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Chapter 6: "Se so' sparati a via Merulana": Achieving linguistic variation and oral discourse in the French and Spanish versions of *Quer pasticciaccio brutto de via Merulana* (chapter 1)[1]

José Luis Aja Sánchez

Abstract

Gadda's *Quer pasticciaccio brutto di via Merulana* (1946-1947) is the story of a sordid murder related from police inspector Ciccio Ingravallo's point of view. The use of slang and vernacular becomes a stylistic choice that transcends the mere replication of regional voices: it is an author's resource to produce a baroque and flowery style, with a profusion of rhetorical, phonetic and symbolic nuances. This paper describes the processes in Juan Ramón Massoliver's and Louis Bonalumi's translations, analysing the different ways in which both translators deal with dialects, regional variations, and paralinguistic elements, by focusing on the spoken discourse represented in written language. An interdisciplinary method of study is suggested, giving outlines of functional, textual, pragmatic, and other translation strategies (House, Chesterman, Venuti).

Keywords: Oral strategies and linguistic variation in translation, paradigmatic elements contrast in SL and TL, equivalence, canon function in literary translation

1. Style and meaning of the novel

It is hard to define the writer, Carlo Emilio Gadda (1893-1973), whose work embraces the influences from so many literary eras, with its abundance of philosophical and aesthetic references from both the 19th and 20th centuries, as belonging to any one literary period.

A great admirer of the work of Alessandro Manzoni, whose influence on Gadda's work is keenly felt, Gadda proclaimed the need to defend a moral dimension in political life. Like Manzoni (author of *I Promessi Sposi and Storia della colonna infame*), he shared the same revulsion towards institutional violence and uttered the same outcry against man's vulnerability in times of war and tyranny; indeed, Carlo Emilio Gadda's life had been dramatically influenced by his personal experience during World War I.

The despair that underscores Gadda's choice of narrative style, and the language he uses, is his response to the incompetence of the mechanisms of power to understand the reality of the individual, and this is reflected in Gadda's characters, who continually question their own perceptions of reality.

La considerazione della realtà nella sua complessità di sistema e il concetto di conoscenza come deformazione guidano le riflessioni gaddiane, che spaziano dall'etica alla gnoseologia, dalla poetica alla lingua. Appare sempre più evidente come la scrittura gaddiana, tutt'altro che giocosa e superficiale, costituisca un modo di esplorare il mondo attraverso l'uso consapevole e meditato degli strumenti espressivi. (Pecoraro 1998: 34-35)

It is precisely these two themes, the futility of our perceptions and the arbitrary nature of power, which lead Carlo Emilio Gadda to adopt this genre of mystery / detective novel or *giallo*; a choice to which can also be adduced a political explanation:

La scelta del genere giallo, dato il divieto, negli ultimi anni del regime, di pubblicare gialli, è la prima tessera di un orientamento globale antifascista. Non più un giallo in contumacia, come succedeva per la *Cognizione del* dolore [...] ma un giallo poliziesco esplicito. (Pecoraro 1998: 133-134)

As well as the evident political undertones, Gadda has deliberately chosen to imbue the language of the witness statements, gathered by Inspector Ingravallo in the wake of the crime, with dialectal flavours, thus adhering to a stylistic strategy:

Anche l'invasione delle forme dialettali, data l'avversione del fascismo per i dialetti in generale e per il romanesco in particolare, rafforza una strategia antifascista. (Pecoraro 1998: 133-134)

The reasoning behind this is that Gadda believed that standard language was too coldly academic and that dialects were far more expressive (Gadda 1956). In his novel, *Quer pasticciaccio brutto di via Merulana*, dialect is used to convey subjective truth: the characters express themselves in the dialect of their region: an elementary but sincere language whose underlying meaning is lost further on in the novel, as reality, and a confusion concerning the facts, combine to devalue the real meaning of the characters' words. This narrative confusion is due in part to Gadda choosing to let his characters express themselves in flashback, with the author adopting the narrative voice to describe events through the detective character, Inspector Ingravallo. However, two different perspectives, the diegetic and the extradiegetic, cross over at various points during the novel, intercalating examples of metalepsis (Genette 2007: 243-244) which endow the narrative with an oral quality.

