



# **The Translation Process Series**

**Multiple perspectives from teaching  
to professional practice**

Mariona Sabaté-Carrové and Lorena Baudo  
(Eds.)

**Volume 1**



# **The Translation Process Series**

## **Multiple perspectives from teaching to professional practice**

**Mariona Sabaté-Carrové and Lorena Baudo**  
**(Eds.)**

**Edicions de la Universitat de Lleida**  
**Lleida, 2021**

Edited by: Edicions de la Universitat de Lleida, 2021

Layout: Edicions i Publicacions de la Universitat de Lleida

Cover photo: Leone, Ulrike (2017). Gear. Pixabay. <https://pixabay.com/es/users/ulleo-1834854/>. Date of last visit: May 7th, 2021

ISBN 978-84-9144-281-3

DOI 10.21001/translation\_process\_series\_volume1.2021



This work is licensed under the Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-NoDerivatives 4.0 International License. To view a copy of this license, visit <http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/4.0/>.

# Table of contents

Foreword .....	7
<i>The editors</i>	

## PAPERS

Two teaching experiences in translation: Aiming to enrich differing university programs through an integrated and cross-cultural project .....	19
<i>Lorena Guadalupe Baudo and Mariona Sabaté-Carrové</i>	
Everyday language in Harold Pinter's <i>The Applicant</i> . Theatrical translation challenges in online classroom teaching .....	29
<i>Mariazell-Eugènia Bosch Fábregas</i>	
Preconceptions from pre-professionals about MTPE .....	41
<i>Laura Bruno, Antonio Miloro, Paula Estrella and Mariona Sabaté-Carrové</i>	
A Founding Father's Translation: Manuel Belgrano and How Translation Can Shape a Continent .....	45
<i>Antuel D'Adam</i>	
Inexperience and Experiences of an Interpreter and Translator .....	55
<i>Gabriela Lorenzo</i>	
Translation of Perrault's fairy tale "Peau d'Âne" (1694) in <i>Revista literaria: novelas y cuentos</i> (1940) from French into Spanish .....	61
<i>Marina Pedrol-Aguilà</i>	
The Pathetic Translator: Dialect as Untranslatable .....	69
<i>Anushiya Ramaswamy</i>	

## INTERVIEWS

A professor's views on translation .....	79
<i>An interview with Marta Susana Baduy</i>	
A student's perspective on the translation process. A current EFL teacher with a solid philological background who's dabbled her toes on translation .....	83
<i>An interview with Gemma Benseny Bonet</i>	

A personal experience of the lights and shadows of translating literature .....	89
<i>An interview with Marta Giné Janer</i>	
The musical possibilities of translation as a creative activity .....	93
<i>An interview with Annjo Klungervik Greenall</i>	
The power of intuition in translating literature .....	101
<i>An interview with Miguel Koleff</i>	
Reflections on translation and philology.....	105
<i>An interview with Matías López López</i>	
Passion and happiness, key elements of a vocational translator .....	113
<i>An interview with Txema Martínez</i>	
The importance of reflecting dialect in translation .....	119
<i>An interview with Anushiya Ramaswamy</i>	
Revisiting my experience with literary translation .....	123
<i>An interview with Cristina Solé Castells</i>	
An approach to translation from a Germanist's point of view .....	127
<i>An interview with Eduard Tapia Yepes</i>	
The translation process in a globalised world.....	133
<i>An interview with Isabelle Weiss</i>	
Reflections on literary translation .....	143
<i>An interview with Brian Worsfold</i>	
<b>INDEX OF AUTHORS</b> .....	153

# Foreword

The editors

*Today, as I was coming back from my local coffee shop, after a nice chat with Gemma, the shop owner, something she said was still spinning around in my mind. It was 7:45, and I made a remark about how marveled I was at how everything was so nice and tidy every morning, and at such an early time. “Well, you know, the secret is,” she said. “we’re here at 6”. I’m still reflecting on what she said, and I think to myself ... ‘this is it, this is exactly what translation is about’. Certainly, what everybody sees, the translated text (oral or written), is only part of the whole translation task. Searching for words, understanding the text, transferring it successfully and naturally into the target language is an essential part of translation without which the product would never see the light of day.*

*What we, the customers, see is the latte, the crunchy croissants, the fingerlickingly delicious slices of marble cake, the cinnamon rolls. The journey from home to the workplace, the hustle and bustle in the kitchen, the rolled-up sleeves, the broom sweeping the floors, and the cloth cleaning the table tops ... these are the things we do not see when we visit the local coffee shop. But without them, my morning joy would not be complete.*

*This e-volume focuses on this quiet, backroom task ... on the secrets that go on behind the scenes in translation.*

*We want to thank everyone who participated in this volume for their generous contribution in revealing their techniques, their strengths and their weaknesses behind their production. We hope to bring out a second volume on this topic, as we feel there is much interest in discovering how each of us have such different approaches to this much-needed and essentially human activity.*

## Is translation really a process?

Translation is a process by which the genetic code contained within a messenger RNA (mRNA) molecule is decoded to produce a specific sequence of amino acids in a polypeptide chain.



In this definition of the word “translation” as applied to biology, one word stands out: *process translatio* is a “carrying across” or “bringing across”, as the Latin “translatio” derives from the perfect passive participle, “translatum,” of “transferre” (“to transfer” — from “trans,” “across” + “ferre,” “to carry” or “to bring”). In fact, the modern Romance, Germanic and Slavic European languages have generally formed their own equivalent terms for this concept after the Latin model, i.e. after “transferre” or after the kindred “traducere” (“to bring across” or “to lead across”). In fact, this is precisely what translation actually means, in its purely linguistic sense. A translation is indeed a process, a series of actions that produce a change or a development from its source to its target. While on the one hand everyone would agree that translation is a mentally-demanding task, on the other hand, every single translator will follow a different translation process. And it is precisely the latter that can be considered the scope of this volume.

## What is the rationale behind this volume?

Over the years, writers, scholars, translators, linguists, and language teachers have expressed their opinions on how to accomplish a successful translation. Although many of them argue that translation is an impossible task, for example, Walter Benjamin and Jacques Derrida, others find it a necessary and feasible endeavour, for example, those supporting the functionalist and the *skopostheorie* approaches like Christiane Nord, Hans J. Vermeer, and Katharina Reiss. Among the many quotes on translation, there is one which encapsulates its mysterious and ambiguous nature, and it is one by the American author Ursula K. Le Guin:

Translation is entirely mysterious. Increasingly I have felt that the art of writing is itself translating, or more like translating than it is like anything else. What is the other text, the original? I have no answer. I suppose it is the source, the deep sea where ideas swim, and one catches them in nets of words and swings them shining into the boat... where in this metaphor they die and get canned and eaten in sandwiches.

Regardless of the views on translatability vs. untranslatability, the history of mankind would not be complete without the existence of a mediation of sorts between cultures that bridges gaps and brings people together. If only for that reason, translation is already worth investigating.

As translators, lecturers and researchers, we have come across plenty of professionals and amateurs who produce target texts, teachers and students involved in translation pedagogy, and other actors who are paid for a marketable product. Surprisingly, although the essence of translation is the procedure whereby a text undergoes a



series of changes, most attention is devoted to the final result at the expense of its most interesting part: the actual process. Added to that, the process of translation is more akin to an art than a skill in that it converts feelings and thoughts from the source language into a target language. Regarding this, Mona Baker quoted Lanna Castellanos in *In Other Words. A Coursebook on Translation* (1992, London: Routledge). Castellanos wrote in 1988:

Our profession is based on knowledge and experience. It has the longest apprenticeship of any profession. Not until thirty do you start to be useful as a translator, not until fifty do you start to be in your prime.

The first stage of the career pyramid —the apprenticeship stage- is the time we devote to investing in ourselves by acquiring knowledge and experience of life. Let me propose a life path: grandparents of different nationalities, a good school education in which you learn to read, write, spell, construe and love your own language. Then roam the world, make friends, see life. Go back to education, but to take a technical or commercial degree, not a language degree. Spend the rest of your twenties and your early thirties in the countries whose languages you speak, working in industry or commerce but not directly in languages. Never marry into your own nationality. Have your children. Then back to a postgraduate translation course. A staff job as a translator, and then go freelance. By which time you are forty and ready to begin. (Lanna Castellano 1988:133)

Although, admittedly, it is inevitable to arrive at what Anthony Pym warns against...

You've been translating for years, you arrive in class armed with examples, experience, communicative methods, didactics and dialectics, and soon your students are floundering in a sea of disparate problems, competences and skills. Some kind of life raft is needed, for both teachers and students.

it is precisely what this volume aims to achieve. Through the "life raft" and real experiences of the contributors to this volume, we aim to bring to the fore some useful life-grounded examples of translation techniques, methods and applications that could be used by a spectrum of people involved in the translation experience.

In an attempt to fill this gap, the authors of this volume began contacting a series of scholars, translators, academics, and professionals whose work orbits around the area of translation, and quizzed them about their approach to translation and how they get on with a translation task. We were interested in the work behind the scenes, the hidden part of translation. We strived to discover the common and differing features of translators, if any common patterns could be drawn from which anyone interested

in translation could mirror themselves and draw inspiration from. In this volume, we have gathered the contributions of the collaborators in a set of interviews and a collection of papers, alphabetically ordered by the author's name.

## Interviews

### From the interviews, what have we learnt about the process of translation?

To begin with, one common feature most of our interviewees share is the fact that they became *translators by accident*. Because of this, maybe, there is a certain feeling of *intrusismo*, in other words, the feeling that one is practising one's profession without having received the proper formation. This is akin to being an actor without actually having a diploma or degree in drama or acting. But if a job that is more similar to an art is done properly, who can dispute its reliability and accuracy? If that were the case, who would not be interested in hearing the original techniques and sources of inspiration of Lawrence Olivier or Meryl Streep? I certainly would.

Another feature shared by all our interviewees is their background philosophy of *translation as a useful and necessary practice*. None of them have doubts as to whether their translation is of any use or not. They just go ahead with it. And they do it with a great sense of responsibility. Translation is, for them, not a trite issue, but rather as a task, a job, an endeavour that they undertake as a duty that is worth doing as professionally as possible.

A differing feature for most of our interviewees is the way they deal with technology, specifically digital technology from online dictionaries, databases, glossaries, and search engines to translation memories and terminology management tools. Some of them hardly touch a computer apart from using it as some sort of sophisticated typewriter, and they relish the good old days of leafing through and picking dictionaries off the shelf, literally, while others do not imagine their professional and academic lives without the presence of each and every computerized translation tool at hand.

### Who participated in the interviews? Index of authors

The interviews in this volume include twelve contributions from the following persons, in alphabetical order:

**Marta Susana Baduy**, an experienced teacher with a translation bias, has earned her teaching skills by means of hard uninterrupted work. In her interview, she reveals a few tips about what her translation pedagogy consists of. The experience she has

gained in translating all sorts of legal documents brings to the fore the importance of consultation with experts to shed light on occasional terminological issues. She explains an amusing story about a translation assignment she once received, with a happy ending.

**Gemma Benseny-Bonet**, a former university student, explains her love for languages, her early contacts with translation in her degree, and her first real-life translation of a text for her Drama class. Although she is currently working as an English language teacher, her interview reveals her interest and curiosity for translation. She represents those students who have a solid philological base, and who ply this expertise in translation.

**Marta Giné-Janer**, former lecturer in translation, discloses some of her secrets for translating, namely, working for periods of a maximum of one and a half hours, and letting her work “rest in a drawer,” later polishing it carefully. She now writes poetry of her own.

**Annjo Klungervik Greenall**, a teacher of translation, combines her teaching position with the translation of Norwegian poems. And not any type of translation but prose translation (or reverse translation), a directionality that purists of translation traditionally have either looked down on or simply claimed to be impossible. Annjo Klungervik’s artistic background and preferences reach out to translation for assistance in disseminating her poems and songs. After all, translation brings cultures together, by bridging ideas and philosophies from different cultures and even ways of thinking.

**Miguel Koleff**, a specialist in lusophone literature, introduces a new element into his interview as one of the keys to his translations: faithfulness, empathy and full comprehension of the original author and message. Koleff illustrates this with some anecdotes of his translation of the Portuguese novelist José de Sousa Saramago into Spanish, and confesses himself to be a “Saramagoan” who takes great care in translating his works.

Professor of Classical Philology **Matías López López**, translator from ancient Latin literature into Spanish, reveals his practice of retroversion (i.e. translation into Latin of texts in modern languages, especially poetry) and his belief in translation as a research task. Translation, for him, is a search of the highest degree of linguistic quality and, also, within his speciality, a work of interpretation of remote cultural keys. He understands translation as a form of writing that must reach the highest degree of artistic excellence and forces one to express linearly all the concepts contained in the source language. He defends and conceives of translation as an exercise in stylistic imitation.

***Txema Martinez*** is a poet, journalist, and translator. In his revealing interview, Txema gives us a good insight into his art. As journalist, poet, and translator, he stresses the vocational and passionate nature of the translating profession. One of the key ideas in his interview is: “if you don’t live this endeavour with passion and happiness, it’s impossible for you to become a good translator”. This enthusiasm is counterbalanced with an equally scientific attitude towards the languages involved in translation, and in the interview he contends that there is an obvious appeal for translators to study language.

***Anushiya Ramaswamy*** is a Professor of English and translator. She translates works of what she describes as “minor literature” from Tamil into English. She explains with plenty of examples how her translations have helped her become a better English teacher, and ponders on some advice she gives about her translation process: the concept of “intimacy” with the source language. The exact meaning of the term will be explained further in the interview. One aspect we had not heard before in the process of translation is the importance of the draft document, and what is left out of it.

***Cristina Solé-Castells*** is a teacher in French Literature. She occasionally carries out literary translations of her favourite French authors. One of her pursuits in translating poetry is finding one’s own musicality, rhythm and meaning. Interestingly, she warns us against too much technology, as “technology can spoil a good translation”. This approach towards the original text reminds readers that translation can become a craft and an exquisite endeavour.

***Eduard Tapia-Yepes***, a Germanist, focuses on organization, timing and effort as key elements to obtain a good final product. Also, as a good Germanist, Tapia Yepes considers etymology and phrasal semantics as good sources of meaning, also important in translation. On a more procedural side of the conversation, he warns translators against overly-tight deadlines, but also encourages them to set a clear timetable, especially for long group translations.

***Isabelle Weiss*** is Founder of Alpha CRC, a leading translation company. Despite the advance of MT, Isabelle believes that humans still have an important contribution to make. She derives her insights from long experience as a translator, reviewer, transcreator, language consultant, examiner and director of a translation company. Her interview exudes a genuine love and respect for the profession, as well as enthusiasm for her work: “I am proud of the fact that my personal success as a translator has allowed a large, global company to evolve, providing employment and, I hope, some pleasure and satisfaction to a lot of people over the years”. Isabelle emphasizes that

translation is hard work rather than glamorous, and requires adaptability and a whole range of skills that are changing by the day.

**Brian Worsfold**, Emeritus Professor of English and translator, zooms in on the dynamics of the narrative in a literary text in an attempt to show his ideas on the process of translation. Likewise, he considers that technology is not a very helpful element for literary translation, given that the translation of literary texts requires time for reflection and revision, especially in terms of translating voice, attitude, and narrative dynamics which machines do not reproduce adequately at present.

Annjo Klungervik Greenall, Brian Worsfold, Marta Giné-Janer and Eduard Tapiá-Yepes are scholars and academics who share a common trait: they do not translate for a living, but rather as a satellite activity that they undertake as a challenge more than as an actual job. Other than that, their experience with hands-on translation has been completely different. Reading their interviews will show the many avenues of the translation profession, and how translation has awakened a creative streak they want to exploit and pursue further in their future careers.

### How were the interviews designed and carried out?

Traditional interviews are usually conducted face-to-face and in-person. In this case though, both interviewers and interviewees were in different places geographically, and so the bulk of our interviews were online and they were conducted by means of i) videoconferencing, as a synchronous online communication, and ii) email, as an asynchronous offline communication consisting of a series of questions that the interviewees could select with an eye to eliciting as much information as possible on how best to reveal their translation process, in a first round, followed by a second round with fine-tuning questions prompted by the first batch of answers.

One could well question the lack of freshness of asynchronous offline e-mail communication, which could be counteracted with the argument that asynchronous interviews are very useful for reflective processes which help to assure rigour (Kitvits 2005, cited in Dowling 2012). In fact, our email interviews went through two-phases: the first phase consisted in a list of generic raw questions that our interviewees selected as they saw fit; the second phase came with questions triggered by the first batch of answers from our interviewees.

The interviews (through video conferences and emails) took place between the months of March and August 2020.

In this volume, we have sought to obtain relevant and significant rather than representative data. In other words, we have intended to go in depth into the process of translation with abundant detail and nuances. We believe that, by so doing, we have managed to study the process of translation in a natural context. We are also aware that most of these opinions may be loaded with personal subjectivity, but we consciously took on this bias. Intentionally, we encouraged our interviewees to supply us with as much as their own professional, educational and even personal experience as they wanted to reveal and, by so doing, we hoped to discover all the ins and outs, all the complexity, and all the intricacies of their translation experience.

Interviews as a technique to elicit quality information is often used in academic research as the favourite technique whenever dynamic, profound, reflexive, open, and interactive data are called for.

For the translations from Catalan and Spanish into English, we have tried to be as faithful to the original authors, as close to their idiolect, their own phrasing of ideas, as possible.

## Papers

### What are the main themes that triggered the collaborators' contributions in the format of papers?

This volume focuses on varied but specific translation tracks under these umbrella themes: the translation process; translating specialized texts; teaching practice and experience in the translation classroom; using technology and breakthrough techniques in teaching and practising translation; code of best practices in the process of professional translation; translation as a professional career; difficulties and challenges for translators, via hands-on experiences and real-life cases. Each of these topics is covered by at least one paper. As editors, our primary objective is to expand the traditional ideas on the translation process by offering a collection of articles by contributors who come from different backgrounds. The contributions in this volume report on inspiring experience and research shared by academics, freelance translators, and entrepreneurs who help complement the current state of knowledge on the translation process.

### Who participated in the papers?

The papers in this volume include the contributions of eight collaborators:

Scholar and academic from the field of Philology, **Marina Pedrol-Aguilà**, and translator and interpreter, **Antuèl D'Adam**, give us a look at the the study of the translation process into Spanish of a literary work — Charles Perrault's fairy tale "Peau d'Âne", and a political speech — George Washington's Farewell Address. Their analysis will shed light on translation as a forceful statement of a particular time in history through the translators' decisions and strategies.

Specialist and academic **Gabriela Lorenzo** takes us on a journey into the professional life of a translator, analysing challenges and revisiting usual happenings and mishappenings along the way. Being translator, interpreter, trainer, and project manager, Ms. Lorenzo's insights in relation to good practices and resources are valuable for novel translators eager to start this winding path with a steady march. Her paper reflects Gabriela's passion for the profession, sharing tips on specialization, skills development, and opportunities in the labor market, with special emphasis on collaborative work as a means of enjoying a fruitful career.

Academic and translator of minor literatures, **Anushiya Ramaswamy** plunges into the complex theme of translating dialectal expressions. This paper sheds light on the challenges that the translator faces to convey a dialect's ambiguities, particular inflections and connotations into a standardized, and sometimes imperial language.

Scholar and researcher **Mariazell-Eugènia Bosch-Fàbregas**, in a similar line, analyses the challenges of translating theatre in an online classroom, taking as an example the play *The Applicant* by Harold Pinter. Ms. Bosch-Fàbregas takes into consideration words and paralinguistic features that continuously add emphasis, convey nuances or even conceal meanings in the everyday language used in the play, and how students can resort to a variety of strategies to convey these features into the target language.

