

## ORALITY IN TRANSLATION: LITERARY DIALECT FROM ENGLISH INTO SPANISH AND CATALAN\*

MILTON M. AZEVEDO

mazevedo@socrates.berkeley.edu

*University of California, Berkeley*

**Resum.** **Oralitat en la traducció. El dialecte literari de l'anglès a l'espanyol i al català.** Els textos de ficció que representen la parla no estàndar mitjançant un dialecte literari plantegen problemes interessants de traducció. Tot i que la traducció, a més de captar el significat cognitiu, hauria de representar els contrastos entre aquell dialecte literari i l'estàndar, no sempre la llengua meta disposa d'unes varietats no estàndar aptes per a assolir aquella representació. Per tant, la traducció ha de plasmar-se en un nou dialecte literari, organitzat en base a elements dialectals de la llengua meta, per tal de captar les connotacions –regionals, socials, o individuals– que, en l'original, contribueixen a la definició dels personatges i les relacions socials entre ells. S'analitzen diversos exemples de dialecte literari (*Huckleberry Finn*, *A Clockwork Orange*, *For Whom the Bell Tolls*) i es comenten aspectes de la seva traducció al català i al castellà.

**Paraules clau:** Traducció, dialecte literari, anglès, espanyol, català, realçament.

**Abstract.** Fiction prose texts that represent nonstandard speech by means of a literary dialect involve interesting translation problems. Although translation, besides capturing cognitive meaning, should represent the contrasts obtaining between that literary dialect and the standard language, the target language does not always have capable of achieving such representation. Thus translation has to embody a new literary dialect, set up on dialectal elements from the target language, in order to capture the connotations –regional, social, or individual– which, in the original, contribute to define the characters and the social relations among them. Several examples of literary dialect (*Huckleberry Finn*, *A Clockwork Orange*, *For Whom the Bell Tolls*) are analyzed and aspects of their translation into Catalan and Spanish are commented upon.

**Key words:** Translation, literary dialect, English, Spanish, Catalan, foregrounding.

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The use of nonstandard language in fictional dialogues raises interesting issues for the theory and practice of translation. One such issue is that translation should not only capture cognitive meaning but also represent, or at least suggest, the standard vs. dialect contrasts present in the original. This goal is made more difficult by the circumstance that fictional conversations are not real speech, standard or otherwise, but rather a stylistic artifact that emulates it. Although the different varieties of a language merge in a continuum where boundaries are affected by users' intentions, we can distinguish between a generic standard, used for general informative purposes, and a more specialized code—the literary language—used for writing fiction. Speech may be represented in a variety of ways, ranging from adherence to formal varieties of the literary language to ways of evoking orality through manipulation of elements borrowed from different nonstandard varieties in order to add a touch of realism to the representation of different voices.

Partly because a standard language results from a process of linguistic design—carried out by authors, editors, or language academies—, denotative and connotative correspondence between two standard languages is usually close enough to facilitate translatability between them. Likewise, translating a text built on a specific nonstandard variety would be effectively accomplished by using a nonstandard variety in the target language that would allow the same type of connotational marking. In practice, however, nonstandard varieties tend to encode social or regional connotations that do not necessarily have one-to-one homologs in the nonstandard varieties of other languages. This lack of correspondence is likely to be a formidable obstacle that forces the translator to choose between two options.

One solution is to avoid the problem by ignoring the dialect used in the original and employing the standard variety of the target language. The other approach is to represent nonstandard speech by means of what Sumner Ives [4, p. 146] characterized as a literary dialect, that is, a stylized representation of speech by means of nonstandard, regional, social, or even individual features. Literary dialect emulates speech by combining a few salient features to suggest a way of talking considered deviant in relation to an accepted standard. In so doing it foregrounds<sup>1</sup> the voices of certain characters, contrasting them with the speech of others, or with the narrator's voice, or even with the reader's own voice, taken as an implicit point of reference. Thus dialect pronunciation may be represented by quasi-phonetic spelling, as in G.

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<sup>1</sup>As used in the Prague School tradition, *foregrounding* refers to the use of an intentionally deviant language form, for the purpose of calling readers' attention to something that the form in question represents. See Leech and Short [7], Leech [6], and Chapman [2].

B. Shaw's rendering of Eliza Doolittle's Cockney talk: "*Cheer ap, Keptin; n' baw ya flahr orf a por gel*". Nonstandard morphosyntax appears *Pygmalion* in constructions like *Her that* [for *she who*] *turned me out was my sixth step-mother* (22); *you and me is* [for *you and I are*] *men of the world* (34), and so on<sup>2</sup>.

As a device for miming speech, literary dialect captures aspects of language variation that could hardly be conveyed by a homogeneous literary standard. Its success depends largely on the readers' ability both to understand the speech thus represented and to appreciate the motivation for using it. As it exists in function of the fictional microcosm created by the writer, literary dialect has to be plausible even if somewhat stereotyped<sup>3</sup>. Also, it has to be easily recognizable, if it is to function optimally as a marked code that challenges readers, without overtaxing them, to interpret the connotations of the linguistic behavior depicted.