In reproducing the dialect oral quality, Don Ciccio, Ingravallo's assistant, plays an interpreting role which tends to contaminate the style:

La parole prise par le narrateur reatrace, sans rien y changer, les diverses langues des ayants droit non pas à la parole, mais à l'idée de parole réélaborée par le narrateur. Refaire la langue des autres, dans le sens d'une mimésis féconde pour l'écriture: c'est là qui réside la nouveauté de ce texte, qui s'écart du naturalisme par le fait même que, tout en semblant le copier pas après pas, il

l'enveloppe en réalité d'une grande distance critique, par l'ingérence de la parodie, de l'humour et de l'ironie. (Manganaro 1994: 108)

The witness statements repeat themselves, cross over and contradict each other, giving way to a series of microstories which detract the reader from the police investigation, from its detective essence, and emerge as a nuance or suggestion, within which we can appreciate a most appealing linguistic ebb and flow:

Élaborant à la fois les notions d'ordre et de désordre, de fonction et de dysfonction, il aboutit à l'enchevêtrement (groviglio), car, chez Gadda, les entrechocs, qui sont constitutif de l'intrigue-intreccio, ne sont, en fait, au bout de la chaîne insoluble des séries, que le groviglio d'une trame ou l'on perd toute raison, comme dans l'oxymore [...]; la vie est un songe. (Manganaro 1994: 108)

From this, we can appreciate that the greatest obstacle in this novel is not only the presence of several different dialects but also the narrative construction and the way Gadda has woven the plot, which, given the bitter existential background, is not able to move towards the more typical ending of a detective story, that is to say, towards finding out who the murderer is. The narrative, a meandering narrative, advances and recedes in a perpetual movement and Manganaro (1994) sees a resemblance to the narrative style in the short stories of Jorge Luis Borges. If we were to borrow a metaphor from the world of art, we could also say that Gadda's narrative is akin to the style adopted by Giovanni Battista Piranesi in his engravings.

2. Methodological strategies. The French and the Spanish editions

In this article, we are going to comment on a small fragment taken from Chapter One, at the moment when Inspector Ingravallo learns that there has been a violent break-in at number 229, of the via Merulana (Gadda 1982: 16-40) and he arrives on the scene to take the witness statements. We shall examine how the translation conveys the aspect of orality and how the element of suspense is maintained.

The only Spanish translation of the novel, entitled *El zafarrancho aquel de via Merulana* (TT1), was undertaken by Juan Ramón Masoliver, and published in 1965 by Seix Barral (Barcelona), being republished on a number of occasions without any major changes. The only French version (TT2), was translated by Louis Bonalumi, and published by Éditions du Seuil (Paris) in 1963 under the title, *L'affreux Pastis de la rue des Merles*.

The translation study of orality which we are going to examine in this article will centre on two very significant aspects of the fragment analysed:

a) The way dialect is introduced and the relationship between diatopic (regional) and diastratic (social) language

b) Paradigmatic contextual elements and oral discourse

3. How dialect is translated

The Italian linguistic reality, studied from a variety of different perspectives (Cortelazzo 1969; De Mauro 1995; Berruto 1997, etc.) has always posed a problem for the translation of orality, given the complex coexistence between standard language and dialect. Indeed, several experts have already studied the way dialect has been translated, almost wholly in terms of the stylistic features involved. This linguistic diversity is frequently present in literary works and covers every possible range of emotion and sentiment, broadly summarised in the two definitions below:

a) Dialect which is used in order to indicate the regional or social origin

b) Dialect which is used as a stylistic device in those works which reveal an overlapping of vernacular and standard register

In the case of Italian, both dialect and vernacular use of language have a symbolic value and using them gives rise to many contextual interpretations. Two authors, Fogazzaro (1842-1911) and Verga (1840-1922), believe that dialectal use is a sociological referent which creates a more intimate framework, whereas Pasolini (1922-1975) believes that dialectal use is a spoken testimony to a stratum of society that is dying out and a cry of resistance against the imposition of a standard language (*koiné*), whose real purpose is to bind an industrial society together (Pasolini 1991: 5-24).

Antoine Berman deals at length with the subject of translating dialect in his book, *La traduction et la lettre ou l'auberge du lointain.* He describes this as a deformation strategy and outlines the different steps in translating dialect into the SL (Berman 1999: 64-64):

a) Translation of the phrases in italics

b) Intensification of the vernacular

c) Substitution of the SL vernacular for a TL vernacular

None of Berman's above proposals has been used systematically to analyse the translations of this novel, although they are helpful in evaluating certain aspects of both the Spanish and the French translations.

