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**Chat GPT vs. Translator: Translation of Fixed Expressions from Spanish to English in  
*Tengo Miedo Torero* by Pedro Lemebel**

Informe final de seminario de grado para optar al grado académico de  
Licenciado/a en Lingüística y Literatura Inglesas

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Santiago de Chile  
2024

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## Abstract

Through empirical and qualitative research, this thesis analyses several translation techniques and how they affect a case study: an English translation by Katherine Silver and an English translation by Chat GPT of the Chilean novel *Tengo Miedo Torero* by Pedro Lemebel. Considering the introduction of new technologies and AIs to the translation field, frequently thought as a potential substitution of the human translator, this study investigates the differences between the translations proposed by both the official translator of the English published version of the book and the translation of text excerpts done by Chat GPT. This process unveiled which translation technique was employed in each translation proposed, determining which was the most frequently used by each translator, along with an analysis of sixteen examples of text excerpts. The final results revealed Chat GPT to have a surprising performance in terms of accuracy, using the equivalence technique to tackle most of the text excerpts, which was not the case with Silver. Moreover, it was discovered that the AI followed a communicative approach to translation, corresponding to several skills and competences proposed by PETRA-E.

**Key words:** Translation studies, Chat GPT, Translation competence, Translation techniques, Literary translation, Translation problems.

## Acknowledgements

Antes de comenzar con esta tesis, me gustaría dirigir unas palabras a todas y cada una de las personas que contribuyeron a que este documento exista. Antes de todo, agradecer a mi profesor guía, Dr. Moisés Llopis i Alarcón, quién estuvo detrás mío en cada paso del proceso de este trabajo. Su infinita paciencia y apoyo fue completamente invaluable y primordial para la exitosa realización de esta tesis.

A mis hermanos, Diego y Lirayen, quienes durante estos cuatro años fueron fuente de risas y ejemplos lingüísticos dignos de analizar. Fueron desde el inicio el motor fundamental para seguir constante en este proceso, incluso cuando el cansancio superaba a la razón.

A mis padres, quienes desde siempre me dieron la oportunidad de perseguir mis sueños sin juzgarme, respaldándome y dándome ese último empujón para atreverme a hacer todas las cosas que me daban miedo.

A Lukas, por ser quién iluminaba mis días y noches de trabajo incansable. Estuviste incluso cuando pensaba en renunciar a todo, motivándome a terminar y esperanzándome con un futuro que nunca me había ilusionado tanto.

A mi mejor amigo, quien siempre estuvo cuando lo necesitaba y me ayudó con su experiencia a sobrellevar esta investigación de la mejor manera, aún cuando no entendía muchas de las cosas que le mostraba.

A todos mis compañeros y amigos de esta carrera que me ayudaron incansablemente a discutir todas las preguntas que me surgían con respecto a este estudio, soportando mis quejas y sollozos de frustración. Nunca olvidaré nuestras conversaciones ni sus comentarios en cada documento que hacíamos.

A Yerko, por ser quien me ayudó a encauzar mi camino profesional desde el inicio, aún cuando el miedo y las dudas me decían que debía dar un paso atrás. Nunca podré agradecerte lo suficiente por ayudarme a descubrir mi propósito en esta vida.

A mi Anubis, que yo sé que estas últimas semanas fue esa estrella brillante que veía por mi ventana, dándome fuerzas para seguir adelante a pesar de todo. Me acompañaste hasta el final y egresaste conmigo como te lo prometí.

Finalmente, a todos mis profesores que fueron parte de estos últimos años, especialmente a la profesora Pascuala quién de alguna u otra forma vió y sigue viendo en mí algo que la hace creer en mí.

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

Literary translation has always been one sphere that has experienced more scientific development when talking about Translation studies. As Hurtado (2001) captures in her book, most of the reflections on translation revolve around literary translation. This is not strange since these kinds of texts possess a variety of fields, tones, styles, and modes, from which the translation could be affected and vary. On top of that, another characteristic that is crucial of these texts is the fact that they tend to be affixed to the culture and literary tradition in which they are written, making use of cultural references that could mark a problem to the target language in which these texts could be translated into. Moreover, it should not be forgotten that the text, besides carrying cultural weight, always denotes the author's idiolect. These characteristics result in literary texts being the most affected in the creative dimension of writing, proposing challenges in equating them to other cultures and languages.

Conversely, introducing new technologies is a natural step to human-driven processes nowadays, always trying to look for an automatic way of performing certain tasks in the best possible way. Translation studies have not been an exception in this field, and for some time, the question has remained whether a computer translation could beat human translation in any way. Since the invention of translators such as Google Translate, the idea of using a computer to translate challenging texts has been revoked based on the poor performance these programs gave the public. However, since the explosive popularity of large language corpus such as Chat GPT and several others in the past years, this question has been progressively closer to a positive response on the side of new technologies.

This thesis consists of a theoretical framework subdivided into three sections: a methodology, a data analysis, a discussion based on this analysis, and final conclusions and

projections. The theoretical framework has been divided into literary translation, fixed expressions, and Chat GPT. Firstly, literary translation will be defined as a translation problem, followed by specifying a translator's competence to solve these problems considering the communicative approach to translation. Secondly, fixed expressions will be defined and characterized according to Corpas Pastor (1996), along with the classification of them by the same author. Finally, the concept of Chat GPT will be defined and characterized by mentioning certain limitations that could hold it back.

Following this theoretical framework, the methodology objectives and research questions will be presented, describing the qualitative analysis. In closing, the conclusions and projections will be presented.

## **2. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

### **2.1. Literary translation**

Regarding the proper translation of the type of text, this research works with, it is necessary to specify certain features that literary translation deals with when bringing a text from one language to another. According to Marco Borillo, Verdegal Cerezo y Hurtado Albir, (1999), in Amparo Hurtado (2001: 63), “los textos literarios suelen estar anclados en la cultura y en la tradición literaria de la cultura de partida, presentando, pues, múltiples referencias culturales”. She remarks that a literary translator must have vast knowledge about the text and the culture in which it was written. Furthermore, explains about the competences the translator should have, mentioning some of them as “amplios conocimientos literarios y culturales y determinadas aptitudes relacionadas con el funcionamiento de esos textos (buenas habilidades de escritura, creatividad, etc.)” (63). Hurtado (2011) emphasizes the fact that this knowledge will help the translator with specific problems that could appear while

working with literary texts, mentioning the aesthetics of these texts, seen in figurative language, the idiolect typical of each writer, the sociocultural status of the source culture, and the time in which the text was written, as in the case of old texts.

### **2.1.1. Translation Problem**

A central concept to deal with while taking into account translation is the difficulties and problems there might appear during the process of dragging one text from a language to another. Nord (1991), in Amparo Hurtado (2001: 282), explains this as “Un problema objetivo que todo traductor (independiente mente de su nivel de competencia y de las condiciones técnicas de su trabajo) debe resolver en el transcurso de una tarea de traducción determinada”. However, there is a distinction between what is a translation problem and a translation difficulty, the latter being defined as “son subjetivas y tienen que ver con el propio traductor y sus condiciones de trabajo particulares” (1991, as cited in Hurtado, 2001, p. 282).

Nord (1991) identifies four types of each category: textual, pragmatic, cultural, and linguistic. She defines the first problem as problems triggered by specific characteristics of the source text, such as word games, which are specific to the text under translation. The second problem occurs as the translation process entails two cultures with all its conventions, which can provoke communication problems whenever these conventions collide. The third problem originates from the differences in cultural norms and conventions between the target and the origin culture. Finally, the fourth problem is provoked by the structural differences between the source and the target language.

On the other hand, translation difficulties are divided into text-specific, which has to do with the level of understanding of the original text that the translator may have; translator’s dependent, which exists even for the ideal translator; pragmatic, regarding the

nature of the translation task itself; and technical, which is related with the specificity of the text to be translated.

### **2.1.2. CEFR and Mediation**

The Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) consists of a standard used to measure and describe language proficiency, providing a comprehensive framework for language learning, teaching, and assessment, providing guidelines in terms of what learners should achieve to communicate effectively using a foreign language (Europe, 2018). The CEFR proposes an interesting concept regarding the teaching and learning of a language called *mediation* that, in their own words, “combines reception, production and interaction” (2020, p. 35). There is a great emphasis on the interaction between two people who may have some issues communicating, and that is where the concept of mediation acts as it is stated in the framework, “two key notions of co-construction of meaning in interaction and constant movement between the individual and social level in language learning, mainly through its vision of the user/learner as a social agent” (2020, p. 36). This highlights the importance of interaction and the social side of language, which should be considered a cornerstone of the present study.