Thus a translator has to seek cross-language or cross-dialect equivalencies, even though scholars have yet to reach a consensus on this concept. Some theorists, such as Snell-Hornby [10, 11], question the suitability of cross-dialect equivalency for a theory of literary translation. Others—perhaps more pragmatically than theoretically—maintain that such equivalencies do exist and justify using certain dialects for translating specific texts written in nonstandard language. Wekker & Wekker, for example, have argued for using Surinamese Dutch—a nonstandard variety of Dutch heavily influenced by vernacular languages spoken in Suriname—as an appropriate medium for translating Alice Walker's novel, *The Color Purple*, where Black English Vernacular (BEV) is used<sup>4</sup>. Since those two vernaculars share linguistic and sociocultural features, Surinamese Dutch would be "a more suitable language variety than GD [general, or standard Dutch] for the translation of BEV [Black English Vernacular] on both linguistic and socio-cultural grounds" (Wekker &

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<sup>2</sup>"Cheer up, Captain; and buy a flower off a poor girl." G. B. Shaw, *Pygmalion*. New York: Signet Books USA, Inc., 1975, p.7. Respelling sometimes involves eye dialect, that is, spelling modified to suggest a supposedly nonstandard pronunciation that turns out to be the usual pronunciation of the word in question, as in *fer*, *wuz*, *wimmin* instead of *for*, *was*, *women*.

<sup>3</sup>See Traugott and Pratt [12, p. 338 ff.] and Furbank [3].

<sup>4</sup>Black English Vernacular is a term for the variety of English spoken by many, though by no means all, individuals of sub-Saharan ancestry born and raised in the United States, which over the years has been variously called Black English, Black English Vernacular, Black American English, Black American English Vernacular, Afro-American English, Afro-American English Vernacular, or, most recently, African American Vernacular English.

Wekker [13, p. 236]). It should be easier to find translation equivalencies between the two vernaculars than between BEV and standard Dutch, and thus preserve the coherence between language and culture conveyed by the discourse of BEV-speaking characters.

Denotative meaning and certain speech features, such as the deictic references or the affirmative or interrogative orientation of sentences, tend to be preserved when a nonstandard text is rewritten as standard, e.g., *It's aw rawt: e's a gentleman: look at his be-oots (Pygmalion, 7) → It's all right. He's a gentleman: look at his boots*, or when it is translated into another standard language: *Pero si no pasa nada: él es un caballero: mirad sus zapatos*. Translation into another nonstandard variety, however, does not necessarily capture the connotations of the original. Consider, for example, the following version into vernacular Spanish: *Pero si no pasa ná, ér eh un cabayero, bata con vé suh zapato*. Cognitive meaning is preserved, but the point is that the relationship between this version and standard Spanish is not the same as between Cockney and standard English. While both are nonstandard, the Spanish version is a generic literary dialect built on some common vernacular features found in popular Spanish. Among these we find *yeísmo*, which in any case is the norm in most of the Spanish-speaking world (*caballero* → *cabayero*); aspiration or loss of implosive /s/ (*es* → *eh*; *basta* → *bata*, *zapatos* → *zapato*); loss of intervocalic /d/ (*nada* → *nâ*); loss of a final /r/ (*ver* → *vê*); rhotacism (*él* → *ér*). Shaw's character's speech, on the contrary, is that of a specific social group from a definite region. The vernacular Spanish representation may do as a generic translation equivalent, but something will be missing.

The target literary dialect may be a composite of standard and nonstandard elements, regardless of whether these co-occur in the actual speech of any particular region or social group. This was the solution adopted by G. Meo-Zilio in his translation of José Hernández's gaucho epic, *Martín Fierro*. He justifies his use of colloquial Italian –“the national language commonly spoken by Italians, with its dialectal substract”– as a translation equivalent of the rural speech of the narrator-protagonist because that variety allowed him to “approximate a colloquial style like that of *Martín Fierro*, precisely because that dialect [colloquial Italian] is richer in popular elements, more picturesque and relaxed, just like the gaucho dialect [...] an Italic *koiné* [...] that includes [...] dialectalisms, vulgarisms, and slang expressions [...] that all Italians can understand nowadays” [9, p. 275]<sup>5</sup>. A stanza illustrates his

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<sup>5</sup>“la lengua nacional comúnmente hablada por los italianos con su substrato dialectal [...]

approach (italics as in the original):

Cuando me vido acercar:	Al vederme avvicinare:
– “¿ <i>Quién vivore?</i> ” –preguntó;	“ <i>Arto là!</i> ” quello gridò;
– “¿ <i>Qué viboras!</i> ” –dije yo;	“ <i>Quale arto?</i> ”, gli risposi.
– “¿ <i>Haga arto!</i> ” –me pegó el grito,	“ <i>Chi va accà?</i> ” gridò di nuovo;
y yo dije despacito:	sottovoce replicai:
– “ <i>Más lagarto serás vos</i> ”.	“ <i>Sarà vacca tua sorella!</i> ”.

(José Hernández, *Martín Fierro*, verses 859–864; Meo-Zilio [9, p. 280–281])

Thus a literary dialect can be used in translation to remedy the lack of direct, one-to-one correspondence between the nonstandard speech of the original and the target language. Just as an author exploits the language’s latent possibilities to achieve the desired impression of orality, a translator strives to preserve the tension that the original text establishes between the reader and the *other* represented by the characters using the dialect.

Certain literary dialects are constructed like a frame where nonstandard forms are inserted, as illustrated by the first paragraph of Anthony Burgess’s *Clockwork Orange*, which we will compare to the Catalan and Spanish translations<sup>6</sup>.

