castillo Bernal
Carmen Expósito Castro
(eds.)



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**Translation, Interpreting and Intermediation in
Legal and Institutional Environments**

Edited by

María Pilar Castillo Bernal

Carmen Expósito Castro

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Introducing insults, offensive and taboo language in the court interpreting classroom

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1. Introduction

In view of ever-increasing globalisation and the multiplication of digital possibilities, court interpreters are needed more than ever. The number of academic courses in the field has grown exponentially and given that appropriate training is a factor which promotes field professionalisation, it could be thought that court interpreting has started to become professionalised. Currently, despite the right to the presence of an interpreter in legal proceedings being guaranteed by many legal instruments¹, in Spain there is still insufficient specific training and a lack of standardised certification. Nonetheless, in courtroom settings, the performance of interpreters is paramount, as they must provide an adequate service in order not to violate an individual's right due to their incompetence.

However, it can be a complex task to define what a competent interpreter is. More than 20 years ago, Schweda Nicholson (1994: 82) stated that, in accordance with their courtroom players, interpreters must provide 'a straightforward, unedited rendition of questions and answers across two languages'. In the case of Spain, court interpreting is not professionalised and, as a result, many court players are unfamiliar with the interpreter's role. This situation leads many to still share the traditional view described above. Yet, from an academic perspective, the role of the interpreter has recently been defined as a seeker of pragmatic equivalence:

the interpreter's duty in this setting is understood to consist of ensuring that the parties' joint work towards the accomplishment of their interactional goal is not hampered by the bilingual nature of the encounter (Pérez 2016: 392).

While accuracy and completeness are always objectives in interpreter-mediated communication, in the field of court interpreting producing an accurate and complete rendition is cardinal, especially when dealing with insults or offensive language. This importance arises from the possibility that the uttered insults may be considered to constitute the offence of *injuria* [defamation] or *calumnia* [defamatory allegation of criminal offending], included in the Spanish Criminal

¹ The Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, the European Directive 64/2010 on the Rights to Interpretation and Translation in Criminal Proceedings, the Spanish Constitution and the Spanish Criminal Code, among others.

Code at sections 206 and 208, respectively. Also, insults and offensive or taboo language can be deemed an aggravating feature pursuant to section 22.4 of the same Code. Thus, the Spanish Professional Association of Court and Sworn Interpreters and Translators (APTIJ) states that interpreters must interpret accurately and in full, ‘without changing the content or intention of the message’. Schweda Nicholson and Martinsen (1995: 264) are more specific and stipulate that ‘emotion and tone of the original must be maintained and conveyed in the target language.’ Additionally, they instruct that ‘offensive and/or vulgar language must be preserved.’

This article explores the ways in which Spanish-speaking students who are proficient English users and have received general interpreting training convey insults, offensive language or taboo language into English when they act as interpreters using reality-based specific court interpreting training material². The results appear to indicate that offensive or taboo language should be included in future court interpreting training programmes, as it is an issue that requires particular attention.

2. Relevant theory regarding court interpreting pragmatics, court interpreting training and teaching impoliteness

2.1. Offensive or taboo language and insults in education

Until recently, the use of formal and polite registers has been encouraged when learning a language in a formal context. Polite and educated people should not use certain expressions, vocabulary or even refer to certain topics (Chiclana 1990: 83). Consequently, language teachers, despite their own language use, believed that students should not be taught to swear or express possibly offensive or violent intentions (Dewaele 2008: 262). Lehmonen & Keturi (2011) attribute this absence to three main factors: teachers are not confident enough with their own knowledge in that particular field; offensive language, taboo language or insults are not included in second language curricula and are avoided as the polite form is always preferred; and teachers’ personal beliefs or limitations.