### **2.1.3. PETRA-E Network**

Considering all the complexities of literary translation, PETRA-E (*Plateforme Européenne pour la traduction littéraire*; “E” stands for Education) was created by several European academics and institutions to teach and train literary translators. This group proposes a common framework that explains the skills and knowledge a professional translator must perform to accomplish an accurate literary translation.

According to this network, there are eight competencies that a translator should have to perform the literary translation. The first one is transfer competence, which consists of the ability to recognize and solve problems accurately related to the textual production of the text, besides possessing the knowledge of translation strategies. Secondly, language competence is related to the domain of grammar, style, and pragmatics of the source and target language. Thirdly, textual competence has to do with the editorial skills and knowledge of literary genres and styles necessary for analyzing the source texts and, later, the production of the target text. Heuristic competence involves the ability to collect the linguistic and thematic knowledge necessary for translation, develop strategies for using information sources, including digital ones, apply textual criticism, and differentiate among editions. The literary-cultural aspect consists of the ability to apply knowledge about literature and the culture of the origin and target sources while doing a literary translation, dealing with cultural differences, and distinguishing between schools, movements, periods, and literary styles. The professional competence deals with the ability to collect knowledge about the working field and to show an appropriate and expected attitude regarding the working field. The evaluative competence is related to assessing and evaluating the translations, how translators work, and the translation process. Finally, the research competence consists of the ability to do methodical research to inform the translation process.

#### **2.1.4. Intercultural Communicative Competence**

Following the line of the previous section, intercultural communicative competence is significantly similar to the concept of mediation. Byram y Zarate (1997), in Isabel Iglesias Casal & Carmen Ramos Méndez (2021, p. 102), coined the concept of *intercultural competence*, defining it as “la capacidad del hablante de interactuar con otros, negociar un

modo de comunicación e interacción satisfactorio para sí mismo y para los demás, aceptar otras perspectivas y percepciones del mundo, mediar entre estas perspectivas y ser consciente de la diferencia”. This concept focuses on the interaction of people, considering that they may have trouble communicating between them. Moreover, from intercultural competence, the concept of *intercultural communicative competence* emerges, broadly defined as a mixture of intercultural, linguistics, sociolinguistics, and discursive competencies considering the intercultural abilities a speaker should hold.

Considering this, it is possible to infer that the concepts of Intercultural communicative competence and mediation point out the same principles of interaction between people and the importance of social factors. This is paramount to the present study since it highlights the role of social factors within communication, which is crucial while understanding translation as a communicative process.

## **2.2. Fixed Expressions**

The research done by Sepúlveda, D. & Vera, E. (2023) was focused on the book *Tengo Miedo Torero* by Pedro Lemebel (2001), specifically chosen for the Chilean norm contained in it, and it was contrasted with its English-translated version of the book. Their analysis incorporated the concept of *culturema* (*cultureme*) to define the units under study. Nonetheless, the definition of *cultureme* they provided considered it a specific and distinctive social phenomenon of a culture viewed as relevant by its members (Nord, 1997, in Sepúlveda & Vera, 2023). Another definition of *cultureme* used in the research was as a verbal or para-verbal element that is culturally weighted and that, when translated, could generate issues regarding cultural aspects between the target and the culture (Molina, 2001, in Sepúlveda & Vera, 2023). This concept is highly problematic to this study as it does not

adjust entirely to the units being analyzed since it is too broad and imprecise to be used in this context, requiring it to be narrowed down to understand better the units the authors discuss. Moreover, the concept of cultureme in this research overlaps the mention of Chileanisms, as they are not the same units or comparable, considering the definitions provided.

Conversely, the book *Phraseology Theory* (1998) offered another concept, which is the *phrasal lexemes*, considered as “phrases' or 'idioms' (according to their metalinguistic terminology): the sorts of item that for reasons of semantics, lexico-grammar, or pragmatics are regarded as holistic units rather than compositional strings.” (p. 79) However, the concept is still unclear, besides excluding one of the most complex aspects of this kind of expression, their cultural value. Moreover, the book keeps explaining some of the issues revolving around the concept of phrasal lexemes, adding, “As far as phrasal lexemes are concerned, corpus evidence shows that their forms are by no means as fixed as some dictionary inventories appear to suggest and that the division between multiword and single-word items is blurred, to say the least” (81).

Furthermore, and as established by Corpas Pastor (1996) in her book *Manual de Fraseología Española*, *fixed expressions* are defined as “unidades léxicas formadas por más de dos palabras gráficas en su límite inferior, cuyo límite superior se sitúa en el nivel de la oración compuesta.” (p. 20) These units are also characterized by their frequency, institutionalization, stability, idiomaticity, and variation. Each of these characteristics is important in identifying a phraseological unit among other units in a text. Regarding frequency, Corpas Pastor (1996) distinguishes between two types of fixed expression frequency: the frequency with which their elements occur together and how frequent the units themselves are. In terms of their institutionalization, she alludes to the importance of repeating an expression to become accepted and part of the norm of society to be

institutionalized. Concerning the stability of these units, Corpas Pastor (1996) emphasizes two important features of this same characteristic. The first is fixation, which alludes to how certain combinations of words can be used while speaking as previously constructed forms. Here, she remarks on two types of fixations: internal, concerning the form and meaning of the units, and external, which has to do with how these units are used in context.

On the other hand, semantic specialization or lexicalization refers to how these units or expressions, once fixed and their meaning interpreted by the community that uses it, have a slight change in semantic meaning to become more narrow and specialized. This process can happen either by the addition or suppression of the original meaning of the expression, and it is essential to mention that the unit must be fixed for this change to occur. Regarding idiomaticity, it should be considered as a characteristic in which the meaning of certain fixed expressions, as a combination of words, is not equivalent to the meaning of each of their parts on their own. This last characteristic should be taken as a potential of any phraseological unit but not an intrinsic characteristic. Finally, concerning variation, there are two ways in which these fixed expressions could vary. Firstly, we have two fixed expressions that are variants of each other if they are within the same language, have the same meaning, are independent of the context in which they appear if they are similar in structure and components, and are fixed. Secondly, regarding the modifications of said expressions, it is said that the degree of modification done must be directly proportional to how fixed these expressions are so as not to distort and affect their meaning; the more fixed, the more modifications a phraseological unit can bear. Thirdly, Corpas Pastor (1996) considers gradation, according to several other authors (cf. Bugarski, 1968; Bolinger, 1975 [1968]; Cowie, 1981; Fernando y Flavell, 1981; Wallace, 1982; Gläser, 1986b; Osselton, 1988), as the degree in which all the characteristics aforementioned are presented in the fixed expressions.

### 2.2.1. Classification of Fixed Expressions

Following the research done by Corpas Pastor (1996), the classification of the fixed expressions has been under discussion for some time and she concludes that “ninguna de las clasificaciones vistas hasta ahora utiliza criterios claros que permitan establecer una taxonomía razonada de las unidades fraseológicas de nuestra lengua.” (p. 50) On account of this, Corpas Pastor proposes her classification for fixed expressions, using some of the categories that were proposed by other authors in the past, reinventing some of them, and creating new classifications to narrow it down and make it more precise.

Corpas Pastor (1996) identified 3 spheres in which another 3 large categories were proposed: *colocaciones* (*collocations*), *locuciones* (*locutions*), and *enunciados fraseológicos* (*phraseological statements*), being this last category the one that has two different classes in it which are *paremias* (*paroemias*) and *fórmulas rutinarias* (*routine formulae*).

Regarding the first large classification or sphere of fixed expressions, collocations are defined by Corpas Pastor (1996) as “unidades fraseológicas que, desde el punto de vista del sistema de la lengua, son sintagmas completamente libres, generados a partir de reglas, pero que, al mismo tiempo, presentan cierto grado de restricción combinatoria determinada por el uso (cierto fijación interna)” (p. 53). These fixed expressions are not considered statements or speech acts by themselves, but they are pre-constructed and stable units of the norm that present analytic external fixation. Here, she identifies 6 combinations of elements: *noun* (*subject*) + *verb*, *verb* + *noun* (*object*), *adjective* + *noun*, *noun* + *preposition* + *noun*, *verb* + *adverb*, and *adjective* + *adverb*.