Other critics, such as Juliane House (1981), place importance on the use of dialect in order to understand the significance of the diatopic dimension in a specific translation and, in particular, to gauge the difference between American English and British English. We do not believe that this differentiating strategy is very helpful in our analysis from the methodological point of view. The broad range of vernacular tongues used does not always coincide comfortably within the different linguistic and cultural realities; however, House's functionalist theory, with its macrostructural vision over the relationship between the original text and the translated work, is applicable in the evaluation of other parameters of the translations.

Indeed, the very peculiarities of the expressions used in the novel make us think that the two translators, Juan Ramón Masoliver and Louis Bonalumi, have had to invent a new translation strategy in order to recreate a parallel communicative and aesthetic system to that offered by Carlo Emilio Gadda in the original. This is because we can see that, embedded in Gadda's novel, there exists a network of diverse systems (linguistic, aesthetic and cultural) which puts it beyond any literary canon and which constitutes its own cultural polysystem (Even-Zohar 1990). The underlying subsystems which coexist in the novel are ruled by a series of norms which the translator must decodify correctly during the translating process. Once these norms have been identified, the mechanism for recreating the ST version will involve the translator in a series of decisions relating to the distance-proximity dynamic and the linguistic difficulties of the novel (Toury 1980). Undoubtedly, both Juan Ramón Masoliver and Louis Bonalumi have had to dig deeply into the Spanish and French literary patrimony in order to translate linguistic references at a more cultured and educated level, as well as those which correspond to the more colloquial or vulgar level of the vernacular tongue. As we shall see in the conclusions, both the Spanish and the French versions have many points in common, despite their different linguistic premises and concepts.

3.1. How dialect is managed in the Spanish and French translations of the original text

One of greatest challenges found in this translation is how the translators have dealt with the problem of the many different dialectal varieties coexisting in the novel.

Let us look at the strategies employed by the two translators in the translation of the most widespread dialect: urban Roman Italian, the language spoken by the majority of the characters.

(1)

ST.   «A polizzia,» disse qualcuno. «Fa' passà lo Sgranfia, a maschié... Addio, Pompé! Che, l'hai agguantato er ladro?... Mo' c'è er bionno... (Gadda 1983/1946-1947: 19)

TT1.   «La poli», profirió alguien. «Dejar pasar al Garras, tú, chaval... ¡salve, Pompé! ¿Qué, ya le has echao el guante al caco?... y ahora, con el Rubianco...» (Gadda 1990/1965: 18)

TT2   "Les flics!", lança quelqu'un. "Place au Grap' eh, jeunesse... Salut, Pompée! Tu l'as piqué ton monte en l'air?... Tiens, v'la Beau Blond, ça va barder!" (Gadda 1963/1957: 24)

Juan Ramón Masoliver (TT1) has used two fundamental strategies to deal with all the lexical and morphosyntactical features, which are framed within the diatopic variation, at the diastratic level:

a) Colloquial register: *poli* for 'policía', *echar el guante* for 'detener', *caco* for 'ladrón'

b) Morphological incorrections: incorrect participle with the missing intervocalic 'd', *echao* for 'echado'

The same can be seen in the French translation (TT2):

a) Colloquial register: *flics* for 'agents de police', *piquer* for 'arrêter', *monte en l'air* for 'voleur' (see *Bob dictionnaire argotique*).

c) Elision to reproduce oral quality: *v'la* for 'voilà'.

Reading the two translations, we can see a contradiction of one of the principles relating to the strategies of deformation as proposed by Antoine Berman (1999: 63-64): the register of the vernacular language does not coincide at the diastratic level, nor does it coincide with the colloquial register, so the effect produced by the SL can never be replicated exactly in the TL.

This loss of dialectal connotation is felt more intensely in the speech given by one of the characters, Signora Menegazzi. Victim of a robbery, Signora Menegazzi, compared to the other characters in the same scene, is considered a lady of somewhat questionable moral character; this disreputable quality being explained in *una tenutaria od ex-frequentatrice d'una qualche casa d'appuntamenti un po' scaduta di rango*. Here, her Venetian dialect ironically conveys a thwarted attempt at upward social mobility:

(2)
ST.   «Ah! signor commissario [...] ci auiti lei: lu ch'el pol giutarne. Ci aiuti lei, per carità, Mària Vergine. Una vedova! Sola in casa, Mària Vergine! Che brutto mondo ch'el xe questo!» (Gadda 1983/1946-1947: 22)