Still, students show an interest in acquiring taboo or offensive language and insults as soon as they start learning a foreign language. This curiosity is often satisfied with non-official teaching materials or in informal contexts. Despite some emphatic calls to include taboo and offensive language in the EFL curricula (Horan, 2013; Mercury, 1995; Mourat, 2004; Mugford, 2008), teachers are usually conservative. It was suggested that:

Teachers need to take the lead by preparing learners to communicate in pleasant, not so pleasant, and even abusive interactional and transactional

² See Hunt-Gómez (2013).

situations. Preparation involves helping learners identify potentially impolite practices and offering ways of dealing with impoliteness (Mugford 2008: 375).

In line with that suggestion, practical training on how to deal with this kind of language is transferred to the didactics of court interpreting.

2.2. Pragmatics in court interpreting

In court interpreting settings, accuracy is considered to be a paramount element. The problem lies in establishing exactly what is meant by ‘accuracy’ when conveying a meaning from one language to another. In 1997, House defined accuracy as a pragmatic reconstruction of the source language into the target language. The desired pragmatic reconstruction can be easily achieved with direct equivalents. However, they are rarely available in two different languages. The frequent lack of direct pragmatic equivalents entails that interpreters need to make the right choice of utterance immediately and be able to convey the pragmatic meaning in the target language in a way that achieves the same effect as the original utterance would have achieved in the original language (Hale 2004: 5). In addition, the specific characteristics of court interpreting make pragmatic reconstructions even more challenging. This exacerbating feature becomes even more acute when the interpreter needs to deal with offensive or taboo language or insults, as it can be extremely difficult to convey the intention, illocutive force and meaning of these terms.

It is important to note that other aspects may influence the way in which a message is perceived, such as knowledge of a specific field of the language, that is, the subject dealt with, the degree of familiarisation with the setting and context, and the emotional charge of the mediated communicative act. Regarding swear words in court interpreting, Hale (2004: 6) points out that the best option is to opt for a pragmatic equivalent, which may be completely different semantically.

In the following section, different options and procedures for translating taboo language, offensive language and insults are analysed.

2.3. Transmitting the illocutive force of taboo language, offensive language and insults

As stated in the section above, achieving pragmatic equivalence when interpreting offensive or taboo language or insults is a highly complex matter, so complex that some authors hold that conveying an offensive utterance into another language or measuring the insult’s intensity or degree of vulgarity is nearly impossible and the best option is to omit this kind of information (Ivansson & Carroll 1998). In the context of court interpreting, as the terms themselves can be the subject of judgment by the court, omitting information is not an acceptable option.

Many authors have suggested procedures or methods in order to achieve the best possible rendition. Nearly 30 years ago, Hatim & Mason (1990) outlined the importance of maintaining equivalence not only in the propositional content, but also in the illocutionary force. In order to achieve that best possible option, Rojo López and Valenzuela Manzanares (2000: 208) emphasise careful consideration of the term's syntactic, semantic and pragmatic features. Hale (2004: 6) insists on the necessity of a pragmatic equivalent and for that purpose, the interpreter's linguistic knowledge is paramount: he or she must not only understand the intended meaning of the speaker in an utterance, but also how that meaning will be perceived by the listener. In this regard, Jansen (1995: 3) decried the fact that some strategies used by court interpreters changed the intentions of other agents' utterances.

Some authors have found that the systemic replacement with the term provided by the dictionary has led to too many rigid and unnatural translations. They also blame inadequate renditions on the perception of doing something inappropriate: 'The translation of insults and taboo words poses a difficult problem that is always not adequately solved, mostly due to its "knotty" character' (Rojo López & Valenzuela Manzanares 2000: 207).

2.4. Let's teach impoliteness to court interpreters

One of the specific characteristics of interpreting in a court is that unpleasant issues are frequently involved. Further, court interpreting requires that interpreters immediately find a pragmatic equivalent or best possible option. On many occasions, in order to provide a professional performance, the interpreter needs to perform with a high degree of emotional stability (Valero Garcés 2006: 143).

