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Translating Broadway:

The translation of musical theatre into Spanish.

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Abstract

As one of the less prominent branches of translation, the translation of musical theatre is a complex task which requires a certain degree of linguistic prowess, creativity and knowledge of both source and target cultures. In this project, I have further studied and investigated the challenges of musical theatre translation by translating and adapting a selection of songs from the Broadway and West End musical, *Legally Blonde The Musical*, into Spanish. As a non-native Spanish speaker, I confronted the challenge of translating musical theatre with the goal to provide practical applications for the translation of musical theatre songs and to further contribute to the field of musical theatre translation.

Keywords: musical theatre, musicals, translation, adaptation, rhyme, singability.

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1. Introduction

Musical theatre, also referred to as ‘musical comedy’ (Collins Dictionary) or simply a ‘musical’, has long been a part of the world of entertainment. With roots in both plays and operas, society has now arrived to what is referred to as a ‘modern day musical’ (musicals which follow a certain structure originating from the early parts of the twentieth century). While New York City continues to be the primary hub for musical theatre, musicals are enjoyed by people across the United States, Europe and the rest of the world. For this reason, many musicals have also been translated into a number of different languages in an attempt to extend the joy and pleasure of musical theatre to all walks of life.

Currently, we are well into the “second golden age of musical theatre” (Tepper, 2016), musicals have, in recent years, been bustling from Times Square to people’s home televisions (Pearl, 2018). This resurgence of musical theatre is exciting because it also means an interest in musicals has once again become popularized; when something is popularized, more people want access to it. Though most of this excitement is centralized within the English-speaking world at the moment, the future could hold an even wider variety of musicals translated across a plethora of languages.

In order to provide grounds for this project, I have selected to use the Broadway show *Legally Blonde The Musical* (which will simply be referred to as *Legally Blonde* for the duration of the project) to be the exemplar. While there may have been other adaptations of this musical, I was unable to uncover any ‘official’ Spanish (let alone “Castellano”) adaptation of the show. Even so, I refrained from reading, listening to or watching any other Spanish adaptations which may exist in order to create the best and most organic work possible.

My goal, or thesis statement, is: through integrating knowledge from my studies this year (in addition to both a Bachelor of Arts degree in Spanish and a Bachelor of Fine Arts degree in Musical Theatre), I plan to take the concepts, artistry and energy of *Legally Blonde*

and, through extensive research, study and interpretation, propose translations of four carefully selected songs into Spanish. In doing so, I plan to both further contribute to the field of musical theatre translation and to highlight and overcome the challenges which this type of translation entails. As a *tricultural mediator* (section 3.4) between the English, Spanish and musical theatre worlds, the aim of this project to help to bridge the theatrical “gap” (Hübsch, 2006: 1-3).

1.2. Translation vs. Adaptation

When visiting Madrid in March, 2018 to see a few musicals which had been translated/adapted into Spanish (*El Rey León*, *La Familia Addams*, *El Guardaespaldas*), the term “adaptación” was encountered in programs either in addition to or in lieu of the word “traducción”. What is the difference? A translation can be simplified to mean the transference of text from one language to another. An adaptation, however, refers when there are multiple concepts/elements from an original work which requires a great deal of alteration in order to successfully transfer meaning to the target culture. Because translating musical theatre contains many elements which are rooted in the source culture and in the music of the show, a series of adaptations often must be carried out in order to see the production’s successful cultural transference. In order to be able to provide adaptations to cultural references, jokes, plays on words, etc. *within* the constraints of a musical theatre song, a translator/adaptor must be capable of understanding the musicality of songs in addition to being well versed in musical theatre.

Why is the adaptation of musicals so important? Shouldn’t the translation of the text be enough? According to research carried out by Alba García Paredes’ (2013), “Traducir teatro es reescribir”. Simply put, in order to accurately and best translate a musical, the translator must feel/have the liberty to rewrite when a given concept cannot not be easily matched in the target culture. This ‘rewriting’ is a necessary strategy a translator can use, especially when

confronted with challenging cultural, lexical or musical elements. This will be further discussed section 5.2.

2. Musical theatre

2.1. The Definition of Musical Theatre

Musical theatre is a unique, exciting and (potentially) profitable art form. It can be defined as “a stage, screen or television production using popular style songs to either tell a story (book musicals) or showcase the talents of songwriters and performers (reviews)...”. (Kendrick, 2017: 2). While this definition suffices, there should also be a distinction made between musical theatre and opera. “The key difference is, in a typical musical dialogue is spoken by the characters who occasionally burst into song. In most operas, the singing never stops” (Opera 101).

Once a clear definition of musical theatre is attained, one might wonder what the purpose of musical theatre is? There are four primary purpose of musical theatre: to tell a story, to provide an escape from reality, to be entertained and to show to mirror of society. Firstly, as Kendrick puts it, “the primary job of a musical is to tell a story...” (2017: 3). Secondly, when people have the opportunity to view these musical stories, they are able to experience an escape from reality. Most people lead extremely busy and stressful lives and, when they go to the theatre, they often want to be brought into an alternate reality in order to escape the chaos; through the suspension of disbelief, we get to experience *other* people’s lives for a brief moment (Safire, 2007). The third, and perhaps clearest, reason people go see musicals is simply to be entertained. Finally, musical theatre is used to mirror society. In a world full of many issues, people sometimes become blind to the realities of society. In order to present these issues or phenomenon in a new light, theatre is often used as a mirror to reflect on society. Unlike movies or television series, however, this ‘mirrored society’ is presented live. Usually, when confronted with a topic in person, the effect is more tangible, thus causing people to

think, question and wonder about the events of their past, present and/or future. Sometimes, topics dealt with in musicals are lighter and are presented by comedy. Other times, more serious topics are presented in the form of a drama. Regardless, art should make a statement on the audience or, as the renowned poet and Harvard professor César A. Cruz says, “Art should comfort the disturbed and disturb the comfortable” (Goodreads, 2018).

2.2. Translation of Musical Theatre

Up until about the mid-2000s, there was a severe lack of study and investigation into the translation of musical theatre. Susan Bassnett states, “translating for the theatre...remains probably the least explored field in Translation Studies and there are very few serious examinations of the complexities of transferring a play across cultures” (France, 2000: 96). However, the last decade or so has seen the beginnings of a corpus of studies both within the specific translation of musical theatre between Spanish and English (e.g. Donés Alos, 2016; Morales Sánchez, 2015; Pertegaz Tudón 2017) and the between English other languages (e.g. Hübsch, 2006; Andersson, B., & Ulvaeus, B., 2009; Merz, P., 2014). This hike in content, one can assume, is due in part to the increasing number of musicals being written, the further connectivity of the world via the internet and the overall increased interest in musicals by the general public.

Though these studies exist, and though there have been musicals which have gone through an official translation/adaptation process (e.g. *Wicked*, *Mama Mia*, *The Lion King*), in many ways the specific study of the translation of musical theatre *still* remains to be one of the less investigated branches of translation. Generalizing to the world of ‘songs’, Johan Franzon (2014: 374) further states, “until quite recently, the translation of songs did not attract much attention within translation studies... Nevertheless, the fact that songs are translated in various ways, for various purposes, and by a variety of mediators should warrant some focused investigation within the discipline.”

One reason for the comparatively smaller amount of research in this field could be due to the sensitive, culturally bound and overall difficulty which translating musical theatre entails; a very specific set of skills, patience and finesse is required in order to adequately carry out the translation of the songs of a musical. Additionally, each language presents its own difficulties in musical theatre translation; some languages are more susceptible to the transference of both concepts and language than others (i.e. the Spanish language has closer cultural and linguistic ties to English than Chinese does). In comparison to other prominent languages, Spanish is a language which *can* be successfully translated and adapted within the scope of musical theatre; a challenge which I confronted in this project.

As opposed to other types of art, the work of a musical theatre translator will not sit in alone book for someone to read on their own time; the text/lyrics will become living, breathing entities through the actors, musicians and directors. Therefore, in order to successfully translate musical theatre, a musical theatre translator must remain mindful of the source and target cultures, in addition to the notion that their work will someday come alive.

2.3. Legally Blonde

2.3.1. Summary and Context

Legally Blonde The Musical was composed (music and lyrics) by the writing team of Laurence O'Keefe and Nell Benjamin. The the book (unsung parts of the show) was written by Heather Hach and the show was both directed and choreographed by Jerry Mitchell. Previews (a select number of 'pre-opening' performances) for *Legally Blonde* began on April 3rd, 2007 and officially opened on Broadway at the Palace Theatre on April 27th, 2007. Though nominated for 10 Drama Desk Awards and 7 Tony Awards, the production unfortunately went home empty handed (The Broadway League, 2007). Approximately four months after the Broadway opening on October 13th, 2007 (Hernandez, 2007), the famous American TV network, MTV (Music Television), decided to air the full musical (videos from this airing have

been made available before each translation proposal in section 4 and in the annex in section 8.1.1). Before the Broadway show closed, however, MTV launched a television show on June 2nd, 2008 entitled *Legally Blonde the Musical: The Search for Elle Wood* in which the network televised the casting process of the next actress to play Elle Woods on Broadway (TV Series, 2008). After completing 595 performances *Legally Blonde* closed on Broadway on October 19th, 2008. Immediately following the Broadway run, the first national tour of *Legally Blonde* began on September 23rd, 2009, running nearly a full year until its closing on August 10th, 2010 (The Broadway League, 2008). Directly following the opening of the US national tour, the London ‘West End’ production of *Legally Blonde* began previews on December 5th, 2009, officially opening on January 13th, 2010. The production ran over two years closing on April 7th, 2012. (Official London Theatre, 2009). Finally, *Legally Blonde the Musical Original UK Tour* (2011) opened on July 8th, 2011 until its closing on October 6th, 2012.

Based on the 2001 movie by the same name, *Legally Blonde* is a (now) cult-classic story which follows Elle Woods, a bleach-blonde fashionista from Malibu, California as she attempts to win back her ex-boyfriend, Warner Huntington III, by getting accepted into Harvard Law School. Armed with a determination to prove herself, she, with the help of her Delta Nu sorority sisters and her parents, manages to make it into the prestigious Ivy League school. Once at Harvard, Elle quickly learns that both Warner has moved on with a stuck-up girl named Vivienne and that law school won’t be as easy as once thought. With the help of a graduate assistant, Emmett, and her new friend Paulette, Elle manages to study and work her way into the high graces of her infamous law professor, Professor Callahan, ultimately landing a spot helping him with an important case – the murder of a millionaire. The prime suspect of the case is the deceased millionaire’s wife, fitness mogul Brooke Wyndham who also happens to be a member of the Delta Nu sorority. Through winning Brooke’s trust and sticking to her

gut, Elle cracks the case open, falls in love with Emmett and makes a name for herself as a girl who truly is legally blonde.

2.3.2. Justification for Show Selection

The selection of this *Legally Blonde* for this project addresses both personal and professional reasons including. Firstly, I have personal connection to the show and dearly enjoy it. Having both *seen* the show and been *in* it, I feel as though I truly know the show from a personal standpoint, from which I hope to be able to correctly interpret and translate the show. The second reason is the music. The music in a musical, as its name suggests, is a fundamental element. *Legally Blonde*'s music is incredibly fun, contagious, humorous and is exciting to work on; however, the songs in this show are notorious for being wordy, having lots of modern jargon/phrases and for being rhythmically demanding. Additionally, there are many different types of musical genres present including reggae, ballad and pop/rock. Thirdly, the story is full of a plethora of relatable themes such as love, passion, drive, dedication, sadness, rejection, friendship, joy and stereotypes. This is the type of show where, no matter the culture, anyone can relate to either something or someone. Finally, this show provides specific challenges one faces in the translation of musical theatre (which will be further discussed in section 3).