**Laura Bruno, Paula Estrella, Antonio Miloro and Mariona Sabaté-Carrové**, lecturers in Translation at undergraduate and postgraduate level, dwell on the challenges of updating academic programmes with the latest translation technology in the era of artificial intelligence while still working on the fundamentals of translation studies, terminology, and language-culture differences. Going through their papers will show various experiences at universities that carry out in-tandem collaborations to achieve this objective.

### Finally, who do we think this volume will appeal to?

The editors of this volume strive to reach a readership with as many professional, academic, and *dilettante* profiles as possible. Since translation is such a multidisciplinary activity undertaken by people of all sorts, its sole association with the academic world



is poor and unrealistic. The constant demand for translators, their tight and busy deadlines, their lack of public visibility and meagre publishing opportunities are some of the reasons why professional translators remain in the background, behind closed doors. Hence, what could be helpful advice for present and future generations of translators remains unknown, unpublished, and unnoticed. The editors have also seen this as an opportunity to try and redirect this situation by facilitating a series of hands-on translating experiences from a whole raft of people who have translated different text types and language pairs.

This volume is aimed at bringing together translating competences, sharing experiences, and brainstorming around past translation experiences which could well apply to other future translation tasks.

## Acknowledgements

We want to thank all contributors for their participation in this volume, and appreciate their willingness to reveal and unveil their secret techniques, mental processes and approaches, and tools. Without their contribution, this volume would have never been possible.

Also, we would like to address our warmest and dearest thanks to our families.

## References

- Baker, Mona. *In Other Words. A Coursebook on Translation*. London: Routledge, 1992.
- Dowling, Sally. "Online asynchronous and face-to-face interviewing: Comparing methods for exploring women's experiences of breastfeeding long-term" Janet Salmons. Ed. *Qualitative Online Interviews: Strategies, Design, and Skills*. SAGE Publications, 2014.
- Le Guin, Ursula K's quotation from <https://www.prozcomblog.com/tag/quotes/>
- Pym, Anthony on "Christiane Nord. *Text Analysis in Translation. Theory, Method, and Didactic Application of a Model for Translation-Oriented Text Analysis*. Translated from the German by Christiane Nord and Penelope Sparrow. Amsterdam/Atlanta GA, Rodopi, 1991, 250 p. ISBN: 90-5183-311-3." Jean-Marc Gouanvic. Ed. *Traduction Terminologie et Rédaction* Vol. 6, N° 2, 1993. 184-190.

Papers

Papers



# Two teaching experiences in translation: Aiming to enrich differing university programs through an integrated and cross-cultural project

Lorena Guadalupe Baudo\*, Mariona Sabaté-Carrové\*\*

\*Universidad Nacional de Córdoba, Argentina

\*\*Universitat de Lleida, España

**Abstract.** This paper describes the teaching experience of an IRO's-funded university incoming project carried out between the National University of Córdoba (UNC), Argentina, and University of Lleida (UdL), Spain. The following paper reports on the three stages (before, during and after) around this project, from the main core features (contents, methodology, assessment, development plan, marking systems, students' feedback) to the minor details (platforms, paperwork). The paper concludes that flexibility, adaptability, and anticipation are the three essential requirements for such integrated cross-cultural projects to succeed. The authors hope the insights into this experience help pave the ground for maximizing the benefits of cross-cultural exchanges.

**Keywords:** cross-cultural; translation programs; teaching experiences.

The starting point of this paper can be found in the conversations of two teachers that set up to work towards a productive incoming project between two universities with diverging translation study programs. When a teaching mobility opportunity was granted, some challenging questions arose: What intercultural topics from Latin America can be appealing to European students of translation? What teaching methodology should be implemented? What areas of innovation can be offered to the host university's program?

Considering the principle that “the variety of course offerings, as a rule, depends on the expertise of the instructors who staff the program”, (Venuti 2016, 23), we hoped that the combination of expertise from two professors with different cultural and educational backgrounds could enrich a translation course if the planning, development, and follow-up processes were thorough. The main objective of this paper is to reflect upon how a translation course can be taught during an incoming

program in terms of contents and pedagogy. This program intends to describe and offer guidelines on how to improve a well-established curriculum which otherwise might resist permanent change without challenging the institutional position.

## Before

To begin with, the experience we undertook required coordination based on comparison and contrast of the syllabuses of the two university programs. Therefore the core themes of both university programs were contrasted, and adapted the students' response and requirements to the resulting themes. At this point, anticipation is key in matching the students' expectations to the syllabus offered in this experience. The two courses involved in the experience were: Translation and Languages in contrast and in contact.

The Translation course is offered as a hybrid teaching consisting of 15 sessions of 1.5h, of which 22.5 hours were face-to-face, while the remaining hours up to 150 (i.e. 127.5h) were devoted to out of class work. The teaching language in class is English and a good command of English (minimum C1, CEF) is required. Translations are mainly into Catalan, and some into Spanish. Taking these into account, the new experience matched the original syllabus of the Translation course, as the contents of the new experience would be taught within face-to-face classes (1,5 h on Mondays and Tuesdays) and the translation would be made from English into Spanish. So far so good.

Regarding the course objectives, the original course aims to improve the level of English through different translation techniques and to learn the basic principles of professional translation. Some of these techniques are:

- i. to introduce and analyse problems related to translation into Catalan/English
- ii. to know the basic theoretical principles for arguing and justifying a translation
- iii. to know practical strategies for achieving good translation
- iv. to become familiar with the most useful technologies, software and technological tools in achieving a good professional translation

In view of this, the contents of the experiment would have to take as many of these objectives into account. Subsequently, the next step involved revising the course contents and redistributing them, if necessary, according to the course calendar of the project. Now the course contents of Translation were the following:

The course is divided into 4 units

UNIT 1. Brief introduction to translation and familiarization with the tools needed to make translations. Introduction to the working method of translation: previous stage (fitting and working tools), executive stage (comprehension, transference, expression) and later stage (revision and edition). The 5 competences of the translator: translation, linguistics, documentary, cultural and technological. The translator's competence: most common translation strategies (transference, naturalization, functional equivalence, descriptive equivalence, cultural equivalence, transposition, modulation, compensation, reduction and expansion) Functionalist approach to translation and the theory of schemes: its importance for professional translation Some basic words: OmegaT, MemoQ, and DeepL. (translation memories and machine translation software).

We will start with informative texts (biographies, history topics, or wikipedia information on current events, social and cultural institutions) to work on the texts: identify problems and apply appropriate translation strategies.

UNIT 2. Translation of registers: Presentation of texts on various topics and identification of three lexical, grammatical, and discursive themes. Familiarization with paper and online monolingual and multilingual dictionaries, as well as with correction tools and grammars for linguistic, stylistic, and orthographic correction.

Translation of journalistic texts and search in parallel texts online (news on current topics - linguee, reverso)

Translation of institutional texts (EU) and search in specialized dictionaries (iate).

UNIT 3. Translation of audiovisual texts: identification of specific problems, techniques and resolution strategies Practice of the most frequent modality: subtitling, with practice with subtitle translation software.

UNIT 4. Cultural translation: Translation of texts with cultural components (translation of text on gastronomic and culinary subjects), advertising and commercial translation (translation of advertisements)

Translation of didactic and educational material for museums (architecture, painting/sculpture, photography). Translation of idiomatic language: set phrases, fixed expressions and sayings, metaphors and metaphorical language.

Fortunately, the timing of the project coincided with Unit 2. Translation of registers (4 sessions altogether) was the topic chosen for the Translation course, and the appropriate

adaptation was implemented. These 4 sessions consisted in introducing the main steps of the translation process, with a selection of corpus, manual/semiautomatic extraction of terms, specific research on the topic, and creation of the register according to international standards with CAT tools. As regards the Virtual content of the course, there would be a follow-up of the tasks with a terminological assignment on the topic of agriculture/manufacturing and its application to AI.

The Languages in contrast and in contact course required a similar preparation. In this case, the 2 sessions involved machine translation (statistical and neuronal) and practice on MT. These classes dealt with the role of the human translator in the current translation environments and the function of terminology as an impact factor in productivity and quality. The tasks would involve translating tasks using technology, CAT tools, quality assessment tools among others.

The “technical part” of the work was the easiest as compared with the teaching planning (e.g. methodology, contents, assessment and development plan). The platforms used for designing the work-in-progress were google Drive (for course design) and Skype-based communication (for oral exchange). Both software platforms were simple enough to use and simplified our interactive planning.

## **During**

For this didactic experience, we considered the following questions: who do we teach for? (characteristics and needs of students), what do we teach? (objectives and content), how is it taught? (methods, means) and which is the expected result? (correction criteria, types of tests) (Hurtado Albir 2013, 162).

The program included eight sessions which expanded over two weeks: a seminar of four classes for the Translation course and a seminar of four classes for the Languages in Contrast and Languages in Contact course. An emphasis on practice and theoretical reflection upon the topics was agreed upon well beforehand. English was chosen as a lingua franca and source language for the activities so as to exploit the students’ production into Catalan and Castilian Spanish to compare with and contrast against Latin American Spanish —the native Spanish variant of the guest teacher.

The first step was to analyze the translation study program of each university. Contents and projects present in the UNC program that could enrich the UdL program were taken into consideration. After a thorough analysis, it was decided that: a) in the case of the Course on Languages in Contrast, students and teacher



from the host university would benefit from learning about intercultural tensions in Latin American translation settings and then apply those concepts to intercultural tensions localized in Catalonia and b) in the case of the Translation Course, the focus would be placed on technology applied to both translation and terminology with the main aim pointing at current demands and standards of the translation job market.

One of the objectives we set for the Translation course was to try to cover the most pressing needs for the training of translators for their professional future. Two components were central to achieving this goal: technology and innovation. “Technological dimensions continue to present fresh scope to bridge the gap between translation theory and practice, ideally to respond to ever-present translator suspicions as to the usefulness of theory in actual translation practice” (O’Hagan 2020, 7). A specialized content was selected for the Translation Course: computer-assisted tools, terminology management process and a specific field of knowledge—Agriculture, since Lleida, like Córdoba, is placed in an agricultural region and this would facilitate the search of geographical variants of terms, if any. The classes followed the methodology of presentation by the teacher, linking the cases and examples with previously covered theoretical topics such as functionalist approaches. Then, the students completed a set of exercises working in pairs and an additional activity was assigned as homework to be uploaded to the virtual classroom. Tasks were designed as preparation for the final activity of the seminar.

The UNC has an existing collaboration with the International World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO, UN, Geneva, Switzerland) that was also made accessible to the UdL’s students and professor so as to enlarge its scope. This terminological project between UNC and WIPO is bilingual (English and Spanish); the contact with UdL opened the possibility to add Catalan to the projects. That is to say, the teaching project was developed giving room for future collaborations as well. “Translation is a skill that requires motivation and talent, and these must be developed into professional translation competence” (Snell-Hornby 1992, 18) The exposure of students to projects and tools designed by international organizations can be seen as a glimpse into the professional life of a translator, setting the example of best practices and global standards of quality and work ethics.

The bilingual culture of UdL’s students made it possible and productive to work with intercultural problems of translation, joining the study of theoretical concepts and research methods with the acquisition of practical skills to solve translation problems.



The Translation course group working on translation and terminology.

A variety of topics that pose intercultural tensions for a translator were presented to the students in a four-lesson seminar. The main focus of the seminar was on neutrality and intercultural tensions in bilingual and multilingual UN corpus related to disability, migration, HIV/AIDS and Malvinas/Falkland Islands. The lessons included discussions and several practical activities on terminological guidelines, editorial guidelines, culturally-rooted metaphors and modelling patterns that negatively affect individuals, groups and social practices. The final product of the seminar aimed at proposing alternatives in pursuit of neutrality and a desirable rhetorical effect in accordance with the existing cultural orders. Students took ownership of these topics and submitted reports and reflections on current language conflicts around gender—binary/non-binary language choices and their treatment in various contexts and genres—and the tension between Catalan and Castilian Spanish. The former is a topic that young people discuss a lot about and the latter is a familiar geopolitical conversation in the region where the host university is located. “Translation (...) can facilitate or obstruct communication, sometimes both simultaneously. Yet insofar as issues of cosmopolitanism, globalization, and transnationalism have become persistent themes in humanistic study, the urgency to recognize translation as a key practice of intercultural communication has never been greater”. (Venuti 2016, 37). That is, the professional translator of tomorrow does not only possess linguistic knowledge but they also have instrumental and intercultural competence.

“All knowledges are incomplete, and we will never reach complete knowledge; on the contrary, engaging in **intercultural translation** means becoming more and more aware of the incompleteness of knowledge.”

De Sousa Santos

We presented the students with ideas and concepts from canonical scholars from the Translation Studies and Terminology such as Amparo Hurtado Albir and María Teresa Cabré i Castellví, and from Cognitive Linguistics such as George Lakoff and Mark Johnson, but also with other intercultural perspectives, for example those proposed by the sociologist Boaventura De Sousa Santos, writer and philosopher Susan Sontag and specialist in rhetoric and postcolonial studies Samera Esmeir. The main objective of exposing students to a variety of authors and concepts was to trigger fruitful insights and reflections on their part.

### Activity

Reflect upon the intercultural tensions in **Catalonia y Gibraltar**:

- Language use and attitudes
- Exonymy/Endonymy
- Idiolects/sociolects
- Interlinguist pairs in conflict
- Rhetorical effects

**Present the topic individually or in pairs in class.  
Submit a brief report via the virtual classroom.**

Sample exercise that served as preparation for the final activity of the seminar on Interculturality and Translation.

## After

*Memory.* Working on a collaborative online document, the professors kept a thorough register of the plans, programs and potential activities to be developed during the

program. This *memory* served as a guide for the video conferences they held before the beginning of the courses. And while the courses were being developed, both teachers included modifications and comments. This method proved to be very used in the *After* - on that basis, the report on the work done was submitted to the Office of International Relations of the host university for administrative purposes.

*Marking and feedback.* Once the classes finished, the teachers also had to work in finding some common ground in relation to the marking systems and feedback to grade the final project for each course. A qualitative-based approach with consideration of submission guidelines was applied. The guest teacher assessed each report and then she sent it back to the host teacher so as to discuss and agree on the feedback and grade. The process of comparing the diverging systems of the universities and exchanging views on how to evaluate the students was an enriching experience.

*Survey to students.* We consider that carrying out a post-experience survey to the students might be of help for future incoming events. In this way, a better programme can be built in case any adjustments are needed. Some sample questions to be asked in a blind questionnaire, such as the ones in Google Forms, could be made available to students.

- Did you feel comfortable receiving a visiting professor to your regular course?
- Did you get enough information about this experience beforehand?
- Was the program developed by the guest professor innovative and useful?
- Was it an enriching experience from a cultural/linguistic/technological point of view?
- Is there anything that you would have modified?
- Would you be interested in taking part in a project which involves the guest professor's students?

*Future possibilities.* During the on-site experience, the two teachers spend plenty of time together in informal meetings to outline and display future possibilities for curricular and pedagogical innovation. The focus of the meetings was to answer the question: How can the translation teaching experience for students and teachers be improved by collaborating together? As a result, in-tandem projects for students of both universities were elaborated, the structure of a volume on the process of translation was developed, along with innovative lines of research combining

translation, technology and interculturality. “In translation studies, as in any academic field, retooling cannot replace ongoing research and publication as a credential or qualification that underpins committed, innovative, and responsible teaching.” (Venuti 2016, 26-27). Thinking about the future while still enjoying the current experience not only ensured the continuity of the academic relationship, but also worked as a motivation for improvement.

## Conclusion

This experience has helped us become more aware of the problems and principles involved in the teaching of translation. The open dialogue between colleagues of diverging nationalities and cultures was a means to exchange opinions and views, to identify similarities and differences, but most importantly, it was a source of mutual inspiration towards innovative practices in the classroom. One main concern was to find ways of offering a suitable course that could enrich the existing program, focusing on training bi/multi-lingual, multicultural and high-tech future professionals. A modular international seminar like the one exemplified in this paper can be taken into consideration as a means towards achieving that objective. The self-contained units (CAT tools, terminology management, intercultural conflicts in translation) allow for introducing flexibility and updated linguistic, cultural and technological content into a traditional translation curriculum.

## References

- Hurtado Albir, A. (Ed.) (1996). *La enseñanza de la traducción*. Publicaciones de la Universitat Jaume I.
- Hurtado Albir, A. (2013). *Traducción y Traductología*. Madrid, Spain: Cátedra.
- O’Hagan, M. (2020). Translation and technology: disruptive entanglement of humana and machine. In *The Routledge Handbook of Translation and Technology*. New York: Routledge.
- Snell-Hornby, M. (1992). The professional translator of tomorrow: language specialist or all-round expert? In *Teaching Translation and Interpreting, Training Talent and Experience*. Amsterdam/Philadelphia: John Benjamins Publishing Company.
- Venuti, L. (2016). *Teaching Translation: Programs, courses, pedagogies*. Oxon, United Kingdom/New York, United States of America: Routledge.



# Everyday language in Harold Pinter's *The Applicant*. Theatrical translation challenges in online classroom teaching

Mariazell-Eugènia Bosch Fábregas

**Abstract.** The combination of verbal and non-verbal language plays an essential role in theatrical representations. Communication is achieved through words and paralinguistic features that continuously add emphasis, convey nuances or even conceal meanings. The language used in theatre may vary depending on the final representation of the play. In this line, theatrical language is often polarized whether the play is to be published or staged. Regarded as “prefabricated orality”, dramatic language is constructed and ultimately adapted for its final representation. In translating theatre, such distinction might alter the translation approach and the language that is used. Harold Pinter's *The Applicant* is a revue sketch that employs everyday language, such as proper nouns and forms of address, as part of fictional character (and actor) conversations. In distance learning environments, where forums can be a tool of class interaction, student and instructor participation, debating and cooperation are crucial to develop critical thinking and achieve an active and successful learning process. This study aims at reflecting on the role of students, teaching practice and experience in the translation of Pinter's everyday language and orality in a fully online-learning medium.

**Keywords.** Asynchronous discussion forum, critical thinking, distance learning, interaction, theatre, translation

## Introduction

Online instruction is here to stay. Nowadays, distance learning complements and substitutes traditional face-to-face teaching methods by providing “a convenient, flexible and manageable alternative” (Brown 2001, 18). In spite of the positive aspects of distance instruction, critics claim that online learning “fails to provide interaction among students and between students and instructors” (Bullen 1998, 1). At university level, the implementation of online media has unarguably shaped the learning and teaching processes, which are in constant transition and adaptation. Some of these changes concern the role of instructors and the relationship with their students.



As challenging as it might seem, Lauzon advises distance educators to “search out means of reducing structure and increasing dialogue so that learners move from simply recipients of knowledge” (1992, 34) to critically think, examine and construct knowledge based on their experience and previous knowledge (Burge 1988; Garrison 1993; Lauzon 1992).

In fully online environments, student interactivity and collaboration can foster reasonable and reflective thinking (Norris & Ennis 1989). Appropriate critical thinking leads to reflection and deeper understanding (Laurillard 1993), keys to a successful learning process. For this, distance learning requires specific communication tools. Winn (1992) metaphorically compares computer-based communication tools to ‘shells’ to be filled by learners. However, these tools cannot work without specific design and facilitation, which aside from ensuring participation, definitely impact student performance, especially in environments where learners lack an omnipresent instructor (Picciano 2002; Dennen 2005). So, for meaningful and content-based communication to emerge, instructors need to determine “how best to position the shell so that learners are able to fill it in a pedagogically useful manner” (Dennen 2005, 128-9).