In recent years, new court interpreting reality-based didactic materials have been developed to help students improve their interpreting skills (Building Mutual Trust, 2010; IVY, 2011; Linkterpreting, 2012; Hunt-Gómez & Gómez-Moreno, 2015, among others). Despite the ever-growing number of formal and informal training courses in court interpreting, usually offensive or taboo words or insults are taught merely as a cross-curricular subject when explaining professional or ethical issues.

In 2014, a joint project between University Rennes 2 (France) and University Pablo de Olavide (Seville, Spain) analysed the utterances produced by Master's degree students when faced with insults, accusations, explicit language and expression of violence while interpreting using audiovisual material based on a real criminal trial (Hunt-Gómez, Hernández-Morin and Lomeña-Galiano, 2014). The study pointed out some of the potential difficulties when dealing with this type of illocutive act when interpreting, especially in criminal trials, and also the effect that the interpretation of physical and psychological violence had on trainees. Results showed that students found the experience useful in order to confront unpleasant

issues or highly emotionally charged situations as it would help them to prepare better reactions for their future practice.

It is paradoxical that in a system in which offensive language, taboo language or insults are to be translated with the maximum possible degree of accuracy and completeness, practical training on how to achieve that desired pragmatic equivalent is not systematically provided. Yet, there is a real need to give students specific materials in order to train them to be able to deal with offensive language, taboo language and insults adequately in a court interpreting context. Consequently, this work advocates specific applied training for future court interpreters on how to deal with this type of utterance.

3. Methodological issues in the analysis of the adequacy of rendition

In this section methodological issues regarding the study are explained.

3.1. Materials and methods

Using a specific court interpreting didactic material based on new technologies and the use of a real criminal trial recording (Hunt-Gómez 2013), the way in which offensive language, taboo language or insults were conveyed by trainees was analysed and utterances were classified as acceptable or unacceptable as described in the following paragraphs.

The exercise was performed by 12 subjects, three male and nine female. All subjects were in the third year of the Degree in Translation and Interpreting at University Pompeu Fabra (Barcelona, Spain). At the time students were involved in this exercise, they were expected to have a general command of English and Spanish and had been exposed to consecutive and bilateral interpreting practice.

Students were presented with a contextualisation of a real criminal trial. Thereafter, they were asked to prepare for the trial and were informed of its nature, namely domestic violence. They were introduced to the workings of a criminal trial in Spain by way of a video entitled *¿Cómo se desarrolla un juicio penal?* [How does a criminal trial work?] (Hunt-Gómez 2012).

Once familiarised with the topic and the running of criminal trials in Spain, students were asked to act as interpreters using the aforementioned English-Spanish-English training material based on reality. By using this material, students acted as interpreters in a quasi-real setting: speakers uttered their renditions and then students had to convey the meaning into Spanish or English, with their interventions being recorded. Each subject interpreted 123 renditions and they were all recorded individually as interpreting sessions.

The total amount of time recorded was of 4 hours and 28 minutes. However, for the purposes of this study, the analysis was restricted to examination of the

renditions in which offensive language, taboo language or insults had to be conveyed, which amounted to 40 minutes.

There was analysis of the data obtained, which consisted of transcribed excerpts drawn from the practical exercise undertaken. The renditions were classified in two different stages. The first stage consisted of classifying the utterances pursuant to the model suggested by Ávila-Cabrera (2016), who described the most frequent strategies when confronting a high emotional load in audiovisual translation, that is to say, softening, maintaining, intensifying, neutralising or omitting the load. In this case, the categorisation has been used for court interpreting. In the second stage, utterances were counted as acceptable if both, the emotional load and the original message were successfully conveyed. If those two requirements were not fulfilled, they were counted as non-acceptable renditions

The renditions analysed were the following:

1. *Le pregunte que si le ha dicho expresiones como 'eres una mierda de madre'. Que se lo vaya traduciendo: 'eres una mierda de madre'.*
2. *La pregunta es que si él en alguna ocasión, bien de palabra bien por mensaje, le ha dicho a ella: 'eres una mierda de madre'.*
3. *Yes, she is a shit mother, yes.*
4. *Que si le ha dicho la palabra 'mentirosa' y 'zorra gorrana', mentirosa y zorra gorrana, que si se lo ha dicho la palabra 'mentirosa' y 'zorra'.*

The obtained data consisting of transcribed excerpts drawn from the practical exercise undertaken is analysed below.