TT1.   «¡Ah! señor comisario [...] ayúdenos usted: el que nos puede ayudar. Ayude, por favor, Virgen Santa. ¡Una viuda! Y sola en casa, Virgen Santísima! ¡El acabóse! Es que no son ni cristianos, ¡demonios coronados, almas de satanases!» (Gadda 1990/1965: 22)

TT2   "Monsieur le Commissaire, faut nous aider! Y a que vous qui pouvez.! Faites quelque chose, Zezus-Marie, une pauvre veuve sans défense! Ah, c'est plus un monde, Monsieur le Commissaire, c'est l'Apocalysse!" (Gadda 1963/1957: 24)

In this particular excerpt, the two translators have chosen different tactics. Juan Ramón Masoliver has identified the Venetian register with an elevated register in the TT, and this produces a clear dichotomy between the way the other

characters speak (Roman dialect), and the way Menegazzi speaks. It is an efficient differentiating strategy, despite revealing, yet again, the diastratic and diatopic dimensions.

The French translation, however, has maintained a phonic quality to codify the lisping speech of this character (*Thethus-Marie*). Compared to the Spanish translation, where the characters speak in an educated tongue, the French translation combines colloquial speech patterns, thus making Menegazzi's speech virtually the same as the speech of all the other characters.

One final point on the dialectal level which we shall examine is the vernacular usage of Inspector Ingravallo. Ingravallo is a native from the south of Italy and speaks with a southern accent when he is thinking out loud or speaking to himself. En route to the *via Merulana* to start his investigation, Ingravallo says:

(3)
ST.   «Jàmmoce,» disse Ingravallo, e poi borbottò: «Jamecenne». (Gadda 1983/1946-1947: 22)

TT1.   «Andando» —dijo Ingravallo, y luego rezongó—: Vámonos ya». (Gadda 1990/1957: 18)

TT2.   «Allonzi» fit Ingravallo. Puis il marmonna: «Lon-nouzan». (Gadda 1963/1947: 25)

The second part of his speech, preceded by a brief aside, indicates a change of register: Ingravallo is speaking to himself and uses his native dialect: *Jamecenne*, rather than the previous offering, *Jàmmoce*, which indicates that he is using the same Roman vernacular as his work colleagues. This dichotomy shows how important dialect is as the means of expression, especially when characters want to be shown thinking, or in more intimate contexts.

The two forms, *jamecenne* and *jàmmoce*, have, once again, different forms in the Spanish and French translations. Juan Ramón Masoliver has chosen to reproduce both phrases in standard language, which is similar to his treatment of Signora Menegazzi's speech, whereas Louis Bonalumi has preferred to keep the two registers quite different, using the lisping voice *Allonthi* in the first case, and a play on words, as a solution for the second: *Lon-nouzan*.

4. Strategies for translating orality

The fragment under analysis reveals, by virtue of a confusing and multivoiced dialogue, a segment of life in which each participant attempts to give their own personal and very varied vision of exactly what happened.

In order to understand the translation process of the fragment in Spanish and in French we obviously have to consider what criteria the original author used in order to create this oral dimension in the scene described. This is because all examples of created orality in a written text, and especially in the case of a

narrative text, follow a carefully planned reformulation which is absent in any spoken discourse. As Lakoff points out:

> Truly spontaneous discourse has an immediacy, an emotional directness, that is truly exhilarating: at the same time, it carries the burden of immediacy, lack of the clarity, use of the wrong word or phrase, hesitation, repetition, and so on. [...] Planned discourse avoids these pitfalls; but at the same time, it necessarily lacks warmth, closeness, and vividness. But print — more than oral non spontaneous media— exacerbates these difficulties because it lacks many of the devices oral present discourse utilized as carriers of emotional tone: intonation, pitch, gesture, eyes and so on. (Lakoff 1993: 242)

Unquestionably, the written medium does not offer the same resources as the phonic medium for the reproduction of spoken discourse. According to Lakoff, writing is characterised by careful planning and the absence of spontaneity, compared to spoken language, which is wholly spontaneous, and relies on extralinguistic communication signals, such as non-verbal language and direct eye-to-eye contact. Other authors who have explored the somewhat arbitrary differences between spoken and written language and, in its more diluted variation, between colloquial and formal register, have also examined the dichotomy between spontaneity and planning, and concluded that a continuum between the two extremes does exist (Bazzanella 1994: 29-30; Berruto 1997: 12; Koch and Oesterreicher 2007: 21).