2.3.3. Justification for Song Selections

In addition to the specific translation obstacles each song contains, each selected song also deals with a general challenges such as rhyme, rhythm, syllabic count, vocabulary and cultural references.

Omigod You Guys

Being the first song in the musical, *Omigod You Guys* sets the stage for the rest of the show. It introduces themes, characters and a plethora of useful vocabulary (such as the title) which are used throughout the musical. Secondly, this song poses specific challenges regarding the world of American university and collegiate Greek (UC San Diego) cultures (e.g. Delta Nu,

sisterhood, Homecoming King and Queen); these references are made lyrically and visually throughout the song (and the show). Additionally, there are very nuanced themes present in this song in reference to an ‘impending wedding engagement’ which poses an extra layer of difficulty in cohesion and underlying meaning throughout the song. Finally, this song depicts moments of subtle humor (i.e. misunderstandings, hyperboles, stereotypes) which requires a finesse capable of providing potential actors with similar lines/lyrics in the target language that allows for the retention of these moments.

What You Want

What You Want is one of the more challenging pieces in the show because of the variety of characters, rhythms, motifs (Lumen) and scenarios which it contains. This song also is a challenge due to the constant change of musical genre, time and geographic location. Finally, this song deals with a wide variety of concepts and references culturally bound to the United States (e.g. GPA, spring break, LSAT, JetBlue, etc....) which requires creativity and exceptional knowledge of both the source culture and target culture in order to procure adequate and appropriate cultural adaptations.

Positive

Positive deals with challenges regarding verbs issues (primarily differentiating between “ser” and “estar”), humor and colloquialisms (e.g. “you off the hizzle, G”, “stick that’s up her butt”, “Miss Fancy Pants”) and “singability” (section 3.2). This song is also intended to be verbally and visually humorous; therefore, this requires the translation to allow for similar verbal and visual humor in the target culture.

Legally Blonde

The primary reason for choosing the song *Legally Blonde* is because it is the title song of the show. Secondly, being the only true ballad in the show, this song was selected in order to provide variety amongst the other types of songs addressed in this project. Finally, the

translation of ballads also has its own set of challenges due to the significantly slower pace of the music (e.g. flexibility with syllabic count is lessened due to the awareness it causes if overly amplified or reduced).

3. Primary Challenges in the Translation of Musical Theatre

Regardless of the specific challenges a musical theatre translator faces, he/she must ensure their translated work has what Mona Baker (1992: 180) refers to as ‘cohesion’. That is, “the network of lexical, grammatical, and other relations which provide links between various parts of a text. These relations or ties organize and, to some extent create a text, for instance by requiring the reader to interpret words and expressions by reference to other words and expressions in the surrounding sentences and paragraphs”. Musicals often repeat phrases and makes references to songs/dialogue previously performed; therefore, this is one of the overarching concepts/challenges a musical theatre translator must always be mindful of.

Furthermore, I have chosen to highlight and discuss in detail six specific and pertinent challenges found in translating musical theatre: rhyme, singability, the comprehension and interpretation of theatrical elements, the translation of cultural references, the translation of the grammatical elements of a song and the interpretation of music, lyrics and spoken words.

3.1. Rhyme

One of the fundamental elements of a song is the rhyme. Rhyme helps to facilitate flow and pattern, both of which help a song to find its ‘groove’. The songs in a musical are no different and are actually part of what makes translating musicals so challenging. Though the translation other types of texts (i.e. literature, poetry, cinema, etc....) come with their own set of challenges, the translation of musical theatre is strongly affected by the musical element. Therefore, when translating the songs of a musical, the rhyme schemes provide a rather set-in-stone structure in which lyrics must fit. According to Merriam-Webster (2018), a “rhyme scheme” is “the arrangement of rhymes in a stanza or a poem” (or in this case ‘in a musical’).

For example, if one uses an AABB rhyme scheme (where A lines rhyme between themselves and B lines rhyme between themselves), no matter what is said A2, it has to fulfil the rhyme originally set in place by line A1. Therefore, in translation, the choice of vocabulary, phrasing and syntax may be heavily affected. While this is clearly a challenge upon writing the original version of a musical, the challenge for musical theatre translators is tenfold.

One specific rhyme-related challenge is in regards to the quality of rhymes which exists in Spanish. In Spanish, rhyme schemes which utilize a saturation of rhymes using the infinitive verb tenses (-ar, -er, -ir verbs) and the past participle verb tenses (“ado”, “ido”, etc....) are viewed as weak. Therefore, in the translation of musical theatre songs, it can be very tempting (and easy) to default to these rhyming pattern. While these pitfalls can be dangerous, it does not mean they are always out of the question. Carlos Perrone (*La Rima y los Verbos*) puts it this way: “Las rimas señaladas como pobres, no están prohibidas y pueden usarse. Pero su uso extenso o forzado siempre revelará superficialidad y falta de esmero de parte del escritor”. Taking this into account, as with many other elements of translation, the use of rhyme with infinitives/past participles *can* be used but with caution and/or intentionality. With this being said, there *are* moments within my translation proposals where I decided to use a rhyme in the infinitive; however, these decisions were made consciously and were purposely limited in each song.

3.2. Singability

As described in Johan Franzon’s (2014) article, the concept of “singability” is a crucial element in the translation of any song. Singability refers to the question of “is the translation going to be singable or not?” While this may sound rudimentary, it is a perfectly valid question and was a common theme/frequent challenge throughout the translation of the songs from *Legally Blonde*. As will be discussed in section 3.5, when translating from English to Spanish, expansion usually takes place. In many cases throughout the translation

process of musical theatre songs, the desired translations do not comply with the singability factor and must be reconsidered and readdressed. This could happen for a number of reasons; however, most occurrences tend to be due to an excess of syllables or words.

If a translator is going to translate musical theatre songs, it should be obvious that one of the primary intentions is for the translated songs to realistically singable. One way I made sure my translations of *Legally Blonde* are singable was by creating self-recorded recordings throughout the translation process. In doing this, I was able to ensure that all of the lyrics I translated could be genuinely sung in a real-life scenario. Upon finalizing the translation of each song, I recorded final recordings as well. These recordings can be found in section 8.2. For further discussion on how to combat problems with singability, see section 5.3.

3.3. Comprehension and Interpretation of Theatrical Elements.

The comprehension and interpretation of theatrical elements refers to the way in which a translator identifies and utilizes information gleaned from the theatrical elements of a musical. For example, when translating a song from the radio, there is no other context binding the song than the context within the song itself. Translating a musical theatre song, however, is infinitely more challenging due to elements such as plot, backstory, motive, relationship, time periods and geographical locations.

Perhaps the most important role of songs in a musical is to further the plot. To clarify, plot is a general word meaning “The main events of a play, novel, film, or similar work, devised and presented by the writer as an interrelated sequence” (Oxford Living Dictionaries, 2018). In a musical, the plot is mostly carried by the songs. These songs can manifest in a plethora of ways including, the physical transition characters from one place to another place, the changing of time or seasons or the development of relationships, all of which lead to challenges for a translator (e.g. verb tenses and vocabulary selection). For instance, the song *What You Want* accomplishes a *lot* in under eight minutes: Elle starts at her lowest point and, by the end of the

song, is admitted into Harvard Law School. Throughout the translation of a song, in addition to the rhythmic and musical constraints, a translator *must* remember they are helping to further the plot.

When translating the lines/lyrics of characters, a comprehensive knowledge of each character and their backstory is necessary; a backstory refers to “a history or background created for a fictional character in a film or television programme” (Oxford Living Dictionary, 2018). When a translator knows a character’s backstory, they are better equipped to make decisions regarding the kinds of words/lyrics a character would use in the target language.

Relationships are an interesting dynamic in both real life and in stories. Relationship between each person/character are informed by their pasts/backstories. For example, in the case of Elle and Vivian, their relationship for most of the show is problematic; there is spite, jealousy and vileness that emanates from this relationship. As the translator, the goal is portray this relationship through words (both spoken and sung).

An example of the Elle/Vivienne relationship can be found in *Positive*. In the middle of the song, the music breaks for brief dialogue. Elle has just hallucinated her sorority sisters who end up ‘physically’ spinning her around until Elle verbally expresses that she feels sick (whilst in the presence of Warner and Vivienne). In English, Vivienne’s response is “Really? Warner, let’s take this back to my place”. The expressed meaning (Baker, 1992: 13) and underlying intent of the word “really” here implies that Vivienne is quite offended. While options such as, “¿de verdad?” or “¿en serio?” would be suitable translations, the underlying intonation of offense and spite can be easily facilitated through the phrase, “¿Ah, sí?”; this phrase allows the character to use vocal intonation to convey her emotions of spite and offense.

Finally, time periods and geographical locations (or lack thereof) are also important tools for translating musical theatre. Like most ‘straight plays’ (Howland, 2018), movies and television shows, musicals also span a multitude of time periods and geographic locations.

When translating a musical, the translator *must* keep in mind his/her time period and location from the source culture in order to translate the appropriate linguistic nuances, terminologies and dialect in the target culture.

3.4. Translation of Cultural References.

As its name suggests, the translation of cultural references refers to the challenge of taking a cultural reference in the source language and adequately conveying the same (or a similar) message in the target language. In order to be a successful translator, one must be an expert (or at least extremely savvy) in both the source culture and the target culture. This definition does not merely entail the understanding of languages pertaining to two cultures, it means comprehensively understanding the elements presented in Hall's triad of culture, such as customs, idioms and institutional nomenclatures (Katan, 2009: 78). In other words, in order to be a successful translator, one must be a cultural mediator. Ronald Taft (Katan 2009: 88) defines a cultural mediator to be a

“person who facilitates communication, understanding, and action between persons or groups who differ with respect to language and culture. The role of the mediator is performed by interpreting the expressions, intentions, perceptions, and expectations of each cultural group to the other, that is, by establishing and balancing the communication between them. In order to serve as a link in this sense, the mediator must be able to participate to some extent in both cultures. Thus, a mediator must be to a certain extent bicultural”.

While this is true for *all* translation disciplines, I propose there is actually a third requisite in order to be a musical theatre translator that would cause a translator to become a type of triple threat, or *tricultural mediator*; one must be an expert in the source culture, the target culture *and* in musical theatre.

In musical theatre, there are many elements which require changes in order to be adequately transferred from one culture/language to the other. These changes could be lyrics, rhythms, or even entire approaches to a song. Sometimes, when there is a high degree of manipulation needed of the source text in order to in order to make the necessary cultural transfers, a translator must take the step from translation to adaptation. Leticia Herrero (2001: 312), states: “La traducción es una actividad que se realiza entre culturas y que involucra culturas; no se traducen lenguas, se traducen culturas. Y no podemos negar que las culturas y las lenguas muestran asimetrías entre sí que hacen inevitable cierto grado de manipulación en el proceso de transferencia.” In light of Ms. Herrero’s statement, in order to best translate elements such as cultural references, figures of speech, or idioms, a translator may need to make adaptations.

Every musical has its fair share of expressions, idioms and other cultural references which need no (to little) explanation for an audience of the same culture. However, when translating one of these shows into a *different* culture, the translator must mediate. He/she must take each reference on a case by case basis and look deeper into the meaning of each reference; what is *really* being accomplished by the usage of any given reference? Is the role of this reference “merely a background against which communication takes place” (Ivir, 2003: 120) or does it play a more prominent role? These are important question to ask because they help clue in a translator if something is changeable/adaptable for the target culture or if something else must be done instead.