3.2. Hypothesis and objectives

The analysis of the interpreted utterances of offensive language, taboo language and insults produced is based on the following hypothesis:

1. Students with a good language command in both English and Spanish and general interpreting training will not be able to produce a pragmatic equivalent in court interpreting contexts when dealing with offensive language, taboo language or insults.
2. That is caused by students' lack of linguistic and semantic knowledge or/and by cultural or personal limitations and can be solved with specific training.

The main aim of this study is to verify these two hypotheses and, by so doing, acknowledge the need for specific training in this particular matter.

4. Analysis and discussion

In this section utterances will be examined one by one and the results produced by students will be shown according to the established categorisation.

1. *Le pregunte que si le ha dicho expresiones como 'eres una mierda de madre'. Que se lo vaya traduciendo: 'eres una mierda de madre'.*

The first utterance studied was made by the prosecutor, who instructed the interpreter to ask the defendant if he had ever used, in respect of the complainant, expressions such as '*eres una mierda de madre*' ['you are a shit mother']. Additionally, with a view to confirming that the interpreter conveyed the required meaning, the prosecutor insisted that the interpreter had to translate '*eres una mierda de madre*'. Regarding grammatical features, the construction *mierda de* + noun is frequently used in Spanish to modify the noun in a highly negative manner.

In this case, the remarks made by Hughes (2006: 432) apply as terms for excretion are used to express insult in swearing; in this case, the insult will be marked by the use of the modifier '*mierda*' [shit]. According to McEnery's categorisation of the scale of offence (2006: 32), 'shit' will be considered a mild insult. However, in this particular case, as it refers to the figure of a mother, the use of 'shit' becomes more offensive. Criticism of mothers enters into the realm of taboo language or topics as it directly challenges filial piety. Sexist connotations also have a certain degree of impact in this case, because the fact that a woman is considered an unfit mother directly attacks the traditional female role model. When choosing a pragmatic equivalent, the intensity of the offence should be maintained as well as the meaning.

In table 1, the first column includes student utterances, the second indicates the strategy the students used to convey the emotional load, and in the third column renditions are classified as acceptable or not, along with some remarks. Terms or expressions which convey or attempt to convey offensive language, taboo language or insults are in bold. The other tables in this text follow the same pattern.

	Utterance	Strategy used	Acceptable
1.1	<i>Have you said to the defendant [abbb] you are a shit as a mother?</i>	Slightly softening the emotional load by adding a pause	Yes. A pragmatic equivalent is used.
1.2	<i>[Obbbb] He is asking if you [abbb] if you said to her things like you are a aaa a mess of mother, you are a shit.</i>	1. Softening the emotional load. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Using a lower intensity insult 	No.