There was me, that is Alex, and my three *droogs* [...] and we sat in the Korova *Milkbar* making up our *rassoodocks* what to do with the evening [...] The Korova *Milkbar* was a milk-plus *mesto*, and you may [...] have forgotten what these *mestos* were like, things changing so *skirry* these days [...] They had no licence for selling liquor, but there was no law yet against prodding some of the new *vesches* which they used to put into the old *moloko*, so you could peet it with *vellocet* or *synthemesc* or *drencrom* or one or two other *vesches* which would give you a nice quiet *horrorshow* fifteen minutes admiring *Bog* And All His Holy Angels and Saints in your left shoe with lights bursting all over your *mozg*. Or you could *peet* milk with knives in it, as we used to say, and this would sharpen

*Cat.*: Érem jo, l’Alex, i els meus tres *droogs* [...] i seiem al Korova *Milkbar*, esprement-nos els *rassudoocs* per veure què fariem aquell vespre [...] El Korova *Milkbar* era un *mesto* en el qual servien *moloca-plus*, i potser vosaltres [...] heu oblidat com eren aquests *mestos*, car les coses canvien molt *escorri* avui dia [...] No tenien permís per vendre licor; però aleshores encara no hi havia cap llei que prohibís les noves *vestzes* que solien barrejar amb l’antiga *moloca*, de manera que un podia *pitejar-la* amb *velocet* o *shintimesc* o *drencrom* o un parell de *vestzes* més que et proporcionaven ben bé uns bons, tranquils i *horrorousos* quinze minuts admirant *Bog* i la seva cort de sants i d’Àngels Celestials a la sabata esquerra, mentre tot

*Sp.*: Estábamos yo, Alex, y mis tres *drugos* [...] sentados en el bar *lácteo Korova*, exprimiéndonos los *rassudoques* y decidiendo qué podríamos hacer esa noche [...] El bar *lácteo Korova* era un *mesto* donde servía *leche-plus*, y quizá ustedes [...] han olvidado cómo eran esos *mestos*, pues las cosas cambian tan *acorro* en estos días [...] No tenían permiso para vender alcohol, pero en ese tiempo no había ninguna ley que prohibiese las nuevas *vesches* que acostumbraban a meter en el viejo *moloco*, de modo que se podía *pitear*lo con *velocet* o *synthemesc* o *drencrom* o una o dos *vesches* más que te daban unos buenos, tranquilos y *jorroschós* quince minutos admirando a *Bogo* y el Coro Celestial de Angeles y Santos en el

[en su] nivel familiar [...] más libre, menos cuidado [...] más rico en elementos populares, más pintoresco y despreocupado, justamente como lo es el gauchesco. En fin, una especie de *koimé* itálica [...] que incorpora, naturalmente, unos cuantos dialectalismos, vulgarismos, jergalismos ya difundidos en la Península y que todos los italianos [...] están en condiciones de comprender [...]” (The translation is mine.)

<sup>6</sup>Anthony Burgess, *A Clockwork Orange*. New York: W. W. Norton & Co., 1962. *La taronja mecànica*. Tr. by Jordi Arbonès. Barcelona: Edicions Proa, 1983. *La naranja mecànica*. Tr. by Anibal Leal. México: Hermes/Minotauro, 1987.

you up and make you ready  
for a bit of dirty twenty-to-one,  
and that was what we were  
*peeing* this evening I'm  
starting off the story with.

de llums esclataven dins el  
teu *mosc*. O bé podies pitejar  
llet amb ganivets, com en  
dèiem nosaltres, i això  
t'esmolava i et posava a to  
per encara aquella porqueria  
de la una-menys-vint, i això  
era el que estàvem *pitejant*  
aquell vespre amb què  
enceto la meua història.

zapato izquierdo, mientras las  
luces te estallaban en el  
*mosco*. O podías *pitear*  
leche con cuchillos como  
decíamos, que te avivaba y  
preparaba para una piojosa  
una-menos-veinte, y eso era  
lo que estábamos *piteando*  
la noche que empieza mi  
historia.

As in any translation, some solutions are open to discussion. Is it preferable to retain the word *milkbar*, as in the Catalan, or to use a calque such as *bar lácteo* as in the Spanish? Is *horrowshow* more aptly rendered by the easily recognizable *horrouxous* or by the more innovative *jorochós*? Whatever our choice, it is apparent that this is a lexicon-based literary dialect where syntax presents no special problems. Furthermore, since lexical variation does not correspond to the formal/informal dimension of register, the relationship between a given item in the original and its translation is essentially cognitive and thus likely to be relatively straightforward.

Things are more complex in the case of nonstandard lexical items for which one-to-one translations are not immediately available. In the following passage from Umberto Eco's novel, *Il nome della rosa*, lay brother Salvatore is characterized by a macaronic talk made up of Latin and Romance vernacular, which the narrator compares to "the babelic language of the first day after divine punishment, the language of primeval confusion"(54). Though idiosyncratic as it is, this Jabberwocky-like parody is a meaningful literary dialect that poses a challenge for translators (*italics are mine*)<sup>7</sup>:

1. *It.*: Penitenziagite! Vide quando draco venturus est a rodegarla l'anima tua! La mortz est super nos! Prega che vene lo papa santo a liberar nos a malo de todas le peccata! Ah ah, ve piase ista negromanzia de Domini Nostri Iesu Christi! Et anco jois m'es dols e plazer m'es dolors... Cave el diabolo! Semper m'aguaita in qualche canto per adentarme le carcagna. Ma Salvatore non est insipiens! Bonum monasterium, et aqui se magna et se priega dominum nostrum. Et el resto valet un figo seco. Et amen. No?
2. *Cat.*: Penitenciàgite! Vide *quan* draco venturus est a rodegar-la l'ànima *teva*! La mortz est super nos! Prega que *venga* lo papa sant a *alliberar* nos a malo de todas les peccata! Ah, ah, *vos platz* ista *nigromància* de Domini Nostri Iesu Christi! Et *àdhuc* jois *m'és dols* e plazer *m'és* dolors... Cave *il dimoni*! Semper