3.5. Translation of the Grammatical Elements

The translation of the grammatical elements of songs refers to the correct and appropriate usage, formulation and conjugation of grammatical elements in the target language. The most challenging element in regards to the lexical parts of translation is making each phrase/word fit. In the original show, each line of each song is comprised of ‘x’ number of

lyrics which specially fit in at perfect intervals within the accompanying music; ergo, the Spanish translation of each song must also follow suit. Through the process of translating English into Spanish, however, the process of expansion (Kluger, 2011) often takes place, thus making a Spanish translation of English lyrics fit into set music and phrasing is not easy. Through working on *Legally Blonde*, it was discovered that most lines have little flexibility for additional syllables and that when translating a ‘dense’ line (Kluger, 2011) from English into Spanish, a direct translation usually does not suffice.

Furthermore, the translation of certain verbs from English to Spanish pose more specific grammatical problems. The biggest issue in this project can be found in the translation proposal of *Positive*. This song, in English, often deals with the concept of ‘to be’, a verb which is split into two verbs in Spanish, “ser” and “estar”. The challenge with a concept like this is both knowing when to correctly use “ser” or “estar” and how to remain consistent throughout the piece.

Finally, as a non-native Spanish speaker carrying out a translation *from* my mother tongue, I am at an immediate disadvantage when translating *into* Spanish. While most linguists and translators suggest one should translate *into* their native tongue(s) (i.e. Baker, 1992: 64-65), this translation was carried out going against the ‘mother-tongue principle’; however, data does not always conclude that the *best* translations are done by native speakers translating *into* their native tongue (Parr, 2018).

3.6. Interpretation of Music, Lyrics and Spoken Words

The interpretation of music, lyrics and spoken words deals with the way in which a translator correctly interprets the emotions, expressions and underlying meanings of thoughts, words, lyrics or music in order to accurately translate the original message’s intent. In musical theatre, there are many underlying concepts which are continually conveyed via the music, the sung lyrics and the spoken words, therefore, it is the job of a translator in this field

to correctly identify and interpret these elements. From the music, a musical theatre translator can ascertain nuances and emotions. From the lyrics and spoken words, a translator can read into each word, concept or thought (sometimes songs in musicals are not dialogue or narrative but are the outward processing and discussion of internal thoughts or concepts). Music aside (which has no specific root in any spoken language), these challenge of correct lyric/word interpretation may be a challenge when the translator translates *from* their mother tongue but is less likely to result in problems if translating *into* their mother tongue.

4. Translation Proposals

The following translation proposals are my own personal translations proposals. In addition to the translated text, I have also taken it upon myself to provide recordings of each proposal using my own voice. The translated versions of the four songs can be found in a link to a Google Drive folder located in section 8.2. Furthermore, I had decided to share the translations side-by-side with the original lyrics. I have done this in order to be able to easily compare and analyze the translations and in order to visually be able to appreciate the structures, character roles and rhyme schemes in every section. Finally, as a general notice, there have been slight changes across the life span of *Legally Blonde* in which minor discrepancies exist. For the sake of consistency, I have elected to follow the Original Broadway Cast Recording, (aside from any other alterations/changes that have notated thusly). Finally, I have utilized footnotes for each song to provide commentaries regarding specific choices I made throughout the translation process.

4.1. *Omigod You Guys – Madre mía, tía*

Broadway version: <https://youtu.be/47D8ZJUMI8k?t=17s>

West End (UK) version: <https://youtu.be/HYd7tWO65LQ?t=8s>

Contextualization:

Omigod You Guys is the opening number ('song') of the musical. The scene opens on the Delta Nu sorority house at UCLA (University of California Los Angeles) where three sorority girls, Margot, Serena and Pilar, are lamenting about the impending nuptials of their best friend, Elle Woods. The song helps the audience to get to know these characters and helps to 'set the stage' for the rest of the musical. Additionally, there are slight textual differences between the Broadway and the London versions. Though I followed the Broadway recording as my primary source, there are a few occasions where I opted to use text from the London production because it allowed for a smoother transition/translation.

(The full recording of this translation proposal can be found in section 8.2.)

LYRICS

LETRAS

MARGOT: Dear Elle, he's a lucky guy, I'm like gonna cry, I got tears comin' out of my nose! MAD PROPS! He's the campus catch, You're a perfect match, 'Cause you both got such great taste in clothes. Of course he will propose!	MARGOT: Querida Elle, él es estelar Me pongo a llorar, Es que, ¡ya me estoy flipando! ¹ ¡BIEN HECHO! Es el más guapo, Sois el mejor combo, Y vestís a la moda y guay. ¡La boda seguro que hay!
SERENA: Dear Elle, honey mazel tov, Future's taking off, Bring that ring back and show it to me!	SERENA: Querida Elle, tu futuro fijo es, Felicidades, ¡El anillo me tendrás que mostrar!
PILAR: Four carats, a princess cut, Are you psyched or what? I just wish I could be there to see,	PILAR: Seis ² quilates, corte princesa, ¡¿No te vuelve loca?! Solo desearía poder estar,
MARGOT, SERENA, & PILAR: When he gets down on one knee!	MARGOT, SERENA & PILAR: ¡Cuando se va a arrodillar!
LAS DELTA NU: Omigod!	LAS DELTA NU: ¡Madre mía!

<p>Omigod you guys, Looks like Elle's gonna win the prize. If there ever was a perfect couple, this one qualifies. Omigod you guys! Omigod this is happening, Our own homecoming Queen and King. Finally she'll be trying on a huge engagement ring for size, Omigod you guys! Omigod!</p>	<p>¡Madre mía, tía! Se ve que Elle toda ganará. Si hubiera una pareja perfecta, ésta sería.</p> <p>¡Madre mía, tía! Madre mía está pasando ya. Serán nuestro Rey y Reina.³ Por fin un anillo de compromiso, ella llevará.</p> <p>¡Madre mía, tía! ¡Madre mía!</p>
<p>PILAR: Okay, everybody signed. Good now form a line and we'll start the engagement parade.</p>	<p>PILAR: Okey, ¿habéis firmado, ya? Muy bien, ¡fila! Y empezamos la celebración.</p>
<p>SERENA: Light candles in single file, Don't forget to smile. Lose the gum Kate! (sung) You look like the maid.</p>	<p>SERENA: Con velas en fila india, ¡Sonreíd porfa! ¡¿El chicle, Kate?! (hablado) Vas de criada.</p>
<p>KATE: Sorry!</p>	<p>KATE: ¡Perdona!</p>
<p>SERENA: Now prepare to serenade! Shhh!</p>	<p>SERENA: ¡Y preparadas para cantar! ¡Ssss!</p>
<p>LAS DELTA NU: (whisper and slowly get louder)</p> <p>Omigod! Omigod you guys! Looks like Elle's gonna win the prize.</p>	<p>LAS DELTA NU: (Susurran y, poco a poco, van subiendo el volumen) ¡Madre mía! ¡Madre mía, tía! Se ve que Elle toda ganará.</p>
<p>SERENA: Shh!</p>	<p>SERENA: ¡Sss!</p>
<p>LAS DELTA NU: If there ever was a perfect couple this one quali-</p>	<p>LAS DELTA NU: Si hubiera una pareja perfecta, ésta s-</p>
<p>SERENA: Shh!</p>	<p>SERENA: ¡SSS!</p>
<p>LAS DELTA NU: Omigod! You gu-</p>	<p>LAS DELTA NU: ¡Madre mía, t-</p>
<p>SERENA: Guys I'm serious!</p>	<p>SERENA: ¡Tías, en serio!</p>
<p>DELTA NU #1: Elle and Warner were meant to be!</p>	<p>DELTA NU #1: ¡Elle y Warner, juntos claro que sí!</p>
<p>DELTA NU #2 Not once ever has he hit on me!</p>	<p>DELTA UN #2: ¡Jamás me tiró la caña a mí!</p>
<p>KATE: SHUT UP!</p>	<p>KATE: ¡CALLA!</p>

MARGOT: They're just like that couple from titanic, Only no one dies.	MARGOT: Son como la pareja en Titanic, Pero nadie morirá.
LAS DELTA NU: Omigod!	LAS DELTA NU: ¡Madre mía!
KATE: 2, 3, 4	KATE: 2, 3, 4
LAS DELTA NU: Daughter of Delta Nu, Soon to be fiancé, Now that a man chose you, Your life begins today. Make him a happy home, Waste not his hard-earned wage, And so he does not roam, Strive not to look your age. Still in your hour of need, Let it be understood no man can supersede, Our sacred bond of sisterhood. Omigod! Omigod you guy-	LAS DELTA NU: Hija de Delta Nu, Esposa pronto serás, Hoy te va a elegir, Y la vida comenzarás. Cuida bien el hogar, Su dinero, no malgastes, Y para que no vaya a buscar, Tu edad siempre esconde. Si tiempos malos pasan, Que sepan con claridad, No hay ningún hombre tan, Sagrado como la hermandad ¡Madre mía! ¡Madre mía, t-
SERENA: (spoken) Guys, she's not even here.	SERENA: (hablado) Tías...no está.
MARGOT: (spoken) Bruiser, where is Elle?	MARGOT: (hablado) Bruiser, ¿dónde está Elle?
BRUSIER: (barks)	BRUISER: (ladra)
MARGOT: She doesn't have an engagement outfit.	MARGOT: ¿No tiene un vestido para el compromiso?
BRUSIER: (barks)	BRUISER: (ladra)
MARGOT: She's totally freaking out.	MARGOT: ¿¿Está, en plan, como una loca??
BRUSIER: (barks)	BRUISER: (ladra)
MARGOT: She's trapped in the old valley mill??!?!?	MARGOT: ¿Está atrapada en un centro correccional? ⁴
BRUSIER: (barks)	BRUISER: (ladra)
MARGOT: O, woops, sorry. The Old Valley Mall!	MARGOT: Ah, sí, perdona... ¡El centro comercial!
LAS DELTA NU: (sung) Omigod! Omigod you guys!	LAS DELTA NU: (cantada) ¡Madre mía! ¡Madre mía, tía!