		<p>(very mild).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adding pauses. <p>2. Intensifying the emotional load.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Changing the meaning of the insult. 	
1.3	<p>He is asking if you have [ebbb] told her that she is a horrible mother or some insults like that</p>	<p>Softening the emotional load.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Using a lower intensity term (very mild). 	No.
1.4	<p>[Ebbb] have you ever told her that she is a shit as a mother?</p>	<p>Maintaining the emotional load.</p>	Yes. A pragmatic equivalent is used.
1.5	<p>[Ubb] Have you said to her that she is [ebbb] aaa aaa a shit mother or that she doesn't work well as a mother or something similar at any time.</p>	<p>1. Maintaining the emotional load. 2. Softening the emotional load.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Using a euphemism. • Adding pauses and hesitations. 	No.
1.6	<p>[Abbb] Have you ever said to... your wife that [ebbb] that she was... a kind of shit... shit of mother [laughs]</p>	<p>Softening the emotional load.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adding <i>a kind of</i>. • Adding wordiness and hesitations. • Laughing. 	No. Lack of professionalism.
1.7	<p>Have you ever told her anything like you are a bullshit mother?</p>	<p>Meaning is not conveyed.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inadequate choice of term. 	No.
1.8	<p>[Ubbb] Have you ever told her things like you suck as a mother, you are not a good mother?</p>	<p>1. Maintaining the emotional load.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Using a higher intensity term. <p>2. Softening the emotional load.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Using a euphemism. 	No.
1.9	<p>[Umbbb ummm] did you... [ubbb]... said some sentences like you... you are a... fucking mother or you ain't a good mother to your wife?</p>	<p>1. Meaning is not adequately conveyed.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Using fucking to emphasise mother. <p>2. Softening the emotional load.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Using a euphemism. 	No.

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1.10	<i>Have you ever said to her expressions like you are a bullshit of a mother?</i>	Meaning is not adequately conveyed. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Inadequate choice of term. The intended meaning is not completely conveyed.	No.
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Table 1: Analysis of the interpreted utterance *Le pregunte que si le ha dicho expresiones como 'eres una mierda de madre'. Que se lo vaya traduciendo: 'eres una mierda de madre'.*

Only two out of ten renditions were considered acceptable (1.1, 1.4), even though in one of them the emotional load is slightly changed by the use of pauses (1.1). If we take a closer look at the non-acceptable utterances, we find that three of them do not convey the original meaning because students do not have enough linguistic-pragmatic knowledge when using insults in English (1.7, 1.19, 1.10); one of them softens the emotional load by intentionally using a euphemism (1.3) or by adding parts of speech to hide the offensive element. However, in the rendition 1.9, when repeating the insult, a euphemism is used. Conveying a higher emotional load and then softening it by using a euphemism appears in two renditions (1.8, 1.5). It is noteworthy that on one occasion (1.2) the intensity is increased, passing from too low an intensity (very mild) to one that is higher but still unable to convey the meaning.

- La pregunta es que si él en alguna ocasión, bien de palabra bien por mensaje, le ha dicho a ella: 'eres una mierda de madre'.*

The prosecutor articulated the second rendition studied. Again, he repeated the same insult 'eres una mierda de madre' [you are a shit mother]. The analysis of the renditions produced in this second approach to the same insults is interesting as its results allow us to check if students have maintained their renditions or have altered them (see Table 2).

	Utterance	Strategy used	Acceptable
2.1	<i>The question is [ebhh] if by telephonic conversation or text message, have you called her that she is a shit as a mother?</i>	Maintaining the emotional load.	Yes. A pragmatic equivalent is used.
2.2	<i>The question is if you in any occasion [ebhh] have you ...have you told her that she is... she is a... terrible mother? In text messages or email or...?</i>	Softening the emotional load. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Using a lower intensity insult (very mild). Adding hesitations. 	No.
2.3	<i>He says that the question is if [abhh] you</i>	1. Softening the	No.