The second large sphere of fixed expressions considers locutions. Corpas Pastor (1996) defines them as fixed expressions of the language system characterized by features like internal fixation, a unit of meaning, and external passmatic fixation. These units are

incomplete statements and often work as sentence elements. The definitions of these kinds of fixed expressions are multiple; however, every definition agrees on its fixation and unit syntactic function. Corpas Pastor (1996) identifies 7 types of locutions: *nominales* (*nominals*), *adjetivas* (*adjectivals*), *adverbiales* (*adverbials*), *verbales* (*verbals*), *prepositivas* (*prepositionals*), *conjuntivas* (*conjunctivals*), and *clausales* (*clausals*).

Considering the third large classification, or sphere, correspond to phraseological statements which Zuluaga (1980) defines, in Corpas Pastor (1996, p. 132), as “secuencias autónomas de habla, su enunciación se lleva a cabo en unidades de entonación distintas; en otras palabras, son unidades de comunicación mínimas”. These units are complete statements independently, constituting speech acts with internal and external fixation. Within these, Corpas Pastor (1996) specifies 2 more categories, which are paroemias and routine formulae, which are distinguished by 2 specific characteristics: paroemias possess referential meaning and textual autonomy, while routine formulae hold social, expressive, or discursive meaning and are determined by concrete circumstances.

The categories within paroemias are 3 which consist of *enunciados de valor específico* (*specific value statements*), *citas* (*quotes*), and *refranes* (*sayings*). On the other hand, the categories within routine formulae are 2 which are *fórmulas discursivas* (*discursive formulae*), which are divided in 2: *fórmulas de apertura y cierre* (*formulae of opening and closure*) and *fórmulas de transición* (*formulae of transition*), and *fórmulas psico-sociales* (*psycho-social formulae*), which are divided as well in 6: *expresivas* (*expressive*), *comisivas* (*commissives*), *directivas* (*directives*), *asertivas* (*assertives*), *rituales* (*rituals*), and *miscelánea* (*miscellaneous*).

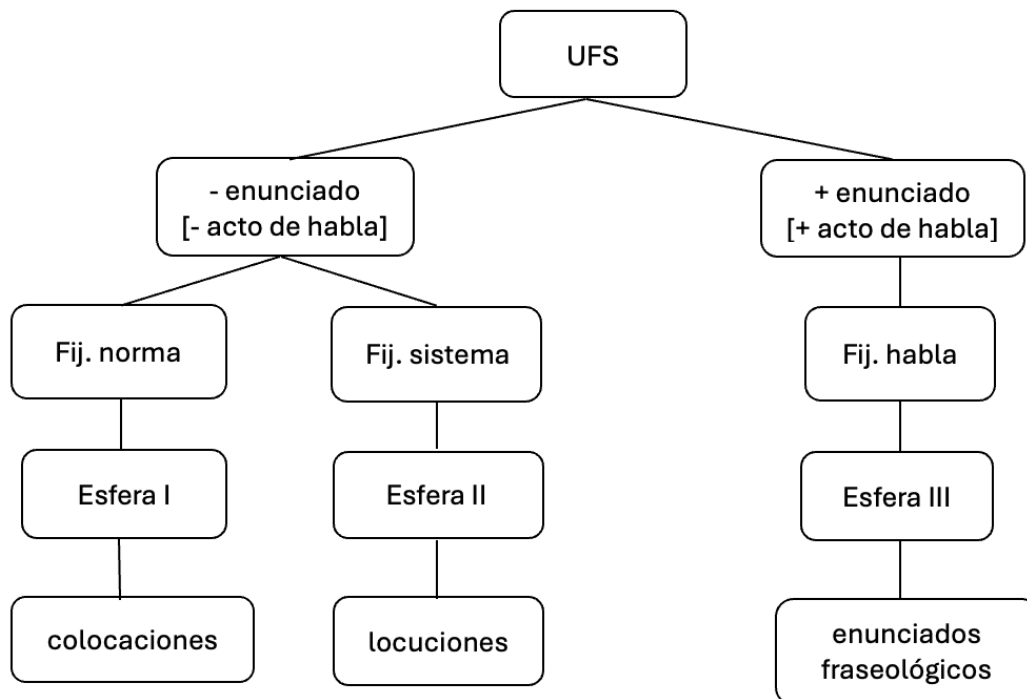


Figure 1. *Classification of Fixed Expressions according to Corpas Pastor (1996).*

### 2.3. Chat GPT

A cornerstone of this investigation is the concept that will be used for the analysis. According to Wang et al. (2023), “ChatGPT is a Transformer-based language model that is pre-trained based on a large amount of text corpus and then fine-tuned based on specialized data. This enables it to generate coherent and contextually appropriate text, capable of multiple tasks such as text completion, text generation, and conversational AI, etc.” (p. 577). This AI is considered a breakthrough since it is one of the first ones open to whoever needs or wants to use it. This proposes a new point of view regarding how texts are analyzed and developed in several ways, from the creation to the way they are translated, which is similar to the actual aim of this research. As stated, this intelligence works based on an immense

amount of data collected from a corpus of information to generate language and knowledge similar to the one obtained by a human being.

In regards to the linguistic competence of Chat GPT, it must be highlighted that “Machine linguistic intelligence, on the other hand, is more of a symbiotic relationship, relying on the development of the Internet to achieve a highly human-like conversational experience based on the massive absorption of human linguistic information while lacking the ability to generate new concepts” (Wang et al., 2023, p. 577). This is important because AI cannot create concepts from scratch, meaning that everything being said must be based on something previously invented by a human, which the program learned and reproduced.

### **2.3.1. Chat GPT in Translation**

For this tool to work precisely as needed, it is important to come up with the exact question or statement to request whatever we need. Through the investigation of Jiao et al. (2023), it was revealed that Chat GPT, as a large language model, needs precise prompts to trigger its abilities, as in this case, in translation. This investigation explored the use of a “strategy named pivot prompting for distant languages, which asks ChatGPT to translate the source sentence into a high-resource pivot language before into the target language” that seemed to improve the performance of Chat GPT in the translation of these distant languages.

Furthermore, the study revealed that the responses of Chat GPT to “the same query may vary across multiple trials, bringing randomness to the evaluation results” (Jiao et al., 2023, p. 9). This is important to emphasize since it could affect the results and their reliability, and the research highlights the fact that the prompts should be applied multiple times to collect all the results and provide an average of them.

Another study regarding prompts called attention to the quantity and quality of information given to the AI through them. It showed that a prompt including the translation

task and context domain could trigger a good response; however, a prompt that includes unclear or too complex information may produce a deficient performance in the task required (Gao et al., 2023). This also sheds light on the necessity of precise prompts for Chat GPT to perform the best tasks.

A study focused on the translation of selected sonnets from Shakespeare from English to Persian identified 5 different strategies Chat GPT used while translating: transposition, equivalence, modulation, literal, and adaptation. Nonetheless, it was by far the most common literal translation. A further important fact was that some parts of the sonnets were entirely distorted after the translation, which emphasizes how the performance of Chat GPT can be affected even by details such as the use of Old English in the original (Reza, n.d.).

### **3. METHODOLOGY**

#### **3.1. Approach & Method**

According to Hurtado (2001), there are two approaches a translation study could take which are theoretical, which points to the “proceso intelectual de ideas” (p. 173), and empirical research, which gathers and analyze data “mediante la utilización de diversos métodos de investigación” (p. 173).

Furthermore, regarding research methods, Hurtado (2001) proposed qualitative and quantitative methodologies. The first method considers the observation and interpretation of the information obtained through a written or oral corpus, depending on the investigation, and the analysis considers the descriptions and discovery of social or cultural phenomena. This definition is opposed to the second method, which is focused on statistics and data related to numbers and counting the data.

Based on this brief review regarding theoretical and methodological aspects, the methodology built for this research is from a qualitative method and an empirical approach.

### **3.2. Research Questions**

The questions that lead the present study are:

1. Is Chat GPT an accurate tool for translating texts from Chilean varieties of Spanish into English regarding fixed expressions?
2. How are the Spanish fixed expressions transferred from the original version of the book into English by Chat GPT?
3. Are these fixed expressions and words equivalent in the translations made by a translator and Chat GPT, as contrasted to the original version in Spanish?

### **3.3. Objectives**

Four objectives were set to answer these questions. The general objective is to determine the efficiency of an AI, such as Chat GPT, in translating fixed expressions from Chilean Spanish into English in contrast to a traditional translator.

The specific objectives set for this research are:

1. Analyzing how precise Chat GPT is as a translation tool for fixed expressions in Chilean Spanish into English.
2. Determining how fixed expressions in Chilean Spanish are transferred by Chat GPT from the original Spanish version of the book into the English one.
3. Detect mismatches between the fixed expressions in English, given by Chat GPT, contrasted with its original form in Chilean Spanish.