LAS DELTA NU: Fashion crisis	SERENA: Crisis de moda ⁵
LAS DELTA NU: to supervise	KATE: Y nos necesita.
LAS DELTA NU: No one should be left alone to dress and to accessorize. OMIGOD YOU GUYS! OMIGOD! OMIGOD! OMIGOD! OMIGOD! OMIGOD!	LAS DELTA NU: A nadie le deberían dejar vestirse sola. ¡MADRE MÍA, TÍA! ¡MADRE MÍA! ¡MADRE MÍA! ¡MADRE MÍA! ¡MADRE MÍA, TÍA!
ELLE: (spoken) It's almost there but (sung) This dress needs to seal the deal, make a grown man kneel, but it can't come right out and say bride. Can't look like I'm desperate, Or like I'm waiting for it. I gotta leave Warner his pride, So bride is more implied.	ELLE: (hablado) Casi estamos.... pero... (cantada) El look debe hacer que Vaya a arrodillarse ⁶ , Pero "boda" no se puede gritar. No puedo estar ansiosa, Ni desesperada. Su orgullo debo preservar, Y "boda" hay que insinuar.
(DELTA NU'S COME IN) (spoken) There she is!	(ENTRAN LAS DELTA NU) (hablado) ¡Allí está!
ELLE: (sung) Omigod! Omigod you guys! All this week I've had butterflies, Every time he looks at me it's totally proposal eyes. Omigod you guys! So help me dress for my fairy tale. Can't wear something I bought on sale.	ELLE: (cantada) ¡Madre mía! ¡Madre mía, tías! ¡Que mariposas que yo tenía! Cuando él me mira es una mirada picara. ¡Madre mía, tías! Pues, ayudadme a ponerme guapa. No puedo llevar algo de rebajas.
SERENA: Love is like forever, This is no time to economize.	SERENA: Amor es para siempre, No hay tiempo de ser frugal, chica.
LAS DELTA NU: Omigod you guys!	LAS DELTA NU: ¡Madre mía, tía!
SHOPGIRL: (spoken) Blondes make commission <i>so</i> easy. Excuse me, have you seen this? It just came in. It's perfect for a blonde.	TRABAJADORA: (hablado) Las rubias hacen <i>tan fáciles</i> las comisiones. Disculpe, ¿ha visto esto? Acabamos de recibirlo. Es perfecto para una rubia.
ELLE: (spoken)	ELLE (hablado)

Right, with a half loop stitch on china silk?	Sí, ¿con una puntada de media trabilla en seda china?
SHOPGIRL: (spoken hesitantly) Uh-huh.	TRABAJADORA: (hablado con hesitación) Mm-hmm.
ELLE: (spoken) But the thing is, you can't use a half loop stitch on china silk... it'll pucker. And you didn't just get this in cause I saw it in last Mays Vogue.	ELLE: (hablado) Pues, la cosa es que no se puede usar una puntada de media trabilla en seda china... se arruga. Y no habíais acabado de recibirlo porque lo vi en la Vogue del año anterior. ⁷
LAS DELTA NU: (whispering/sung) Omigod. Omigod you guys...	LAS DELTA NU: (susurrando/cantando) madre mía. madre mía, tía...
ELLE: (spoken) I'm not about to buy last year's dress at this year's price.	ELLE: (hablado) No voy a comprarme un vestido del año pasado al precio de hoy.
LAS DELTA NU: (whispering/sung) Elle saw right through that sales girls lies.	LAS DELTA NU: (susurrando/cantando) Ha calado todas sus mentiras.
ELLE: (spoken) It may be perfect for a blonde, but I'm not that blonde. (sung) I may be in love, but I'm not stupid, lady I've got eyes.	ELLE: (hablado) Quizás sea perfecto para una rubia, Pero tan rubia, no soy. (cantada) Sí me enamora pero no soy tonta, Señora.
MANAGER: (cantada) Omigod! Elle Woods, sorry our mistake. Courtney take your break. Just ignore her she hasn't been well. Try this latest from Milan. Go on try it on. I take care of my best clientele. It's a gift from me to Elle!	DIRECTORA: (cantada) ¡Madre mía! Elle Woods, perdón, culpa nuestra. Courtney, haz una pausa. Ignórele, ella está mala. Ponte esto, es de Milano. Venga, Pruéballo. Cuido bien a mi clientela. ¡Gratis de mí para ella!
ELLE: Omigod! Omigod you guys! This one's perfect, and it's just my size! See dreams really do come true you never have to compromise. Omigod!	ELLE: ¡Madre mía! ¡Madre mía, tía! ¡Me cabe bien, y está mola! Sí los sueños se hacen realidad, Sin ceder nada. ¡Madre mía!
LAS DELTA NU: Omigod! Omigod you guys! Let's go home before someone cries. If there ever was a perfect couple this one	LAS DELTA NU: ¡Madre mía! ¡Madre mía, tías! Vámonos antes de las lágrimas. Si hubiera una pareja perfecta, ésta sería.

qualifies. Cause we love you guys!	¡Y te queremos tía!
ELLE: No, I love you guys!	ELLE: ¡Yo os quiero tías!
LAS DELTA NU: Omigod!	LAS DELTA NU: ¡Madre mía!
ELLE: Omigod!	ELLE: ¡Madre mía!
ALL: Omigod! You guys! (shouted) OMIGOD!	TODAS: ¡Madre mía! ¡Tía! (gritada) ¡MADRE MÍA!

Footnotes:

1. Complete change of concept here. The phrase in Spanish takes too many words/syllables; therefore, I opted to replace the concept with something which would also be both culturally and character appropriate.
2. I changed the number of carats in order to save syllabic space; in English, “four” is one syllable and in Spanish, “cuatro” is two syllables. The point is that it’s big, nice ring. A few carats more won’t change the point being made (if not make it even better made).
3. Homecoming is not something which can be easily translated without supplying context. Therefore, I generalized to the point that these sorority girls see Elle and Warner like royalty.
4. The English version plays off the old adage of being “trapped in the old valley mill”; an irreplaceable cultural phrase. Instead of trying to force something exactly similar, I considered the bigger picture - Margot misinterprets Bruiser. By replacing this concept with another concept which also centers on miscommunication, the effect is recuperated.
5. This line and the next line are both the London version.
6. The English text takes two lines to practically much repeat itself. Instead of trying to make each example fit, I simply used both lines to make the single point.
7. This is a small thing: I decided to change it to just “last year” because it helps imply the general “out-of-dated-ness” of the dress; the month is not what’s important. Additionally, this choice makes sense because Elle mentions few lines later how she does not want to buy something from “last year” at today’s price.

4.2. What You Want – *Lo que quieres*

- Broadway version: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pT4K2rwb0KE>
- West End (UK) version: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FCMLadXhXgQ>

Contextualization:

At this point in the show, Elle has been “dumped” by Warner (whom she thought was going to propose to her) and has spiraled into a very sad and depressed state. Elle lives in this state for 12 days until she sees a picture of Warner’s brother and his new bride in a magazine, seemingly happy and “serious”. Upon seeing this image, Elle snaps out of her depression and comes up with a “completely brilliant plan” to get Warner back. This song expounds said plan and follows Elle through the first step of her journey. In the first line of the song, the “type of girl” referenced is in regards to Warner’s now serious, pretty and perfect sister-in-law.

(The full recording of this translation proposal can be found in section 8.2.)

LYRICS

LETRAS

<p>ELLE (spoken) Wait a sec! This is the kind of girl Warner wants! Someone serious! Someone lawyerly! Someone who wears black when nobody's dead! Girls, I have a completely brilliant plan!</p>	<p>ELLE (hablado) ¡Espera! ¡Este es el tipo de chica que Warner quiere! ¡Alguien seria! ¡Alguien que sea abogada! Alguien... ¡a quien le guste ir de negro aunque no haya muerto nadie! Chicas, ¡tengo un plan completamente genial!</p>
<p>(sung) What you want, Warner, What you want is me But you need to see me in a brand new domain.</p>	<p>(cantada) Lo que quieres, Warner, Lo que quieres soy yo. Pero tienes que verme diferentemente.</p>
<p>Well it's plain, Warner, In a different setting, You will see you're getting All of this plus a brain!</p>	<p>Claramente, Warner, En un lugar distinto, Obtendrás todo esto Y, además, ¡mi mente!</p>
<p>I'll meet you there at Harvard with a book in my hand. Big sturdy book. Big wordy boo.</p>	<p>Yo te veré en Harvard leyendo un libro. Grandísimo. Llenísimo.</p>
<p>Full of words I'll understand, And right - there is where you'll see it too.</p>	<p>De palabras que yo pillo. Y allí, también, sí que lo verás,</p>

Warner, what you want is right in front of you!	Warner, ¡lo que quieres justo aquí está!
GIRLS What you want!	CHICAS ¡Lo que quieres!
ELLE It's clear.	ELLE Claro es.
GIRLS What you want!	CHICAS ¡Lo que quieres!
ELLE Right here.	ELLE Aquí, ves.
GIRLS What you want is right in front of you, Front of you. What you want!	CHICAS Lo que quieres justo aquí está, Aquí está. ¡Lo que quieres!
ELLE It's clear.	ELLE Claro es.
GIRLS What you want!	CHICAS ¡Lo que quieres!
ELLE Right here.	ELLE Aquí, ves.
GIRLS What you want is right in front of you, Front of you.	CHICAS Lo que quieres justo aquí está, Aquí está.
ELLE Step one, he's off to Harvard law, So I get in there too.	ELLE Uno, si a Harvard se va Pues, también, me iré.
GIRLS Step two?	CHICAS ¿Y dos?
ELLE Make Warner reassess: Impress him with my high IQ.	ELLE Hazlo reevaluar E impresionarlo con mi mente.
GIRLS Step three?	CHICAS ¿Y tres?
ELLE We throw a great big wedding,	ELLE Tenemos una boda,
ELLE and GIRLS And invite all Delta Nu!	ELLE Y CHICAS ¡Y Delta Nu se incluirá!
KATE (Spoken) That's great. nice plan. Now can we think this through? Harvard Law School?	KATE (Hablado) ¿Ah, sí? Buen plan. ¿Lo has pensado bien, tía? ¿La Facultad de Derecho de Harvard?
ELLE (Spoken) I have a 4.0 average.	ELLE (Hablado) Tengo una media de 10. ¹
KATE (Spoken) Yeah, in fashion merchandising. What makes you think you can do this?	KATE (Hablado) Sí, en la comercialización de moda. ¿Qué te hace pensar que lo puedes hacer?

<p>ELLE Love! I'm doing this for love, And love will see me through; Yes, with love on my side I can't lose, And Harvard can't refuse A love so pure and true... Don't lawyers feel love too?</p>	<p>ELLE ¡Amor! Lo hago por amor, Y amor me guiará; No pierdo con amor a mi lado, Y Harvard no puede decir no A un amor que durará. ¿Los abogados también aman?</p>
<p>KATE (spoken) Even if they do;</p>	<p>KATE (hablado) Sea que sea;</p>
<p>(sung) What you want, sweetheart, is no easy Thing. If you're going to swing it, It will wreck your Senior spring. Yeah it's true: First, you'll need an LSAT score Of more than one seventy four, So no more parties for you.</p>	<p>(cantada) Lo que quieres, querida, fácil no será. Y para lograrlo, Tirarás tu última Primavera. Necesitas, que tu LSAT² sea Al menos, uno-siete-cinco³, tía. Pues, ¡ya no vas de fiesta!</p>
<p>You'll need a killer essay, or do not even hope, And glowing letters from your betters⁵ - Any chance you know the pope?</p>	<p>Ten una buena carta⁴, y si no ya está. Y referencias, de las famosas... ¿Por suerte conoces al Papa?</p>
<p>ELLE Oo... nope!</p>	<p>ELLE ¡Qué va!</p>
<p>KATE Too bad, 'Cause that would be a coup. And you've got a lot of work in front of you!</p>	<p>KATE Qué pena, y Que guay hubiera sido, Y el trabajo por hacer es mucho.</p>
<p>GIRLS What you want!</p>	<p>CHICAS ¡Lo que quieres!</p>
<p>ELLE Yes I know.</p>	<p>ELLE Lo sé, sí.</p>
<p>GIRLS What you want!</p>	<p>CHICAS ¡Lo que quieres!</p>
<p>ELLE Even so...</p>	<p>ELLE Aun así...</p>
<p>GIRLS What you want is right in front of you, front of you!</p>	<p>CHICAS ¡Lo que quieres justo aquí está, Aquí está!</p>
<p>GIRLS What you want! (Girl, you go!) What you want!</p>	<p>CHICAS ¡Lo que quieres! (¡Vámonos!) ¡Lo que quieres!</p>
<p>KATE (spoken) No, really, go!</p>	<p>KATE (hablado) En serio, ¡vámonos!</p>
<p>GIRLS What you want is right in front of you,</p>	<p>CHICAS ¡Lo que quieres justo aquí está,</p>