Asynchronous discussion forums provide an opportunity for participants to engage in course contents and online discussions that can develop student critical thinking skills, extend their learning (Mauriani 2006; Blumfield et al., 1996) and form a community that “can affect student satisfaction, retention and learning” (Brown 2001, 18). In forums, posts are archived and stored, so participants can reflect on previous postings and develop a thoughtful response or analysis in less intimidating environments than face-to-face or videoconference discussions (Dennen 2005; Alvarez-Torres 2001; Meyer 1996). Also, instructors tend to lead debates in traditional learning, whereas online discussions allow student control and contribution (Harasim 1987), which benefit their learning experience.

## **Module organization and planning**

Based on practical translation tasks, the study focuses on an asynchronous discussion forum as the communication tool among students and between students and educators to assess the critical thinking in posts, and the role and relationship of students and the educator. The study was conducted at UOC (Universitat Oberta de Catalunya) and involved a brief section of the online subject ‘Audiovisual Translation (English-Spanish)’, which developed from an earlier teaching experience and practice at Universitat de Vic (Espasa 2017; 2001, Bartrina and Espasa 2001). For this study, the subject was a required third-year degree course in the interuniversity Bachelor

of 'Translation, Interpretation and Applied Languages' (UVic-UOC). The 3-month seminar (mid-February to mid-May) examined the semiotic, professional and technical complexity in audiovisual translation focusing on subtitling, dubbing and theatre. Each module lasted for a month and each week dealt with a specific topic. There were no videoconference sessions or online lectures. Instead, educators provided students with the required and additional material, which consisted of bibliographical references and an online reading module on Audiovisual Translation that introduced the specificities of theatrical translation and translation priorities (Bartrina, Espasa; Buform 2020). Moreover, the campus offered a clear and structured activity timeline, an index with the subject content, the list of tasks and a deadline. In this sense, students could work at their own pace without the necessity of having a present figure the whole time. Forty-seven students enrolled, and the majority of them was female (34/13).

This contribution examines the last part of the subject (Theatrical Translation) and focuses on a week-time work that addressed orality and translation in theatre, in particular, the use of everyday language in Harold Pinter's *The Applicant*. Students had to complete four exercises and share their answers in the forum, the aim of which was to create an alternative space where students could collaborate, interact and generate high-quality and content-based debate for an active learning process. As research shows, offering students a space to engage in meaningful discussion does not directly and entirely guarantee high-quality discussion posts and interaction (McLoughlin & Mynard 2009; Buraphadeja & Dawson 2008; Dennen 2005). In this study, activity preparation and the role of the instructor were crucial to enliven participation in forums, which was recommended but not mandatory. Turoff (2000) claims that participation correlates with attendance. In traditional environments, student attendance increases when it is required, graded or students realize that they will learn. In online mediums, Dennen (2005) argues that students are notorious for not attending large classes where their absence will not be noticed or if marks are easily obtainable. The primary goal for this study was not checking attendance but rather achieve and assess student interaction and dialogue in forums. Since participation in the forum was only recommended, the same behavioral pattern (Dennen 2005; Turoff 2000) was expected.

Together with computer-based communications, design and definition of activities are determining factors for learner engagement. The facilitator needs to ensure that the module presents a clear and defined outline and a structured design of activities, which ultimately guarantee student participation and influence their final performance (Picciano 2002; Dennen 2005). As regards to the activities for this study, four different tasks were planned (Table 1).

TABLE 1. DESCRIPTION OF ACTIVITIES

<b>Task 1.</b> Read the script. Optionally visualize the staged version. Identify the typical expressions applicable to any job interview and discuss the possible Spanish equivalents.
<b>Task 2.</b> Discuss whether characters would address each other formally or informally in Spanish.
<b>Task 3.</b> Address the possibility and necessity of translating connotated proper nouns in Spanish.
<b>Task 4.</b> Select a part of the play. Provide a translation paying attention to the role of orality, formality and proper names.

Last but not least, knowing how and when to interact with the class is crucial for the teaching experience. In this line, “instructor presence is an important factor in generating quality student dialogue in an asynchronous forum” (Dennen 2005, 145). If the aim of forums is to engage students in participation, collaboration and dialogue, educators have to work as facilitators, as guides on the side. In this regard, the figure and role of instructors require a balance between an exceeding online presence and complete disengagement. In online media, a way of balancing instructor presence can include active forum participation. However, what scaffolding techniques should educators use? Should they “ask questions, provide feedback, give lectures, or promote connections between messages?” (Dennen 2005, 145). What is the optimal strategy usage frequency to promote critical thinking without eclipsing the students’ learning process due to instructor excessive presence?

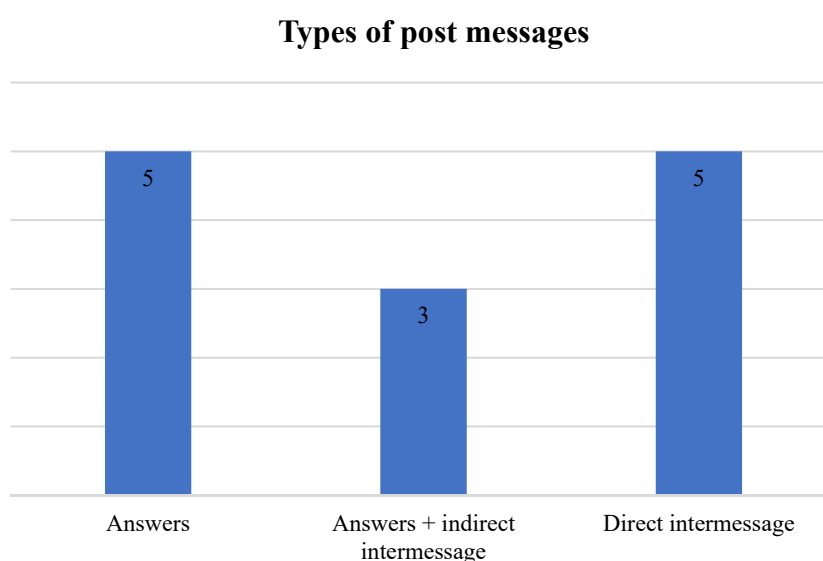
## Data collection

The quantitative data for this study consisted of the number of messages posted by each student, including the number of intermessage reference (messages posted as comments and answers to previous comments). The study also covers posts by the instructor, both in students’ post forums and in the instructor’s board. As mentioned previously, the analysis spans a period of one week. Expecting a low student participation in the forum, the study includes a qualitative analysis, which addresses and assesses the degree to which students appeared to be thinking critically while participating (i.e., how they reasoned their answers, the type of sources they used in their answers) and the different scaffolding techniques that the instructor used in order to promote active participation in the forum.

## Results

The practice-oriented translation activities aimed at dealing with British playwright and poet Harold Pinter's *The Applicant* (1961), an absurdist but comical revue sketch where a young man applies for a job, but he is ultimately subjected to an extreme psychological test. The exercises focused on the translation of forms of address and proper nouns as examples of everyday language. At the end of the week, the instructor had participated two times in the students' forum and once in the educator's main board, the latter being a token of encouragement (and a reminder) for students to actively participate in the forum.

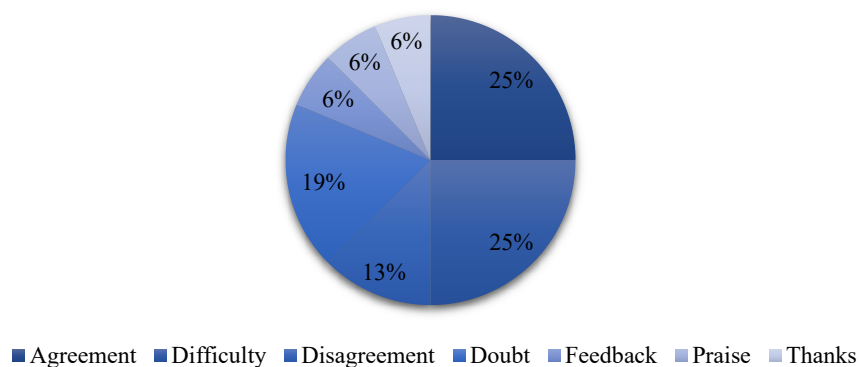
There was a total of 14 messages from students, which is a very low number in comparison to the total number of students that had enrolled (47). Nine posts were answers to tasks (6 female and 3 male) and five comments were intermessages (4 female and 1 male). Only 7 of the messages included task 4 (Table 1). The maximum amount of intermessages in a main post was only one, so the conversation did not continue further in the same line of messages. However, some students answered and commented other students' questions and doubts in their own post rather than directly replying, which made the difference between main messages and intermessages unclear. As deduced from the graphic below, there was exactly the same number of messages including the answers to the tasks (8) and the number of posts in reference to other students' messages (8), which are itemized as direct messages (5) to other students and comments that contained both the answers to tasks and indirect reference to other participants (3).



Graphic 1. Types of messages in posts.

After considering the different types of messages in the forum, posts were analyzed individually in order to determine the linguistic functions that participants resorted to in their messages (Graphic 2). As inferred from the graphic below, the majority of comments revealed agreement towards other classmates' word choice and translations (4). Similarly, the same number of comments expressed difficulty in the translation of proper nouns (4). Three comments suggested doubt in translating proper nouns, two comments indicated disagreement but showed different options (or solutions) for translation. Finally, one comment included positive feedback (from a post that had expressed doubt in translating), another one praised a participant's word choice, and one student expressed gratitude.

**Language functions in post messages**

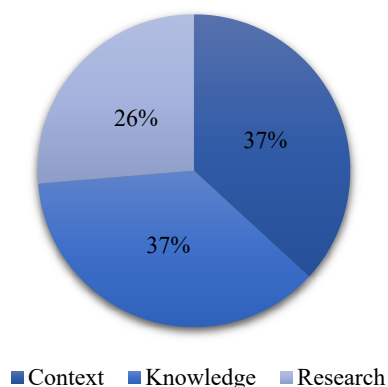


Graphic 2. Language functions in posts.

The following analysis (Graphic 3) consisted of checking the source of information in students' posts and how participants supported and reasoned their answers. As shown in the diagram below, three main sources of information were found: context, previous knowledge/experience and research. It must be noted that a single answer could perfectly include various sources of information.

As deduced from the graphic, the major sources of information to support answers and comments were contextual information (7 posts) and previous knowledge and experience (7 posts). This means that students similarly focused on the situational and conversational context of the script, the material available to them and their knowledge as primary sources of information and support for answers. The type of knowledge/experience differed in activities, but it entailed specific knowledge on language and (theatrical) translation. Finally, and in a lesser degree, few students conducted some research (5 posts) as support for their comments. In this line, research mainly involved checking definitions, etymology and translation in dictionaries and reading analyses on Pinter's life and plays.

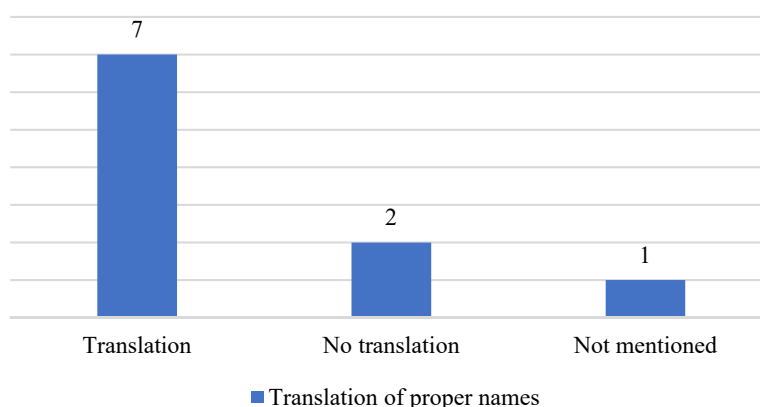
### Source of information in posts



Graphic 3. Source of information in posts.

In the next paragraphs, the study addresses the different tasks in detail together with the role of the instructor. For Task 1, students identified the typical formulas in interviews and provided similar translations. In the following task, the focus was on the degree of formality between interviewer and interviewee and its possible adaptation into Spanish. All comments agreed in transferring formality in Spanish, not only because the language that develops in professional and serious environments such as interviews should convey respect and reciprocal distance, but also because the contrast between extreme formality and the informal, personal and intimidating environment fills the scene with irony and confusion. In Task 3, students had to debate on the necessity and possibility of translation proper names.

### Translation of proper names



Graphic 4. Translation of proper nouns (Task 2).

As the graphic shows, the general tendency was to translate proper nouns in Spanish. Participants examined the context of the play and claimed that translating proper names maintained naturality, originality and humorous fiction in the target language/culture. Semantically, most comments identified proper nouns as meaningful hypocorisms, whose partially concealed connotations provided information about characters' behavior and role. One student noted that semantic alterations and possible meaning loss would result from "domestication" and the unusual tendency of adapting proper nouns in subtitled translations, which sparked discussion and debate. The instructor confirmed the student's post and added that translating connotated proper nouns allows a closer connection of their emblematic sense. As a final reminder, the instructor asked for maximum adequacy and coherence in translations. Overall, there was a general process of sense search and character portrayal that captured and transferred character personality in Spanish (Tables 2 & 3).

TABLE 2. TRANSLATION OF 'LAMB' AND REASONS

<b>'Lamb'</b>	<b>Reasons</b>
Cordero	Animal reference and direct translation of 'Lamb'
Sr./Señor Cordero	Real/plausible surname in Spanish
	Exact transfer of connotations (meekness, weakness, submissiveness, inferiority)

TABLE 3. TRANSLATION OF 'MISS PIFFS' AND REASONS

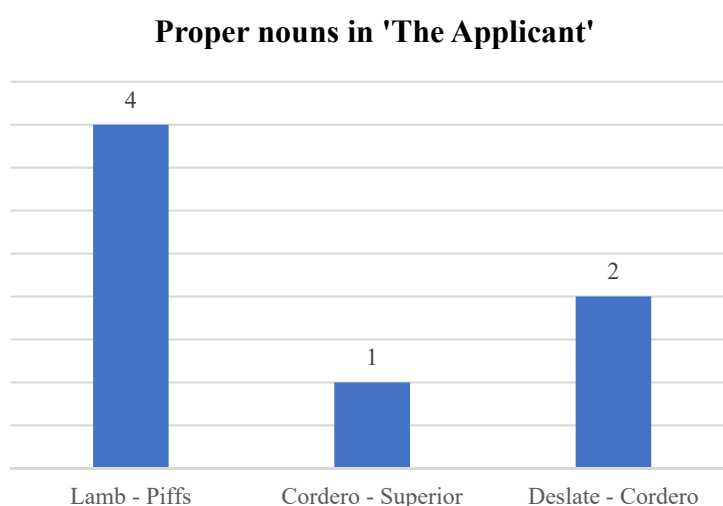
<b>'Miss Piffs'</b>	<b>Reasons</b>
Tonterías	Conveys the nonsensical atmosphere of the interview.
Burleta	Refers to the mocking tone of questions, the ridiculous nature of the interview.
Desatino	Conveys the nonsense of the interview and Miss Piff's questions.
Disparate	Makes reference to the nonsensical nature of the scene.
Srta. Dislate	References the silliness and absurdity of the interview. Variation of 'deslate' to cover direct sense.
Srta. Superior	Miss Piffs is superior to Lamb (beauty, power, sex)

The primary concern for participants was to check the etymological sense of both proper nouns to later find a word that would naturally work in Spanish. Overall, students claimed that 'Lamb' was metaphorically about to be sacrificed. In some cases, students included the title 'Sr./Señor' in concordance with 'Miss Piffs'. As regards to 'Mis Piffs', learners also searched the origin of the word and noted the character's superiority and dominance over Lamb. As can be deduced from the comments and alternatives for translation, participants were interested in a word that would 1)



represent the antithesis of Lamb, 2) establish a clear difference of role and status between characters, and 3) convey the nonsense and insanity of the interview. At this point, the instructor asked students about the possibility of continuing the animal conceptualization for ‘Miss Piffs’ in Spanish. One comment suggested ‘Señorita/Srta Lobos’ as a possible translation and argued that the noun applied as possible surname and it figuratively superiority over lambs, which become their prey.

Finally, students had to provide a short translation of the ‘The Applicant’. Students maintained the role of orality and the expressions of formality in their translations. While students preferred and opted for translating proper nouns (Graphic 4) in Task 2, the final translations not only showed a similar amount of translation (4) and non-translation (3) but also that more students opted for leaving proper nouns unchanged. This sudden change can be explained if one compares the initial brainstorming options for translation (Task 3) to the real translation and final choices (Task 4), where difficulties and doubts emerged.



Graphic 5. Translation of proper nouns (Task 4).

## Conclusions

This study addressed orality and translation in theatre, and in particular, it analyzed connoted proper nouns and degree of formality as examples of everyday language in Harold Pinter’s *The Applicant*. The purpose of this analysis was to examine how asynchronous discussion forums could work as a space for students to debate and engage in critical thinking while the educator accompanied participants, rather than overshadowing the students’ learning process. As Dennen (2005) and Turoff (2000) suggested, participation tends to correlate with students’ attendance, learning objectives

and subject requirements. In this study, low participation was evident. However, the results showed that students actively conversating and debating their answers, asking questions, posing doubts and challenges, praising other participants and even disagreeing with them enlivened the online learning experience. Moreover, it was observed that forums could work as a space for mutual collaboration, since students sometimes incorporated other participants' options, suggestions and comments in their own translations, which ultimately showed coherence and reasoned choices.

As regards to the instructor presence, interventions were reduced to minor clarifications and raising questions to maintain high content-related debate. The educator assumed the role of a "guide on the side" and tried to interact in the forum at a low level and only when necessary in order to give space to the students without an excessive presence. In this line, the instructor preferred guiding the participants in their learning process so that learners could lead the debate and conversations, asking and answering questions without them excessively depending on the educator's (online) figure. Despite seemingly distancing students and instructors and the whole teaching experience, the forum brought the learning practice closer. Overall, though working individually and remotely, both students and the instructor collectively collaborated, participated and contributed to class by sharing ideas and solutions, reasoning choices and ultimately assisting each other to develop critical thinking and enriching their learning experience in an online classroom.

## References

- Alvarez-Torres, M. (2001). On 'chatting' in the foreign language classroom. *ClearingHouse*, 74(6), 313-316. Retrieved from <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/00098650109599216>.
- Bartrina, F., Espasa, E. Buform, T. (2020). *Traducción Teatral*. Updated ed. Universitat de Vic-Universitat Oberta de Catalunya.
- Blumfield, P.C., Marx, R. W., Soloway, E., & Krajcik, J. (1996). Learning with peers: From small group cooperation to collaborative communication. *Educational Researcher*, 25(8), 37-42. Retrieved from <https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/pdf/10.3102/0013189X025008037>.
- Brown, R. (2001). The process of community-building in distance learning classes. *Journal of Asynchronous Learning Networks*, 5(2), 18-35. Retrieved from <https://olj.onlinelearningconsortium.org/index.php/olj/article/view/1876>.
- Bullen, M. (1998). Participation and Critical Thinking in Online University Distance Learning. *Journal of Distance Education*, 13(2), 1-32. Retrieved from <http://www.ijede.ca/index.php/jde/article/view/140/394>.