### **3.4. Corpus**

This thesis works with the Chilean novel *Tengo Miedo Torero* by Pedro Lemebel (2001) and its English-translated version by Katherine Silver (2003). The colloquial Spanish language determined the reason behind the choice of this specific novel, which the author captures throughout the book. The use of colloquial language is crucial for this study since there is an interest in contrasting the accuracy of a machine to a human translation of chunks of languages that already present difficulties in finding an equivalent to them in English. This will shed light on the competence and reliability of a machine translation when faced with translation issues that translators often encounter.

The original novel was written in Spanish and published in 2001 in Chile by the publishing house Seix Barral (Planeta). For this specific study, we are working with the Border edition of the book (2019), which is in collaboration with the original editorial (Planeta).

### **3.5. Prompt**

The prompt used for this investigation was based on previous studies regarding developing the prompts specifically applied for Chat GPT. Following the study of He (2024) on using Chat GPT for translation while incorporating certain elements such as information of the text being translated, assigning roles to the AI, and specifying a temperature to trigger a lower level of creativity of Chat GPT. At first, the basic prompt proposed by He (2024) was used to have a base on which to work to adjust details regarding the specific corpus for this investigation. The final prompts used for this study specify that the text is an extract from a Chilean literary book, warning Chat GPT to consider the colloquial language used by the

author and ask for an accurate and equivalent translation of the extract, maintaining the original meaning.

Considering the classification proposed by Corpas Pastor (1996) presented earlier in this thesis, this investigation will focus on only one category: collocations. This choice was based on the extension and time set to this research. Moreover, this specific type of phraseological unit is the most frequently used in the text under study.

#### **4. DATA ANALYSIS**

Once this research's theoretical framework and methodology were introduced, the qualitative analysis of the corpus gathered will be presented below. In this section, the translation techniques will be analyzed based on the technique used by the translator of the published English version of the book. Furthermore, the analysis of the structure of the fixed expressions will be based on the structure of each of them's languages, either English or Spanish.

##### **4.1. Equivalence**

Hurtado (2001) defined equivalence as “un término o expresión reconocido (por el diccionario, por el uso lingüístico) como equivalente en la lengua meta”. Regarding the first example of equivalence, the expression “hacerse la lesa” defines a person pretending not to have listened to someone or pretending not to be referred to in any way. With this in mind, the goal is to translate the text so that the reader does not have any problem understanding the informal register and writing style of Pedro Lemebel while reading the text in English. In this case, the published version of the book tried to equal the expression with the English

expression “to play the fool,” which according to the Collins Dictionary Online (2024) refers to “to deliberately act foolishly; indulge in buffoonery”. This specific expression does not accurately represent the intended meaning of the original sentence since Lemebel is not trying to say that the main character should act foolishly but to pretend not to be aware of something. Thus, the translation lost the mischievousness with which the main character expresses her status.

Notwithstanding, Chat GPT proposes a different expression to *hacerse la lesa*, translating it into “playing dumb,” which according to Cambridge Dictionary Online (2024) is to “pretend to be stupid or not to know something.” This definition expresses almost the exact definition as *hacerse la lesa*, making it the most accurate match. Moreover, the expression contains an informal register, highlighting the day-to-day language in which the original book is written.

In general, taking into account both translations proposed, it can be said that Chat GPT demonstrates a better understanding of the original meaning behind the expressions exemplified through the accuracy with which it selects the English expressions proposed. Later on in the analysis, Chat GPT evinces that it knows the expression of act the fool or play the fool (which are synonyms); however, shows an understanding of the fact that they are not synonyms between play the fool and play dumb as it chooses wisely the extracts in which one or the other fits better the intended meaning Lemebel tried to convey when writing the book in Chilean Spanish, even when the difference between the expression is minimum.

N° 1	Original extract (Lemebel)	English translated extract (Silver)	English translated extract (Chat GPT)
	"¿Ah? Que si se <b>hacía la lesa</b> era nada más por él."	"Really! If she did <b>play the fool</b> , it was only for his sake."	"If she <b>played dumb</b> , it was only for his sake."
FE type	verb + noun (obj)	verb + noun (+ noun)	verbal expression

Another example is the expression “poner a todo chanco” which describes how the character speaking, in this case, the figure of Pinochet, would put on some music, emphasizing that it would be loud. Once again, an expression like this highlights the register that characterizes the book, a language that can be found everywhere in informal contexts in Chile.

The published translation used the expression “put on full blast” which comes from the idiom “at full blast” which according to the Cambridge Dictionary Online (2024) means that something is “as loud as possible”. The excerpt possesses the exact meaning of the original Spanish extract from the book, which indicates the accuracy with which the translator chooses the expression to replace the original one. Moreover, in terms of the register, the English expression maintains the informal style characteristic of the situation in which the character, Pinochet, speaks when arguing with his wife Lucía; however, there is always a loss in register that inevitably happens when translating a text.

On the contrary, Chat GPT proposed a quite similar option, using “blast at full volume” which again comes from the very same expression of “at full blast” meaning to put something as loud as possible. Given the similarity between the expressions, it could be said that both translations accomplish the intended meaning the author tried to convey with the original expression. Nonetheless, even though both translations tried to maintain the register,

in terms of writing style, the expression still lacks what could be called the Lemebelian register.

Nº 2	Original extract (Lemebel)	English translated extract (Silver)	English translated extract (Chat GPT)
	"(...) y llegando, <b>pondría a todo chancho</b> esas retretas (...)"	"(...) and as soon as they arrived he would <b>put</b> those bugles <b>on full blast</b> "	"(...) and as soon as he got there, he'd <b>blast</b> those fanfares <b>at full volume</b> (...)"
FE type	verb + prep + adj + noun	verb + adj + noun	adverbial expression

A further example is the expression “hacerse la cucha” which is quite similar to the meaning of “hacerse el leso”, although it is rather different. According to DRAE (RAE, 2021), “hacerse alguien el cucho” defines someone who tries to appear innocent or uninvolved in a certain situation. In the original book, the expression is used to refer to the main character, who, even though he is involved in everything related to the illegal activities the character Carlos is involved in regarding the Frente Patriótico Manuel Rodríguez, advises that she could pretend to be innocent as a way of warning Carlos of what she is capable of. On the other hand, the published translation opted for equating it with “to play the puppy dog” which is not a preconceived expression; however, it could be interpreted as acting or pretending to be innocent as a puppy could appear to be. Nevertheless, this expression could be problematic because it requires a certain degree of inference to understand the intended meaning of the expression in that specific context. Furthermore, inserting an expression that is not used in a language could result in misinterpreting what the author tried to say with the expression in the first place, generating a communication problem.

On the other side, Chat GPT proposes once again the expression of “play dumb” which, as previously discussed, refers to pretending not to know something, which is a close meaning to appear to be innocent even though it may not be the case. Although the expression works in terms of conveying the intended meaning expected from the original version in Spanish, the use of this expression as an umbrella term for all these kinds of expressions that refer to someone pretending to be someone who is not or acting as if the person knows anything about a certain situation, this sheds light on the fact that Chat GPT produces a loss of writing style when translating all these different expressions in the same way when they are part of a rich repertoire that the Chilean language possesses.

When comparing both translations proposed, it can be seen that Chat GPT’s proposal is less problematic in terms of meaning, register, and ambiguity than the official translator, which used an expression that required an inference from part of the reader. Nonetheless, this does not mean that Chat GPT’s proposal is clear of issues since, as mentioned above, its proposal could indicate a failure in terms of writing style and a loss of multiplicity of expressions.

N° 3	Original extract (Lemebel)	English translated extract (Silver)	English translated extract (Chat GPT)
	"Prefería <b>hacerse la chucha</b> , ya que él la creía tonta (...)"	"She preferred <b>to play the puppy dog</b> since anyway he thought she must be stupid (...)"	"She'd rather <b>play dumb</b> , since he thought she was naive (...)"
FE type	verb + noun (obj)	verb + noun (+ noun)	verbal expression

In a last instance, we have the expression “mandar todo a la chucha,” which is often used to tell someone to leave immediately, figuratively or literally. Considering this and the

context in which the expression is said in the book, it can be assumed that the main character was trying to say that she was getting tired of all that Carlos was making her go through and that she wanted to tell him to go away, throwing away their relationship as well. It is important to note that this expression is usually accompanied by rage or anger by the person who enunciates it and that the expression denotes that the person speaking is angry.

Analyzing the published translation, it can be seen that the translator used the expression “send someone to hell,” which is close to the original expression and is an excellent equivalent to the intended meaning in the original book. Nonetheless, the problem with this translation is the wording of the expression itself as it refers to a “they,” which does not appear clearly in the original text and makes it confusing to the reader, having to infer what that “they” is referring to.