front of you!	Aquí está!
ELLE'S DAD (spoken) Law school?!	EL PADRE DE ELLE (hablado) ¿¿La facultad de Derecho?!
ELLE (spoken) Yes, Daddy, Law school!	ELLE (hablado) ¡Sí, papá, la facultad de Derecho!
ELLE'S DAD (spoken) Good god, why? Law school is for boring, ugly, serious people. And you, Button, are none of those things.	EL PADRE DE ELLE (hablado) Madre mía, ¿por qué? Solo los aburridos, serios y feos estudian derecho. Y tú, cariño, no eres como ellos.
(sung) What you want, Button, Hey, you just say the word - But what you want's absurd, And costs a whole lot of swag, And hell why? Button, when you can stay right here Pursue a film career?	(cantada) Lo que quieres, cariño, Pues, ¡dime lo que es! Pero lo que <i>tú</i> quieres, Es caro y absurdo, Y ¿por qué? Cariño, aquí te puedes quedar, ¡Podrías actuar!
ELLE'S MOM How 'bout a nice Birkin bag?	LA MADRE DE ELLE ¿Quizás un bolsito de Prada? ⁶
ELLE'S DAD Yes, the east coast is foreign: There's no film studios. It's cold and dark, no valet parking, All the girls have different noses- Christ, Button! It's like the damned frontier!	EL PADRE DE ELLE Sí, el este es raro ni para las actrices. Es frío, oscuro; no hay aparcamiento, ¡Todas tienen diferentes narices! ¡Jolín! Cariño, ¡el viejo oeste es!
ELLE'S MOM AND DAD Tell me what's out there that you can't get right here?	LA MADRE Y EL PADRE DE ELLE ¿Qué hay allí que aquí no consigues?
ELLE Guys, love!	ELLE ¡Amor!
ELLE'S MOM AND DAD Love?	LA MADRE Y EL PADRE DE ELLE ¿Amor?
ELLE I'm going there for love!	ELLE Voy por un amor
ELLE'S MOM AND DAD Good god!	LA MADRE Y EL PADRE DE ELLE ¡Dios mío!
ELLE A love I have to win. I can live without sun or valet; I can't just walk away- Betray what might have been...	ELLE que tengo que ganar. Sin el sol o pelis viviré; Y no puedo marcharme, Ni ignorar el azar.
ELLE'S DAD Fine, okay, I'll pay your way... if you get in.	EL PADRE DE ELLE Vale, okey, si entras te lo pagaré.
CHORUS What you want!	TODOS ¡Lo que quieres!

ELLE'S MOM AND DAD Make the grade	LA MADRE Y EL PADRE DE ELLE Buenas notas...
CHORUS What you want!	CORO ¡Lo que quieres!
ELLE'S MOM AND DAD And it's paid	LA MADRE Y EL PADRE DE ELLE Y no pagarás.
CHORUS What you want is right in front of you, front of you..!	CORO ¡Lo que quieres justo aquí está, Aquí está!
MARGOT (spoken) Hey everybody: it's the Spring Fling Beer Bash Extreme!	MARGOT (hablado) ¡Oye todos! ¡Es la mega-cerveza-primavera-fiesta! ⁷
FRAT GUYS (spoken) EXTREME!!!	CHICOS DE FRATERNIDAD (hablado) ¡¡¡FIESTA!!!
KATE (spoken) Not for you. You can either party or get into Harvard Law. Time to study! Go.	KATE (hablado) No para ti. Puedes ir de fiesta o entrar en la Facultad de Derecho de Harvard. ¡A estudiar! ¡Ya!
MARGOT (spoken) This year's theme? Jamaican me crazy!	MARGOT (hablado) ¿El tema este año? ¡¡¡Jamaícame!!! ⁸
GRANDMASTER CHAD What u want, u wanna be out because the sun she warm? What u want, u wanna be study-stuck inside your dorm? What u want, u wanna be party with us all night long? What u want, u wanna be strong!	GRANDMASTER CHAD ⁹ Lo que quieres es sentir el sol allí afuera. Lo que quieres es estudiar en su residencia. Lo que quieres es ir de fiesta toda la noche. ¡Lo que quieres es ser fuerte!
KATE (spoken) Be strong!	KATE (hablado) ¡Sé fuerte!
ALL Who-oa!	TODOS ¡O-o!
KATE (spoken) One-thirty-four. Not good enough. Try again.	KATE (hablado) Uno-tres-cuatro. No es suficiente. Pues, otra vez.
KATE & GRANDMASTER CHAD Go!	KATE & GRADMASTER ¡Va!
GRANDMASTER CHAD What u want, u wanna be groovin', bumpin', shake da room? What u want, u wanna be provin' something and ta whom? What u want, u wanna be wondrin' where you	GRANDMASTER CHAD Lo que quieres es perderte en la música. Lo que quieres es demostrarte a quien sea. Lo que quieres es pensar dónde la juventud se

your youth is gone? What u want, u wanna hold on!		fue. ¡Lo que quieres es ser firme!	
ELLE: Hold on!		ELLE: ¡Espérate! ¹⁰	
ALL Oh-oh		TODOS: ¡O-o!	
KATE (spoken) One fifty one. Still not Harvard material... Once again!!		KATE (hablado) Uno-cinco-uno. No basta para Harvard... ¡¡De nuevo!!	
KATE & GRANDMASTER CHAD Go!		KATE & GRADMASTER ¡Va!	
GRANDMASTER CHAD What u want, u wanna be breathin' in the healthy air? What u want, u wanna be chasin' him and he don't care? What u want, u wanna ignore the pity in their looks? What u want, u wanna say "sorry, got to hit me books". What u want, u wanna be sittin' like a lonely child? What u want, u wanna be drivin' all the fellas wild! What u want, u wanna be feelin' good to be alive...?	ELLE Love! I'm doing this for love, And that's how I'll survive. Here you go. I said no, go away! Right here is where I'll stay Until that happy day... That day I hear them say . . .	GRANDMASTER CHAD Lo que quieres es respirar el aire fresquito. Lo que quieres es tenerle, pero no te hace caso. Lo que quieres es ignorar la pena en las caras. Lo que quieres es pedir perdón y subir tus notas. Lo que quieres es quedarte justo aquí dentro. Lo que quieres es volver a todos los chicos locos. Lo que quieres es vivir y tener sobra buen rollo...	ELLE ¡Amor! Lo hago por amor, Y con él sobreviviré. Tómalo Dije no, ¡Apártame! Aquí me quedaré Hasta el día alegre... Cuando me digan Que...
KATE One seventy five!		KATE ¡Uno-siete-cinco!	
ALL One seventy five!		ALL ¡Uno-siete-cinco!	
ELLE One seventy five?		ELLE ¿Uno-siete-cinco?	
ALL One seventy five! One seventy five!!!		TODOS ¡Uno-siete-cinco! ¡¡¡Uno-siete-cinco!!!	
HARVARD PROFESSOR (spoken) So gentlemen, Harvard Law grants admission to Adam Cohen and Sundeep Padamadan.		WINTHROP (hablado) Vale Señores, la Facultad de Derecho de Harvard otorga admisión a Adam Cohen y Sundeep Padamadan.	

OTHER PROFESSORS (spoken) Outstanding.	LOWELL (hablado) Muy bien.
HARVARD PROFESSOR (spoken) And now, “Ms. Elle Woods.”... Who was kind enough to send in... a headshot.	WINTHROP (hablado) Y ahora, señorita Elle Woods... Quien nos otorgó una foto de su rostro...
LOWELL <i>She's applying???!!</i>	LOWELL ¡¡¡¡¡Ella solicita plaza???!!
WINTHROP Apparently.	WINTHROP Pues, parece que sí.
PFORZHEIMER It says here she has a 4.0 average.	PFORZHEIMER Dice aquí que tiene una media de 10.
WINTHROP Yes, in <i>fashion merchandising</i> .	WINTHROP Sí, en <i>la comercialización de moda</i> .
LOWELL And she got a 175 on her LSATS...	LOWELL Y ha logrado un... Uno-siete-cinco en su examen de LSAT.
PFORZHEIMER There's also the letter of recommendation from <i>Oprah Winfrey</i> .	PFORZHEIMER Incluso, tiene una carta de recomendación de <i>Oprah Winfrey</i> .
WINTHROP I'm not arguing Ms. Woods is entirely unqualified, but look at her! Is THIS the face of Harvard Law?	WINTHROP No digo que la Señorita Woods está totalmente sin cualificación, pero, ¡mírenla! ¿Es ESTA la cara de la Facultad de Derecho Harvard?
LOWELL Multiculturalism!	LOWELL ¡Multiculturalismo!
WINTHROP Excuse me?	WINTHROP ¿Perdona?
LOWELL We could admit her! For reasons of...um...	LOWELL Podríamos otorgarla admisión por razones de...em...
PFORZHEIMER ...Multiculturalism!	PFORZHEIMER ... ¡Multiculturalismo!
LOWELL Exactly!	LOWELL ¡Exacto!
WINTHROP Oh gentlemen, please! Get a hold of yourselves! This is Harvard Law School not “Match dot com”!... Oh, look at that! Oh, what a shame! She didn't bother sending in a personal essay...	WINTHROP ¡Por favor, Señores! ¡Contrólense! ¡Este es Harvard!... no es Tinder. ¹¹ Ah, pues mira. Ah, ¡qué pena! No se tomó la molestia de entregar una carta de motivación. ¹²
PILAR (spoken) How's <i>this</i> for a personal essay?	PILAR (hablado) ¡Toma esto para una carta de motivación!

CHORUS What you want!	CORO ¡Lo que quieres!
WINTHROP Goodness me!	WINTHROP ¡Madre mía!
CHORUS What you want!	CORO ¡Lo que quieres!
WINTHROP Security!	WINTHROP ¡Guardia!
CHORUS What you want is right in—	CORO Lo que quieres justo a—
WINTHROP (spoken) Who are you?	WINTHROP (hablado) ¿Quién eres?
ELLE <i>I'm</i> what you want, Harvard, I'm the girl for you!	ELLE Soy lo que quieres ¡Harvard, para ti soy perfecta!
CHORUS And to prove it's true?	CORO Y para comprobarla
ELLE We all flew here on Jet Blue.	ELLE Llegamos aquí con Delta.
CHORUS Thank you!	CORO ¡Gracias!
JET BLUE PILOT Thank <i>you</i> .	PILOTO DE DELTA ¡De nada!
CHORUS This is what Elle Woods inspires; Everyone admires her And Harvard should too!	CORO Esto es lo que Elle Woods inspira; El mundo le admira Y Harvard también debería.
WINTHROP (spoken) This is NOT a personal essay!	WINTHROP (hablado) ¡Esto NO es una carta!
ELLE & CHORUS Nope! An essay's so boring, and so much does not fit. So we're appearing live, right here! Making clear you must admit, That Elle Woods should join the chosen few, Harvard, what you want is right in front of...!	ELLE & CORO ¡No! Son muy aburridas; ¡todo no puede caber! Por eso, estamos en directo Porque se debe reconocer Que a Elle Woods, ¡hay que incluir ella! ¹³ Harvard, lo que quieres justo aquí—
<i>(The next four lines will not be featured in the</i>	<i>annexed recording due to a cut in the music)</i>
SERENA (hablado) And now some legal jargon!	SERENA (hablado) ¡Y ahora un poco de vocabulario jurídico!
ELLE Exhibit A!	ELLE ¡Prueba 1!
ELLE Time for my cross!	ELLE ¡Proceda, por favor!
ELLE I object!	ELLE ¡Me opongo!