<sup>7</sup>Umberto Eco, *Il nome della rosa*. Milano: Bonpiani, 1983, 54; *El nom de la rosa*. Tr. Josep Daurella. Barcelona: Ediciones Destino, 1985, p. 54; *El nombre de la rosa*. Tr. Ricardo Pochtar, 10th ed., Barcelona: Editorial Lumen, 1985, p. 60; *The Name of the Rose*. Tr. William Weaver. San Diego: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1983, p. 46.

*mi insidia en qualque cantó per queixalar-me los garrons. Però Salvatore non est insipiens! Bonum monasterium, et aici si magna et si prega dominum nostrum. Et il resto valet un figo seco. Et amen. Oi?*

3. *Sp.:* Penitenziagite! Vide cuando draco venturus est a rodegarla *el alma tuya!* La mortz est super nos! *Ruega* que *vinga* lo papa santo a liberar nos a malo de *tutte las peccata!* Ah ah, *vos pladse* ista negromanzia de Domini Nostri Jesu Christi! Et *mesmo* jois m'es dols *y plazer* m'es dolors... Cave el diablo! Semper m'aguaita *en algún* canto per adentarme *las tobillas.* ¡Pero Salvatore non est insipiens! Bonum monasterium, et aqui se magna et *si ruega* dominum *nostrum.* Et il resto valet un figo seco. Et amen. No?
4. *Eng.:* Penitenziagite! *Watch out for the draco who cometh in futurum to gnaw your anima!* *Death is* super nos! *Pray the Santo Pater come* to liberar nos a malo *and all our sin!* Ha ha, *you like this* negromanzia de Domini Nostri Jesu Christi! Et anco jois m'es dols e plazer m'es dolors. . . . Cave el diablo! Semper *lying in wait for me in some angulum to snap at my heels.* *But Salvatore is not stupidus!* Bonum monasterium, *and* aqui refectorium *and pray to dominum nostrum.* *And the resto is not worth merda.* Amen. No?

Although a translator could get away with keeping this hybrid chatter in the original, rephrasing it with elements of the target language enhances its impact by bringing it closer to the reader. This task is relatively simple in a Romance language, which allows preserving the original syntax while substituting easily recognizable cognates. The English translation, in turn, requires some syntactic adjustments, as in *draco venturus est* → *the draco who cometh in futurum*. As regards vocabulary, two nouns in the opening sentence, *draco* and *anima*, evoke the English cognates *dragon*, *anima*; the adverbial phrase *in futurum* closely parallels *in the future*; the words *liberar*, *negromanzia*, *stupidus*, *monasterium*, and *refectorium* recall the cognates *liberate*, *necromancy*, *stupid*, *monastery*, and *refectory* respectively; and the adverb *semper* is likely to be known from household expressions like *semper fidelis* or *semper paratus*<sup>8</sup>. Other Latinisms – *super nos*, *Domini Nostri Jesu Christi*, *diablo*– are accessible to any reader with a smattering of a Romance language. Though the Provençal sentence *Et anco jois m'es dols e plazer m'es dolors* continues to pose a challenge, one out of twelve (counting

<sup>8</sup>Mottoes of the U. S. Marine Corps and the U. S. Coast Guard, respectively.

the self-evident *Amen* and *No?* as independent sentences) is hardly excessive. Furthermore, even that simple and less than fully comprehensible sentence fulfills the stylistic function of making readers share the surprise and puzzlement of Salvatore's interlocutors.

Unlike writing or translating a short passage like Salvatore's speech, keeping up a literary dialect throughout a long text is a tour de force not easily replicated in translation, where using the wrong register is like playing a lively dance in slow tempo: the notes are all there, but the music limps. Consider, for example, the following excerpts from the Catalan and Spanish translations of J. D. Salinger's *The Catcher in the Rye* (emphasis added)<sup>9</sup>.

- (a) If you really want to hear about it, the first thing you'll probably want to know is where I was born, and what *my lousy childhood* was like, and how my parents were *occupied and all* before they had me, and all *that David Copperfield kind of crap*, but I don't feel like going into it, if you want to know the truth. In the first place, *that stuff* bores me [...] (*Catcher*, 1)

*Cat.*: Si de debò voleu que us en parli, segurament la primera cosa que voldreu saber serà on vaig néixer, i com va ser *la meua fastigosa infantesa*, i què *feien* els meus pares abans de tenir-me, i tota *aquesta porqueria estil David Copperfield*, però no en tinc gens de ganes. Primer de tot, *aquestes coses* m'avorreixen [...] (*Vigilant*, 7)

*Sp.*: Si de verdad les interesa lo que voy a contarles, lo primero que querrán saber es dónde nació cómo fue todo *esse rollo de mi infancia*, qué hacían mis padres antes de tenerme a mí, y *demás puñetas estilo David Copperfield*, pero no tengo ganas de contarles nada de eso. Primero *porque es una lata* [...] (*Guardián*, 7)