	<i>have told her that she is a horrible mother, that she is a crap as a mother? It doesn't matter if it is by messages or text messages or just said.</i>	emotional load. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Using a lower intensity insult (very mild). Adding hesitations. 2. Maintaining the emotional load.	
2.4	<i>The question is that if he has told her anytime that she is a... a shit of a mother?</i>	Maintaining the emotional load. The intended meaning is not completely conveyed.	No. A pragmatic equivalent is used.
2.5	<i>The question is [ehhh] have you told her [ehhh] by text message or by [ebb] oral expression, directly, that she is a... shit of mother or something like this?</i>	Maintaining the emotional load. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Slightly softened by adding hesitations. 	Yes. A pragmatic equivalent is used.
2.6	<i>[Abhh] the point is not that. I want to know if he... he sometimes [abhh]... said to her... in a text message or in voice that... she... was [abhh] [incomprehensible swearing] a bad mother.</i>	Softening the emotional load. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Using a lower intensity insult (very mild). Adding hesitations. Adding swearing in Spanish. 	No. Lack of professionalism.
2.7	<i>The question is if you have ever told her by word or by text message she is a bullshit mother?</i>	Meaning is not adequately conveyed. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Inadequate choice of term. The intended meaning is not completely conveyed.	No.
2.8	<i>The question is if in any occasion, have you told to your wife via... via text message or orally you suck as a mother?</i>	Maintaining the emotional load.	Yes. A pragmatic equivalent is used.
2.9	<i>[Uhhh] The question is if you insulted her or not via sms or just voice.</i>	Omitting the emotional load by avoiding repeating the insult.	No.
2.10	<i>The question is if you have ever said to her that she is a bullshit of a mother?</i>	Meaning is not adequately conveyed. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Inadequate choice of term. The intended meaning is	No.

Introducing insults, offensive and taboo language in the court interpreting

		not completely conveyed.	
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Table 2. Analysis of the interpreted utterance *La pregunta es que si él en alguna ocasión, bien de palabra bien por mensaje, le ha dicho a ella: 'eres una mierda de madre'.*

In this case, four students selected a pragmatic equivalent. Despite that, only three renditions were acceptable (2.1, 2.5, 2.8), as one of them lacked information (2.4). Only two out of ten renditions were acceptable (2.1, 2.4). As shown in Table 1, two students produced non-acceptable utterances because of lack of insult-related linguistic knowledge (2.10, 2.7). In this second appearance of the term, three students intentionally used euphemisms (2.2, 2.6, 2.3), even if one of them rectified and regained the emotional load. One student avoided repeating the insult and referred to the action of *insulting* (2.9).

3. Yes, she is a shit mother, yes.

In this rendition, the interpretations of which appear transcribed in Table 3, the interpreter now has to change direction and produce a satisfactory utterance in Spanish. The context of the question is the following: the defendant answered the question, *'La pregunta es que si él en alguna ocasión, bien de palabra bien por mensaje, le ha dicho a ella: 'eres una mierda de madre'* [The question is if he has told her, orally or by text message, 'you are a shit mother'], which was put by the prosecutor. In this particular rendition, the defendant deliberately repeats the insult- 'Yes, she is a shit mother, yes' - and he does it using the present simple tense to state clearly his opinion that she is a shit mother. This intentionality should be maintained in the students' renditions.

	Utterance	Strategy used	Acceptable
3.1	<i>Sí, es una mierda de madre. Se lo ha dicho.</i>	Maintaining the emotional load.	Yes. A pragmatic equivalent is used.
3.2	<i>Sí, sí que se lo ha dicho.</i>	Omitting the emotional load by avoiding repeating the insult.	No.
3.3	<i>Dice que sí. Que ha dicho que es una mierda de madre.</i>	Maintaining the emotional load.	Yes. A pragmatic equivalent is used.
3.4	<i>Sí.</i>	Omitting the emotional load by avoiding repeating the insult.	No.
3.5	<i>Sí, le he dicho que era una mierda de madre.</i>	Maintaining the emotional load. Temporal aspect is changed as the verb is used in the past.	Yes. A pragmatic equivalent is used for the insult but part of the temporal aspect is lost.
3.6	<i>Sí. Sí, se lo he dicho.</i>	Omitting the emotional load by avoiding	No.

		repeating the insult.	
3.7	<i>Sí, sí que le ha dicho que es una mierda de madre.</i>	Maintaining the emotional load.	Yes. A pragmatic equivalent is used.
3.8	<i>Sí. Sí, así es.</i>	Omitting the emotional load by avoiding repeating the insult.	No.
3.9	<i>Sí. Cero que no es una buena madre.</i>	Softening the emotional load. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Using a lower intensity insult (very mild). 	No.
3.10	<i>Sí. Que es una mierda de madre, sí.</i>	Maintaining the emotional load.	Yes. A pragmatic equivalent is used.