ELLE May I approach!	ELLE ¡Me puedo acercar!		
ALL Uh-huh! Oh yeah! Go Elle!	ALL ¡Ajá! ¡Sí, sí! ¡Viva Elle!		
WINTHROP (spoken) Now SEE HERE, Ms. Woods!... You can't just barge in here with singing and dancing and... ethnic movement! This is a very flashy presentation, but I still don't see <i>one reason</i> to admit you.	WINTHROP (hablado) ¡ESCÚCHAME BIEN, Señorita Woods! No puedes colarte aquí, cantando, bailando y con... ¡movimientos étnicos! Es una presentación muy ostentosa, pero, todavía no veo <i>ninguna razón</i> para otorgarte admisión.		
ELLE How about...love? Have you ever been in love? Cause if you have, you'll know	ELLE Y, pues, ¿amor? ¿Una vez sintió amor? Si es así, me entenderá		
That love never accepts a defeat. No challenge it can't meet. No place it cannot go. Don't say no to a woman in love!	Que amor no acepta el rechazo. Nada puede superarlo. No hay lugar que no irá. Diga sí a la enamorada.		
Don't laugh when I say love. Don't think that I'm naïve.	Que no se ría de mí, Sé de qué hablo, sí.		
Because even a person who's smart, Can listen to their heart; Can listen and believe. So believe in what love can achieve!	Aún alguien brillante A su corazón sí que puede Crear y escuchar. ¡Cree en lo que amor puede lograr!		
Do you believe?	Usted cree, ¿no?		
PFORZHEIMER (spoken) I do!	PFORZHEIMER (hablado) ¡Sí, yo!		
ELLE Do you believe?	ELLE Usted cree, ¿no?		
LOWELL (spoken) Me too!	LOWELL (hablado) ¡Y, yo!		
ALL Yes we believe, in love! How 'bout you?	TODOS ¡Creemos en amor! Cree, ¿no?		
WINTHROP (spoken) Welcome to Harvard.	WINTHROP (hablado) ¡Bienvenida a Harvard!		
PILAR, MARGOT, SERENA WHOO-HOO! Now we're set! Let's go get!	ALL WHOO-HOO! What you want! What you want! What you want!	PILAR, MARGOT, SERENA WHOO-HOO! ¡Ya está! ¡Toma ya!	TODOS WHOO-HOO! ¡Lo que quieres! ¡Lo que quieres! ¡Lo que quieres!

It's right in front of you! Front of you! Now we're done With step one! It's right in front of you! Front of you!	It's right in front of you! Front of you! What you want! What you want! What you want! It's right in front of you! Front of you!	¡Justo aquí está! ¡Aquí está! ¡Está hecho! ¡Paso uno! ¡Justo aquí está! ¡Aquí está!	¡Justo aquí está! ¡Aquí está! ¡Lo que quieres! ¡Lo que quieres! ¡Lo que quieres! ¡Justo aquí está! ¡Aquí está!
ALL What you want! What you want! What you want! What you want!	TODOS ¡Lo que quieres! ¡Lo que quieres! ¡Lo que quieres! ¡Lo que quieres!		

Footnotes:

1. Though referenced somewhat often in American movies and television shows, the average Spaniard (or European for that matter) does not understand the American GPA grading system. The priorities here is for the audience to understand that Elle is at the top of her class (within her major).
2. To be pronounced as “el-sat” throughout. Additionally, this test is a very prestigious test and does not have a translatable name. Therefore, by leaving it as is and by adding supporting context (such as the score she needs to achieve), I expect an audience to be able to understand that an entrance exam is being referenced (regardless of the prestige). Furthermore, the Castellano subtitled for the *movie* also left “LSAT” in English, utilizing the visual clues to their advantage (Legally Blonde, 2001: 15:00)
3. According to Craven, J., & Jones, E. (2017), a 175 is the minimum score one can achieve on their LSAT in order to be considered for Harvard Law School.
4. “De motivación”.
5. In English, “betters” refers to people viewed by society as “upper class” and “important” people; ergo, they are ‘better’ than the rest. However, using ‘los mejores’ or any other variant may not carry the same weight (culturally speaking). Instead, I have opted to make it more specific by using “las famosas”.
6. The point of this line was to suggest buying Elle a fancy handbag instead of going to law school. However, the brand ‘Birkin’ does not carry the same weight as other European brands do. Therefore, I chose to replace ‘Birkin’ with Prada for clarity and to also fit the rhyme structure.
7. With this kind of phrase/cultural reference, there was no way to be able to retain everything. Therefore, in order to help recreate a similar sensation, I opted to create a lengthy name that alludes to a big beach party a la ‘spring break’. Furthermore, I selected these words to have the same ending letter (‘a’) in order to help facilitate fluidity of the phrase.
8. This word play cannot be recreated in Spanish in the exact same way. Instead, I decided to create a new word which helps to imply a Jamaican themed party.
9. I have purposefully changed all the questions from the English version to be statements; in order to keep each line as a question, I would have to break the phrasing of “lo que quieres”, which is absolutely necessary to maintain. Additionally, the change does nothing to lessen the internal struggle Elle goes through during this process: in the English version, Elle questions everything and in my translation, proposal, Elle is being told multiple things she wants to do in a fashion which would cause internal struggle.
10. The English version of this song takes advantage of a double usage of the phrase “hold on” (version 1 = “continue on!” AND version 2 = “wait!”). Instead of forcing the same double usage of a phrase in Spanish, I opted to replace the second usage with a phrase which provides the effect of “wait!” and also fits the appropriate rhyme scheme.

11. Modernizing references like these helps to keep a show relevant over time. They are small things but helpful in the long run.
12. After doing some investigation, I decided to use “carta de motivación” since it is the closest cultural equivalent to writing a personal essay for an American university.
13. This “ella” is purposefully placed here because the following line ‘should’ end with “está”; though the phrase is cut off, the audience has heard this phrase enough times to be able to subconsciously finish the rhyme in their heads (as the English version also accomplishes).

4.3. Positive – Positiva

Broadway Version: <https://youtu.be/lZLEE0xZtoU?t=1m51s>

West End (UK) Version (Audio only): <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7K4pkPRa7Vk>

Contextualization:

This song was not originally in the *Legally Blonde* but replaced a previous song called *Love and War* before opening on Broadway (the script entitled “Legally Blonde Script” located in the annexed Google Drive folder is the script which features this song). This song takes place right after Elle’s first class at Harvard Law School. Having come to class unprepared, Elle essentially gets “voted out” by Vivienne when the law professor, Professor Callahan, asks Vivienne what he should be done as a consequence. Elle confronts Vivienne after class where she learns Vivienne is now Warner’s girlfriend. In a sort of mental panic, Elle begins to hallucinate her sorority sisters. Upon asking why they are ‘here’, the audience discovers this mirage of girls have come to act as the tragedy’s ‘Greek chorus’ (but only in Elle’s head). This hallucination of a song is Elle’s way of facing the reality she has been replaced.

(The full recording of this translation proposal can be found in section 8.2.)

LYRICS

LETRAS

SERENA: Honey whatcha cryin at? You're not losing him to <i>that</i> ! Both her hair and shoes are flat! Why is she so rude?	SERENA: Nena, ¿por qué lloras así? ¡Ella no es igual a ti! ¡Huele mal y se viste fatal! ¿Y por qué es súper vil?
MARGOT: Wipe your tears: it's no big thing! You were meant to wear his ring. Cheer-up! Chin-up! It's time to bring	MARGOT: Cálmate: ¡no es gran cosa! Pronto serás su novia. ¡Venga! ¡Vaya! Pongámonos

GREEK CHORUS: A happy attitude! Keep it positive!	CORO GRIEGO: ¡Una buena actitud! ¡Sé positiva! ¹
MARGOT: As you slap her to the floor!	MARGOT: ¡Y títala al suelo!
GREEK CHORUS: Keep it positive!	CORO GRIEGO: ¡Sé positiva!
SERENA: As you pull her hair and call her “whore”!	SERENA: ¡Llámala “puta”, títale del pelo!
PILAR: You can take her in a fight!	PILAR: ¡En una lucha ganarás!
MARGOT: You and he will reunite!	MARGOT: ¡Muy prontito te casarás!
GREEK CHORUS: You know we're right! We're positive!	CORO GRIEGO: ¡Ya lo verás! ¡Sé positiva!
ALL: KILL HER!	TODAS: ¡MÁTALA!
ELLE: Girls. Girls. What if she's a violent nut? She might stab me in the gut. With the stick that's up her butt. ² Who's gotta plan B?	ELLE: ¡Chicasss! ¿Qué pasa si está loca? Quizás me atacaría Con sus tacones pasados de moda. ³ ¿Quién tiene un plan B?
PILAR: Me! Look at her: she's like a nun. Show him you are way more fun! Bust out the lap dance and you won! You off the hizzle, G!	PILAR: ¡Lo... sé! ¡Parece como una monja! ¡Eres más divertida! Mueve el culito ⁴ Y ya verás: ¡Eres la leche, tía!
ELLE: What?	ELLE: Ay... ⁵
GREEK CHORUS: Keep it positive!	CORO GRIEGO: ¡Sé positiva!
MARGOT: Yeah! Rip off your clothes and dance! ⁶	MARGOT: ¡Sí! ¡Desnúdate y baila!
GREEK CHORUS: Keep it positive!	CORO GRIEGO: ¡Sé positiva!
PILAR: Miss Fancy Pants won't stand a chance! ⁷	PILAR: ¡Esta pija no durará!
SERENA: You will whet his appetite!	SERENA: ¡Su interés despertarás!
MARGOT: You and he will reunite!	MARGOT: ¡Sí con él, te reunirás!
GREEK CHORUS: You know we're right! We're positive! We're positive!	CORO GRIEGO: ¡Ya lo verás! ¡Sé positiva! ¡Sé positiva!

We're positive! We're posi –	¡Sé positiva! ¡Sé posi- ⁸
ELLE: (Spoken) Omgod, you're making me sick.	ELLE: (Hablado) Ostras, me estáis mareando.
VIVIENNE: (Spoken) Really? Are we? Warner, let's take this back to my place.	VIVIENNE: (Hablado) ¿Ah, sí? ⁹ Pues, Warner, vámonos a <i>mi</i> piso.
GREEK CHORUS: Aaaahhhhhh! Hey! Hey! Hey! Be positive!	CORO GRIEGO: Eeeeeeeee ¡Es-ta-mos Positivas! ¹⁰
SERENA That he loves you	SERENA Que te ama,
P+M+S and <i>not</i> her!	S+P+M ¡no <i>ella</i> !
MARGOT You're	MARGOT ¡Es
P+M+S Hotter!	S+P+M <i>Fea</i> !
PILAR And I betchya	PILAR ¡Tú eres la
P+M+S Smarter!	S+P+M Estrella!
MARGOT She don't know the <i>real</i> him...	MARGOT Él no <i>la</i> conoce... ¹¹
PILAR You <i>feel</i> him!	PILAR ¡Él <i>te</i> conoce!
SERENA So don't let her	SERENA ¡No dejes que
P+M+S <i>steal</i> him!	S+P+M <i>Lo robe</i> !
MARGOT Wake him up like	MARGOT ¡Despierta al Bello ¹²
P+M+S Sleeping Beauty.	S+P+M <i>Durmiente.</i>
SERENA Turn his head with your	SERENA Con el culo que no
P+M+S red hot booty. We'll bring the noise if you bring the funk.	S+P+M <i>Miente.</i> Grítelo así, y cántalo así.
PILAR It's positively time to	PILAR Y positivamente,
P+M+S shake your junk.	S+P+M ¡Muévelo ya!
Shake, shake, shake, shake, shake, shake, shake, shake, shake, shake, Whoo!	Muévelo, muévelo Mueve, mueve, mueve, mueve, mueve, mueve ¡Lo!