- (b) [My parents are] *nice* and all –I'm not saying that– but they're also *touchy as hell*. Besides, I'm not going to tell you my whole *goddam* autobiography or anything. (*Catcher*, 1)

*Cat.*: Són *bona gent* –no dic pas que no–, però també són *més sensibles que una mona*. A més, no us explicaré pas tota la meua *remaleïda* autobiografia. (*Vigilant*, 7)

*Sp.*: [Mis padres] Son *buena gente*, no digo que no, pero *a quisquillosos no hay quien les gane*. Además, no crean que voy a contarles mi autobiografía con pelos y señales. (*Guardián*, 7)

<sup>9</sup>J. D. Salinger, *The Catcher in the Rye*. New York: Bantam Books, 1976; *El vigilant en el camp de sègol*. Tr. E. Riera and J. M. Fonalleras, Barcelona: Editorial Empúries, 1990; *El guardián entre el centeno*. Tr. Carmen Criado, Madrid: Alianza Editorial, 1978. For a commentary on the language of *The Catcher in the Rye*, see Lodge [8, p. 17–20].



- (c) He just got a Jaguar. [...] It cost him *damn near* four thousand bucks. (*Catcher*, 1)  
*Cat.*: S'acaba de comprar un Jaguar. [...] Li va costar *gairebé* quatre mil dòlars. (*Vigilant*, 7)  
*Sp.*: Acaba de comprarse un "Jaguar". [...] *Cerca de* cuatro mil dólares le ha costado. (*Guardián*, 7–8)
- (d) Anyway, it was December and all, and it was *cold as a witch's teat*, especially on top of that *stupid* hill. (*Catcher*, 4)  
*Cat.*: És igual, era desembre i tota la pesca i feia un *fred que pelava*, especialment al cim d'aquell *estúpid* turó. (*Vigilant*, 10)  
*Sp.*: Pues, como iba diciendo, era diciembre y hacía un frío que pelaba en lo alto de aquella *dichosa montañita*. (*Guardián*, 10)
- (e) *They got a bang out of things*, though *–in a half-assed way*, of course. (*Catcher*, 6)  
*Cat.*: *S'ho passaven bé*, però *a mig gas*, és clar. (*Vigilant*, 13)  
*Sp.*: ... aún *seguían disfrutando con sus cosas*. *Un poco a lo tonto*, claro. (*Guardián*, 13)

Though these translations succeed in creating a relaxed diction through use of colloquial language, they include a variety of register shifts, largely because certain items responsible for the colloquial tone of the original are rendered by standard terms. For example, *that stuff [bores me]* becomes too plain as *Cat. aquestes coses* 'these things' [*m'avorreixen*], which is less satisfactory than the more colloquial *Sp. porque es una lata*. Likewise, *get a bang out of* becomes far more formal as standard *Cat. s'ho passaven bé* 'they had a good time' and even more so as *Sp. seguían disfrutando con sus cosas* 'went on enjoying their things'.

Profanity, responsible for a good deal of the novel's shock effect when it came out in 1945, is bowdlerized by turning *these goddam tests* into *Cat. aquell coi de proves* or *Sp. montón de análisis*, neither of which carries the spice of the original curse word. Likewise, the once startling *damn near four thousand bucks* becomes rather insipid as *Cat. gairebé* ['almost'] *quatre mil dòlars* or *Sp. cerca de* ['about'] *cuatro mil dólares*; *touchy as hell* turns into an innocent *Cat. més sensibles que una mona* [literally 'more sensitive than a female monkey'] or *Sp. a quisquillosos no hay quien les gane* ['nobody beats them in touchiness']. The impact of *stupid hill* is somehow not quite felt in the calque *Cat. estúpid turó*, while *Sp. dichosa montañita*, if a bit closer to the mark, sounds remarkably mild. The humorous anatomic allusions of *cold as a witch's teat* or *half-assed* are lost in *Cat. fred que pelava* / *Sp. frío*

*que pelaba* ('cold enough to skin you') or Cat. *a mig gas* / Sp. *a lo tonto* ('half heartedly'). Finally, neither the tame *porqueria estil David Copperfield* nor the less mannerly *demás puñetas estilo David Copperfield* matches the scatological expressiveness of *that David Copperfield kind of crap*<sup>10</sup>. In the long run, such translations, while conveying a feeling of colloquial speech, display too much oscillation in register and fail to keep up the tight tone of teenager slang that is such a crucial component of this novel.

As for creativeness, Ernest Hemingway's novel, *For Whom the Bell Tolls*, set in the context of the Spanish Civil War of 1936–1939, poses a unique challenge. Part of its literary dialect relies on the traditional device of inserting expletives, phrases and full sentences in Spanish, often preceded or followed by a gloss. Thus in passages<sup>11</sup> like “‘*Estoy listo,*’ Robert Jordan said. ‘I am ready to do it.’” (*Bell*, 220), or “‘I am afraid to die, Pilar,’ he said. ‘*Tengo miedo de morir.*’” (*Bell*, 90), meaning is explicit enough that readers can hardly miss it. Furthermore, Hemingway manipulated English syntax and lexicon to craft a nonstandard and yet comprehensible style to represent the speech of the Spanish characters and the American protagonist Robert Jordan, a former lecturer in Spanish fighting on the Republican side. Thus a contrast with standard English (which is the language of narrative and, significantly, of Jordan's soliloquies) is maintained throughout the novel.