Given the idiosyncratic nature of this novel, the hermeneutic process of recreating the development of the translation process must of necessity resort to cognitive reformulation following certain key cultural and expressive ST norms. Then the strategies employed to create the feeling of orality in the original are reinterpreted in order to replicate the effect in the translated text.

> A printed narrative text is, first of all, something we perceive through our eyes, and the "intellectualize" in a process conditioned by series of factors, mainly personal (socioeducational status), cultural (specific interpretation of certain interactive silences), and situational. (Poyatos 1997: 19-20)

4.1. How to reproduce the conversational parameters of the story

The language of the fragment we are going to comment on is characterised by parameters which, within the written framework, give a feeling of communicative immediacy, according to the terminology employed by Koch and Oesterreicher (Koch and Oesterreicher 2007: 34), or the complicity of the speakers (Chafe 1993), as can be seen in the following examples which have been classified according to Koch and Oesterreicher's terminology:

a) Features of communicative immediacy depending on the conditions of the conversation and which are strongly linked to a situation of suspense: familiarity, emotion, engagement with the communicative situation.

b) Features of communicative immediacy following the strategies of verbalization: extratextual contextualisation (gesture and mimicry), partial or total absence of prior planning, aggregate structure.

4.2. Paralinguistic elements which frame the development of the conversations

Gadda has made use of two key elements, visual and acoustic, to recreate the confusion that reigns throughout the investigation at number 219 of the via Merulana. Both of these key elements are powerful factors in the transmission of orality despite the fact that they are often used at the contextual level. Since the story is essentially discursive with occasional use of flashback, the narrator's voice is the essential mechanism for reproducing the communicative process, conferring valuable information about the behaviour and attitude of the other characters, clarifying the often ambivalent nature of their speech and guiding the reader through the setting of the dialogues. As Poyatos explains:

> The writer, therefore, will exercise his or her ability, once that initial presentation has been done, to maintain kinesic and paralinguistic repertoires that correspond precisely to those characters. (Poyatos 1997: 23)

Fernando Poyatos speaks of the importance of both of these two elements, visual and acoustic, in oral discourse. However, given the importance of the acoustic elements in the fragment we are examining, and the lack of space, we shall confine our examination exclusively to these elements, which, according to Poyatos (1997: 23), are repeated in the oral framework and can be categorised in two groups.

a) Bodily-related sounds. Paralinguistic elements which give rise to primary qualities such as the voice: talking loudly or softly, whispering, spelling out words, an affected voice, an ironic laugh, exclamations of surprise, disappointment or fear, coughing, doubt, irony etc. These paradigmatic acoustic elements also include a wide range of sounds reproduced in the following contexts: the speakers interacting with themselves, such as drumming their fingers, smacking their forehead with the palm of their hand; the speakers interacting with their listener (punching someone); or the speakers interacting with a series of objects, such as kicking the table or banging on the door. These do not appear in the fragment under analysis.

b) Background noises. These can have a parallel significance between the conversation and the respective bodily-related sounds:

Environmental sounds can also acquire, as in real-life interaction, an impressive speech-like quality related to the character's behaviors, interwoven with the other verbal and non verbal elements in the experience of reading. (Poyatos 1997: 33)

Background noise is akin to being considered a further conversational element in this fragment, as it is a resource used by the author to emphasise the confusion surrounding the jewellery theft and, besides, it fulfils a symbolic function by expressing doubt about the possibility of ever being able to exact the truth of this crime.

Let us now take a look at the mechanisms that the two translators, Juan Ramón Masoliver and Louis Bonalumi, use in the reproduction of the acoustic elements within the conversational developments.

(4)
ST.   [Don Ciccio] omise i «Gesù mio bello! Sor commissario mio!» e le altre **interiezioni-imprecazioni** di cui la «signora» Manuela Petacchioni non tralasciava d'inzeppare il suo referto. (Gadda 1983/1946-1947: 20)

TT1.   Don Chito omitió los «¡Jesús, Jesús de mi corazón! ¡Querido comisario mío!» y demás **interjecciones-invocaciones** con que la señá Manuela Pettacchioni atascaba de continuo su relato. (Gadda 1990/1965: 20)

TT2.   Don Ciccio se mit donc à l'oeuvre [...] non sans laisser de côté les "Sante-Vierge Maire" et el "mon cher Commissaire" **longs comme les bras**, dont la "femme" Manuela Petacchioni n'arrêtait pas de farcir son histoire. (Gadda 1963/1957:24, *my emphasis*)