- Buraphadeja, V. & Dawson K. (2008). Content analysis in Computer-Mediated Communication: Analyzing models for assessing critical thinking through the lens of social constructivism. *American Journal of Distance Education*, 22(3), 130-145. Retrieved from <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/08923640802224568>.
- Burge, E. J. (1988). Beyond andragogy: Some explorations for distance learning design. *Journal of Distance Education*, 3(1), 5-23. Retrieved from <http://www.ijede.ca/index.php/jde/article/view/326/220>.
- Dennen, V. P. (2005). From message posting to learning dialogues: Factors affecting learner participation in asynchronous discussion. *Distance Education*, 26(1), 127-148. Retrieved from <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/01587910500081376?src=recsys&journalCode=cdie20>.
- Espasa, E. (2017) Adapting– and accessing – translation for the stage. 22, 279-287. *Adapting Translation for the Stage*. Ed. Geraldine Brodie and Emma Cole. London: Routledge.
- . (2001). La traducció per al teatre i per al doblatge a l'aula: un laboratory de proves, 57-64. *La traducción en los medios audiovisuales*. Frederic Chaume and Rosa Agost (eds.) Castelló de la Plana: Universitat Jaume I.
- Garrison, D. R. (1993). A cognitive constructivist view of distance education: An analysis of teaching-learning assumptions. *Distance Education*, 14, 199-211. Retrieved from <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/0158791930140204>.
- Harasim, L. (1989). Online education: A new domain. In R. Mason & T. Kaye (Eds.) *Mindweave: Computers, communications and distance education*. Oxford: Pergamon Press.
- Jarosewich, T.; Vargo L.; Salzman, J.; Lenhart, L.; Krosnick, L.; et al. (2010). Say What? The Quality of Discussion Board Postings in Online Professional Development. *New Horizons in Education*, 58(3), 118-132. Retrieved from <https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ966665.pdf>.
- Laurillard, D. (1993). *Rethinking university teaching*. London: Routledge.
- Lauzon, A. C. (1992). Integrating computer-based instruction with computer conferencing: An evaluation of a model for designing online education. *American Journal of Distance Education*, 6(2), 32-46. Retrieved from <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/08923649209526784>.
- Mauriano, P. (2006). Looking for critical thinking in online threaded discussions. *E-Journal of Instructional Science and Technology*, 9(2), 1-18. Retrieved from <https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ846722.pdf>.
- McLoughlin, D. & Mynard, J. (2009). An analysis of higher order thinking in online discussions. *Innovations in Education and Teaching International*, 46(2), 147-160. Retrieved from <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/14703290902843778>.
- Meyer, K. A. (2006). Best practices in the assessment of online discussions. In M. Hricko and S. L. Howell (eds.) *Online Assessment and Measurement: Foundations and Challenges*. London: Information Science Publishing.

- Norris, S.P., & Ennis, R. H. (1989). *Evaluating critical thinking*. Pacific Grove, CA: Critical Thinking Press & Software.
- Picciano, A. G. (2002). Beyond student perceptions: Issues of interaction, presence, and performance in an online course. *Journal of Asynchronous Learning Networks*, 6(1), 27-40.
- Turoff, M. (2000). An end to student segregation: No more separation between distance learning and regular courses. *On the Horizon*, 8(1), 1-7. Retrieved from <https://www.emerald.com/insight/content/doi/10.1108/10748120010803294/full/html>.
- Winn, W. (1992). The assumptions of constructivism and instructional design. In T. M. Duffy & D. H. Jonassen (Eds.), *Constructivism and the technology of instruction* (177-182). Hillsdale, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

# Preconceptions from pre-professionals about MTPE

Laura Bruno Paula Estrella\*, Mariona Sabaté-Carrové\*\*

\* Facultad de Lenguas, UNC Córdoba, Argentina

\*\* Universitat de Lleida

**Abstract.** While machine translation and post-editing has become an industry standard in professional circuits, most translation schools have not been able to accompany these changes by updating their academic programs. We polled 100 pre-professionals to confirm whether pre-professional translators are reluctant to accept post-editing jobs mainly because they have inherited preconceptions or negative opinions about machine translation during their studies, apart from their poor or non-existent practice during their academic formation years.

**Keywords:** academic programs; MTPE; Machine translation; postediting; pre-professionals.

## Pre-professionals and machine translation and post-editing

Any business with an international presence aims at offering its customers the best possible translation services. In a world that produces more and more content, translation needs to be able to select meaningful content. Also, in a context where machine translation technology continues to improve, companies and their professional employees need to keep abreast of technological changes. Machine translation (MT) is the automated translation of a source text into a target language. MT has greatly improved in speed and accuracy in recent years. It is now possible to “teach” computers to solve complex translation tasks in various ways, from building statistical models to neural machine translation systems that manage to map the way words tend to associate with each other. It is true to say that MT engines can process millions of words each hour and produce reasonable and usable output in most language combinations. However, on the other hand, despite these breakthroughs in MT technology, public opinion still maintains the original conception that machine translation has a long way to go before it matches the capabilities of an intelligent human being, e.g. nuance, tone, sarcasm, humour, meaning. Likewise, many clients refuse to bank completely on machine translation and acknowledge —reluctantly, as money saving would be remarkable for their businesses— the need for human

revision, to a greater or lesser extent. With the irruption of MT in the professional world came the associated combination of MT and human revision, aka post-editing (PE). Nowadays, in the professional sphere, the hybrid combination MT and PE has become a common technique. The stages of this two-fold process begins with the MT program producing a rough translation of the source text; once this initial stage is covered, human translators take over and browse through the text trying to spot errors and misunderstandings, and ensuring such aspects as accuracy, flow and coherence. This two-step method offers an unparalleled combination of fast and accurate translations, by means of the tandem machine and human translation. Strictly speaking, the human translator is then a misnomer since their task is closer to editing than to translating.

In a scenario where MT + PE has become a *de facto* standard of sorts, one wonders whether future translation professionals receive the academic and vocational preparation the market requires.

Following global trends, the translation industry in Latin America has dramatically changed over the years and Argentina is emerging as an important translation provider. However, the Argentinian context is quite different from that of the USA, Canada or Europe, as Argentina is a monolingual country positioned at the end of the supply chain, with more intermediaries between MT producers and Post-Editors. While the emergence of new MT+PE technologies has had an impact on businesses and companies, our translation schools and departments have fallen short of this challenge and failed to update their academic programs. Therefore, our soon-to-be professionals are not acquainted with the MT+PE process and they inherit old prejudices that sometimes do not even hold anymore. We felt the need to ask those future translators their opinion about the technologies they will come across once they enter the labour market. To this end, we conducted a survey and polled 100 advanced undergraduate students in their 4th and 5th year (i.e. pre-professionals) and invited them to answer 8 questions about their experience and opinion on MT+PE. Our sample consists of 90 non-bilingual informants from the School of Languages, Universidad Nacional de Córdoba (UNC), Argentina, and 10 bilinguals (Spanish-Catalan) from the School of Arts, Dept. of English and Linguistics, University of Lleida (UdL), Spain. We decided to include students from these two institutions to compare the results obtained as each group of informants differs in its academic and cultural profile and background, but none of them reported any experience in PE.

When compiling the results, we found that opinions about MT were mostly negative, respectively, in 40% (UdL) and 50% (UNC) of the cases while opinions about PE were mostly positive in 43% (UL) and 40% (UNC) of the cases. When looking at the participants' comments, we found that most negative comments revolved around the payment model, and many complained that MT produced awkward output or errors,

and admitted that they did not have the chance to practice PE during their studies. On the other hand, positive comments were made on recent improvements in MT quality that resulted in faster MT+PE tasks and greater help in developing other skills. These results are consistent with our expectations and confirm that new professionals in our local context are reluctant to accept post-editing jobs mainly because they already have prejudices or negative opinions about MT. To tackle this issue, we are currently working on extracurricular training on MT+PE to help them make more informed decisions and to give them the opportunity to gain expertise on this technology. Obtaining and analyzing feedback from future translation professionals is an essential step and will also help shape an alternative course methodology to be implemented at an early stage rather than introducing MT+PE in the final academic years.





# A Founding Father's Translation: Manuel Belgrano and How Translation Can Shape a Continent

Antuel D'Adam

**Abstract.** Few people know that Manuel Belgrano, one of the Founding Fathers of Argentina, was also a translator. In his translation of *George Washington's Farewell Address* (Washington, 1796), a work to which he was so committed that he wrote it between ardent military battles and despite many a vicissitude, he uses certain methods and techniques to make his countrymen or "*paisanos*" desire and fight for the establishment of an independent, free, and, perhaps most significantly, unified South American nation. Belgrano's translation not only can help us solve current and future translation problems by guiding us in how to take a Latin-American Argentina position in a globalized translation industry, but it also lets us delve into the translation process of a man who reflected deeply on what can be achieved through translation.

**Keywords:** translation process; translation industry; Farewell address.

## A Man With a Mission

General Manuel José Joaquín del Corazón de Jesús Belgrano, apart from being a lawyer, a *Libertador*, and the creator of the Argentine flag, was a translator, although this is not a very well-known fact. An Argentine research center known as Instituto Nacional Belgraniano, the faithful custodian of Belgrano's heritage, keeps his translations, along with a plethora of other valuable documentation. However, one document is of particular interest to this work: *Despedida de Wáshington al pueblo de los Estados Unidos* (1813), a translation of *George Washington's Farewell Address* (Washington, 1796) on which Belgrano worked between 1811 and 1813, while he was one of the military leaders of the Argentine patriotic forces during the Argentine War of Independence against royalist forces loyal to the Spanish Crown.

In Washington's text, as well as in Lincoln's *Gettysburg Address* and the U.S. Constitution, the founding values and ideals of the United States are codified. Belgrano shared these and considered it important to spread them—as well as the ideas of freedom, equality, and brotherhood promoted through the French Revolution—in order to achieve peace and progress in the region. In fact, Belgrano admired Washington<sup>1</sup>, and they both had a strong desire to emancipate their homelands from colonial rule and establish mostly trade relations with Europe.

George Washington was also very interested in maintaining the unity of the southern and northern states of the United States, which, as we know, did not fare so well, considering that in the mid-19th century the vicious American Civil War occurred, and the consequences of that strife still somewhat resonate to our days.

Just as Washington sought to share his ideas with the U.S. citizens through his *Address* so that they embraced nation-ness fully, Belgrano fervently hoped that the inhabitants of the region that he called home, his “*paisanos*”, would become aware of the values and ideals embodied therein so that they would desire and fight for the establishment of an independent, free, and, perhaps most significantly, united South American nation. To this goal he was so committed that he translated Washington's text between ardent military battles and despite many a vicissitude.

## A Man's Translation Journey

Letts De Espil (1944), who seems to be one of the few—if not the only one—who actively wrote of the bond between Washington and Belgrano, gives an excellent account of the latter's arduous translation journey:

Belgrano, in March of 1811, had nearly finished a translation of the Address. However, at Tacuary [battle] it had been burned with the rest of his private papers when catastrophe loomed imminent. At Tucuman during the spring of 1812 he undertook the work once more. (...) This February night in 1813, after an arduous two weeks' march through the wilderness, the patriot general and his troops were camped near the banks of the swollen Pasaje River.

---

1. He even “wore sideburns like those seen in the last-period portraits of Washington”, according to late Argentine President Bartolomé Mitre, a contemporary of Belgrano (Letts De Espil, 1944).

Here, before proceeding north, they had been forced to delay because of torrential rains. So it was that Belgrano had a new opportunity to complete his long-planned translation. This time he would take no chances on its loss. At the same moment as he and the Army were able to move north to Salta—where waited his enemy Don Pío Tristán with the formidable Royalist forces—his manuscript would be despatched to Buenos Aires, “to be printed” (p. 65).

After reading this extract, it is not hard to see that Belgrano was fully committed to his cause not only on the battlefield, but also on the translation front—despite having to destroy his work and start all over, despite the dire conditions in which he was living, despite the terrible foe that his army was facing. He believed so completely in the values contained in this document that had reached his hands in 1805, and which he had read and re-read ever since, that nothing would stop him from passing them on to his “*paisanos*”. As Letts De Espil (1944) translates:

“The ardent desire,” Belgrano commenced his *Introduction*, “that I have that my fellow citizens should grasp the true ideas that they should hold if they love their country and desire it to prosper on a solid and permanent foundation, has led me in the midst of my weighty occupation to undertake this translation...” (p. 69).

Belgrano’s military obligations were not the only obstacles that he faced during his translation journey. Although he was a true polyglot who spoke French and Italian fluently and understood English fairly well (Salvadores de Arzuaga, 2014), Washington’s prose seemed to have proven a little too obscure for the Argentine *Libertador*, who found in his fast friend and personal physician, Dr. Joseph Redhead, an English-native speaker who helped him in his endeavor: “To do it more quickly I have availed myself of the help of the American, Doctor Redhead, who has taken the trouble to translate it literally and to explain some of the ideas” (Letts De Espil, 1944, p. 69). What should be noted here is that Belgrano met Dr. Redhead in 1812. That is, *approximately a year after* having nearly finished his first—and, unfortunately, burned to ashes—version of Washington’s text. The fact that Belgrano had trouble grasping the meaning of the source text should not make us ponder solely on his lack of professional translation expertise, which must of course be considered when analyzing his translation, but also on the intellectual humility of the man that Mitre called “the male more just and more virtuous of the Argentina Republic” (Salvadores de Arzuaga, 2014) and, even more significantly, on his keen understanding of the collaborative effort that the translation process entails.

## A Man's Plan

Should we consider the current American situation —meaning the Latin-American continent's situation—, the effects of negative globalization<sup>2</sup> (Bauman, 2006), and the recent 200th anniversary of General Manuel Belgrano's death (June 1820-June 2020), Belgrano's translation of *George Washington's Farewell Address* remains more relevant than ever, as it opens the doors to the genesis of values and ideals that not only are present in emblematic texts such as the *Liminal Manifesto* of the 1918 Córdoba University Reform —which influenced emancipatory events such as May 68 (Romero, 2018)—, but can also help translators solve current and future translation problems by guiding them in how to take a Latin-American Argentina position in the globalized translation industry, thereby allowing them to work towards developing a continent more united than ever. In fact, Belgrano's ideas and values can be encapsulated in the concept of South-American unity, which will become clear now.

In 1816, the year in which the Independence of Argentina was declared, the Congress of Tucumán asked Belgrano for advice on what form and shape of government this newly independent region should have. Belgrano advocated for a constitutional monarchy (Fau, 2014)<sup>3</sup>. He believed that a descendant of the Inca should be king and that the capital of this territory should be Cusco, Peru. In fact, Belgrano wanted the unity of most of what now is South America, including Bolivia, Peru, and Ecuador. Contrary to what might be believed, this idea, known as the Inca plan, was supported by many, including national heroes Martín Miguel de Güemes y José de San Martín<sup>4</sup>. After all, San Martín's Army of the Andes and its emancipatory crusade were an attempt to *continentalize* the revolution that had taken place in Argentina.

Despite all this, in the end the strong pressure of Buenos Aires and the most separatist ideas prevailed. Ultimately, the region that this Inca king would have administered was divided into 10 separate states.

---

2. The possibly inevitable implications that a global community creates, including the import and export of crimes, coercion, and terrorism, without legal institutions accompanying it.

3. For those interested in more information on Argentina's history, Fau's book is an excellent starting point.

4. This should not surprise us, since, at the time, the idea of establishing new monarchies was seriously considered, as some level of political continuity was deemed necessary to ensure the stability of newly emancipated regions.

## How Translation Can Shape a Continent

After last section's brief historical digression, let us go back to Belgrano's translation of *George Washington's Farewell Address*, where he uses certain methods and techniques to promote his plan, that of a unified South American nation, and to how it can be a starting point to take now a Latin-American Argentina position when translating.

To analyze what Belgrano did in his translation, some key terms were extracted. The first pair was "the North" vs. "*países septentrionales*" and "the South" vs. "*países meridionales*". In the source text, Washington argues for the interdependence of U.S. northern and southern states and thus for the necessity of unity, and he talks of "the North" and "the South":

The North, in an unrestrained intercourse with the South, protected by the equal laws of a common government, finds in the productions of the latter great additional resources of maritime and commercial enterprise and precious materials of the manufacturing industry. The south, in the same intercourse, benefiting by the agency of the north, sees its agriculture grow and its commerce expand (Fig. 1)<sup>5</sup>.

Belgrano translates this in the following way:

Comunicándose los **países septentrionales** con los **meridionales**, sin restricción alguna, y bajo la protección de leyes iguales de un gobierno común, hallan aquéllos en las producciones de éstos, recursos para empresas marítimas y mercantiles, y materiales preciosos para su industria. Estos, beneficiados por esta misma comunicación con aquéllos, ven aumentar su agricultura, y extender su comercio (Fig 2)<sup>6</sup>.

There can hardly be any doubt that this choice was a very conscious one. It could have been translated literally and simply as "*el norte*" and "*el sur*", which would have been roughly as unspecified as what is going on in the source text. However, it is important to note that, given the fact that the United States had its borders already quite demarcated at the time, Washington's audience might have thought of more clearly defined referents for "the North" and "the South" than Belgrano's would have had for "*el norte*" and "*el sur*". Belgrano could have also used the translation technique of explication (Blum-Kulka, S., 1986), as "*los estados del norte/septentrionales*" ("North/Northern States") and "*los estados del sur/meridionales*" ("South/Southern States"), a

---

5. Emphasis in the original.

6. Emphasis added.

rather “safe” option that on the one hand would have made the referent clearer, but on the other would have leveraged the ambiguity of “estados”, i.e., “state” as analogous to “province” and “state” as a synonym of “nation”. Instead, he uses “países” (“nations”). He thus changes the referents from domestic administrative units, which would later become the Union and the Confederacy, to the integral administrative units, northern and southern countries, of a supranational region that is now South America. By doing this, Belgrano establishes a conceptual equivalence between the United States as a whole and South America as a whole, thereby arguing for the interdependence of the north and the south of South America and for the necessity of their unity, just like Washington did in his *Address* for the region. The effect is, precisely, the promotion of South-American unity, Belgrano’s great American project.

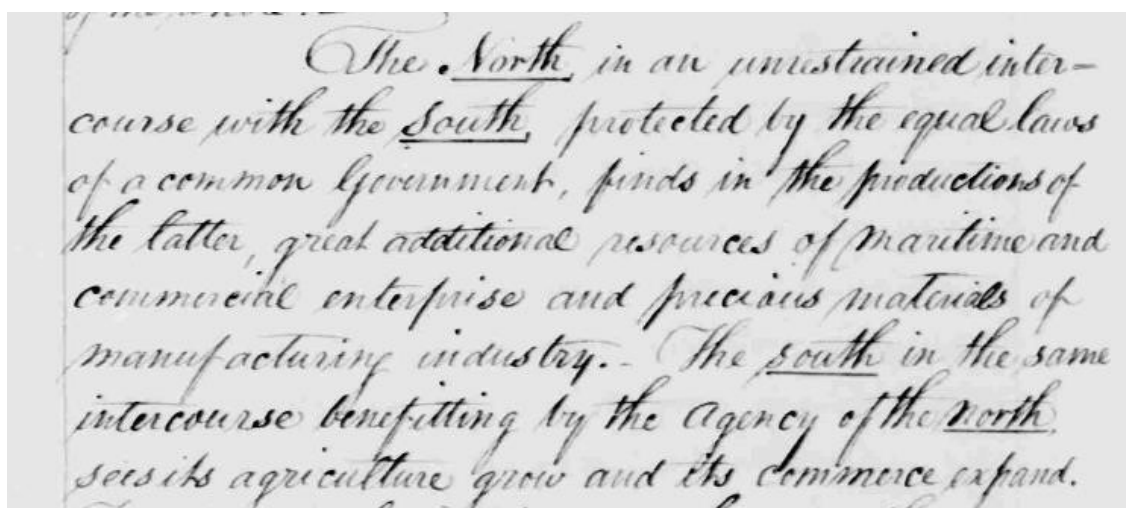


Fig. 1. George Washington’s Farewell Address (Washington, 1796, p. 224).