A salient feature is the allusion to the Spanish pronouns *tú*, *te*, and the possessive *tu* by the use of the archaic forms *thou*, *thee*, *thy*, in which the contemporary English-speaking reader is more likely to see an obsolete poetic usage than an indicator of informality. As Hemingway's usage is not systematic, *you* and *thou/thee* alternate, sometimes in the same sentence, for no apparent reason<sup>12</sup>.

Even so, these *th-* forms effectively reinforce the convention that the characters are supposed to be speaking an alien language that distinguishes between formal and informal modes of address. Whereas a detailed analysis of

<sup>10</sup>Cultural references also suffer: while an American reader of the forties might be expected to understand the reference to *David Copperfield*, this was not the case of the Catalan reader of the seventies.

<sup>11</sup>Italics in the quotes from *Bell* are as in the original. The passages quoted are from *For Whom the Bell Tolls*, by Ernest Hemingway, New York: Collier Books, MacMillan Publishing Company, [1940] 1987; *Por quien doblan las campanas*. Tr. Lola de Aguado, Barcelona: [Editorial Planeta, 1979] Mundo Actual de Ediciones, S. A., 1982; *Per qui toquen les campanes*. Tr. Jordi Arbonès, Barcelona: Edicions Proa, 1978.

<sup>12</sup>E.g., “‘It isn't whether you can hear it,’ Pilar said. ‘It is whether I should tell it to thee and make thee bad dreams [...] But thee, *guapa*, if it reaches a point that it molests thee, tell me.’” (*Bell*, 99).

the use of formal and informal pronoun forms might reveal a pattern about each translator's motivation, the point is that the use of *thou* is not necessarily taken by the Spanish translator to suggest *tú*, as shown in the following example:

[Jordan]	"Hast thou eaten?"	-¿Ha comido usted?
[Anselmo]	"No. No one has eaten."	-"No, nadie ha comido todavía."
	( <i>Bell</i> , 77)	( <i>Campanas</i> , 82)

In the Catalan translation reciprocal *tú* is the usual form of address among the guerrilla fighters since the opening dialogue between Jordan and old Anselmo. In the Spanish translation, however, they call each other *usted* until, in the middle of a conversation about hunting (p. 47), Jordan suddenly switches to *tú* although Anselmo continues to call him *usted*:

- (a) "We'll need a certain number of men," he said. "How many can you get?"  
 "I can bring as many men as you wish," the old man said. (*Bell*, 2)  
*Cat.*: – Necessitarem uns quants homes –digué–. Quants en pots trobar?  
 – Tants com vulguis –replicà el vell–. (*Campanes*, 14)  
*Sp.*: – Necesitaremos cierto número de hombres –dijo el joven–.  
 ¿Cuántos podría conseguirme?  
 – Puedo proporcionarle los que quiera –dijo el viejo–. (*Campanas*, 10)
- (b) "You like to hunt?"  
 "Yes, man. More than anything [...] You do not like to hunt? [...] On the door of the church of my village was nailed the paw of a bear that I killed in the spring [...] And every time I saw that paw, like the hand of a man [...] I received a pleasure [...]"  
 "Of pride?" [...]  
 "Since you put it clearly in that way I believe that must be it."  
 (*Bell*, 39–41)  
*Sp.*: [Jordan] – ¿Le gusta cazar?  
 [Anselmo] – Sí, hombre, me gusta más que nada. [...] ¿No le gusta a usted la caza? [...] En la puerta de la iglesia de mi pueblo había una pata de oso que maté yo en primavera [...]  
 [Jordan] – Te sentías orgulloso. [...]  
 [Anselmo] – Lo ha dicho usted de una forma tan clara, que creo que tiene que ser así. (*Campanas*, 46–48)

In a dialogue between Jordan and his superior officer, general Golz, reciprocal *you* and the title *comrade* are used throughout, translators opted for different solutions. In Spanish they call each other *usted*, but in Catalan Golz uses *tu* while Jordan, somewhat incongruously, addresses him as *vós*:

“ [...] You have a funny name in Spanish, Comrade Hordown.”

“How do you say Golz in Spanish, Comrade General?” ( *Bell*, 7)

*Cat.*: “En espanyol, el teu nom fa molta gràcia, camarada ‘Hordan’.”

“Com pronuncieu Golz en espanyol, camarada general?” ( *Campanes*, 19)

*Sp.*: ¿Sabe que su nombre es muy cómico en español, camarada Hordown?

¿Cómo se dice Golz en español, camarada general? ( *Campanas*, 15)

Since obscenity is culturally defined, finding cross-language equivalencies for oaths and swear expressions can be problematic. For example, expletives like *damn/damned* (literally *doomed to hell*) seem less expressive when rendered as Sp. *maldito/maldición*. Conversely, oaths involving references to family members, strong in Spanish or Catalan, become much milder, if meaningful at all, when translated literally into English. Hemingway’s effort to evoke strong language relies partly on euphemisms, like his celebrated use of the word *obscenity* to suggest Spanish insults involving references to defecation (e.g. *me cago en [...]*). Another is the use of the word *milk* as an allusion to the use of *leche* to refer insultingly either to mother’s milk (e.g., *me cago en la leche de tu madre*) or, metaphorically, to semen (e.g., *jes la leche!*). Such euphemisms, transparent to readers familiar with colloquial Spanish, may be puzzling—and yet perceived as insults even though their connotations may not be evident—to monolingual readers. Rather than restoring the underlying insult, however, the Spanish translation uses suspension points, while the Catalan translation employs the generic and largely ineffective euphemisms *dallonses* or *daixonses*<sup>13</sup>:

“Thy duty,” said Agustín mockingly. “I besmirch the milk of thy duty.”