Table 3 Analysis of the interpreted utterance 'Yes, she is a **shit-mother**, yes'

Five students used a pragmatic equivalent when interpreting the insult (3.1, 3.3, 3.5, 3.7, 3.10). Rendition 3.5 changed the temporal aspect from the present to the past. Four students avoided repeating the insult (3.2, 3.4, 3.6, 3.8). These avoidances seem to be intentional as the insult '*madre de mierda*' was previously included in the prosecution questions. One student softened the emotional load by using the expression '*no es una buena madre*' (3.9), which is a mild insult, if one at all.

4. *Que si le ha dicho la palabra 'mentirosa' y 'zorra gorróna', mentirosa y zorra gorróna, que si se lo ha dicho la palabra 'mentirosa' y 'zorra'.*

The last studied rendition was put by the prosecutor in Spanish and had to be interpreted into English. In this case the judicial agent specifically emphasised two insults '*mentirosa*' [liar] and '*zorra gorróna*' [sponging slut]. As the prosecutor specifically highlighted them through his intonation and due to the repetition of the specific terms, the interpreter should be especially careful when translating them. '*Mentirosa*' can be considered very offensive and *zorra gorróna* is an extremely strong insult.

	Utterance	Strategy used	Acceptable
4.1	<i>[Hostia] have you called her a liar and a ... slut... that is taking profit of you? Have you used these words? Liar and slut [ummb] that is taking care of you?</i>	Maintaining the emotional load. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Paraphrasing. The original meaning is not adequately conveyed.	No. [Lack of professionalism, swearing in Spanish at the beginning] In the first part the intended original meaning is conveyed. However, in the second part, where insults are repeated,

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			the student conveys completely the opposite meaning.
4.2	<i>[Ummmm abbb]... have you... have you said [abb]... to her if she is a liar of [abbbb]... bitch... a sloppy bitch?</i>	Softening the emotional load. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Using a lower intensity insult (strong). 	No.
4.3	<i>He is asking of you have told her liar and... and... whore... and bitch?</i>	1. Maintaining the emotional load. 2. Softening the emotional load. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Using a lower intensity insult (strong). The original meaning is not adequately conveyed.	No.
4.4	<i>[Abbb] Ask him if he has ever told her she is a liar and... and a whore.</i>	Maintaining the emotional load. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Some minor hesitations are added. The original meaning is not adequately conveyed.	No.
4.5	<i>[Ummm] have you told her [ebbb] the words liar or... or... or bitch or any expression similar, any similar expression?</i>	Softening the emotional load. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Using a lower intensity insult (strong). The original meaning is not adequately conveyed.	No.
4.6	<i>[Laughs] [ebbb] I want to know if you have said to her that... You are a liar and you are a bitch [laughs]</i>	Softening the emotional load. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Using a lower intensity insult (strong). Some minor hesitations are added. The original meaning is not adequately conveyed.	No. Lack of professionalism.
4.7	<i>Have you ever... said to her... that she is a liar and a bitch?</i>	Softening the emotional load. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Using a lower intensity insult (strong). Some minor 	No.

		hesitations are added. The original meaning is not adequately conveyed.	
4.8	<i>Have you ever told her the word liar or even... bitch... [abbb].</i>	Softening the emotional load. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Using a lower intensity insult (strong). Some minor hesitations are added. The original meaning is not adequately conveyed	No.
4.9	<i>[Ummm] Have you... [ubbb] called her... a liar and a fucking whore [oobb]?</i>	Intensifying the emotional load. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Using a higher qualifier that over-increases the intensity of the insult (fucking). The original meaning is not adequately conveyed.	No.
4.10	<i>Have you ever said to her liar or fucking bitch [high volume]?</i>	Intensifying the emotional load. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Using a higher qualifier that over increases the intensity of the insult (fucking). Raising the voice. The intended meaning is not completely conveyed.	No.