On the contrary, the proposal done by Chat GPT included the expression “tell someone to go to hell,” which again is an excellent equivalence to the intended meaning of the original expression; however, in contrast to the proposal by Silver, Chat GPT’s version does not contain any wording ambiguity and even remarks the addressee of what is being said by employing a “him” so to have no room for doubts that the message is directed to Carlos and no one else. Having in mind this, it could be argued that Chat GPT’s translation is more accurate than Silver’s proposal since it is not ambiguous and

Nº 4	Original extract (Lemebel)	English translated extract (Silver)	English translated extract (Chat GPT)
	"(...) si no fuera porque la quería tanto, le salía la rota y <b>mandaba todo a la chucha.</b> "	"(...) if she didn't love him so much, she'd show how brash she could be and <b>send the lot of them to hell.</b> "	"(...) if it weren't because she cared for him so much, her rough side would come out, and she'd <b>tell him to go to hell.</b> "
FE type	verb + adj + prep + noun	verb + noun + prep + prep + noun	Interjection verb + prep + verb+ prep + noun

Following this line, the expression “petibuché” recovered from the original book is a Spanish naturalized borrowing from the expression *petite bouche*, which is literally translated *little mouth* (Cambridge Dictionary | English Dictionary, Translations & Thesaurus, 2024), making reference to the word *bouchée* that refers as well to a a small, light, pastry case filled with sweet or savoury (= seasoned or flavoured but not sweet) food (“Collins Online Dictionary | Definitions, Thesaurus and Translations,” 2024) . Within the text, the author employed this expression to highlight the size and quantity of the main character being served, that what they offered her to eat was so little that it could only be eaten in one bite.

In the case of the published translation, the translator opted for the expression *finger foods*, which according to the Cambridge Dictionary Online (2024) refers to “food that you can eat without using knives, forks, or spoons”. Although this expression does not provide the exact same meaning as the original one, it gets so close that the use of finger foods also conveys the meaning the author tried to convey. Nonetheless, the expression loses its register and writing style as it does not maintain this foreign word, which refers to the French language that is part of the original text.

Alternatively, Chat GPT’s translation offered another borrowing that has been naturalized to a certain extent. The word “canapé” comes from the French word *canapé*, which according to the Cambridge Dictionary Online (2024) refers to a sofa, and later on, it extended its meaning a small, thin, salty biscuit or small piece of bread with food such as cheese, fish, or meat on top, that is served with drinks, especially at a party. These appetizers are usually small and eaten in just one bite, and this description matches perfectly with the definition of *petibuché* previously discussed, indicating once again that Chat GPT is rather accurate and competent in terms of finding a word or expression that preserves the intended meaning the author tried to depict. Moreover, the AI's use of this foreign word denotes that it better maintains the expression gathered from the original book since it maintained the form of only one word to convey both the meaning and the characteristic writing style of Lemebel.

Without a doubt, while comparing both translations, it can be said that Chat GPT has exemplified its ability to translate such a complicated text in a way that is easy to understand, preserves the form of the expression, maintains the meaning, and keeps an informal register which is the hallmark of Lemebel’s writing style.

N° 5	Original extract (Lemebel)	English translated extract (Silver)	English translated extract (Chat GPT)
	“Debe ser porque los ricos comen como pájaros, apenas un <b>petibuché</b> , una cagadita de margarina diet en una cáscara de pan sintético”	“It must be because the rich eat like birds, just a few <b>finger foods</b> , <i>whore d’oeuvres</i> , a pat of diet margarine on a crust of synthetic bread.”	“It must be because the rich eat like birds, barely a <b>canapé</b> , a tiny dab of diet margarine on a slice of synthetic bread.”
FE type	noun	Adj. + noun	noun

## 4.2. Variation

According to Hurtado (2001), variation is characterized by the change of linguistic or paralinguistic elements that affect certain features of the linguistic variation (p. 271). This concept sheds light on the fact that language is not static and changes depending on the contexts in which it is used. These changes are depicted in terms of vocabulary, pronunciation, grammar, and syntax, affecting the language in use transversely. On the other hand, Hurtado defines compensation as “Se introduce en otro lugar del texto traducido un elemento de información o efecto estilístico que no se ha podido reflejar en el mismo lugar en que aparece situado en el texto original” (2001, p. 270). In this case, the original expression Lemebel used was “cagadita”, which refers to how little margarine was put in the bread, and this expression is heavily loaded with criticism. It is used offensively towards the hosts of this meal offered to her.

Moreover, the expression *whore d’oeuvres*, proposed by Silver, is analyzed as a mixture of English with *whore*, which is a pejorative and informal way of naming a prostitute, and French with *d’oeuvres*, which forms part of the expression *hors d’oeuvres* that is a small savoury (= not sweet) dish eaten at the start of a meal (*Cambridge Dictionary | English Dictionary, Translations & Thesaurus*, 2024). Having this in mind, it should refer to ephemeral physical relationships before finding a meaningful relationship. Following this line, this expression is a mixture of the metaphor of a short relationship for little food offered and this sexual connotation that is usually portrayed in the writing style of the author throughout the whole book. Taking into account this, the translator tried to maintain the writing style through the use of another French expression to refer to the food served; however, it does not entirely adjust to what the author intended to convey with the original expression since this expression employed by the translator may be slightly ambiguous and

have another meaning besides the one that could be inferred from the context in which the expression appeared, and there is always a possibility in which the reader may misinterpret or misunderstand the intended meaning behind the use of an expression, transforming this election of words in a problematic decision. Furthermore, there is a vulgarization since the introduction of this element that is not present in the original book. It carries a negative connotation that tries to emulate the writing style of the author by doing this compensation.

Alternatively, the proposal of Chat GPT was *a tiny dab*, which the Cambridge Dictionary Online (2024) defined it as “a small amount of a substance.” This definition and expression match almost perfectly the intended meaning of the original Spanish expression given by Lemebel; however, there is a loss of register as the original term expresses criticism through anger towards these appetizers, and this expression is very neutral in this sense.

Nº 6	Original extract (Lemebel)	English translated extract (Silver)	English translated extract (Chat GPT)
	“Debe ser porque los ricos comen como pájaros, apenas un petibuché, una <b>cagadita</b> de margarina diet en una cáscara de pan sintético”	“It must be because the rich eat like birds, just a few finger foods, <b>whore d’oeuvres</b> , a pat of diet margarine on a crust of synthetic bread.”	“It must be because the rich eat like birds, barely a canapé, <b>a tiny dab</b> of diet margarine on a slice of synthetic bread.”
FE type	noun	Adj. + noun	noun

### 4.3. Elision

Hurtado (2001) describes the translation technique of elision as “No se formulan elementos de información en el texto original” (p. 270). Taking into account the original book

by Pedro Lemebel, the expression “a raja suelta” was employed to try to express, while people were sleeping, how unintentionally the snores and farts mentioned in the excerpt were produced. This expression also highlights the register implemented by the author when writing the book, which is a very informal use employed to depict how a day-to-day Chilean Spanish looks like.

When looking at the official translator’s proposal, it can be seen that the expression is entirely omitted in the published version, generating a significant loss in terms of Lemebel’s writing style. In terms of meaning, it could be said that it was preserved and that it did not alter in a substantial way the conveyed meaning of the Spanish version of the book. However, it is an interesting case in terms of wondering why the translator chose this instance to entirely eliminate an expression that could be easily translated with an adverb and not one of the previous instances in which the expression was complicated to find another word or expression that conveyed the same meaning, intention or register of the original.

On the other hand, when looking at the proposal by Chat GPT, it can be seen that it tried to solve the problem by adding the adverb “freely”, which, in terms of meaning, conveys the original one that the author was trying to express through *a raja suelta*. This proves that Chat GPT’s competence in terms of translation could be considered better than the official translator, who could have difficulties in cases like this one in which she did not find a better way to express the intended meaning of the original expression and opted to simply eliminate the expression to affect the meaning as little as possible to not interfere with the reader’s understanding of the text.

This excerpt is one of the best examples of the contrast between Silver and Chat GPT. The fact that Chat GPT did not just eliminate the expression in the same way as the translator shows that AI understands that in a book as *My Tender Matador*, which is written in a

particular language, to understand better the characters and certain situations that are presented in the text, is crucial to maintain both the meaning and, up to a certain point, the writing style and the register behind the simple words written to convey a message. However, it should be noted that, although Chat GPT's translation better conveys the meaning than the published English version of the book, it does not necessarily mean that it is the perfect translation since it is still general, losing to some extent both the sense and the register intended by the author in the original book.