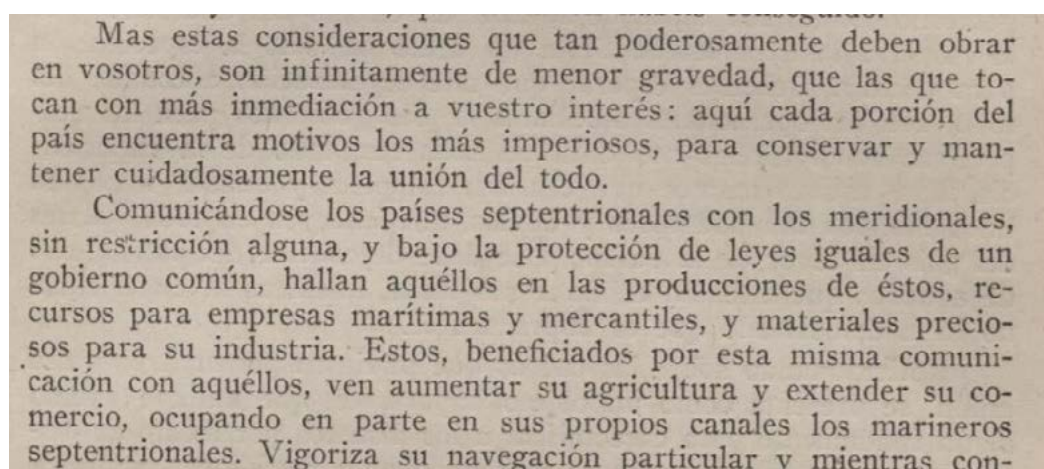


Fig. 2. *Despedida de Washington al pueblo de los Estados Unidos* (Belgrano, 1813, p. 65).



This is, almost certainly, the decision of an interculturally aware translator who has a translation and intercultural competence based on situated (South-American Argentina) knowledge and who finds an alternative and epistemologically creative translation solution evidencing his commitment towards a relevant issue of the political agenda of the time.

Another example of Belgrano's South-American positioning as a translator is his translation of "American" for "*americano*": compare "The name of **American**<sup>7</sup>, which belongs to you, in your national capacity, must always exalt the just pride of Patriotism, more than any appellation derived from local discriminations" (Fig. 3) to "El nombre de **americano**<sup>8</sup>, que os pertenece en vuestro estado nacional, siempre debe excitar un justo orgullo patriótico, más que cualquier otro nombre, que derive de los lugares en que habéis nacido" (Fig. 4).

In the first fragment, Washington encourages his readers to think of themselves as Americans (U.S. citizens) and not, for example, as Virginians or Georgians, further fostering the American unity he so wanted. At first sight, Belgrano's appears to be a literal translation, the mistake of a novel translator unaware of the fact that in Spanish "*americano*" is not only someone who was born in the United States of America, but also someone from Guatemala, Mexico, or Argentina. It could be considered almost an epistemicide (De Sousa Santos, 2014), i.e., the systematic destruction of rival (non-central, Latin-American) forms of knowledge, in so much as a fundamental part of the identity of more than 600 million people is obliterated in the process of using it. This would be contrary to Belgrano's emancipatory ideals, but let us not forget Dr. Joseph Redhead's hermeneutic role—Belgrano was a relatively inexperienced translator who needed help to translate Washington's Address to his full satisfaction, so it would not be too hard to imagine that he could have made errors such as these.

In other words, the translation, undoubtedly, should be "*estadounidense*" ("U.S. citizen").

Right? Not necessarily. In fact, at Belgrano's time, United States linguistic imperialism over America was not a reality and, as an interculturally aware translator with a translation and intercultural competence based on situated knowledge, Belgrano probably used the term "*americano*" in reference to the Inca's plan region, that territory that is roughly South America now: something that may not be so clear when first

---

7. Emphasis added.

8. Emphasis added.

coming across this word, but that it becomes so when, a few paragraphs later, he uses “*países meridionales*” y “*países septentrionales*”. In other words, while Washington’s referent for “American” is from the United States, Belgrano’s for “*americano*” seems to be an inhabitant of the entire continent. Again, the effect achieved in the translation is the promotion of Belgrano’s great project for the region, South-American unity.

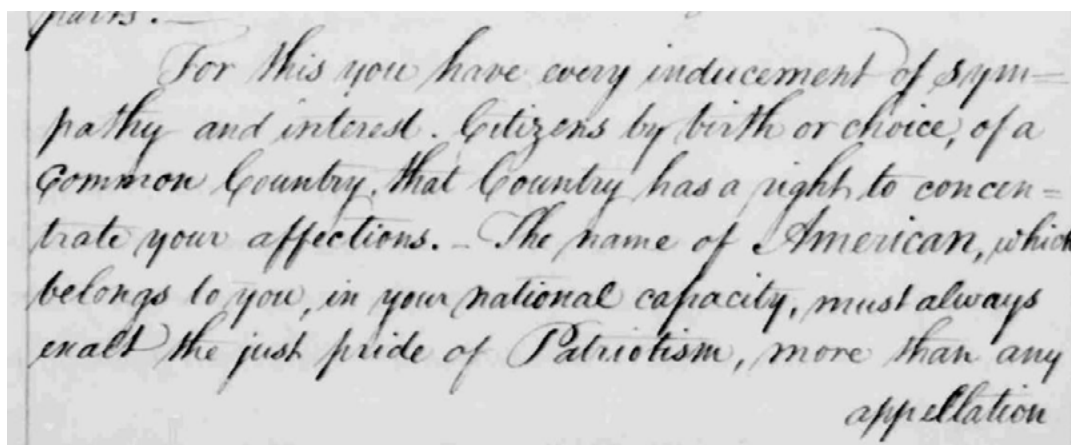


Fig. 3. George Washington’s Farewell Address (Washington, 1796, p. 223).

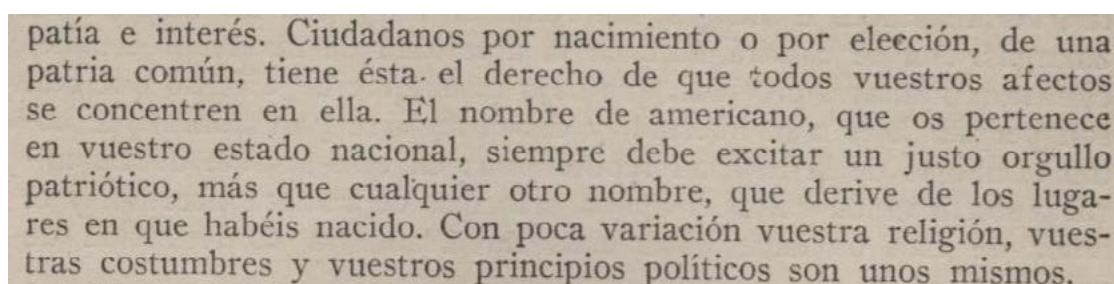


Fig. 4. *Despedida de Washington al pueblo de los Estados Unidos* (Belgrano, 1813, p. 65).

## Conclusion

Globalization has opened up an ever-expanding world of possibilities for translators and other language professionals. Technology, remote working, and internationalism make possible for us to translate more and for more clients from all over the world. However, there are some related potential dangers affecting translation, including negative globalization, the tensions between the local and the global, and Industry 4.0. As translators, we may not have the policy tools to actively address these or other issues, but it is certainly our professional responsibility to be aware of the highly geopolitical and ideological context in which a globalized translation industry must by necessity be immersed.



In this paper, we have tried to show how General Manuel Belgrano's translation of *George Washington's Farewell Address* (Washington, 1796), i.e., *Despedida de Wáshington al pueblo de los Estados Unidos* (Belgrano, 1813), can be a starting point to help us solve current and future translation problems by guiding us in how to take a Latin-American Argentina position in a globalized world. Although recent events, such as the COVID-19 pandemic and the widespread rise of nationalism, seem to challenge the usually undisputed assertion that the globalization process will continue with ever-increasing force, it is unlikely that we could seriously argue for the possibility of going back to what the world was a hundred or even thirty years ago.

Thus, it is our strong belief that translators, both experienced and novel, should actively take into account the intercultural tensions regarding the texts on which they work and ask themselves: what epistemologically creative alternatives evidencing political commitment towards relevant issues of the current national, regional, and international agenda can I put forward as an interculturally aware translator?

In our everyday work, we tend to forget that translation has the potential to be much more than just a job. In the end, we may not have the tools to shape a continent, but Belgrano did not either. However, there can be a political dimension to translating on which this paper will hopefully encourage experienced, novel, and future translators to reflect so as to consciously position themselves in the global translation arena, whichever that position might be.

## References

- Bauman, Z. (2006). *Liquid Fear*. Cambridge, England: Polity.
- Belgrano, M. (1813). *Despedida de Wáshington al pueblo de los Estados Unidos*. Buenos Aires, Argentina: Imprenta de Niños Expósitos.
- Blum-Kulka, S. (1986). Shifts of cohesion and coherence in translation. In J. House and S. Blum-Kulka (Eds.). *Interlingual and intercultural communication: Discourse and cognition in translation and second language acquisition studies*, 17-35. Tubinga, Alemania: Narr.
- De Sousa Santos, B. (2014). *Epistemologies of the South. Justice against Epistemicide*. Abingdon, England: Routledge.
- Fau, M. E. (2014). *Diccionario básico de historia argentina*. Buenos Aires, Argentina: La Bisagra Editorial.
- Letts De Espil, C. (1944). Belgrano and Washington. Their Collaboration in Immortality. *Bulletin of the Pan American Union*, 78, 64-69.
- Romero, R. R. (2018). Significado de la Reforma Universitaria de 1918. *MenteClara Foundation's Peer-review Journal*, 3(2), 55-73.

Salvadores de Arzuaga, C. I. (2014). BELGRANO: The male more just and more virtuous of the Argentina Republic. *Aequitas Virtual*, 8(21). Retrieved August 12, 2020, from <https://p3.usal.edu.ar/index.php/aequitasvirtual/article/view/2385/2964>.

Washington, G. (1796). *George Washington's Farewell Address*. Retrieved April 18, 2020, from <https://www.loc.gov/resource/mgw2.024/?sp=229&st=text>.

# Inexperience and Experiences of an Interpreter and Translator

Gabriela Lorenzo

**Abstract.** Whenever one is professionally initiated in both interpreting and translation, the market values experience, specialization and skill in the field. How do you get that experience and skill? As a teacher, in the classroom, I always aim to share inexperience, experiences, best practices and resources to get on the road and stay on track. The process of reflection to value the decision making and the path taken helps us as professionals to give value to our task, to respect our profession and to be part of a community of professionals to whom we can turn for support. The road ahead for an independent professional presents innumerable options and poses difficult decisions. Therefore, we intend to provide tools for decision making and to face the bifurcations that our path may present.

**Keywords:** professional interpreting; specialized translation.

## The end and the beginning of the journey

The beginning of professional life, like every important beginning in our lives, raises many questions, doubts, and insecurities. On our journey we encounter a signal to stop and we approach a moment that for years seemed distant: the end of the university career and the beginning of a new career, the professional one. After several years of university training, the new translator/interpreter faces a new path that obliges him/her to making decisions, one more important than the other. Roles change and new actors and factors begin to influence, priorities change and pose new challenges. Among these new elements is the labor market, real life. The labor market in the area in which we develop the translators, interpreters and linguists in general, values the specialization, the experience and the skill. How is it possible to obtain this triad so valued, in cases, exclusive? Although at times it may seem self-referential, it is my objective to share inexperience, experiences, good practices and resources to set out on the journey and stay in the profession, from a close perspective, from the vision of a colleague who long ago set out on this path and has travelled through these same questions.

The path to professional development is not straight, it is not simple, it is not easy and every stumbling block, every stone on the way, presents us with the opportunity to reflect, to reorder ourselves and to rethink the journey. The process of thoughtfulness to value the decision making and the journey travelled helps us as professionals to give value to our task, respect our profession and be part of a community of professionals to whom we can turn for support.

## **What do we mean when we talk about specialization, experience and skill?**

### **Specialization**

Specialization is defined as *a process through which a certain individual passes when cultivating some specialty of a branch, science or art. It consists in a thorough study of a specific subject.* Without doubt, specialization presents us with a turning point in decision making: choosing what I want to concentrate on and making that area my specialization. This decision is transcendental, after having overcome this, the next decision in front of us is the form that this specialization will have, will it be a postgraduate, a master, workshops, training? We have no rest.

One of the main sources of inexperience related to the search for specialization is the lack of planning. If I could communicate with my college student self in the past, I would recommend that I begin to ask these questions before I get my diploma and start the process earlier to make the transition from college to work more of a transition than a sudden change. The planning that our pursuit of specialization requires taking into account two fundamental factors: time and investment, both financial and emotional. Can I make a commitment to this training instance for the period of time that it entails? Do I have the financial means to start and finish the training process? On the other hand, it is important to consider the relevance of use we can give to that training and whether this use will be short, medium or long term. The consideration of all these aspects undoubtedly affects the basis of the decision we take.

According to Estanislao Bachrach, doctor in Molecular Biology, creativity is breaking away from our common patterns of thought. A valuable aspect when considering options for specialization is related by the modality of it. We can opt for courses in translation or interpretation (traditional habitual patterns) related to a particular subject in which we wish to specialize. This can be a structured postgraduate course, but we can also appeal to our creativity and seek other sources of knowledge that will bring us closer to our goal. An excellent source of this applied knowledge can be other academic units, specific organizations in the area of interest, etc. Suppose that

a translator wishes to start specializing in medicine (broad field if any, specialization requires even more specificity), one option could be to sign up for a course in medical translation; however, there are other options. One of these could be to sign up for open courses at the Medical School, outreach talks, medical community events, etc. All of these options are extremely valid and get us in touch with first-hand knowledge, not from a linguist's point of view but from the expert's one.

## Experience

According to Oxford Languages' definition, *experience is the knowledge of something, or ability to do so, that is acquired by having **done** it, **lived** it, **felt** it, or **suffered** it one or more times*. You can't have experience if you don't have a first opportunity, but that doesn't mean that that first opportunity should be a job, we can gain experience in many ways, even before we apply for a job. In the current educational system, from the initial level, there is a predominance of the importance of traditional, logical and structured teaching without much room for creativity. Being creative depends on us, we must think, create our own opportunities to acquire experience either in nonprofit organizations, civil associations, schools, basically institutions that are willing to give us their time to help us in our acquisition of experience. I must say that many times, the satisfaction obtained from these experiences far exceeds expectations, we gain much more than experience.

For several years in parallel with my university education I worked in a call center, a job I hated, but as it was part-time, it allowed me to study and be able to support myself. Obviously, when I had the opportunity, I started working in translation and left that horror work. Years went by, I specialized in interpretation, started with my first consecutive interpretation events and a project of more than 20 consecutive days of interpretation arrived. Due to confidentiality issues, I did not have access to details of the subject matter so the preparation was quite lean. On the first day of the event, I showed up to interpret and started working. To my surprise, all those years at the call center served a purpose: the event was a request for information, or RFI, which is a standard business process whose purpose is to collect written information about a provider's capabilities and more precisely related to cell phones. I knew all the terms, I understood all the concepts, I was able to provide my interpretation services without problems, I enjoyed it. The important thing in the acquisition of experience is that giving value to what has been lived, no matter how simple, small or insignificant the task that has been entrusted to us, one can learn a lot from the way of working, from the fulfillment of objectives, from working as a team; everything can be transformed into a learning opportunity.

## Skill

Finally, we will address the third concept of this fabulous triad, the skill. A skill is the ability to do something correctly. It is not usually an innate skill, but is acquired. Repetition and constance are key elements to achieving authentic skill. The more times we repeat an action; the more possibilities we have to be skillful in its handling.

Perhaps in the first instance we could associate skill with how well we perform professionally in translation, interpretation or linguistics, however, I would like to propose a slightly broader view of skills. It is essential that professionals develop skills that allow them to provide their services and differentiate themselves, among them we can mention those related to teamwork, adaptability, communication skills, proactivity, empathy, decision making and problem solving, and creativity.

For the development of these skills, capacities and abilities it is fundamental that we have and maintain healthy relationships with our community and I am referring to the university, colleagues, professional associations and clients.

This leads us to the first conclusion I want to present: experience, specialization and skill require time. They are not obtained overnight, they require effort, dedication but above all, time. My advice: do not despair, they are not the unattainable triad. It is important to take our time to choose what to specialize in, gain experience and develop our skills.

## **If you walk with others, you will go further**

Although it was always said that the translator's task is a solitary one, since it is done individually in front of a computer, it is important that as professionals we know how to establish healthy relationships (I repeat: healthy) with the different actors of the community to which we belong in this professional path.

Denis Waitley once said "There are two basic options: accept the conditions as they exist or accept responsibility for changing them. Being part of a community or communities is not easy. But each and every group we come into contact with has an effect on our journey.

So far, in my personal journey I have been able to identify at least 3 groups of companions who have contributed in some way to enriching the process of professional development.

- University/Educational Institution
- Professional Associations
- Colleagues/entrepreneurial community

We found our first companion at the beginning of our journey. Sometimes it is the case that after going through the 5-6 or more years of the university career, as newly graduated professionals, we want to run away from university and never come back. This may be due to bureaucracy we endure, a not-so-empathetic instructor, or simply because we would like to move on and change direction. And this is precisely what happened to me. But it could also be the case that one meets future colleagues, teachers who inspire and challenge us to actively participate in the educational community. I recommend, opting for the second option, even if it seems difficult, even if we feel that nothing will change, it is important to maintain a healthy relationship with the institution that formed us. There are several ways in which one can contribute to the academic unit from which we came, not as a student but as a professional. It can be as teachers, as researchers, as tutors, by participating in some association of graduates. It is hard work, however, it is a way in which we link our student being with our professional being. It is always good to remember the journey, to reflect in order to move forward.

On our journey we meet a new companion, one who aims to promote our profession, represents our interests, provides technical assistance and legal defense among others. Professional associations are essential in order to enjoy our journey to the fullest, although they imply a financial outlay in terms of tuition or membership, without a doubt, the benefits we receive far exceed the investment. Belonging to this type of institution gives us the opportunity to receive priority information regarding our profession and connects us with colleagues from different areas and languages. Needless to say, the groups that house these institutions are very heterogeneous; therein lies their wealth.

Our third group of companions was mutating, together with us, it was enlarging, it was reducing but together with us it was developing somehow. Our colleagues, some of them were university colleagues, others appeared on the road in the exercise of the profession, others came from other areas of knowledge. Whatever the origin, our colleagues, the members of our community, are a source of support, containment and growth that makes the professional transit even richer, stronger and more advanced. Co-creation, cooperation and collaboration are excellent ways to develop professionally. Like our path, co-creating, cooperating and collaborating with other

members of the community is not an easy job; it requires flexibility, empathy and above all commitment.