The French translation has omitted the paradigmatic reference associated with the acoustic element, in this example related to bodily expression (the tone of voice), which is very important when referring to the expressive intensity and the communicative proximity which is characteristic of the neighbours and their declarations: the terms *interiezioni* and *imprecazioni* describe the register and the tonal intensity of the speakers and their yelling and clamouring. According to Chesterman's translation criteria of semantic strategies (Chesterman 1997: 105), this is a metaphorical or trope change. By adopting the metaphor 'longs comme les bras', the comparative element is forced on to the visual level, and the acoustic element of the SL is not reproduced (Chesterman 1997: 110-115).

(5)
ST.   Il patema testimoniale, appiccato il foco delle anime, **deflagrava ad epos**. Parlavano tutte in una volta. (Gadda 1983/1946-1947: 26)

TT1.   La pasión testimonial, prendiendo fuego a las almas, **deflagraba en ellos.** (Gadda 1990/1965: 26)

TT2.   Ayant mis le feu aux âmes, la ferveur des témoins oculaires explosait d'un seul coup **en chanson de geste**. (Gadda 1963/1957: 29, *my emphasis)*

The expression *deflagrava ad epos* is an educated register which demonstrates the novel's habitual strategy of combining different registers, dialect,

colloquialisms and elevated speech, all at the same narrative level. The register of lower social levels of speech, as seen in their declarations, take on epic tones, and this connotation is clearly appreciated in the French translation with the association between the *epos* and the 'chanson de geste'. This adaptation, which reveals a clear tendency to domestication of the language, (it becomes hard not to think in terms of the French literary tradition) suffuse the hybrid stylistics of the original but is not found in the Spanish version.

The word *epos* means a 'fable' or a 'fable with epic tinges'. The word *epos* is a key word in the original: it is an explicit nod to deferred discourse proffered through the mouths of those being questioned, so that the phonic element is present through the use of indirect speech. Besides which, it is also a rhetorical element with nuances of irony, because it is indeed difficult to imagine some of the shabbier neighbours, with their uneducated use of language, as befits the communicative immediacy, and their high dialectal content, regaling their listener with an epic tale.

(6)
ST.   Domandò ancora se fossero rimaste delle tracce... o impronte, o altro... dell'assassino. (Quel termine della **collettività fabulante** gli si era ormai annidato nei timpani: gli forzò la lingua a un errore). (Gadda 1983/1946-1947: 30)

TT1.   Preguntó además si por ventura quedaban trazas... o huellas, o cualquier otra cosa... del asesino (aquel término de la colectividad **fabulante** ya se le había metido en los tímpanos; y le forzó la lengua al error). (Gadda 1990/1965: 29)

TT2.   Il demanda une fois de plus si on avait relevé des traces, empreintes, ou autre... de l'assassin (ce terme, issu de **l'imagination collective**, s'était logé dans ses oreilles et il le prononça malgré lui). (Gadda 1963/1957: 32-33, *my emphasis*)

Our third example shows how the acoustic element forms part of the context. It is produced by the speaker and it is not a strategy of a bodily-related sound. Nonetheless, it is a strategy or a resource used to give the idea of orality because it alludes to the noisy clamouring of the neighbours. In this case, the French translation uses the strategy of modulation/generalisation, thereby diminishing the hyperbolic perception of the discourse which is channelled through the word *fabulante*, an adjective which makes a clear paradigmatic reference to these raucous neighbours and their shouting, and their unreliable witness statements.

5. Conclusions

From this analysis of the fragments taken from the Spanish and the French translations, we can see that the process of translation has been dealt with from different perspectives.

Juan Ramón Masoliver's Spanish version prefers the creation of a flowing prose with expressions that remind one, on numerous occasions, of examples from Spanish classical literature, in particular in the narrative.

That being said, we can also appreciate that at times the colloquial register and the occasional use of more classic phrases set off a domestication process whose result is certainly questionable from the point of view of the effect produced, probably due to the typically Spanish touch of the register which undoubtedly awakens feelings in the Spanish reader. This particular strategy in translation has been widely criticised by Antoine Berman, who acknowledges that it is most unusual to be able to reproduce the vernacular in a translation without it sounding like a pastiche or a parody of the original text (Berman 1999: 63-65), as we can see in the following example.