(DANCE BREAK)	(BAILE)
ELLE: (Spoken) Girls, how is this helping? He's not even HERE! He left while we were shaking "junk"! Wait!	ELLE: (Hablado) Chicas, ¿y cómo nos ayuda esto? ¡No está! ¡Se fue mientras "lo movíamos"! ¹³ ¡Espera!
(sung) Girls, I'm positive That we've taken this too far. No! I'm positive; This is Harvard not a stripper bar! All this trashy carryin' on, That's the reason that he's <i>gone</i> . I need a salon!	(cantada) Estoy positiva Que esto tiene que parar. Sí, positiva: Que este es Harvard, y no un bar. Todas estas groserías Le hicieron dejarnos atrás. Vale, a la peluquería.
GREEK CHORUS: WHOO!	CORO GRIEGO: ¡WUU!
ELLE: Girls I'm	ELLE: Estoy
ALL: Positive	TODAS: Positiva
ELLE: And try not to get upset – But I'm	ELLE: y os juro que no soy loca... Estoy
ALL: Positive	TODAS: Positiva
ELLE: That it's time for me to go brunette!	ELLE: ¡Que es tiempo de ser morena!
GREEK CHORUS: <i>What!?</i>	CORO GRIEGO: <i>¿¡Qué!?</i>
ELLE: Being blonde and being hot?	ELLE: Siendo rubia y muy sexy
SERENA But...	SERENA Pero...
ELLE That got me exactly squat.	ELLE No ha hecho nada para mí.
PILAR AND MARGO But...	PILAR Y MARGO Pero...
ELLE Gotta to show him I've got more to give!	ELLE ¡Él tiene que ver todo lo que soy!
GREEK CHORUS: Whoa, whoa, whoa, whoa!	CORO GRIEGO: O, o, o, o
ELLE: No! I'm positive!	ELLE: ¡Positiva yo estoy!
GREEK CHORUS: You positive?	CORO GRIEGO: ¿Positiva?
ELLE: I'm positive!	ELLE: ¡Positiva!

GREEK CHORUS: You're positive?	CORO GRIEGO: ¿Muy positiva?
ELLE: I'm positive!	ELLE: ¡Positiva!
GIRLS: Positive? You're really positive?	CORO GRIEGO: ¿De verdad? ¿Súper positiva?
ELLE AND GREEK CHORUS: Positive!	ELLE Y CORO GRIEGO: ¡Positiva!

Footnotes:

1. The concept of “being positive” in Spanish has to be distinguished between “ser” and “estar”. At this point in the song Elle’s overall positivity as a person is what is being discussed.
2. London version.
3. See section 5.2.
4. Instead of using “baile privado/exótico” o “estriptease” I chose to generalize so that in the coming section where Elle and the girls “muévelo”, there has been pre-established context which merits the ‘junk shaking’.
5. I changed this word because, in the English version, the vernacular is out of Elle’s normal vocabulary. In my translation proposal, the words would be known, thus requiring a different type of reaction.
6. London version.
7. London version.
8. Change in subject here. Since the double meaning of “we’re positive’ can be interpreted as both “estamos positivas” *and* “somos positivas”, I chose to change the subject back to Elle in order to help to evade confusion with estar/ser.
9. This suffices for both the “Really?” and the “Are we?” See section 3.3.
10. This is where the verb changes from “ser” to “estar”; the rest of the instances of “to be” in the song deal with temporary conditions/characteristics which require “estar”.
11. I chose to flip the point of view both in this line and the next to help the flow and the rhyme of the song. Even the other way around, the audience still understands that the girls believe Warner and Elle are better together.
12. Instead of removing the cultural reference of Snow White, I decided to create a bit of word play in my translation proposal by mixing the Spanish equivalent it with the masculine ending (“o”), effectively making Warner the male version of Sleeping Beauty, “Bello Durmiente”. In doing this I hope to invoke an extra level of humor within this section.
13. This should be said with/as if with air quotes.

4.4. *Legally Blonde* – *Una rubia muy legal*

Broadway version: <https://youtu.be/G3T2kUxbiy0?t=2m55s>

West End (UK) version: <https://youtu.be/rQxXx-fQMFQ?t=48s>

Contextualization:

Moments before *Legally Blonde* takes place, Elle has successfully made an impact on the murder case against fitness mogul Brooke Wyndham. Elle and her team, Professor Callahan, Warner, Vivienne and Enid, have shared a celebratory Champaign toast to Elle. After the latter three leave the room, Professor Callahan kisses Elle, who immediately rejects his advances. She then learns that the main reasons she has made it this far was by her looks; she had come to believe that she was an intelligent woman with potential. Warner and Vivienne both happen to see the kiss and immediately judge Elle as a girl who is just trying to ‘sleep her way to the top’. This song is the immediate reaction Elle has in light of these events.

(The full recording of this translation proposal can be found in section 8.2.)

LYRICS

LETRAS

ELLE Take back the books and pack up the clothes. Clear out the room and drop off the key. Leave with what's left of my dignity. Get in the car and just go.	ELLE Devolver libros, hacer maletas. Vaciar el cuarto, dejar llaves. Salir con la dignidad restante, pues, Entrar en el coche ...e ir.
Chalk it all up to experience. They said I'd fail but I disagreed; Who could say then where my path would lead?...	Atribuir todo a la experiencia. Decían que no, y yo decía sí; ¿Quién sabía dónde llegaría?...
Well, now I know:	Pues, ya lo sé:
Back to the sun; Back to the shore; Back to what I was before. Back where I'm known, Back in my own very small pond.	A volver al sol Y a la playa A todo lo que yo era. A volver atrás Querida por los demás; Mi lugar especial.
Laugh with my friends when I arrive We'll drop the top and just drive –	Reír con amigos, Y cuando llego, En descapotable iremos
That's fine by me. Just let me be, Legally, blonde.	Está bien por mí. ¹ Déjame así, Una rubia, muy legal.

Thanks for your help and for all you've done. Thank you for treating me decently.	Gracias por todo y por ayudarme. Gracias por cómo me has tratado.
EMMETT What's wrong?	EMMETT ¿Qué ha pasado?
ELLE Maybe someday you can visit me. Give me a call. Say "hello".	ELLE Quizás algún día me visitarás. Charlaremos un rato.
EMMETT Wait, where are you going?	EMMETT Espera, ¿a dónde vas?
ELLE Sorry I'm letting down ev'ryone.	ELLE Lo siento por abandonar todo.
EMMETT What brought on this?	EMMETT ¿Qué me dices?
ELLE You did your best with a hopeless case.	ELLE Has hecho lo que podías por mí.
EMMETT That's ludicrous.	EMMETT ¡Esto absurdo es!
ELLE/EMMETT You are the best thing about this place.	ELLE/EMMETT Eres la mejor parte de aquí.
EMMETT Elle you should know...	EMMETT Elle, debes saber...
ELLE (spoken) Callahan hit on me.	ELLE (hablado) Callahan me tiró la caña.
EMMETT (spoken) He what?	EMMETT (hablado) ¿Qué?
ELLE (spoken) He kissed me. He fired me. There's no reason for me to stay.	ELLE (hablado) Me besó. Me despidió. No veo ninguna razón para quedarme aquí.
EMMETT (sung) What about love? I never mentioned love. The timing's bad, I know But perhaps if I'd made it more clear, That you belong right here, You wouldn't have to go. 'Cause you'd know that I'm so much in love!	EMMETT (cantada) Y, pues, ¿amor? Nunca dije amor. Es un poco tarde, sí lo sé. Tal vez sí fuera más claro con ti- ² -go, que encajas bien aquí, No tendrías que irte. ¡Porque sabrías cuánto te amo!
ELLE Back to the sun. Back to the shore. Back to what I was before.	ELLE A volver al sol Y a la playa A todo lo que yo era.
EMMETT Please will you open the door	EMMETT Déjame entrar porfa.
ELLE Lie on the beach.	ELLE Sentir la arena

Dream within reach. Don't stray beyond.	Y soñar allá; Lo que sea real. ²
EMMETT We both know you're worth so much more...	EMMETT Sabemos que vales mucho más.
ELLE Some girls fight hard. Some face the trial. Some girls were just meant to smile.	ELLE Algunas luchan Sin miedo de ir. Otras solo deben sonreír.
EMMETT If you can hear, Can I just say, how much I want you to stay.	EMMETT Si me oyes, Este que te enteres: Quiero que te quedas aquí.
ELLE It's not up to me. Just let me be Legally blonde.	ELLE Está bien por mí. Déjame así Una rubia muy legal.
EMMETT I need you to stay.	EMMETT Te necesito aquí.
ELLE It's not up to me. Just let me be Legally blonde.	ELLE Está bien por mí. Déjame así. Una rubia muy legal.

Footnotes:

- | |
|---|
| <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. This line could also be translated as “No depende de mí”; however, there is a nuance when someone says they are “fine” when they clearly are not. For this reason, I wanted to keep “bien” as a part of this line so that the actress could potentially play into the fact that she’s saying she is ‘bien’ (even when she’s not). 2. In order to achieve the desired flow for this section, I decided to split up the word “contigo” into two different lines. In doing this I was able to fulfill the rhyme scheme and retain grammatical correctness. |
|---|

5. Possible Strategies for Combating Challenges in the Translation of Musical Theatre

As important as it is to understand the challenges a translator faces in the translation of musical theatre, it is equally as important to identify and discuss some strategies for combating said challenges. This section will provide three strategies which are important to know about within the world musical theatre translation.

5.1. Rhyme Restructuring

One option as a musical theatre translator is to disregard the original rhyme scheme and reformulate a new rhyme scheme in the target language. *Legally Blonde* is notorious for having

very intricate rhyme schemes (not necessarily the typical AABB) where one line should rhyme with a line from three lines ago. Depending many factors, sometimes being able to both accurately translate/continue the story *and* keep the correct rhyme is not plausible. In this case, what I suggest (and what I have done) is to restructure parts of the rhyme scheme. The goal here is to draw little to no attention to the change in rhyme scheme by redesigning it in a way which seems natural in the target language. In order to exemplify this concept, see Figure 1 below from *Omigod You Guys*.

(For context, [HERE](#) is the link to the part of the song this section is performed in.)

<p>MARGOT: Dear Elle, he's a lucky guy, I'm like gonna cry, I got tears comin' out of my nose! MAD PROPS! He's the campus catch, You're a perfect match, 'Cause you both got such great taste in clothes. Of course he will propose!</p>	<p>MARGOT: Querida Elle, él es estelar Me pongo a llorar, es que, ¡ya me estoy flipando! ¡BIEN HECHO! Es el más guapo, Sois el mejor combo, Y vestís a la moda y guay. ¡La boda seguro que hay!</p>
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Figure 1: Example of Rhyme Restructuring from *Omigod You Guys*

This comparison clearly shows each version has three individual rhyme schemes, however, they differ slightly. In the English version, the phrase “MAD PROPS” is, in terms of rhyme, a ‘throw-away line’; it has no rhyming purpose whatsoever. However, the writers were expertly able to make “nose” rhyme with both “clothes” and “propose” some three or four lines later. In Spanish, however, this rhyme was sacrificed in order to offer a translation which mimics the original while maintaining both grammatically and contextually appropriate word choices in Spanish. By making “nariz” the throw-away word, and also by incorporating “BIEN HECHO” and “flipando” into the **rhyme scheme**, a new rhyme scheme was created and the lack of the interconnected **rhyme** is not missed. While this may be a tool a translator can use, it is always best to keep as close to the original rhyme scheme as possible in order to stay true to the original piece. Of course, this is not a hard and fast statement but by attempting to retain

similar rhyme schemes, it also provides a structure for a translator to work in. However, in the moments when mimicking the original rhyme scheme is not possible (as in the case above), and so long as the altered rhyme scheme still allows for fluidity and singability, a potential restructuring of the rhyme scheme may be in order.