### **A stumble is not a fall but an opportunity**

Wherever we find ourselves in this journey of our professional path, it is undoubtedly important that we understand that each path is singular, particular and unique. Some of us will have a bumpier road, more challenges, others a smoother road. However, each difficulty, each setback, is an opportunity to change the pace, speed up or slow down and even change the course. It is fundamental that we give ourselves the space and the moment to reflect, plan, organize and redirect our objectives.

We are not alone, we have a large community to turn to and collaborate with. We can nourish ourselves with the experiences, good practices and resources to undertake the path and keep on practising the profession we are so passionate about.

Let us value our decisions, reflect on our achievements and be willing to collaborate and challenge our professional community so that we all move forward together along this shared professional journey.



# Translation of Perrault's fairy tale "Peau d'Âne" (1694) in *Revista literaria: novelas y cuentos* (1940) from French into Spanish

Marina Pedrol-Aguilà  
Universitat de Lleida

**Abstract.** This paper aims to illustrate the interest of the study of the translation processes of literary works in the academic field to improve the knowledge of the historical, social, and cultural period in which a version is given to the press. For that purpose, we present an analysis of the translation of Perrault's fairy tale "Peau d'Âne" from French into Spanish published by Dédalo in 1940 but which dates back to the mid-19th century. In the version studied, numerous elements of the original story have been omitted, added, and modified. The anonymous translator tends to simplify the style of the story, erasing the features that link it to the aristocratic and remote context of its creation, which seems to respond to the desire to achieve a greater diffusion of the work. Also, a clear alignment with certain precepts prevailing at the time the text was published can be perceived.

**Keywords:** literary translation; literary reception; 17<sup>th</sup> century; 19<sup>th</sup>-20<sup>th</sup> century; fairy tales.

Within the framework of this volume focused on translation processes and their applications in teaching and professional practice, we would like to reflect on the usefulness of the analysis of translations of literary works as a form of investigation of the historical, social and cultural context in which they are carried out. This article also aims to show to what extent the study of a literary translation can enrich the understanding, by the students, of the moment in which said version was made. To illustrate this premise, we will examine an anonymous translation of Charles Perrault's fairy tale "Peau d'Âne" (1694<sup>1</sup>) published under the title "Piel de Asno", by Dédalo

---

1. First edition: *Grisélidis, nouvelle, avec le conte de Peau d'Âne et celui des Souhairs ridicules* (Paris, Veuve Coignard, 1694).

publishing house in 1940. Just after the Spanish Civil War, there was already a tight government control of publications, so it is a particularly interesting time as far as text edition study is concerned<sup>2</sup>.

From a formal point of view, we observe that the version proposed by Dédalo tends to simplify Perrault's original. Firstly, the transformation of the verse into prose stands out, which implies a freer translation in the whole story. It is true that the moral has been kept almost literal, but the final quartet has been omitted, a stanza that accentuated the childlike nature of the genre<sup>3</sup> and that the translator considered apparently out of place in his adaptation, aimed at an adult audience. Equally surprising is the disappearance of the dedication to the Marchioness of Lambert, who ran a prestigious literary salon in Paris at the dawn of the Enlightenment. It was clear from this dedication that the Marchioness had commissioned the author to compose "Peau d'Âne" and Perrault, fearful of being criticized for indulging in the genre of the tale, justified the need for a little distraction even for the most judicious<sup>4</sup>. In this sense, it should be noted that, despite the folkloric origin of his stories, Perrault gives "Peau d'Âne" a clear refinement to be appreciated by the distinguished reader.

However, even if at times the style is close to that of the original story, the translation seems to want to erase certain marks of erudition by suppressing names of mythological characters, such as Cephalus, and substituting cosmological terms such as "l'Empyrée" for "bóveda del cielo" or precious metaphors such as "le blond Amant de Climène" for "el sol" (Perrault, 2003, p. 133-134 and 1940, p. 14). In addition, expressions corresponding to a more colloquial register are incorporated: next to the sick queen, the king "lloraba [...] como una Magdalena"; for her part, the disgruntled fairy godmother is shown in the edition of Dédalo "corrida como una mona" when she sees that her forecasts

---

2. The Press Law of April 22, 1938, in its articles 1 and 2, attributed to the State the organization, surveillance and control of the national institution of the periodic Press, as well as the regulation of the number and extent of publications periodic (BOE, April 24, 1938, p. 6938). In addition, an order of April 29 of that year required prior authorization for the commercial production and circulation of books, brochures and all kinds of printed matter and engravings, both Spanish and of foreign origin (BOE, April 30, 1938, p. 7035-7036).

3. "Le Conte de Peau d'Âne est difficile à croire, // Mais tant que dans le Monde il y aura des Enfants, // Des Mères et des Mères-grands, // On en gardera la mémoire" (Perrault, 2003, p. 149).

4. In seventeenth-century France, the tale was looked down upon by scholars and good society as a genre of simple minds. However, at the end of the said century there was an extraordinary boom in the emergence of fairy tales, directed mainly to ladies of the court. On this subject, see *Le conte de fées littéraire en France de la fin du XVIIe à la fin du XVIIIe siècle*, by R. Robert (Paris, Champion, 2004) or *Le conte de fées du classicisme aux Lumières*, by J.-P. Sermain (Paris, Desjonquères, 2005).

fail (Perrault, 1940, p. 13-14). Likewise, the translator frequently transforms narrative passages into dialogues, although he also adds some of his own creation.

Precisely, in terms of content, omissions, substitutions and numerous additions are striking. The translator says, for example, that the prince “acertó a pasar [...] de vuelta de una cacería” (Perrault, 1940, p. 15) by the farm where Donkey Skin had been taken; while the French storyteller specifies that, in that farm, there was a small aviary for the enjoyment of the king of those lands and that, for this reason, the prince used to stop there. The list of grotesque and bloody tricks that the candidates to marry the prince apply, at the request of some charlatans, to try to sharpen their fingers and show that the ring is hers is also eliminated<sup>5</sup>; the translator only says that they “se estrujaron los dedos” in order to put on the ring (Perrault, 1940, p. 15).

With regard to the figure of the king, the features that identified the progenitor of Donkey Skin with Louis XIV have disappeared. Perrault (2003, p. 128) described the monarch of the tale as “le plus grand qui fût sur la Terre, // Aimable en Paix, terrible en Guerre, // Seul enfin comparable à soi; // Ses voisins le craignaient, ses États étaient calmes, // Et l’on voyait de toutes parts // Fleurir, à l’ombre de ses palmes, // Et les Vertus et les beaux Arts”. However, the translator presents this character as “un rey tan poderoso, querido de sus pueblos y respetado de sus aliados y vecinos” (Perrault, 1940, p. 13). On the other hand, and despite his greatness as a ruler, the French writer insists on the human weakness of this figure, whose main defects are that of soon forgetting his promise to the deceased queen not to marry again if it was not with another woman more beautiful and virtuous than she had been and, above all, that of desiring her own daughter.

On the contrary, the monarch of the translated version is an excellent Christian and a devoted governor and paterfamilias. When his wife fell ill, the translator adds that “mandó hacer rogativas en todos los templos de su reino, ofreció grandes sumas a los facultativos y aun su vida en holocausto de su muy querida esposa” (Perrault, 1940, p. 13). Furthermore, he is not the one who wishes to remarry, as in the original story<sup>6</sup>, rather, he is pressured by his ministers and ends up giving in out of a pure

---

5. “L’une, en suivant son bizarre caprice, // Comme une rave le ratisse, // L’autre en coupe un petit morceau, // Une autre en le pressant croit qu’elle l’apetisse, // Et l’autre avec de certaine eau // Pour le rendre moins gros en fait tomber la peau” (Perrault, 2003, p. 144).

6. “On jugea que son deuil ne lui durerait guère [...]. On ne se trompa point. Au bout de quelques mois // Il voulut procéder à faire un nouveau choix” (Perrault, 2003, p. 130-131).

sense of state<sup>7</sup>: “Pronto los altos dignatarios [...] fueron a pedir al rey, a nombre de la salud de los pueblos, que volviese a casarse”. The Council, which “calificó de fruslería” the sentimental motives alleged by the monarch, declared “que poco importaba la hermosura con tal que la reina fuese fecunda y virtuosa; que el país necesitaba príncipes herederos para su tranquilidad y reposo” because, even if the princess was married to a foreign prince who settled in the kingdom, “los hijos que nacieran no serían considerados por el pueblo como de la misma sangre; y, por último, que no habiendo más príncipe de su nombre, los países vecinos podrían suscitar guerras alegando pretendidos derechos a la corona”(Perrault, 1940, pp. 13-14). Likewise, it should be emphasized that the king’s incestuous desire is not, according to the translator, the result of debauchery but diabolical inspiration<sup>8</sup>.

Some elements of the plot are also modified, sometimes without consequences for the development of the story. In the original tale, for example, making the moon-colored dress takes four days, while in Dédalo’s version it takes only twenty-four hours. Perrault (2003, p. 137 and 1940, p. 14) says that Donkey Skin has his face covered with “crasse”, that is, dirt, but the translator decides to change this term to “hollín, soot”. At other times, these modifications can be transcendental: in the original story, it is the princess who furtively sees the prince first, instantly falling in love with the young man, but in translation it is just the other way around. It is important to emphasize the change in perspective on religion offered by the original and the translation: if Perrault introduces criticisms of the clergy, the 1940 version takes care to qualify or erase them. In the French tale, Donkey Skin’s father seeks the approval of his unnatural passion from a casuist, a theologian whose task is to solve cases of conscience relying on moral and Christian rules. This figure is replaced in the translation by “un viejo druida”, “grandísimo pícaro, que tenía más ambición que sentimientos religiosos” (Perrault, 1940, p. 14). Likewise, with the wedding between the king and his daughter canceled, the French writer insists on the sadness of the ladies of the court, unable to eat a bite, but comments mockingly that the great sorrow of the priest in charge of officiating the ceremony is due to the not being able to have breakfast until very late, as well as not being able to collect donations. This criticism of gluttony and greed of some religious disappears in the translation.

---

7. Although in the translation the queen retains the pride that Perrault gives her regarding her qualities and believes that the king will never find “una princesa más bella y mejor formada”, she has as much sense of state as her husband and urges him to take a new wife after his death: “El Estado tiene derecho a exigiros un sucesor a la corona, y como no hemos tenido más que una hija, debéis apresuraros a darle un varón” (Perrault, 1940, p. 13).

8. We found expressions such as “tentado del diablo” or “el diablo le soplabá al oído tan original proyecto” (Perrault, 1940, p. 14).

Regarding the additions, these are divided into two categories. On the one hand, there are those who are inscribed in the thread of the story. Upon detecting the disappearance of the princess, the king sent in his search “más de cien gendarmes y sobre unos mil y pico de mosqueteros” (Perrault, 1940, p. 14). In the original tale, Donkey Skin reaches a farm where she must wash rags and cloths, and clean the pig feeder. However, the translator says that she is also entrusted with tidying up the kitchen, keeping the turkeys and leading the rams to pasture; which allows him to introduce a country scene where the princess takes off her costume and bathes in a crystalline fountain, thus showing the whiteness of her skin, a sign of purity and high birth. Apart from descriptive passages, the Spanish translation incorporates new dialogues, for example, a conversation between the sick prince and his parents about the succession, which did not exist in the French tale. Doctors diagnose the prince with a mortal grief and, to save his life, the queen offers him the abdication of the king in his favor or the hand of any maiden, even if she is the daughter of an enemy or “la más vil de las esclavas.” However, the young man humbly confirms his will to “[ser] siempre el más fiel y respetuoso de sus súbditos” as well as not to “contraer ningún enlace que [...] disguste” his parents (Perrault, 1940, p. 15).

On the other hand, there is some addition not directly related to the theme of the story but that draws on other contemporary texts of the same genre. Faced with the extraordinary shine of the sun-colored dress, the translator suggests that “de aquel tiempo datan, sin duda, los cristales opacos y las gafas verdes” (Perrault, 1940, p. 14). This type of comment, alluding to the invention of some fashionable object, is not found in the source text, but it is not alien to the classic French literary tale<sup>9</sup>. The spectacularity of the outcome proposed by the translator also stands out, probably inspired by the marvelous stories of the seventeenth century that evoked the increasingly complex theatrical and operatic sets. Unlike the original, where Donkey Skin asks to be allowed to change clothes once she has proved that the ring is hers, in the version analyzed, the princess had dressed up before presenting herself before the prince and only needs to shed her costume to astonish the audience even more. And not only that because then the roof is opened and the fairy godmother descends in her carriage to reveal the girl’s true identity<sup>10</sup>.

---

9. Madame de Murat (2006, p. 387) attributes to the good fairy of “La Fée Princesse” the design of a concave architectural element that, like a barrel vault, allows the sound to be propagated from one end of the arch to the other, without being audible at intermediate points.

10. In the outcome of “Le Prince Arc-en-ciel” (*Nouveau Recueil de contes de fées*, 1731, p. 388-390), the walls disappear, in the center of the room a throne rises and floats emerge from all sides that bring the queen of the place, her courtiers and the three fairies who had guided the heroine.

Finally, although what we have just said seems to indicate that the translator is knowledgeable about the French fairy tale of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, there are some misinterpretations. Where it said “Dans son vaste et riche Palais // Ce n’était que magnificence, // Partout y fourmillait une vive abondance // De Courtisans et de Valets”, it says “La magnificencia, el buen gusto y la abundancia reinaban en el palacio del rey: los ministros eran sabios y hábiles, virtuosos y adictos los cortesanos, y los servidores laboriosos y fieles” (Perrault, 2003, p. 128 and 1940, p. 13). Regardless of the fact that the enumeration that follows the colon is an addition by the translator, he has associated “abondance” with the wealth of the palace, while the source text affirms that what abounds in the palace are courtiers and servants. Likewise, the allusion to the goods produced by the marvelous donkey in the form of “beaux Écus au soleil // Et Louis de toute manière” is translated by “escudos de oro resplandecientes como un sol” (Perrault, 2003, p. 129 and 1940, p. 13). Actually, the storyteller was referring to the coins (not always made of gold) minted with the coat of arms of the King of France crowned with the image of a sun, as well as those coins called Louis in honor of Louis XIII, these being, in reality, of gold, although of various values.

To conclude this brief analysis of the translation of Perrault’s tale “Peau d’Âne”, published anonymously by Dédalo in 1940, we can point out that two main strategies are observed. On the one hand, the translator tends to erase the features of the original story that link it to the aristocratic and remote context of its creation. Likewise, he generally tends to simplify the style of the text. Thus, there seems to be an inverse adaptation path compared to that carried out by Perrault. If the seventeenth-century author refined the style and content of the story by putting it in writing to offer it to princes and nobles, the translator wanted to simplify it and restore its popular character in order to spread it more easily among the general public.

Furthermore, the version by Dédalo seems to have a very clear moralizing objective, since it adapts certain elements of the background or of the form that, taking into account the historical moment in which it is published, could be inappropriate. Let us remember that Franco’s censorship of the first years was governed, both by an “*recatolización* social extrema” and by a military logic combined with a political aspect (Andrés de Blas, 2008, p. 23). Hence perhaps the desire of the translator to show exemplary behaviors of children who obey their parents (except when it is an unnatural desire) and to leave the figures who represent authority —be it family, political or religious— in better place than in the original.

However, it should be noted that the translation published by Dédalo in 1940 is not contemporary, but had already been given to the press in 1936 (Madrid: Lecturas para todos) and in 1928 (Madrid: Ibero-African-American Editorial). This edition came from



the version of *Cuentos de Perrault* in Biblioteca Universal (Madrid, 1892) which, in turn, was inspired by that of Federico de la Vega, published in 1863 by Ledoux (Martens, 2016, p. 233- 238). We have managed to trace elements not found in Perrault's text that, however, appear in the 1940 edition by Dédalo, since the translation proposed by Coll y Vehí in 1862 (Barcelona: Imp. Narciso Ramírez) and it is possible that it could go back further.

Therefore, the analysis proposed throughout the article acquires a new perspective under the prism of this chronology. Apart from the possible weight of censorship in the preparation of the work in postwar Spain, the hypothesis arises that the 1940 editor wanted to keep the story intact due to its traditional and, by extension, timeless character. On the other hand, it is inevitable to think that the prevailing morality when the publication of this edition of Perrault's *Cuentos de viejas* was authorized seems to coincide with that of the nineteenth century when its translation was forged. This reinforces the interest in the study of the translation processes of literary works in the academic field, both teaching and research, since it allows deepening the knowledge of the historical, social and cultural period in which a translation is published.

## References

- Andrés de Blas, J. (2008). La censura de libros durante la guerra civil española. In E. Ruiz Bautista (ed.), *Tiempo de censura: la represión editorial durante el franquismo*, pp. 19-44. Gijón: Ediciones Trea.
- BOE. (24 de abril de 1938). Ley de Prensa (rectificada). *Boletín Oficial del Estado*, año III, nº550, pp. 6938-6940.
- \_\_\_\_\_. (30 de abril de 1938). Orden sobre edición y venta de publicaciones no periódicas. *Boletín Oficial del Estado*, año III, nº556, pp. 7035-7036.
- Martens, H. V. L. (2016). *Tradición y censura en las traducciones de literatura infantil y juvenil en la cultura franquista: los cuentos de Perrault en español hasta 1975*. [Tesis doctoral.] Universidad de Extremadura, Facultad de Educación, España. Retrieved from: [http://dehesa.unex.es/bitstream/10662/3766/1/TDUEX\\_2016\\_Martens.pdf](http://dehesa.unex.es/bitstream/10662/3766/1/TDUEX_2016_Martens.pdf)
- Murat, M<sup>me</sup> de (2006). *Contes*. Paris: Honoré Champion, col. Bibliothèque des Génies et des Fées 3.
- Nouveau recueil de contes de fées*. (1731). Paris: P.-J. Mariette.
- Perrault, Ch. (2003). Peau d'Âne. In *Contes de ma Mère l'Oye*, pp. 127-149. Paris: Gallimard, col. Folio Plus Classiques 17<sup>e</sup> siècle.
- Perrault, C. (1940). Piel de Asno. In *Cuentos de viejas*, pp. 13-16. Madrid: Dédalo, col. Revista Literaria: novelas y cuentos.





# The Pathetic Translator: Dialect as Untranslatable

Anushiya Ramaswamy

**Abstract.** Where the vehicle of translation comes to a screeching stop is at dialect. How does one translate dialect —the richly regional, idiom-laden, locally identifiable language— into a target language (which is usually and almost always a dominant language) that would necessarily flatten the dialect’s ambiguities, particular inflections and connotations into a standardized language in the name of other priorities? A dialect that is tied to a place and time, contingencies of history, and performative in ways incommensurable to a positivistic, neo-liberal, discipline-driven (“World Literature” as an academic field) resists translation. Whereas the western philosophical tradition has often found certain key terms as untranslatable — polis, logos, pathos, to name a few —in the case of dialect, since it is associated with non-standard, or even minor literatures, the expectation has been to translate this untranslatable into standardized language (Spivak who translates the Bengali writer Mahasweta Devi, points out that the tribal Bengali dialect of Devi is often incomprehensible to literate Bengali readers). This homogenization is justified in terms of communication and globalization: what had been out of reach, suddenly becomes available, like exotic fruit from the tropics at the metropolitan super market. The dialect is naturalized into a Global language driven by a publishing industry that assumes that everything can be translated. As a translator of minor literatures, I would like to think through this mine-field of translating dialect in an essay that would touch on Spivak Walter Benjamin, and Derrida, among others.