[...] “Where the un-nameable is this vileness that I am to guard?”

<sup>13</sup> *Daixonses/dallonses* are semantic wild cards used to “refer to someone or mention something when we do not find the appropriate words or do not want to say them” ( *Diccionari de la Llengua Catalana*. Barcelona: Institut d’Estudis Catalans, 1995; the translation is mine.)

“In the cave,” Pilar said. “In two sacks. And I am tired of thy obscenity.”

“I obscenity in the milk of thy tiredness,” Agustín said.

“Then go and befoul thyself,” Pilar said. [...]

“Thy mother,” Agustín replied.

“Thou never had one,” Pilar told him [...] (*Bell*, 92–93)

*Sp.*: – ¿Tu deber? –preguntó Agustín, burlón–. Me c... en la leche de tu deber. [...] ¿Dónde está ese c... que tengo que guardar?

– En la cueva –contestó Pilar–; dentro de los dos sacos. Y estoy cansada de tus groserías.

– Me c... en la leche de tu cansancio –siguió Agustín.

– Entonces vete y ca... en ti mismo –dijo Pilar [...] (*Campanas*, 97–98)

*Cat.*: – El teu deure! –es burlà l'Agustín–. Em dallonses en la llet del teu deure! [...] ¿On redimonis és aquesta porqueria que haig de vigilar?

– A la cova –contestà la Pilar–. Són les dues motxilles. I ja n'estic farta, de sentir-te dir disbarats!

– Em dallonses en la llet de la teva fartanera! –replicà l'Agustíjn.

– Aleshores, vés a daixonses! –deixà caure la Pilar . . . .

– Ta mare! –contestà l'Agustíjn.

– La teva, que no n'has tinguda mai! (*Campanes*, 110)

There is in the original a strong contrast between the passages in straight English, those in Spanish, and those in Hemingway's “Spanish-in-English” literary dialect. In seeking to recreate a literary dialect, however, translation affects the relationship between the reader and the text. In the Spanish translation, as one might expect, those contrasts disappear. In the Catalan translation, the similarity between Catalan and Spanish not only dilutes any remaining literary dialect but also softens the impact of the passages in Spanish. Furthermore, since Catalan readers can be expected to understand Spanish, glosses paralleling those in the original are redundant:

“*Pero es muy vivo*. He is very smart. And if we do not do this smartly we are obscenitied.” (*Bell*, 95)

*Cat.*: – ¡*Pero es muy vivo!* És molt viu! I, si no actuem amb llestesa, estem fotuts! (*Campanes*, 112)

Translation problems increase when two or more nonstandard varieties are represented in the original. For example, in Mark Twain's novel, *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*, there is a significant contrast between the varieties of nonstandard Deep South English used by the narrator-protagonist, Huck, a semi-literate white country boy, and his buddy Jim, an illiterate runaway slave. The translator's problem consists in devising a way to capture the relationships—such as dialect contrasts, cultural connotations, and social values—expressed in the interaction of those two dialects. If the target language does not have two nonstandard varieties capable of projecting a similar contrast, the solution may lie in manipulating language to reflect at least some of the contrasts found in the original, in a manner that the reader will find both meaningful and plausible. The selection below compares the original and the Catalan translation of the well-known passage in which Huck and Jim talk about foreign languages (italics added for emphasis)<sup>14</sup>.

I told [Jim] about Louis Sixteenth [...] and about his little boy the dolphin, that would 'a 'been a king, but they took and shut him up in jail, and some say he died there.  
 "Po' little chap."  
 "But some says he got out and got away, and come to America"  
 "Dat's good! But he'll be pooty lonesome—dey ain' no kings here, is dey, Huck?"  
 "No."  
 "Den he cain't git no situation. What he gwyne to do?"  
 "Well, I don't know. Some of them gets on the police, and some of them learns people how to talk French."  
 "Why, Huck, doan' de French people talk de same way we does?"  
 "No, Jim; you couldn't understand a word they said—not a single word."  
 "Well, now, I be ding-busted! How do dat come?"  
 "I don't know; but it's so. I got some of their jabber out of a book. S'pose a man was to come to you and say Polly-voofranzy—what would you think?"  
 "I wouldn't think nuffin; I'd take en bust him over de head—dat is, if he warn't white. I wouldn't 'low no nigger to call me dat."  
 "Shucks, it ain't calling you anything. It's only saying, do you know how to talk French?"  
 "Well, den, why couldn't he say it?"  
 "Why, he *is* a-saying it. That's a Frenchman's way of saying it."  
 "Well, it's a blame ridiculous way, en I doan' want to hear no mo' 'bout it. Dey ain' no sense in it."