(7)
ST.   «Ecché macché! Macché un cavolo, sora Teresa mia! Che avrò li occhi pe nun vedecce? Staressimo bene.» (Gadda 1983/1946-1947: 28)

TT1.   «¡Qué hablar ni hablar! Ni hablar un cuerno, seora Teresa mía. ¿O es que tengo los clisos pa no ver? Estaría una fresca...» (Gadda 1990/1957: 27)

Borrowing words like 'clisos', from the Spanish gypsy dialect *caló* (see Corominas 1973), or, as is documented in classical literature, abbreviating 'señor' or 'señora' to *seor* or *seora*, produces a strange effect on the reader. Masoliver, in trying to mimic the diatopic and diastratic registers of the original, uses words which conjure up a completely different reference for the Spanish reader, than do the original words for the Italian reader. It is indeed questionable whether the text functionality and adaptation, to use House's terminology, have been correctly discharged.

Another of Juan Ramón Masoliver's strategies is to link the dialectal tongue to a morphological or lexical incorrection. So we might come across words like *entoavía* and *mismamente*, or imperative forms such as, *me deje que lo piense*, which all point to the distratic aspect, that is to say, to the cultural register of the speaker, but not to the diatopic or regional register.

The French version that Louis Bonalumi proposes is, in many ways, similar in the strategies employed to differentiate dialect and standard language:

(8)
ST.   «Gesummaria! Prima aveva sonato alla sora Liliana...» «Chi?» «Ma l'assassino...» «Ma qua' assassine si nun ce stà 'o muorto? La sora Liliana (Ingravallo trepidò), sola in casa, non aveva aperto. «Era nel bagno... sì... stava facendo il bagno.» (Gadda 1983/1946-1947: 20)

TT2.   «Juste ciel, il avait sonné d'bord chez Ma'me Liliane». «¿Qui donc?» «Mais l'assassin!» «Quel assassin, puisqu'y a pas de cadavre? «Bref, se trouvant seule chez elle, Mam'Liliane (Ingravallo s'agita) n'avait pas ouvert. **Pasque** elle était dans son bain... **Voui,** elle s'prenait un bain.» (Gadda 1963/1957: 25, *my emphasis*)

However, in other instances, Bonalumi reflects the diatopic register by using elision and writing out the common spoken-French contractions:

(9)
ST.   «Ma sor commissario mio... un'emozzione così! Chi ce pensa ar beretto, in queli momenti? Che ve pare?... Diteme voi, quanno che spareno tutti sti córpi, si ve pare che una signora po pensà ar beretto...» (Gadda 1983/1946-1947: 22)

TT2.   «Mon cher **m'sieu** l'Commissaire! Qui qui s'occupe encore d'casquettes à des moments pareils? **C'pas** votre avis? Quand ça tire tous ces coups de revolvers, dites, vous croyez qu'une dame, elle peut penser aux casquettes?» (Gadda 1963/1957: 26, *my emphasis*)

Louis Bonalumi prefers this means to reproduce diatopic variation, whereas Juan Ramón Masoliver's version in Spanish reveals a profusion of slang and defective constructions.

Where the French version also differs from the Spanish version is in the handling of improvised discourse, such as one might find in real-life. The Spanish translation adopts a distant communicative approach in order to recreate a different type of syntactical structure, whereas the French version alternates between communicative immediacy and proximity (Koch and Oesterreicher 2007: 34), as it tends to erase any improvised discursive markers which, in the deferred story, try to demonstrate the spontaneous nature of the oral expression. The syntax used by Louis Bonalumi tends to elevate the register of the narrative, and this is repeated in various contexts throughout the translation. The Spanish translation, however, is more receptive to a more frequent use of strategies of orality.

The tendency to normalise the features of spontaneous communication demonstrates a predisposition, on the part of the French translator, to elevate the register, as can be seen in the following context:

(10)
ST.   Il commendatore non si dava pace. Quel tic tac del maledetto orologio della stanza, di tocco in tocco gli aveva scavato le orbite [...]. A interrogarlo, nel primo pomeriggio, fu lo stesso Ingravallo, che alternò blandizie e amabilità varie a fasi un po' più grevi. (Gadda 1983/1946-1947: 38)

TT2.   Il Commendatore, lui, **était sur le gril**. D'heure en heure, le tic-tac de la maudite horloge suspendue au mur lui avait taraudé les orbites [...]. Ingravallo en personne entreprit de l'interroger, au début de l'après-midi, **faisant alterner main de velours et gant de crin**. (Gadda 1963/1957: 38, *my emphasis*)

The use of stylistic figures of speech and proverbs which are not available in the ST is frequent in the French version. Nonetheless, these changes can be justified as a compensation strategy, given the number of educated speech patterns which appear in the original.