**Keywords:** Dialectal translation; ambiguity; standardized translation; literary translation; minor literatures.

Translation begins with a tearing of the veil, with the promise to make all visible. Within a national language, it is dialect that is arguably aporetic, with all its alternatives, in its insistence on a singularity that refuses the universal. If we think of dialect as drag queen-like performativity, we would recognize that it is the deviations and de-formations from the standard that marks out the contours of the standard language itself. The Bakhtinian “univocal” of standard language, which through all its

machinations to keep itself located in the official center as the normal, appropriate, and only form of language is put under question when dialect appears next to it, using the signifiers and sometimes the syntax itself to refer to other things. The typical response of standard language is one of prohibition in the name of order. Dialect's refusal to adhere to its ratio makes it both powerful and a problem.<sup>1</sup>

The material conditions of speaking in dialect is usually not one of choice. The people living on the scattered islands off the coast of the Jaffna peninsula in Sri Lanka speak an idiomatic Tamil that immediately identify them as island folk to those who live on the mainland. If a child from the island takes the morning ferry to attend the Catholic school in Jaffna town, this child quickly learns to assimilate herself to town culture by shifting the cadence of her speech. What is ironical in this modeling of speech performance is that this child from the islands knows that her usage of Tamil, both spoken and written is a performance: she recognizes in that initial moment of shock when she is called out for being different—a limit experience—that the spoken Tamil of mainland Jaffna is also a speech dialect that is carefully kept out of the written discourses of the school. This written Tamil is the standard Tamil that connects to a universal Tamil identity shared by ethnic Tamils the world over. When the British transported Tamil laborers to plantations from India to South East Asia and Africa, these migrants kept alive their linguistically-maintained ethnic identity of Tamil with a shared veneration for classical Tamil (literary Tamil that is as old as 600 BCE), and by extension the standard Tamil of print media. The Nineteenth and early Twentieth century social reformers in India and Sri Lanka continued this division, maintaining the discipline of standard Tamil as being able to withstand other powerful modern languages like Hindi and English. The island child learns to keep her dialect a secret,<sup>2</sup> recognizing in the language asymmetry the other injustices that makes for the precarity of her life.

As such, the dialect appears in the literary text on a platform of authenticity and self-presence. Significantly, this dialect cannot appear as it appears in literary forms anywhere else in standard language.<sup>3</sup> This slipping in that literature allows is the reason

---

1. "...desire to ... make the definition coincide with the defined ... Our language reflects this desire" (xx). Gayatri Spivak, "Translator's Preface," *Of Grammatology*, Jacques Derrida, Baltimore, Maryland: Johns Hopkins UP, 1976.

2. Derrida admits, "I have a taste for the secret... it has to do with not-belonging... the demand that everything be paraded in public square ... is a glaring sign of the totalitarianization of democracy" (59). See J. Derrida & M. Ferraris, *A Taste of the Secret*, tr. G. Donis, Polity/Blackwell, 2001.

3. Traditionally, folk songs, a staple of Tamil oral culture associated with the Dalit working classes, with their parodying and miming of high culture devotional songs (in *koothu* or folk drama, especially)

there is such mourning when the translation is unable to accommodate the dialect. Translation works with the Saussurian theory of signification, promising the transfer of meaning from one text to another. But translation does not simply substitute one word in one language for another in another language:<sup>4</sup> it actually works towards paving over and bridging the gaps, contradictions and elisions in the original. Figures of speech especially come under close scrutiny and are often jettisoned in the name of clarity. The translation does the work for the reader by doing an interpretation of what might otherwise be too difficult; this act of reduction is also one of seduction as the translation makes the translated text as smoothly acceptable as possible.<sup>5</sup>

In the Platonic realm of the translation as a shadow of another, more real text, it is told firmly that it is a copy that needs to be faithful to the origin. We need to understand that by following this rule, the dialect is written out of the translation.<sup>6</sup> In

---

function as carnivalesque spaces for both the critiquing and borrowing of classical and standard Tamil literary devices.

4. In translation, the signified (concept) becomes more important than the signifier, hence the translation privileges communicating meaning over the word itself. Lacan's insight that the signification is but another signifier in a never-ending chain of significations is elided in translating. Lacan calls parts standing for the (imagined) whole as metonymy, where each word is not a replacement of another word like it but a parallel that constructs a continued context. Standard language insists on reading the world as literal while defining the dialect as that which reads the same world allegorically (allegory is derived from the Greek of "allos" other or "allos agoria" to speak of the other). In the translation, the polyphonies of the Other becomes transformed into standard versions.

5. See Lawrence Venuti, "Translation, Community, Utopia," Damrosch et al, *The Princeton Sourcebook in Comparative Literature*, New Jersey: Princeton, UP, 2009, where he argues for the translator to do this interpretation in the name of a liberal humanism. To me this feels like a way to keep the structures of imperialism untouched within neo-liberalism.

6. In an earlier essay, I had found fault with the English translation of the Tamil Dalit writer, Bama's *Karukku*, a novel written in Tamil dialect, for ignoring the dialect. The speech of an unrepresented people who had found voice in the Tamil novel, disappears in the translation because the dialect had been translated into standard Tamil and then into English. A. Sivanarayanan, "Translation and Globalization: Tamil Dalit Literature and Bama's *Karukku*," *Other Tongues: Rethinking the Language Debates in India*, Iyer & Zaire (Eds.), Rodopi, 2009. In the 1990's with the rise of Dalit liberatory writings, classic Tamil texts were re-read critically à la Nietzsche to prove that the genealogy of literary values were elitist. Accordingly, those who are uncomplicatedly self-present in texts as the poor/ Dalit were shown to be not present in any real sense. See Rajgowthaman, *Poi + Abatham = Unmai* ("Lie + Foolishness = Truth"), Chennai: Vilimbu, 1995. The question Spivak asks, "Can the Subaltern Speak?" is answered in the negative because in a discursive world that functions along divisive, hierarchical terms, these bodies are silenced. Rajgowthaman's *Dalit Paarvayil Tamil Panpadu* ("Tamil Culture from a Dalit Point of View") is written in the familiar academic standard Tamil with paragraphs of dialogue in dialect inserted in a performative busting of borders. Pondicherry: Gowri, 1994.

the translation, if the dialect is repeated in whatever form (as truncated dialogue, with apostrophes like “Dey” that would appear to be untranslated, with quotation marks, italics, etc.) the effect is startlingly opposite to the mimetic role dialect had played in the original. The difference becomes so stark, it is as if each time the dialect appears a siren goes off, indicating that the dialect is displaced, that is, out-of-place. This is why editors adjure the translator to keep such intrusions to the minimum, and if need be, cut out whole sections of the text where dialect appears.<sup>7</sup> The reader is believed to be grateful to the ruthless translator who produces a text that is faithful to the ultimate meaning of the original than its rhetoric. For with rhetoric comes a series of choices that would serve to slow down the reading as well as lead to misinterpretation – both of which go against the translation’s readability promises.<sup>8</sup>

The translation with the dialect subsumed into an imperial language is still haunted by those it has swallowed. To the metropolitan reader of the translation, the inheritor<sup>9</sup> of this new, accessible reading material, the Other comes through as either a ghost (when those who had read the original speak about the sad lack of the translation) or in a form that continues an age-old violence. Let me explain with an example taken from one of those translations that has been received in the West with gratitude. It’s portability and the unruffled confidence in its project has allowed for World Literature departments in the West to provide course work in Classical Tamil literature for readers with minimal knowledge of South India.<sup>10</sup> This is a poem taken from A.K. Ramanujan’s *Poems of Love and War*.<sup>11</sup> The Tamil original is a typical poem of praise about the valor of the Cholla king, Killi. Here is Ramanujan’s undeniably beautiful translation which he follows up with a paraphrase of the poem, where he adds the essentializing adjective, “low-born”

---

7. What is gained in such a translation is that it travels far and wide. When I tried publishing Shobasakthi’s first novel, *Gorilla*, the editor at a multinational publishing house in India at that time slashed out sections of the novel that might be “difficult” for a metropolitan reader of English novels. This searing coming-of-age memoir of a child soldier in the civil war in Sri Lanka and later a refugee in Paris was tamed enough for an excerpt to appear in the Indian edition of *Elle* magazine as part of its marketing effort.

8. Opaqueness, shifts in register, a habit of standing in place ruminating rather than marching along, repetitions, multiple definitions, what might seem archaic minutiae, word play -- all of which are said to cut down on the speed of reading. Of course, the other task of the translator is in providing context: footnotes, prefaces, glossaries, extended introductions, commentaries that interrupt the reading and slow it down.

9. “One never inherits without coming to terms with some specter, and therefore with more than one specter.” Derrida, *Specters of Marx*. P. 24

10. See Emily Apter, *Against World Literature: On the Politics of Untranslatability* for her scathing critique of globalized marketing forces that have pushed for universalizing and making “World Literature” accessible like mangoes available year-around at the local supermarket. London: Verso, 2013.

11. A.K. Ramanujan, *Poems of Love and War: From the Eight Anthologies and the Ten long Poems of Classical Tamil*. New York: Columbia UP, 1985, 2011, p. 233.

to the person he calls “cobbler” in his translation. The ancient Tamil poem uses the word “Izhisinin” which refers not to a person associated with a specific profession but to one who is lesser: the poor man, the one who is a peasant as opposed to the king.<sup>12</sup>

### **King Killi in Combat**

With the festival hour close at hand,  
his woman in labor,  
a sun setting behind pouring rains,  
the needle in the cobbler’s hand  
is in a frenzy  
stitching thongs for a cot:  
    swifter, far swifter,  
    were the tackles of our lord  
    wearing garlands of laburnum,  
    as he wrestled with the enemy  
    come all the way  
    to take the land.

Here is mine, made for argument-sake only; it is not as pellucid as Ramanujan’s for I have tried not to duplicate the nomos of caste vocabulary in Ramanujan’s translation.

### **Battle court of the Great King Killi**

The village festival is almost here  
and so is his wife’s time to deliver  
While rain falls and the day fades  
the poor man sews swiftly  
the straps for the bed  
As quick and as sharp as his moving needle  
the challenger to the land  
is caught in the grip for all to see by our king.

---

12. See V.S. Rajam, *Sanga Padalgalil Saathi, Theendamai, Inna Pira* (“Caste, Untouchability, etc. in Sangam Poetry”), Chennai: Narmatha, 2015, for a scholarly and polemical argument tracing the paths of a non-existent caste vocabulary in classical poetry. Her earlier work, *A Reference Grammar of Classical Tamil Poetry*, Philadelphia: American Philosophical Society, 1992 begins by calling into question the very foundational commentaries that modern Tamil studies is based upon. Rajam’s translation with Jeanne Hein, of *The Earliest Missionary Grammar of Tamil: Fr. Henriques’ Arte de Lingua Malabar: Translation History and Analysis*, Harvard UP, 2013, shows the onto-genesis of many of the caste definitions that have entered classical Tamil studies. I am indebted to Prof. A. Dakshinamurthy of Thanjavur who generously shared his unpublished translation of poem 82 with me. He translates “Izhisinin” as “lowly worker.”

The original mentions the king, as I do, only in the title and the final lines. I have avoided even the adjective “garlanded in Aar flowers” for the king because the Tamil constricts the name of the flower from three syllables to one (this adjective is also commonly used as a noun for the Cholla king). In his explication, Ramanujan refers to other commentators, all of whom explain the “cobbler” as a metaphor used to describe the king’s swift moves and his position as the highest in the land vis-à-vis the low-born. While also questioning the validity of these interpretations, I am more interested in how the word that is not there in the original —“cobbler”— enters the translation as a noun. In the original, the daily vicissitudes of this villager, who is working desperately to finish making the birthing bed before a watery sun sets, fully aware that he has a role to play in the rituals of the village festival is quite striking. The festival mentioned in the first line of the poem is a reference to the imbrication of Tamil identity to a village deity —a local locution that is renewed annually in the *communio*. This working-class body occupies almost the whole poem because it is his actions that figure the king’s bodily moves. Ramanujan as the translator, fills in a gap he perceives in the poem which only notes that the man is sewing leather clasps for a bed. So why does Ramanujan call the man a cobbler? A cobbler is one who works with leather, hence Ramanujan connects the poem’s “Izhisinan,” that is, a person who is the opposite of the king and imagines him along the unmistakable logic lines of caste as a Dalit figure. In a caste society split along lines of perceived purity/impurity, the work involved in curing leather has defined whole communities as “untouchable,” and worse, the only folk to do that work. And once Ramanujan names the man a cobbler, the succeeding line where he uses the word “thongs” makes one read the silent adjective “leather” that is there in the original. In my translation, I was careful not to make the same leaps because while the expectant father may have been a cobbler, he was not a cobbler in the abject terms we now understand the word. There is nothing in the poem that makes him out to be oppressed in caste or class terms. The undecidability<sup>13</sup> of the “Izhisinan” is taken away when he is confidently called “cobbler.” Why must we too see him as lesser when he seems to be connected in a series of affirming ways to his society (festival, childbirth, craft)? Wouldn’t even the king while struggling to throw down the upstart wrestler, wish for one moment to be like the peasant, happily involved in his domestic tasks?

---

13. I am using the Derridean inflection here. See John Llewelyn’s essay, “Responsibility with Indecidability” as he raises questions of how responsibility to the Other could exist alongside undecidability. “How can we respond responsibly to a question unless there is a criterion, rule or law by reference to which the validity of the answer can be judged?” (72) The usual or ‘unthought’ protocols of translation too would insist on coming up with certain rules that would stand objective scrutiny, that is, where the universal triumphs over the singular. *Derrida: A Critical Reader*, ed. David Wood, Cambridge, MA: Blackwell, 1992.



Paradoxically, Ramanujan in explicating the *thinai* or landscape-based divisions that underlie the poetics of the *Purananuru* poems<sup>14</sup> in his Afterword, repeats what is well-known in Tamil studies: the ancient Tamil society as divided carefully along geography, where the literature through a logos-driven system kept the divisions in place. These Tamil country divisions were not the obvious caste divisions that one associates with the Orientalizing Indian socio-histories produced as part of the colonial enterprise since the 18<sup>th</sup> century. Ramanujan is translating in the post-Independence period naming a profession that had been performed as part of a politico-ethical activism by a caste-protecting Gandhi who hand-sewed leather sandals in an effort to spectacularly identify himself with those he saw as the most oppressed of the Dalit castes. Ramanujan believes that he is following the intention of the original Caatanthayar's song of praise for the king: whereby he clarifies and stretches a short adjective to a whole line. With the peasant, he does the opposite by re-iterating the same and reducing the diverse meanings of "Izhisinin" to an identity that would raise no questions when read in the metropolis.

Why not think of the translation as a parallel text, a text out-of-order that does not need to follow the father's word (tradition, genre, naming or editing conventions)? Why not think beyond the boundaries of standard/dialect, appropriate/slang, poetic/rhetoric? In translation, why not undo the otherwise transparent rules that maintain the differences between the dialect and the standard language? Asking plaintively how to translate dialect into a former colonizer's language is meaningless in a riven world filled with refugees at every border. The exilic poet, Cheran writing on the aftermath of the civil war in Sri Lanka, titles his collection, "Ajnar." The word means "trauma," but it is a word taken from classical literature and as such is not in common usage. Most Tamils would not know this word. In order to persuade us that such a word exists, Cheran provides multiple quotations from the classics in the first page of his book. His act is one of both providing antecedents to what might be quite rightly seen as a neologism and at the same time, it is profoundly rhetorical in situating himself within a universal Tamil literary tradition, the newest iteration being his war poems. "Ajnar" in Cheran is a dialect since it is not part of contemporary standard Tamil, and as such fits the fears of standardizers of dialect as chaos, of moving the language away from the marked paths. What happens is a re-territorialization where languages enter hitherto closed spaces. The island child becomes at home elsewhere too.

---

14. *Purananuru* (400 poems about the *puram* or the public space). The ancient Tamil poems are divided into *agam* or the inside and *puram*, the outside. The subject matter of domestic love belongs to the *agam* poems and the *puram* ones deal with war and politics.





# Interviews



# A professor's views on translation

An interview with Marta Susana Baduy

## **Can you give us some translation background/profile?**

My name is Marta Susana Baduy. I am an English Teacher and Translator with a master's degree in Translation Studies. I got my three graduate and postgraduate degrees at the School of Languages, National University of Córdoba. At this moment I am working as a teacher in the English translation department. I am in charge of 3 subjects/chairs: Translation Methods and Techniques, and Terminology and Documentation in the second year, and Legal Translation in the fourth year. I also work as a Director of the online Specialization in Translation, and as an Advisor to the teaching staff in the Honorable Executive Administrative and Academic Board of the School of Languages. A word that defines me is hard-working.

## **What made you first interested in translating?**

In fact, when I began studying at college, we first had to get a degree as a teacher of English and then did a few more subjects, and we graduated as a translator. So I did not really choose the translation career. I actually started working as an English teacher. One day I was teaching at the Sacred Heart Institute, a higher education center, and Professor Meehan, from the School of Languages, told me that there was an open position in Legal Translation. And without really intending to, I started teaching legal translation, then the full-tenured professor retired, and I was selected for that position. So, really I did not actually *choose* it. I liked being a teacher better, actually. I love it now. I could not do or be anything else. Now I can combine both things: being a teacher with a translation bias; I like teaching translation.

## **Can you remember the first translation job you received?**

When I see my first assignments now I say "Oh My God". At that time, in the 1970s, there was no Internet; we only had paper dictionaries that, most of the time, did not provide us with the most adequate answer. The first translations obviously fulfilled their function because they were never returned to me. The other day I

came across one of my first translations and I thought to myself “this is just awful”, but they served their purpose at the time and that is what matters sometimes: the function of the translation. By the way, these early documents were academic transcripts.

### **Does this mean that experience helps a lot?**

You become stronger as a translator through experience and study. This is a profession in which you cannot afford to fall behind and you have to keep studying, and training yourself, especially now that everything is moving forward so quickly with the new technologies. You simply can’t afford to lag behind if you really want to live from this profession.

### **What do you wish people knew about translation as a career?**

The other day I came across one of my first translations and I thought to myself “this is just awful”, but they served their purpose at the time and that is what matters sometimes: the function of the translation.

The translator’s profession is complicated, difficult, and not at all easy. People think that if you know the language, then you can translate and this does not work like that. Translation is a long, demanding career. Students realize as early as their first year that it is not just a matter of taking a text and translating. There are a lot of details and knowledge that must be put into practice

when translating a text. Those who think they can take up translation as a career together with another one, soon realize that this is impossible because it is both a very demanding and complex profession. Our language department prepares students quite well; there are always certain limitations, of course, but overall they are ready to face the complicated world that awaits them.

### **What has been your biggest professional reward?**

I remember several job assignments. One in particular was the edition of articles that had been translated by experts from the school of psychology. They were so poorly translated that I practically had to translate them from scratch. Then they were published and the expert congratulated me on my work and sent me the magazine attached including all the translated articles. That was a very nice experience. When I translate academic documents and the clients come back to me thanking me for my translation, saying that they were able to achieve this or that, then these are very satisfying jobs.

## **Can you reveal to us how your translation process goes?**

In the case of certain documents, I have so much experience that I simply look at them and translate straightaway, for example with academic documents, birth and death certificates. Judgments and lawsuits are a different kettle of fish. Recently I had to translate a divorce complaint that was so badly written that I first had to rewrite it in a way that was grammatically and syntactically acceptable in order to interpret the meaning. Sometimes I do an intra-translation first to sort out the ideas and understand what is meant by some ideas. If I had to start over, I would first do an analysis in Spanish and then in English: a contextual analysis, always working with parallel documents to organize the information and see the terminology used in the target language. This is a long process. Sometimes it happens to me with a term, like when I translate a Letters Rogatory. It has to be rewritten because it is a truncated language, and the meaning of some terms has to be disambiguated. I call upon the expert lawyer. She expands the sentence and explains it to me. The expert always helps me, and I also use parallel texts, and the comparison of the legal systems of both countries. Experts give meaning to those phrases that we would not understand on our own.