Vaig parlar-li d'en Lluís XVI [...] i del seu fillet, el dofí, que havia d'arribar a rei, però el van engarjoliar i uns diuen que morí a la presó.  
 — *Pob'et!*  
 — Però d'altres diuen que en va sortir i s'escapà i arribà a Amèrica.  
 — Bé! *Po' s'hi t'obará ba'tant* sol, aquí no n'hi ha de reis, oi, Huck?  
 — No.  
 — *Javors* no pot *t'obar* feina. Què farà?  
 — Noí, no ho sé. N'hi ha que es fan policíes o ensenyen francès a la gent.  
 — Com *é'* això, Huck? *E's f'ancesos* no *pa'ten* com *natros*?  
 — No, Jim, no entendries ni una paraula del que diuen.  
 — Òndia, tu, això sí que m'atabala. I com *é'* això?  
 — No ho sé, però *és* així. D'aquest girigall, n'he après alguna cosa en un llibre. Imagina't que et ve un home i et diu " *Parlé bu fransé?*" Què pensaries?  
 — No pensaria res. Li *c'avaría* un cop de puny al cap. Ep, si no fos blanc, *é'* clar. No *pe'metria* que cap negue m'*insu'tés*.  
 — Bufa, noi, que no *és* cap insult! Només vol dir si saps parlar francès.  
 — Valtua! I *javors* pe'què no ho deia?  
 — Home, ja ho diu. És la forma de dir-ho en francès.  
 — Doncs *é* una *fo'ma* ben ridícula i no *vuí* sentir-ne *pa'lar mé'*. No té cap sentit.

Aware of the difficulty of conveying Deep South dialects in another language, the Catalan translator clarified in a footnote that "in translating these

<sup>14</sup>Mark Twain, *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*. New York: Bantam Books, [1884] 1965, p. 76–77; *Les aventures d'en Huckleberry Finn*. Tr. Joan Fontcuberta. Barcelona: Edicions de la Magrana, 1979, p. 97–99.

dialectal forms, we have taken into account especially those of Negroes, and have tried to ‘give the impression’ of Negroes’ talk, but for obvious reasons of comprehension, we have not reproduced the dialect.”<sup>15</sup> Jim’s dialectal speech rests on a few simple phonological processes such as simplification of consonant clusters by apocope of the liquid, as in *pobret* > *pob’et*, *francesos* > *f’ancesos*, *negre* > *negue* (where *g/gu* = [g]), *trobarà* > *t’obarà*, *trobar* > *t’obar*, *clavaria* > *c’avaria*. Another process is deletion of both implosive /s/, *bastant* > *ba’tant*, *més* > *mé’*, *contesta* > *conte’ta* and implosive /l/, *insultés* > *insu’tés*. Implosive /r/ likewise disappears: *perquè* > *pe’què*, *permetria* > *pe’metria*, or *parlen* > *pa’len*. *Yeísmo*, the articulation of phonological /ɰ/ as [j], is represented in *llavors* > *iavors* and *vull* > *vui*. Finally, the dialectal form *natros* is substituted for standard *nosaltres* ‘we’.

A weakness of this translation is that Jim’s stereotyped dialect, though effective in setting off his voice, fails to contrast with Huck’s speech on a dialect-to-dialect basis. Another weak point is that Huck’s talk, rendered in colloquial, but grammatical Catalan, lacks plausibility as the speech of a poorly educated country boy. In the original, the tone set for the narrative by Huck’s talk stands out in the opening line through the nonstandard use of *without* for *unless* and *ain’t* for *isn’t*: “You don’t know about me without you have read a book by the name of *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer*; but that ain’t no matter” (3).

The dialogic counterpoint created by the contrast between Huck’s and Jim’s speech constitutes one of the mainstays of the novel, as it frames their individual worldviews and highlights their differences of race, social status, and education. In a translation, absence of that counterpoint entails the loss of the ideological function of dialect, which Judith Lavoie [5, p. 134] characterized as Twain’s ironical commentary on “the hegemonic racist discourse of his society.” To use a Bakhtinean perspective, we can say that when heteroglossic variation is maintained within the bounds of a standard language, the author’s voice reaches the reader through a single filter. In texts written in literary dialect, however, variation creates additional filters that perform the heuristic function of challenging the reader to go beyond cognitive meaning in order to uncover the metalinguistic significance of the discordant linguistic codes. Besides carrying cognitive meaning, literary dialect signals—in the sense of Barthes’ dichotomy between *signifier* and *signaler* [1, p. 9]—a frame of reference for interpreting sociolinguistic peculiarities of individual

<sup>15</sup>“A l’hora de traduir aquestes formes dialectals, hem tingut en compte especialment la dels negres i hem intentat ‘donar la impressió’ del parlar dels negres, però per raons òbvies de comprensió, no hem reproduït el dialecte” (p. 1; the translation is mine).

characters and connotations of specific communicative situations.

A literary dialect can be created by emulation of an existing variety or by bringing together elements from one or more existing varieties. Translators, however, do not necessarily have at their disposal a dialect that approximates, let alone replicates, the connotations of the original. As a result, they may have to represent orality through the creation of an approximative, perhaps *ad hoc* literary dialect, and in so doing they will risk masking, misrepresenting, or obliterating the sociolinguistic variables inherent in the original. If an attempt is not made, however, something vital will be missing from the translation. Nonstandard speech is not just an alternate, optional way of saying the same thing: rather, it marks the characters using it and affects their mutual relationships in a way that standard language cannot replicate. The use of several nonstandard dialects further complicates things, since the relations between them can be just as crucial for character definition as the relation between any one dialect and the standard language. Literary dialect is a powerful means of defamiliarization that encourages the reader to take a new look at the characters and the way they speak. It is not surprising that in many translations the issue is avoided by simply recasting dialect speech in a standard mould. When this happens, however, the characters themselves are reshaped and their relationships, not only with each other but also with the reader, are substantially altered. All the same, a translation can only be considered successful to the extent that it manages to capture the nuances inherent in the linguistic diversity of the original, in order to preserve, even if in a modified fashion, the manifestation of individual voices, each endowed with a significance of its own.

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