Table 4 Analysis of the interpreted utterance '*Que si le ha dicho la palabra 'mentirosa' y 'zorra gorróna', mentirosa y zorra gorróna, que si se lo ha dicho la palabra 'mentirosa' y 'zorra'.*

In all cases, finding a pragmatic equivalent for *mentirosa* was not a problem, all students properly used *liar*. However, it was very difficult for the students to find a pragmatic equivalent to the second insult, *zorra gorróna*. This difficulty has a double origin: first, there are many synonyms (varying in intensity) for the word *puta* (prostitute, whore, bitch, slut, tart, hooker, trollop, strumpet, and so on) but they are not adequately learnt within a pragmatic context; the second difficulty was that the vast majority of students did not know how to translate *gorróna*. Thus, only three students adequately conveyed the meaning of *puta* (4.1, 4.4, 4.9) and only two students adequately conveyed the meaning of *gorróna* (4.1, 4.2).

None of the students gave a pragmatic equivalent for the complete utterance analysed. One student produced a rendition close to a pragmatic equivalent by paraphrasing for *gorrona* but, unfortunately, the uttered sentence may be confusing for the average English-speaker, and also that person repeated the paraphrasing and changed it from ‘*that is taking profit of you*’ to ‘*that is taking care of you*’; none of the options provided conveyed the meaning adequately (4.1). In three cases, students could not control their reactions and showed a great lack of professionalism. One student added some swearing in Spanish at the beginning of the interpretation to express surprise (4.1); another student laughed during the intervention (4.6), and a third made noises to show astonishment (4.9). When in court, all three of those reactions are highly unprofessional and inappropriate.

5. Conclusions

This is an example of the importance of a pragmatically adequate rendition when dealing with offensive language, taboo language and insults. The study has illustrated that even if students have a good command of English and have received some interpreting training, specific court interpreting training is needed. In view of the fact that offensive language, taboo language and insults can amount to discrete criminal offences, in such a sensitive context a qualified interpreter must be able to opt for an adequate rendition, that is, a pragmatic equivalent.

Some aspects should be considered. Generally, when learning a second language, the use of formal or polite registers is encouraged while other registers are considered insufficiently polite or even injurious. Paradoxically, despite the extended use of insults, offensive and taboo language and the interest the area stimulates in students, they are not usually included in second language curricula. On the other hand, in the field of court interpreting, accuracy and completeness are essential. Consequently, there is a need to convey all aspects of the original rendition and, at the same time, overcome the specific added difficulties of the activity and context, that is, to maintain emotional stability, immediateness, dealing with unpleasant topics, and lack of professionalisation, among other things. Despite the increase in court interpreting training, guidelines on offensive language, taboo language and insults, if included in the curriculum, only appear incidentally and in a theoretical fashion, embedded in professional ethics explanations.

Two hypotheses have been proved. The first formulated hypothesis stated that students with no specific training in how to deal with this particular kind of language would be unable to produce pragmatic equivalents. Given that 77.5% of the renditions analysed were not considered to be acceptable, this first hypothesis can be deemed partially proved. The second hypothesis attempts to explore the origin of the following fact: many students with interpreting training and who are proficient speakers in both languages fail to convey a pragmatic equivalent when

dealing with offensive or taboo language or insults in a courtroom. Unsurprisingly, results indicate that, on many occasions, finding a pragmatic equivalent which adequately conveys this kind of term or expression poses an elevated degree of difficulty for students because of their lack of knowledge in this specific language area. On the other hand, a not-so-expected result was that the influence of personal or cultural limitations leads to huge impediments to the production of a pragmatic equivalent, with examples being the intentional avoiding of insults or taboo or offensive terms in speech, and their conveyance using a milder emotional load.

When considering the obtained results, it becomes clear that there is a need for specific practical training for court interpreters in order to achieve the best possible utterance when dealing with offensive or taboo language and insults.

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