We would like to end our conclusion with a brief comment about the methodology: the final reading of the two translations has been undertaken with special attention being paid to the effect in the ST, in particular, to the way in which the suspense of the scene has been recreated. Thus, we have analysed the

criteria of adaptation of the two versions with respect to the original, and have paid less attention to a microtextual analysis and criteria of equivalence: we have not carried out a quantitative study of the domestication of terms in the Spanish version, as we believe that the use or abuse of colloquial language and the introduction of typically Spanish linguistic elements has been undertaken according to the needs of the dialogue and the sensitivities of the translator. Our process has been similar to the one carried out in the French edition which, on the whole, manages to achieve, as does the original Italian, a complex harmony between educated and colloquial language, despite the final effect veering more towards the former.

The applications of concepts such as domestication and foreignisation, which have been used frequently during our analysis, are equally applicable to both translations. The combination of the two opposite terms in the same text might seem contradictory or paradoxical, but we believe that this contradiction is due to the absence of a specific canon (Venuti 1995: 43-147) for a novel such as *Quer pasticciaccio brutto di via Merulana*. The impossibility of being able to transfer the communicative and cultural dimension of the Italian dialects into the Spanish and French versions has led the translators to create their own system which borrows from both Spanish and French literary canons in order to reproduce the colloquial tone of the speakers and the rhetorical style of the narrator, without forsaking, in certain contexts, the few Italianate features which are the essence of the novel.

So we can only conclude by applauding the two translators, Juan Ramón Masoliver and Louis Bonalumi. By accepting the challenge to deal with the difficulties present in this novel, they have overcome one of translations' greatest hurdles: dealing with a work which, like many of its kind, is branded untranslatable. If we allow ourselves to be guided by the Benjaminian concept of the translating process, we can even detect certain complicity between the two translators and the original text. The fruits of this collusion are two translations which, despite our asymmetric findings, enable us to sense and enjoy the emotions produced in the original through the transmission of oral discourse.

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[1] The original Spanish version of this paper has been translated by Susan Jeffrey, Universidad Pontificia Comillas, Madrid.

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Chapter 7: Bringing home the banter: Translating "empty" dialogue in exotic crime fiction

Jean Anderson

Abstract

This study explores some of the issues and strategies related to the use of foreign language terms in dialogue in the context of "exotic" crime fiction, meaning crime fiction set in a country where an *exotic language* is spoken, a language other than that of the author (and presumed original reader), as opposed to the local or *narrative language* which is the main language of the original text, or featuring an "exotic" character. It surveys patterns of usage adopted by authors to create exotic atmosphere and language use (*exoticisation*), before analysing some of the strategies used by translators whose task it is to move such works into the formerly exotic language of the original (*repatriation*). Considering the English-French language pair, examples will be drawn from classic Agatha Christie and two more recent authors, Canadian Louise Penny and American Cara Black, who all choose French-speaking detectives, although in quite different contexts.

Keywords: Exotic language, exoticisation, repatriation, Agatha Christie, Louise Penny, Cara Black

1. Writing and reading exotic crime fiction

Even a quick glance along the shelves of the Mysteries section of a public library will provide evidence of the recent proliferation of exotic detective stories, that is, thriller writing across a range of subgenres set in locations other than the writer's and source readers' own. This is not a new phenomenon: the text often cited as the first example of crime fiction in English, Poe's *Murders on the Rue Morgue* (1841), is already cross-cultural, exploiting the fact that an unfamiliar setting can add significantly to the reader's sense of derailment, thereby increasing the suspense, at the same time as it offers a certain comfort, the idea that such things do not happen "here". Creating crime fiction with an exotic setting, or reading crime fiction from exotic countries, appears to be a growing trend: in the words of Jason Goodwin, historian and travel writer turned crime writer, "Crime fiction is the new travel writing" (Goodwin 2011). To cite only a few current examples, Briton Michael Dibdin and American Donna Leon set their detective series in Venice; Scotsman Peter May's China series takes place in Beijing and Shanghai, and his Enzo McLeod books, featuring a half-Italian, half-Scots detective, are set in France; British author John Burdett's Bangkok series consists of five novels to date. Goodwin is the creator of the