N° 7	Original extract (Lemebel)	English translated extract (Silver)	English translated extract (Chat GPT)
	"(...) cuando el barrio era un orfeón de ronquidos y peos que tronaban <b>a raja suelta</b> la Marsellesa del sueño."	"(...) when the neighborhood was nothing but a chorus of snores and farts:[Ø] sleep's splintered anthem."	"(...) when the neighborhood was an orchestra of snores and farts <b>freely</b> blaring out the Marseillaise of sleep."
FE type	noun + adj	Ø	adv

#### 4.4. Adaptation

According to Hurtado (2001), adaptation occurs when a cultural element is changed for an element suitable for the target language (p. 269). Regarding the first example, the expression "hincha pelotas" could be misspelled in the original version of the book as it should be only one word. Moreover, this expression tries to communicate that this woman, the wife of Augusto Pinochet, is annoying and irritating by simply talking to him. Nonetheless, the published translation of the book adapted the expression into "ball-bashing," which has more of a sexual connotation that could lead to a misinterpretation of the original meaning

behind it since usually this expression is used to refer to someone who enjoys kicking men on their crotch. This may preserve, in a way, the naughty style of writing that Lemebel exhibits throughout the book. Yet, this specific expression does not quite fit the tone of the conversation portrayed in the book at this point, leading to confusion and misunderstanding from the reader. Conversely, Chat GPT’s translation proposed the idiomatic expression of “being a pain in the neck,” which according to the Cambridge Dictionary Online (2024) refers to “someone or something that is very annoying”. This expression's definition better fits the original extract's intended meaning since it refers to the same kind of person.

Furthermore, comparing both translations proposed, it is evident that Chat GPT is the closest to the intended meaning of the original expression, being accurate and competent. This means that it successfully adapts an expression, maintaining the original meaning trying to be conveyed by the author and trying not to alter or disrupt the meaning or register of the translated version of the book. Thus, the book is not misunderstood or problematic in communicating the same message in a foreign language.

N° 8	Original extract (Lemebel)	English translated extract (Silver)	English translated extract (Chat GPT)
	"Gracias. ¡Qué mujer más <b>hincha pelotas!</b> ¿Qué tendría que hablar con él?"	“Thank you. What a <b>ball-bashing</b> woman she is! What could she possibly want with her?”	“Thanks. What a <b>pain in the neck</b> that woman is! What could she possibly need to talk to him about?”
FE type	Adj (Verb + noun)	adj	Idiom (noun)

In regards to the expression “hacerse la loca”, it implies the action of pretending something that is not, in this case, pretending that the main character was a “proper lady” and not just a transvestite. Regarding the published translation, it was adapted into “do your

drag-queen thing,” which does not quite accomplish the communicative purpose of the original expression. This adaptation could be problematic in terms of understanding the intention behind it. To talk about “a drag-queen thing” could be misinterpreted in a bad or pejorative way and does not entirely fit the meaning of pretending to be someone you are not. On the other hand, the translation proposed by Chat GPT with “play along” achieves better the meaning of following the intentions of the character who is talking to the main character, as is defined as “to act as if you agree with something that is happening, esp. if it is something wrong,” communicating better the intended meaning and intention of the original book which was that the main character followed the other character’s ideas. Moreover, using the phrasal verb exacerbates the informal register Lemebel tried to portray in his book, highlighting the use of a more day-to-day language.

N° 9	Original extract (Lemebel)	English translated extract (Silver)	English translated extract (Chat GPT)
	"Pero... Pónetelo, te digo, y <b>hazte la loca.</b> "	"But – I'm telling you, put it on and <b>do your drag-queen thing.</b> "	But... Just put it on, I'm telling you, and <b>play along.</b>
FE type	verb + noun (obj)	verb + adj + noun	Phrasal verb

#### 4.5. Generalisation

Hurtado (2001, p. 270) defined generalisation as “se utiliza un término más general o neutro”. Regarding the example involving “cotorrear”, the verb is defined as “Hablar con exceso y con bullicio” (RAE, 2024). This expression is used in the book as a pejorative way of describing the old ladies that lived near the main character’s house, intending to mean that

these ladies were always talking about everybody that lived on the same block of houses as there and that these talks were not something that should be hidden from the people involved in, but rather as a case of almost feeling the pride of being heard while talking about others.

Having this in consideration, the expression proposed by the official translator “watching” to the original verb; however, this verb does not accomplish the meaning tried to communicate in the original excerpt since it does not even have to do with seeing anything but rather with talking about someone. This translation is highly problematic as the intended meaning by the author was completely different than the one obtained after the translation of the extract was done, changing the understanding of what is happening in this part of the book and the characterization of these ladies the main character is referring to.

Parallel, the translation proposed by Chat GPT was gossiping, which could be seen as a better fit than watching at first, but it does not fulfill the original intention Lemebel tried to capture. The term gossiping is more related to talking, but secretly or behind someone’s back, while *cotorrear* still intends not to be afraid of being listened to while talking too much about someone. Although this could affect the understanding of the sentence since it slightly changes the meaning, it is still better than the translation proposed by Silver, which mixes up the actions done by the ladies.

When comparing both translations, Chat GPT has undoubtedly portrayed a better accuracy and, as a result, a better competence than the translator since it goes beyond the simple words and, in a way, enquires into the meaning behind the expressions given. This leads the AI to find better matches to the Spanish expressions in English, trying to maintain as well as possible the meaning intended by the author, besides the informal writing style depicted throughout the book.

N° 10	Original extract (Lemebel)	English translated extract (Silver)	English translated extract (Chat GPT)
	"(...) y se lo pasan todo el día en la esquina, <b>cotorreando</b> , sapeando quién entra y quién sale de mi casa."	"(...) who spend their whole day hanging around <b>watching</b> everybody, spying on everybody who goes in and out of my house."	"(...) and spend all day on the corner <b>gossiping</b> , snooping on who goes in and out of my house."
FE type	verb	verb	verb

Finally, regarding the noun *chifladura* is defined by DRAE as “manía (preocupación extravagante)” (RAE, 2024). This noun was used by the author to describe the character’s fixation over her own feelings towards Carlos because, as she herself says in the extract, she was overthinking the situation as she was deeply in love with him. This word emphasizes the foolishness of the character’s thoughts regarding the topic, showing how imaginary these were.

On the other hand, with Silver’s proposal, it can be seen that this Spanish word was simply reduced to the concept of *fantasies*, which the Cambridge Dictionary Online (2024) defines as “a pleasant situation that you enjoy thinking about but is unlikely to happen, or the activity of imagining things like this.” This definition does not entirely match the original word’s meaning, but only partially, since it does not include the fact that the word was used to depict how ridiculous the main character's thoughts were. Including a more general term to refer to this specific concept implies a loss in terms of the pragmatic meaning beyond the simple wording of the sentence.

Parallely, the proposal done by Chat GPT opted for *craziness*, which, again, the Cambridge Dictionary defined as “stupid and unreasonable behavior, speech, situations, etc.”

This definition, in contrast to *fantasies*, does include the fact that the character's thoughts are not reasonable, and it does not have any basis to be supported. The use of this word, which implies the unreasonable idea of the main character, can be considered a better match for the original word, conveying both the meaning and the intention behind the use of *chifladura*.

Moreover, when comparing both translations of the same extract, the proposal done by Chat GPT achieves a better understanding of the text from the part of the reader, avoiding the generalization of terms as well as the ambiguity of ideas. In addition, the word proposed by the AI conveys the author's pragmatic intention by using the word *chifladura* in the original book, transferring the meaning of the extract almost intact to the target language. Nevertheless, when looking at the translation done by Silver, the proposal could be more problematic as it generalizes the concept employed by Lemebel and needs to maintain the intention and register of the book, also changing his writing style.

N° 11	Original extract (Lemebel)	English translated extract (Silver)	English translated extract (Chat GPT)
	"El resto eran sus propias películas, su <b>chifladura</b> , de maricón enamorado."	"Everything else was a movie that played in her own head, the <b>fantasies</b> of a smitten sissy."	"The rest was just his own fantasies, the <b>craziness</b> of a lovesick fool."
FE type	noun	noun	noun

#### 4.6. Literal Translation

According to Hurtado (2001), the literal translation is, in simple terms, a translation of an expression or syntagma done word by word. The first example of literal translation is the

case of “chiquero inmundo” which refers to a dirty place that resembles where pigs are kept. In the original book, the expression describes how disorganized and untidy the main character's house was.