5.2. Rewriting

Translators understand that when they are given a text to translate, they not only act as a translator and cultural mediator, but they also act as a type of new author. While the original content is not that of the translator, the content which is produced by the translator could be viewed as a brand-new work; through the changing of the text's language, the text has been reimagined, redesigned and, effectively, rewritten. As aforementioned, one strategy (if not philosophy) for tackling many problems in musical theatre is to rewrite. While this strategy should not necessarily be the first strategy implemented, it should remain as a valid option throughout the translation of a musical.

The concept of 'rewriting' can also be deceptively vague. Generally speaking, if/when implementing the strategy of rewriting, the actual words are rewritten but the primary concept/idea remains. Though this clearly applies to the spoken words in a musical, it particularly applies to the songs. Since the text in songs are greatly bound by the music, phrasing, characters, etc., it is absolutely *imperative* to go to the heart of each line and find out what the baseline concept is; in other words, generalizing. Ignacio Pérez (2001) puts it this way: "Lo ideal en la traducción de canciones...sería poder traducir una canción conservando todos los elementos propios del tema original." In musical theatre songs, however, this should be the case for each *song* but for also each *line*. *Legally Blonde*, in particular, jumps from idea to idea and concept to concept in a matter of seconds; therefore, the need to take each line (or concept) on a case-by-case basis is crucial in order to provide an acceptable and performable translation.

An example of this concept can be highlighted in Figure 2 below from the song *Positive*. [HERE](#) is the link to the part of the song in which this is sung (note: this particular section was borrowed from the London production).

ELLE: Girls, girls! What if she's a violent nut? She might stab me in the gut. With the stick that's up her butt Who's gotta plan B?	ELLE: ¡Chicasss! ¿Qué pasa si está loca? Quizás me atacaría Con sus tacones pasados de moda ¿Quién tiene un plan B?
---	--

Figure 2: Example of Rewriting from *Positive*.

In this particular case, there was a problem with both the concept of having a “stick up her butt” and with the phrasing of a ‘would-be’ translation of that idiom. Firstly, I was unable to come up with another phrase in Spanish which implies the same meaning of “having a stick up your butt” (Farlex, 2015) and which also allows for the phrase to become ‘weaponized’. When crossed with this conundrum, it became necessary to take a few steps back and look at what the text/character is trying to get across. The two main points in this section are in regards to Elle’s fear of being attacked and also in emphasizing out how rigid and dull Vivienne is. The solution I presented was to rewrite the phrase keeping in mind the aforementioned intentions. In the reformulation stage, the idea of referring to Vivienne’s clothing came to mind – black, dull and “out of style”. Ultimately the choice to have Elle call out Vivienne’s bad taste in clothes was made (something her character would do), ultimately landing on ‘weaponizing’ Vivienne’s heels. This choice fits the original intent of the English song and further reveals the relationship between Elle and Vivienne at this point in the show. This choice also has effects on the show outside of the text. With a specific mention of Vivienne’s heels, this becomes a mandate for Vivienne to wear dull and out-of-date heels during this part of the show. With this suggestion a translator’s note would need to be left for the costume designers and directors in order to ensure sure the actress who portrays Vivienne is indeed wearing the appropriate shoes for this scene.

5.3. Syllabic Alteration

While achieving rhyme and singability have their own unique challenges, syllables can often influence both because “in song translation all syllables count...” (Cortés Ramal, 2004: 77) One of the tools I used to help combat problems with singability is through what Cortés Ramal (2004: 78-79) calls “alteración silábica por exceso” and alteración silábica por defecto”, or “syllabic alteration by addition” and “or “syllabic alteration by deduction” respectively. Syllabic alteration by addition refers to the addition of syllables to a lyric. These extra syllables may be needed in order to retain desired words or phrasing or even to help a lyric to have the correct stress during the right musical moments. On the other hand, syllabic alteration by deduction is just the opposite; it refers to the subtraction of syllables from the source language’s syllabic count. Syllabic alteration by deduction can sometimes be necessary if and when, for example, a phrase in Spanish ends up being shorter than its English counterpart. In these moments, the deletion of one or more syllables can be helpful.

While there are examples of syllabic alteration by deduction in the translation proposals, the number of instances in which the use of syllabic alteration by addition was implemented, practically speaking, heavily outweighs the examples of syllabic alteration by deduction. Musically speaking, addressing syllabic alteration by addition poses a tough challenge; however, each line/lyric in each song contains a certain amount of “wiggle room” for extra syllables. The more difficult part of this process is finding the right places within each line and making sure the extra syllables fall are added at the right times of each phrase. To further illustrate, see Figure 3. Figure 3 is a musically written out an example from *Omigod You Guys* in which syllabic alteration by addition was implemented in order fulfill the translation of the line.

(For reference, [HERE](#) is the part of the song in which this is sung by Elle.)

Voice

This dress needs to seal the deal; Make a grown man kneel; But it

4

can't come right out and say "Bride". Can't look like I'm desp'-rate, or like I'm

7

wait-ing for it. I've got-ta leave War-ner his pride. So "Bride" is more im-plied.

11

Figure 3: Selection from *Omgod You Guys*.

Figure 4 is how my translation proposal would musically fit into the score for comparison.

(See 8.2 for complete recording.)

Voice

El look de-be ha-cer que va-ya a a-rro-di-ar-se. Pe-ro

4

"bo-da" no se pue-de gri-tar. No pue-do es-tar an-si-o-sa, Ni de-

7

es-per-a-da. Su or-gu-llo de-bo pre-ser-var. Y "bo-da" hay que in-sin-u-

11

ar.

Figure 4: Adaption proposal for *Omgod You Guys*

In comparing the two versions, the difference in the number of notes/syllables in order for the Spanish words to fit within the preset music can be clearly noted. Mathematically

speaking, this was possible by further subdividing each syllable/note, thus creating a faster syllable/note capable of fitting within the musical constraints (i.e. rhythm, tempo, melody). The challenge here is to not saturate any given line with too many subdivisions/additions of syllables, otherwise the lyrics sound rushed and less smooth; they become less ‘singable’. In other words, “En la canción para ser cantada el texto ha de ajustarse a los parámetros musicales. La traducción ha de coincidir con la música” (Cortés Ramal, 2004: 82).

6. Conclusions and Final Thoughts

The goal of this project was to further study and practice the translation of musical theatre and to provide contributions to the musical theatre translation community. Having carried out extensive study and diligent work, I feel like I have accomplished these goals. When equipped with the right tools, strategies and points of view, the translation of musical theatre is an achievable, enjoyable and a rewarding practice which contributes to both the entertainment industry and the translation community.

The world of song translation (in general) is a difficult practice with many obstacles. In addition to the translation of the text itself, there are a plethora of restraints which the musical element places on the translation of a song. As I personally discovered, translating musical theatre songs is like putting a puzzle together; there are many parts that all must fit together. Finding the right combinations of translated text coupled with rhyme schemes, syllable counts, singability, musical stress, plot and character relationships is a process which requires both dedicated work and commitment of time.

Conclusively, the most difficult parts of musical theatre translation are in regards to rhyme and syllables. Since Spanish, generally speaking, takes up more words/syllables than English to communicate a similar message, the natural consequence of incorporating the musical element is that the ‘equivalent’ Spanish translation can often not fit the same word/syllable count. A notable portion of the time I spent on the translation element of this

project was devoted to making sure each translated line rhymed with the appropriate rhyme scheme and also syllabically fit into the phrase. Consequently, this also resulted in the need to rewrite and restructure lines various times in order to find the best translation options for each song. In my experience, the best solution to these challenges was simply having sufficient time to adequately work and edit. As often is the case with works of art, time greatly affects the quality and the outcome of the final product.

Furthermore, being a non-native Spanish speaker translating *into* my second language proved to be a double-edged sword. On the one hand, being a native English speaker greatly helped me in the comprehension of the entirety of the source text; there were never doubts regarding idioms, phrasing, vocabulary, etc. On the other hand, translating *into* Spanish is a more difficult task. However, being that the vast majority of work carried out in this master's program dealt with the translation of English *into* Spanish, I felt adept to further this practice into musical theatre translation. In this light, having a complete understanding of *Legally Blonde* (both linguistically and culturally) greatly aided me in areas in which restructuring and rewriting were necessary. Regardless, having translated into my second language, it was *imperative* that I request the revision and feedback of native speakers in order to gain insight on nuances and any phrasing issues or grammar errors.

In conclusion, the culmination of this project has further increased my passions for language, translation and musical theatre and has also helped me to grow personally, professionally and academically. As a lover of both languages *and* musical theatre, I want to be among those who bridge the gap between language and culture within this wonderful world. Being that 'the second golden age of musical theatre' is currently taking place, there could not be a better time for the practice and the study of musical theatre translation. As the amount of musical theatre content continues to grow (and as the world becomes even more connected), I would also like to see the number of qualified and interested translators also continue to grow

so that the Spanish-speaking world (and the rest of the world) can have more access to this wonderful, meaningful and exciting pastime.

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8. Annex

8.1. Music Links

8.1.1. YouTube:

- *Legally Blonde The Musical* (Broadway Production) = <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xjkscx9Osmw>
- “Omigod You Guys”
 - Broadway version: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=47D8ZJUMI8k>
 - West End (UK) version: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HYd7tWO65LQ>
- “What You Want”
 - Broadway version: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pT4K2rwb0KE>
 - West End (UK) version: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FCMLadXhXgQ>
- “Positive”
 - Broadway Version: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lZLEE0xZtoU>
 - West End (UK) Version (audio only): <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7K4pkPRa7Vk>
- “Legally Blonde”
 - Broadway version: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=G3T2kUxbiy0>
 - West End (UK) version: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rQxXx-fQMfQ>

8.1.2. Spotify:

- Legally Blonde The Musical (Original Broadway Cast Recording)
 - <https://open.spotify.com/album/7os43c6BUhMjKDUaEtDufk?si=CYYJL4G-RsKxXDjXKzj4pw>
- Legally Blonde Original London Cast Recording:
 - <https://open.spotify.com/album/7os43c6BUhMjKDUaEtDufk?si=CYYJL4G-RsKxXDjXKzj4pw>

8.2. Translated Song Recordings

- <https://drive.google.com/open?id=1CWZ6F7sFwo5INy5dZbWInR9I7P-5u2le>

8.3. Backing Tracks

- *Omigod You Guys* backing track: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2m_I_mmDbrU
- *What You Want* backing track: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nJL0ZQRJtnE>
- *Positive* backing track: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jMBTA1pHX8>
- *Legally Blonde* backing track: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XpMy5E-Fto0>

8.4. Script, Score and Lyrics

- Legally Blonde Script 1, Legally Blonde Script 2 (more recently updated and also contains “Positive”) and Legally Blonde Score

- <https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1yJjNLtfJFreVlxxwRa0Wt47cR8UcYon4?usp=sharing>
- Lyrics for the London Production of “Omigod You Guys”
 - <https://www.musixmatch.com/lyrics/Legally-Blonde-the-Musical-Original-London-Cast-Amy-Lennox-Susan-McFadden-Ibinabo-Jack-Sheridan-Smith-Nadine-Higgin-Sorelle-Marsh/Omigod-You-Guys>
- Lyrics for the London Production of “What You Want”
 - https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yc3PWha_tHo
 - No written lyrics could be found. This video plays a slideshow of the lyrics backed by the London Cast Recording of the song.
- Lyrics for the London Production of “Positive”
 - <https://www.musixmatch.com/lyrics/Amy-Lennox-Susan-McFadden-Ibinabo-Jack-Sheridan-Smith-The-Legally-Blonde-the-Musical-Original-London-Cast-Company/Positive>