The proposal done by both the official translator and Chat GPT was “filthy pigsty” used to refer to a place that evokes the same energy as the place in which pigs are kept, which is the literal translation of *chiquero inmundo*. The English expression maintained the same intention, register, and meaning as the original expression, as it is not always true for literal translations. In terms of accuracy, both the translator and Chat GPT demonstrated a great level of accuracy by selecting this expression that accomplishes all the requirements to be considered a good translation of the selected excerpt of the book.

N° 12	Original extract (Lemebel)	English translated extract (Silver)	English translated extract (Chat GPT)
	"¿Y si yo no estuviera?, esto sería un <b>chiquero inmundo</b> , rezongó tomando la almohada aún tibia que sostuvo su cabeza."	"And if I wasn't here? This would be a <b>filthy pigsty</b> , she griped, as she picked up the still-warm pillow where he had laid his head."	"If I weren't here, this place would be a <b>filthy pigsty</b> ," she grumbled, picking up the still-warm pillow that had cradled his head."
FE type	noun + adj	adj + noun	adj + noun

In regards to the next expression, “país de lauchas”, the context in which the expression was used sheds light on the fact that the intended meaning behind this saying is to refer to people in a way that demolishes their understanding, making a metaphor regarding how small and afraid these people could be. Having this in mind, it can be seen that the published translation opted for literally translating word by word the original expression as “country of mice,” which, to a certain extent, makes me wonder whether an English speaker

would understand what the author referred to when talking about a “country of mice.” To a certain point, this translation conceals some ambiguity regarding the actual intention with which this expression was used. It could also be interpreted as referring to a country so poor that rats are everywhere. The literal translation of this expression is highly problematic in terms of meaning for an English reader who does not have the original book to contrast and understand why the translator chose that particular expression over another one.

Nonetheless, Chat GPT’s proposal of the expression is “country full of nobodies” basically paraphrasing what Lemebel intended to communicate when describing Chile in that way. Although this translation could be considered an actual description of what was intended with the expression, it makes clear the point that the author tried to depict in the book. In this sense, Chat GPT certainly has better accuracy and understanding of what the expression means and what intention was put in the excerpt, showing its translation competence.

Comparing both translation proposals for this extract, it could be concluded that translating the expression does not work in every case of fixed expression used by Pedro Lemebel in his book. Furthermore, the use of descriptions, as in this case with Chat GPT, exhibits the complexity of Chilean Spanish and the register used in day-to-day interaction.

N° 13	Original extract (Lemebel)	English translated extract (Silver)	English translated extract (Chat GPT)
	"Corte eso, que en este <b>país de lauchas</b> nadie se atrevería a cruzarse en mi camino, le ordenó al chofer."	"Turn it off; in this <b>country of mice</b> nobody would dare get in my way, he ordered the chauffeur."	"Cut it out; in this <b>country full of nobodies</b> , no one would dare get in my way," he ordered the driver."
FE type	noun + adj	noun + prep + noun	noun + adj + prep + noun

Finally, regarding the expression *mojarse el poto* DRAE defines a similar expression (*mojarse alguien el culo*) as taking the risk of doing something (RAE, 2024). However, this definition of the expression is the figurative use of it, and in the context in which it is used in the book, it has more of a literal meaning, which is to wet one's bottom. This was mainly used as an informal way of describing how the character of Lucia, or Pincohet's wife, is referring to the poor people, emphasizing how accustomed they are to having fun and relaxing in a way that, she thinks, is bad taste and lacks elegance or fineness.

Chat GPT made the proposal done by Silver as well as the one that used a literal translation of the expression that turned *mojarse el poto* into *dip their butts*, which does not exist in English, but it accomplishes the intended meaning as the expression was used in the meaning that can be easily understood. This specific case exemplifies how the figurative meaning of the language challenges the translation competence of both proposals, determining whether the traditional translator or Chat GPT performs better, being the latter the one that often obtains the best results and matches.

N° 14	Original extract (Lemebel)	English translated extract (Silver)	English translated extract (Chat GPT)
	"(...) una tropa de pobres que se toman la micro los domingos para <b>mojarse el poto</b> en ese río."	"(...) regiments of poor people pile onto buses so they can <b>dip their butts</b> in their river."	"(...) a bunch of poor folks taking the bus on Sundays <b>to dip their butts</b> in that river."
FE type	verb + noun (obj)	verb + noun	verb + noun

#### 4.7. Amplification

Hurtado (2001) distinguishes this category from linguistic amplification and defines it as putting information that was not part of the original text in the translated version (p. 269). Regarding the expression *jubiladas del patín*, in this context, it is used to refer to these two ladies who are described as “retired from the skate” in the sense of being out of the street where they used to work. In this sense, it is a kind of euphemism to refer to having retired from being a sexual worker.

The first proposal of translation, done by Silver, is interesting in terms of added information since it was translated as *retired from the street but still in the market*, and this, besides simply being a description of what the original expression intended to mean, possesses a contradiction within the expression itself. On the one hand, the character is saying that these ladies are retired, but on the other hand, she emphasizes that although they may be retired, they are still available to work in some way. This contradiction proposes a critical communication issue since the expression may be open to interpretation, and in this process, the reader may get lost or misunderstand what is being said behind this expression. In other words, it adds another, even contradictory, meaning, which was not part of the original intended meaning Lemebel tried to convey in the first place.

Alternatively, the translation proposed by Chat GPT is undoubtedly a more concise and closer translation to the original expression. The AI translated this as *retired from the scene*, conveying almost the same meaning that Lemebel conveyed in the Spanish version of the book. However, this expression is not the same as in Spanish since it is usually used in terms of being out of the public eye for a while, especially for famous people. However, it

accomplishes the intended purpose of establishing that these ladies are retired from their jobs. What is not entirely achieved is the informal register and playfulness of Lemebel’s writing style since this expression is neither well-known nor playful, losing certain aspects of the original text.

Comparing both translations, Silver’s and Chat GPT’s proposals, it can be seen that although neither of them is perfect in terms of either register or meaning, the AI’s translation keeps being the best of the two in terms of conveying the message the author intended to mean, showing the incredible competence a tool like this one could accomplish.

N° 15	Original extract (Lemebel)	English translated extract (Silver)	English translated extract (Chat GPT)
	"(...) la casa donde aguardaban tejiendo la Fabiola y la Rana, las dos viejas colizas <b>jubiladas del patín.</b> "	"(...) to the house where Fabiola and Rana would be waiting, knitting, two queens <b>retired from the street but still in the market.</b> "	"(...) to the house where Fabiola and Rana waited, knitting—the two old ladies, <b>retired from the scene.</b> "
FE type	adj + prep + noun	verb + prep + noun (conj + adv + prep + noun)	verb + prep + noun

Closing, and regarding the next example, the word *pilcha* appeared to refer to clothes that the main character could wear, following the line of the definition proposed by DRAE, which is “Prenda de vestir, particularmente si es elegante y cara” (RAE, 2024). In this context, the concept is an umbrella term for any clothes. This word, which comes from the Mapudungun, depicts how Lemebel expresses his writing style through minimal details, denoting a certain register and day-to-day language so characteristic of this book.

The first translation, proposed by Silver, chose to describe the intended meaning of the original book in a way that sounded natural so that the reader could understand what was

being said at that point in the book. However, this, in a way, adds new information which was not present in the word *pilcha*, since it is inevitably as the word turned into an action. This transformation that the word suffered directly impacts the register the author tried to maintain throughout the book since the original exemplified the character's playfulness by using this very informal concept to refer to the concept of clothes, generating a variation in writing style as well.

On the contrary, the proposal by Chat GPT directly included the word *clothes*, which is close to the definition given by DRAE. However, it eliminated the description of it as luxurious or expensive. In terms of meaning, the proposal provided by Chat GPT accomplishes passing the original meaning in a way that the reader can easily understand it; however, it still lacks the same tone or registers the author employed in the book, also having a loss in terms of writing style.

When comparing both translations, it is likely that both Chat GPT and Silver successfully fulfilled the intended meaning of the original excerpt, making the understanding of it easy and unambiguous. Nonetheless, it is essential to note that both translations represent a loss in terms of the register or the playfulness that characterizes these characters, making them at least problematic to a certain extent.

Nº 16	Original extract (Lemebel)	English translated extract (Silver)	English translated extract (Chat GPT)
	"Uno no sabe qué <b>pilcha</b> ponerse para estar de acuerdo con esta cambiante media estación."	"How can one possibly know <b>how to dress</b> for this ever-changing climate?"	"You never know what <b>clothes</b> to put on to match this fickle in-between season."
FE type	noun	verb + verb	noun

## 5. DISCUSSION

Based on the data analysis previously discussed, Chat GPT showed an undoubtedly positive response to the text excerpts proposed, translating them more accurately than the official translator herself most of the time. Having in mind the fact that Chat GPT is a great language corpus, it could be assumed that it would follow a linguist criterion of the translation; however, it tries to avoid at all costs the literal translation of the expressions presented, but it also avoids the free translation of such instances. Remarkably, it understands what translation is as it is currently conceived as a communicative act, which generates its proposals to adjust to this conception of translation as a communicative act. This is relevant when comparing this tool to other kinds of technologies applied to translation as it is the case of Google Translator, which is unable to detect, for example, certain elements that are relevant in terms of the communicative context; Chat GPT goes a step further and understands these elements, making it able identify and to maintain the intention of the author in the original text.

It would be important to remark on the fact that the book with which this investigation is working a published translated version that has been around long enough to be able to be found freely on the internet. This could affect the action of Chat GPT since, as it is based on existing material on the internet, the AI could have a previous experience or database regarding this specific book, either the same examples or very similar to the ones presented in this investigation. Nonetheless, the book *Tengo Miedo Torero* is characterized by a Chilean norm of Spanish, which differs from the Standard use of the language; this impacts the fact that the register exhibited in the book is hardly ever seen in a writing form but mostly in oral interactions.

In certain instances, it was proved that the AI, although portraying an incredible understanding of the expressions, still needs human supervision to obtain the perfect or most accurate translation possible to convey the intended meaning behind the expressions. Regarding that last point, it has been proved that Chat GPT was used to try to maintain the intended meaning the author tried to convey, usually in a better way than Silver, who had some issues regarding ambiguity and accuracy in certain expressions.

Moreover, there is no correlation between the type of fixed expression and the translation technique used by the translator or the AI. Following that line, both Chat GPT and Silver translations were accomplished mainly through adaptation but mostly through equivalence, which is not rare since these techniques help us understand the translation process as a communicative act. What is important to note is the fact that Chat GPT can identify these techniques to use them to convey the meaning of the original text in the English translation and tries to avoid other techniques, such as the literal translation or borrowings, since it detects that these uses would not convey the exact meaning proposed by the author and that they would deform the translation in different ways. For instance, in the example of *petibuché*, in Spanish, Chat GPT's solution to this case is closer to the original one with *canapé*, rather than the solution proposed by Silver, which employed a compensation and borrowing to try to maintain the intention and the register or create the same effect generated in the original text. In that sense, the AI is closer to the original in linguistic and communicative terms than the human translator, who overloaded the text by using this compensation, using two different structures to a single word. Chat GPT transfers almost the same word from the original using a single word, *canapé*, which also comes from French, generating the same effect as the original excerpt.

Chat GPT was the one that used the most equivalences concerning the published translation, which is an essential difference between the two translations proposed. However, the AI does possess great competence in translating problematic expressions of the Spanish language, but it does not always provide the most accurate in terms of the register of the voices in the book.

Furthermore, regarding the fixed expressions' structure, there was no significant difference besides the typical syntax incongruencies between languages, as in the case of English and Spanish, regarding pre-modifications. In terms of translation techniques, the only instances in which the wording of the sentences was relevant were the cases of amplification and elision that, for the nature of the technique itself, altered the syntactic structure of the sentences.

Finally, besides simply analyzing the fixed expressions that are part of the book, this investigation proposed analyzing them in context, which in this particular book tries to imitate an oral context since Lemebel wrote this novel based on an oral register of the language. In this sense, it is worth mentioning that when translating text from English into Spanish or simply when an author is writing a novel, they usually use the standard version of the language, and Chat GPT, in this case, can identify the peculiarities of Chilean Spanish. Although it does not translate certain expressions presented to it, basically because it is impossible to do so, its solutions in either way try to get closer to the context, register, tone, and meaning of the original language. Even though the human translator tried to highlight this language component, the translation was sometimes too standardized, or it did not adjust to Chilean Spanish by using standard English to translate, losing hints relevant to the original text. On the other hand, Chat GPT can detect the Chilean Spanish variety, despite being singularised, by analyzing solutions in the English language that, somehow being part of this

standard English, tried to get closer to the idea proposed in Chilean Spanish. Viewed in this way, when the translation proposed by Chat GPT is read, the reader is getting closer to a text that allows them to see characteristics typical of Chilean Spanish that the translation by Silver does not necessarily expose. Some solutions try to maintain the same register and tone despite not being a match.

## **6. CONCLUSIONS AND PROJECTIONS**

This research aimed to determine the efficiency with which Chat GPT translated fixed expressions of the Chilean book *Tengo Miedo Torero* by Pedro Lemebel. As a way of organizing the analysis, it was considered essential to do a review of the theoretical and methodological forms proposed by different authors as a way of guiding the research as well as establishing the definitions of key concepts regarding the translation studies and techniques used to this process, along with multiple and relevant aspects of the description of translation competence.

First, a review of the process of literary translation was carried out to display the different aspects in which this kind of translation poses a challenge to the translator. Following this investigation's nature and main focus, we adhere to the communicative approach to translation. Following on, we introduced the concept of translation problem, highlighting the importance of the culture linked to the text in the source language, emphasizing the importance of understanding the original intention and meaning of the text to transfer it as intact as possible to the target language. Moreover, I enquired into the CEFR and the concept of mediation, which deals with language proficiency and interaction in a sociolinguistic context, as well as the PETRA-E Network that tries to determine the skills and knowledge a translator must be able to perform to accomplish an accurate literary translation.

From here, the concept of intercultural communicative competence emerges, which is similar to the concept of mediation and focuses on the interaction between people and how they should acquire intercultural abilities and competencies to avoid problems in communication.

Secondly, the concept of fixed expressions was explored, considering previous studies that used other terms to refer to the same expressions and explaining why these concepts may result in problematic approaches. As a result, we followed the definition and classification of fixed expressions done by Corpas Pastor (1996).

Thirdly, we looked into Chat GPT, defining it as a large language corpus and emphasizing its limitations. Additionally, it was added to the previous studies in which Chat GPT was used to translate texts to obtain prior information regarding the field.

Regarding the methodology employed in this investigation, an empirical and qualitative approach was used to establish the relationship between the translation technique and the translation competence portrayed by both the translator and the AI.

Analyzing both translations proposed to the original book made it possible to identify the techniques Silver and Chat GPT used. The conclusions revealed that, when faced with the same text excerpt, each translation's choice of the translation technique varied in most cases. When solving a translation problem, the translators must correspond to the register and intention the author intended in the original book. In this research, based on the analysis carried out, Katherine Silver, who is the translator of the English-published version of the book, most frequently used the following techniques to solve translation problems: Equivalence, Adaptation, Literal translation, Generalisation, Amplification, Omission, Variation, and Dissolution. On the other hand, Chat GPT used two main techniques to solve the translation problems faced: Adaptation and equality.

Considering the results previously discussed, it can be observed that both translators only coincided with the equivalence and adaptation techniques. Silver used the equivalence more frequently, as did Chat GPT; however, the latter used this specific technique three times more to solve the translations. Considering this, the technique used by both translators contributes to language competence. Regarding literary-cultural competence, Chat GPT better understood the expression in context to maintain the excerpt's meaning and register as intact as possible, considering that translating a text already provokes an inevitable difference. On the whole, Chat GPT can be considered an accurate tool for translating texts that correspond to a Chilean variety of Spanish, trying to maintain the same tone, register, and meaning in the English version of the text. Moreover, the expressions transferred into English by Chat GPT were a better equivalent of the original than the proposed translation by Silver most of the time, supported by the fact that the AI used the equivalence technique in almost every case presented to it, contrasted to Silver that struggled to use this technique.

Regarding the limitations of this present study, the analysis mainly focused on certain expressions that are part of the original book. This is because the whole book had several instances of these expressions per page, becoming something that did not fit the extension of this study. Considering this limitation, it would be possible to extend the sphere in which this study is working by analyzing these concepts and instances throughout the whole book, recovering all the expressions that are present in the book by Lemebel, as well as extending this research to other novels by the same author or even other authors belonging to the same register or style that is so characteristic and interesting to this field of translation and translation problems.

Finally, although Chat GPT proposes viable solutions to the process of translation, surprisingly considering it with a communicative approach, it must not be forgotten that the

work done by a human translator goes beyond the simple fact of transferring one text from one language to another, and it deals with a process of connecting two realities and cultures that might be far away from one another, sometimes even putting their own touch in the texts they work on.

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