People think that if you know the language, then you can translate and this does not work like that.

## **Do you think the translation profession is well paid?**

Theoretically, yes, if we follow the fees suggested by the translators' associations and we could get every translator to play by the rules and the clients to pay the official fees. I don't know what the world of translation agencies is like because I've never worked with an agency. The advantage of a certified translation is that the client is in urgent need for it. The problem lies in unfair competition between colleagues.

Experts give meaning to those phrases that we would not understand on our own.

## **Do you usually use CAT (Computer Aided Translation) tools when you translate? If so, which one/s? | What apps, tools, or resources could you not live without in your work?**

In my case, the translation has been a self-taught journey. Translators of my generation started with practically nothing, with the typewriter and Hobbs' dictionary, which was the only one available. And we continued studying and adapted to the times until we reached the point where we are now. The translator has to be prepared for challenges and this is achieved through continuous training. If I hadn't continued studying, I

wouldn't be able to translate even a birth certificate now. Nor could I be teaching. That would be unthinkable.

### **What has been your favourite work to translate so far?**

What I most like to translate are lawsuits, complaints, wills and declarations of heirs because all this has to do with my thesis work. My master's thesis is on testate and intestate succession. So I studied a lot about it. I even carried out a terminological

Translators of my generation started with practically nothing, with the typewriter and Hobbs' dictionary, which was the only one available.

research into the different states in the United States to find out what succession was like in each one. I loved that job and it's my favorite job. It was not only a theoretical research work, but I also compared the old code with the new code that was about to be approved. In the thesis I compared legal systems and concepts, for example, and all

the new concepts I found had to be translated because the thesis was in Spanish. I like to translate exhortations that are difficult, I enjoy doing it.

### **Could you share with us funny anecdotes and curiosities?**

About five years ago I got a call from the federal courts to translate a legal file on motorcycle smuggling. It was a huge file with a very tight deadline. I translated it, paid for the legalization out of my own pocket and when I gave the translation to the court clerk, I told him: "I'm sure I will never be able to get any money for this job because until now I have been able to collect very little money as a court expert". Four years later, I received a call from the clerk who told me: "woman of little faith". They paid me much more than I thought and gave me the money in cash, inside a gift bag!

# A student's perspective on the translation process. A current EFL teacher with a solid philological background who's dabbled her toes on translation

An interview with Gemma Benseny Bonet

My name is Gemma Benseny Bonet and I am 23 years old. I live in Balaguer, a city in Catalonia (Spain) with my parents. I have a BA in English Studies from the University of Lleida (UdL). I finished my degree a couple of years ago and I did the TFG defence last June. I've been working for two school years as an English teacher at Yes, We Can English (a language school located in Lleida). I've been teaching children, teenagers and adults in small groups (including special educational needs such as ADHD, dyslexia...). I'm bilingual in Catalan and Spanish and I speak fluent English, too. Besides, I have a good command of French (currently at B2.1 level).

My philosophy of life is as simple as enjoying the small things, the details (baking a cake, having a coffee with a friend, visiting a relative in hospital, staying healthy, doing a job that makes me happy).

I've always loved languages and I've always been curious about the cultures and society where those languages are spoken. My perception towards translation has changed quite a lot. Some years ago, I thought translation was monotonous and boring. As I began to have contact with this discipline broke. In the subject Drama in English (3<sup>rd</sup> year) I had to translate a scene from Spanish into English. I really enjoyed that task and soon after that, I was given the opportunity to collaborate with the Department of English and Linguistics in the form of a scholarship for correcting and translating the syllabus of all the subjects that were in the curriculum of English Studies. I had the privilege of carrying out this task for two consecutive years and it boosted my motivation to investigate a little bit more about translation.

Already in my last year, I took the subject Translation in English, which gave me the theory and tools to apply once you're working in this discipline. Afterwards I did an



internship related to translation in a local company. Finally, I focused my TFG on audiovisual translation (AVT), specifically on dubbing in the cinematographic industry.

**Can you remember the first translation job/task you received? Did you need any special qualifications?**

It happened as I was taking the subject Drama in English, in my third year. The practical part of the subject was a theatre play, and we all had different roles. I was working as a stage manager. One day, the professor asked me if I could translate one of the scenes we would include in our play. I didn't think twice, after all it was part of the project. It was a scene, not too long, in Spanish that I had to translate into English. I really enjoyed that translation, even though sometimes it was difficult to translate the humour and the jokes in it. At that moment I didn't see that as an opportunity to pursue a career in translation. It was just my first contact with it.

**Could you give us more details about the scene in the theatre play you translated?**

The scene I had to translate from Spanish into English was a fragment from the play *Folie à deux*. The scene's title was "la consulta de Miguel". I didn't know the play and so was not familiar with its topic. I first read the entire scene in Spanish, I thought it wasn't necessary to read all the play so as to produce a valid translation. Two characters interact: a medical doctor and Miguel, a patient. From the beginning of the scene I realized there was absurd humour in it. For instance, the patient arrives at the appointment carrying a suitcase and he refuses to put it down. Additionally, he has to write down all the instructions the doctor gives him. He forgets easily.

Were it not for translation, I wouldn't probably be reading about disciplines that are so apart from me.

The doctor tells Miguel that today's session is about working with his psychomotor and socio-affective capacity. The doctor is going to give Miguel several drawings of animals. Miguel has to mimic them using his body only. The doctor has to guess the animal it is. Miguel, however, makes some mistakes

because he says the name of the animal. The doctor starts losing his temper and decides to impersonate the animals himself. Miguel interrupts him constantly because he believes the doctor is not following the instructions.

At the end of the scene, Miguel takes one drawing: it is a pig. He tells the doctor that he is the best pig he has ever seen. There is clearly absurd humour here as Miguel and the doctor keep on speaking that the doctor is really keen on the pig and it is his best

performance. I did the translation into English and I made sure that the jokes and the humour were maintained in the target language. They had to make sense and make the target audience laugh. I mostly did a through translation including the jokes. I kept the word-for-word translation in the parts of the absurd humour, as I believed these jokes could be understood and shared both by source and target community.

The scene was not difficult when it comes to content; it was a dialogue with mostly short sentences. After providing a first draft, I proofread the scene and gave it to the drama professor. She maintained most of my production though she adapted some of its parts. Apart from that, she changed the title of the scene: from “La consulta de Miguel” into “Mad Therapy”. The outcome in the theatre play was a combination of my version and her modifications.

### **What attracted you to translation as a career? What do you enjoy about translating?**

I’m not a professional translator at the moment, but I’ve had some contact with this discipline as I said before. I enjoyed all the tasks I did related to translation, correction, transcription... What I find fascinating about translation is the possibility you have to work with many different areas and therefore to discover and learn of new disciplines. Were it not for translation, I wouldn’t probably be reading about disciplines that are so apart from me. For instance, I wouldn’t be interested in odontology, theatre, economy, music... For these reasons, I think a translator has to be a curious person who asks him/herself questions and wants to go a step further.

Apart from that, I believe the collective of translators have the opportunity to travel anywhere in the world from their homes. You need to know about the culture you are translating from and into and you have to be aware of the nuances and the lifestyle which make that language unique, too. If we look at translation from the outside, we may not be able to identify these factors and we rather stay with the cliché that translation is only linguistic.

I try to write in English every day in the form of a diary to express my thoughts or to explain an anecdote or a meeting with a friend.

### **What in your education prepared you most or best for translation?**

It was the internship I did in Torsitrad, a company in Lleida that works with translation, transcription, correction and interpretation. There I applied the tools I had learnt in Translation in English such as translation strategies or resources. I worked five months in Torsitrad. Apart from learning about teamwork and work atmosphere, I discovered

online resources, I learnt that a translator has to have doubts during the translation process. Even though you are translating documents that are of different domains, the translator does not have to be familiar with them necessarily. Translation in itself may give you access to new disciplines. I also attended a lecture where there was an interpretation. All in all, I could see bits and pieces of what this profession involves.

**How important is technology in translation as a profession? What apps, tools, or online resources could you not live without when you translate? Do you use paper dictionaries?**

Society is changing rapidly and so are working methods. My generation was born with computers and technology and little by little we are introducing it at work or just using it for entertainment purposes. Society demands technology and we must adapt to our reality as well as look for ways which may facilitate our work. Most of us use online dictionaries in our everyday lives. I combine both paper and online dictionaries, but I use the Internet most of the times when I have linguistic doubts.

From my point of view, I could live without online dictionaries but I guess coping with a job would be more difficult. Wordreference, linguee, thefreedictionary, Cambridge online dictionary or thesaurus... are already part of my everyday life.

**Do you usually use CAT tools when you translate? If so, which one/s?**

The only Computer Aided Translation tool that I have used is Trados. It was the programme I used throughout my internship. It worked quite well and I found it effective and reliable. It contained a translation memory of all the languages the company worked with. As many words were already included in the system, some words in the translation were automatically translated into the target language.

**Do you think the translation profession is well paid?**

From what I've read and seen, professional translators are underpaid in relation to the quality of their translations and the amount of time they spend translating, correcting or editing a text. I believe the translation industry is nowadays claiming for better wages. However, as an outsider one can think that translators earn sums of money, and I believe it is rather the contrary. It is argued that the best translation is the invisible one. Yet, this does not imply that professional translators should be invisible, too. There are many hours of work, effort, training, reading... behind and we seem to forget about it.

By and large, we only notice the translator when a book has a very different translated title or when a key sentence in an original film is introduced in a different way in

its translation. There will always be minor flaws, as it happens with all professions. We need to have a general outlook and see that translation is part of our everyday lives, we need it and it facilitates the access to many resources without the need of speaking a specific language.

I think a translator has to be a curious person who asks him/herself questions and wants to go a step further.

### **How has the knowledge of multiple languages impacted your life?**

Being bilingual is always an advantage in that you can use both languages in your everyday life and with no distinction. The fact that they are so alike makes it easy to switch from one language to the other. As I see it, speaking two or more languages is an advantage for me because I am fluent enough to communicate with them. The more languages you know, the more receptive you are to learn new ones. Knowing several languages is key when you work as a translator, since you need to have an effective command in at least two languages. You need to preserve the original message and understand the nuances of a text in order to translate it adequately.

### **How important do you think is travelling for a translator?**

First, translators ought to enjoy travelling and visiting other countries. Otherwise, there is little likelihood that they are interested in languages and cultures. Travelling should be a part of their job, not as an everyday activity but as a frequent one. Travelling enriches your knowledge of the world and therefore it opens your mind to other lifestyles. For translators, travelling to a place that is the cradle of a language allows them to know it more in depth but more important, to discover what lays behind that language. There is a culture, a society, their habits, their slang and their humour, among others. I believe a long stay abroad is one of the best professional and personal experiences a translator may have. You live another language and another society. Getting under the skin of their mindset will facilitate your job a lot. You are already familiar with your own culture and language, and travelling is an ideal tool to immerse into another one.

### **How do you engage with language outside of translating? Do you write? Are you an avid reader? Both? What are you currently reading or what would you recommend?**

I'd say that when I am in contact with languages, most of the time there is not a connection with translation. Languages are part of me and therefore I try to keep practising and having fun as I am learning. What I miss the most now is being able to

speak English everyday as I did before. The less you practise, the less fluent you are. So, I decided I would fix an objective to stay in contact with languages one way or another. I try to write in English every day in the form of a diary to express my thoughts or to explain an anecdote or a meeting with a friend. When I have the chance, I watch TED talks that interest me as well as episodes of series. Despite preferring writing than reading, I usually have a book to read on my bedroom shelf. Now I'm reading *La librería*, by Penelope Fitzgerald. It is a novella about pursuing one's dreams and believing in oneself. I recommend it, it is entertaining and thought-provoking.

**Are you currently translating anything? If so, what is it?**

I'm collaborating with TED.com as a volunteer translator. Now I'm working with the subtitling of a TED talk and I'm translating it from English into Catalan.

**What are your future projects, either connected to translation or not?**

One of my aims is to continue engaged with translation as much as I can, be it as a volunteer translator, as a participant in a course about translation, as an applicant in a translation programme... I also have in mind to do a masters in audiovisual translation, possibly in Barcelona. However, I'm very grateful for my current situation. I like being an English teacher and staying in contact with my pupils. I have really grown since I started working there. Although being a teacher is not my goal, it makes me happy now. Above all, I feel privileged to be working with one of my passions: English.

**Have you received any formal training as to the parameters/standards to be used in audiovisual translation? If the answer is no, how did you learn them?**

I would have liked to have more training on audiovisual translation in the translation course. Due to the time limit of the subject, this was not possible. It was during the process of doing my final thesis when I first started being in contact with concepts such as synchronization, takes or dubbese, among others. One of the main books I used for the theoretical framework was *Through the dubbing glass*, by Candace Whitman-Linsen.

# A personal experience of the lights and shadows of translating literature

An interview with Marta Giné Janer

**Profession/Position:** Professor in translation, retired

**Languages you translate from and into:** French to Spanish/Catalan. Also from Catalan to French.

**Country of residence:** Catalunya

**A sentence that defines you:** “translating is writing in company”, it’s not mine. I can’t remember who said it, I know it’s one of the “big ones”. But I feel it as my own.

**Can you remember the first translation job you received?**

I didn’t start directly translating, but revising and updating “old” translations (adequate for their time) that needed language revision for publication. This task was very useful as a preparatory stage before “launching” into translating.

What I find most complicated of all is to avoid the feeling that my translation “sounds” like a translation.

**Which was your first published translation?**

*Muerta enamoradas*, a selection of fantasy short stories by Théophile Gautier. I did the selection, the prologue and the translation.

**What attracted you to translation as a career?**

I am interested in the process of translation of cultural aspects: in other words, apart from transferring language, I am interested in transferring everything that a language contains: culture, traditions, features of a specific historical period, etc.

## **What in your education prepared you most or best for translation?**

Because of the type of translation I do (literary), what best prepares me for translation is having a solid cultural knowledge (i.e. history, society, customs) to understand properly the original text and translate it adequately. I also think that it can be useful to consider (and relate the original and target texts) the cultural time of the original text and that of the target language.

## **What do you find most difficult about the kind of translation you do (please specify which kind of translation you do)?**

The translation task boils down to trying to do good work, never giving up, revising, trying again and again, until you feel satisfied with your final product.

In translation, what I find most complicated of all is to avoid the feeling that my translation “sounds” like a translation. That is, being faithful to all the original linguistic traits (idioms, syntactic turns, false friends... etc.) that I come across in the source language and adapt them to the target language.

## **Can you reveal to us any “secrets” about your translation process?**

I wish I had the key to these secrets! a magic key! There is none of it: rather, the translation task boils down to trying to do good work, never giving up, revising, trying again and again, until you feel satisfied with your final product.

## **What do you think are the most common mistakes amongst new translators?**

Start translating word by word, adapting your translation to the original language. In translation, there is always the difficulty of the source language “invading” the target language.

I always re-read several times the first draft, I revise and correct it, “let it rest in a drawer” and, before handing it over to the publisher, I always revise it once more.

## **Can you describe your translation process?**

My job is not translating per se, but rather teaching to translate. Being a translation teacher, I have been able to translate differently to how a professional or freelance translator translate. I have always translated

what I want: I have suggested works that I have found interesting, because I knew them, to begin with. In literary translation, I couldn’t conceive of translating a piece



of work without knowing it and having read it before. This does not mean that I have never been exposed to “rushing” from publishers (as far as I know, I would say that there is no exception to this rule), as this is imposed on each and every single translator. But I always re-read several times the first draft, I revise and correct it, “let it rest in a drawer” and, before handing it over to the publisher, I always revise it once more.

### **What helpful and not-so-helpful work habits have you developed over the years?**

One rule of thumb that works for me, both when I’m translating or when I’m writing my own production, is working in time periods of one hour and a half. No more, or less than that. Then I let it rest in a drawer and re-open it when my head is calm and rested.

### **Do you think the translation profession is well paid?**

I would say it is not. Besides, there is hardly any recognition of the translation work. In general, people are unaware of the amount of work involved in a good translation.

One rule of thumb that works for me is working in time periods of one hour and a half.

### **Future projects, either connected to translation or not.**

If, after retiring, I have more time, translating is an activity I like, I love, I find it “creative” because it gives me a fresh insight into language: and the better we speak and write, the easier the world goes round, don’t you agree with that?



# The musical possibilities of translation as a creative activity

An interview with Annjo Klungervik Greenall

**Profession/Position:** Professor of English Language and Translation Studies, Department of Language and Literature, Norwegian University of Science and Technology

**Languages you translate from and into:** English/Norwegian

**Country of residence:** Norway

**A word that defines you:** Creative

**General background:** As a ‘day job’, I teach and do research in the English Section of the Department of Language and Literature at the Norwegian University of Science and Technology. My main teaching and research are within Translation Studies. Alongside this job I translate songs, and sing in two different jazz bands. I have released two jazz albums, one with translations into Norwegian of the songs of Billie Holiday (Eg vandrar langs kaiane/I cover the waterfront, Øra Fonogram, 2012) and the other with translations of English-language pop hits into Norwegian, performed in a jazzy Bossanova style (Løgn og forbannet gjendiktning/Lies and damned re-interpretations, 2019).<sup>1</sup> At the moment, I’m translating a collection of poetry by the Norwegian poet Margrethe Aas, into English.

**Why did you become a translator/teacher and what path did you take to get to this point in your career?**

Music has been a big part of my life ever since I was a child. As a 7-8 year-old in Norway I used to run around to our neighbours’ houses with my guitar, offering to play and

---

1. Both available in full on youtube.

sing for them. Later, I would be in a variety of different bands, singing anything from country & western to blues, jazz and pop music. I chose an education in language,

We human beings have something akin to an instinctive fascination for translation. We can't help but respond to them

I think, partly because of the musical properties of languages – the phonetic qualities of their sounds held an irresistible aesthetic appeal for me. As I progressed through the various stages of getting a PhD, securing my first job, specializing further within my chosen field (advancing from a focus on linguistic pragmatics to one on translation studies), I was, however, missing

music more and more. Then one day the idea occurred to me that I might combine my passion for music with my passion for languages and translation, by translating songs and performing them. Since that day I have translated a large number of songs by different artists – Anglophone artists such as Billie Holiday, and English-language songs written (and performed) by Norwegian artists – into Norwegian. A few of them have made their way onto albums – not many, because obtaining permission to record songs with ‘new lyrics’, as they call it in the business, is a long-winded process where one is most likely not to hear anything from copyright holders at all, or get a negative response.

### **Tell us a little bit about your background and how you got to where you are today.**

I grew up in a mostly monolingual Norway, where Norwegian was and still is the main language. Back then, kids would begin to learn a second language, English, at the age of 10, so this was when I had my first encounter with the English language. Since then, English has gained immense ground in our country, to the extent that one is now talking about a ‘parallel language situation’, with English being channeled through to us in large quantities via popular culture, as well as increasingly used in tertiary education and in multinational companies, business and trade. I started studying English, as well as German and French, specializing in language and linguistics at first, then progressing onto translation studies. My venture into translation studies has allowed me to combine my interests in music and in translation, and to mix and blend my academic role with my song translation activities. I have, for example, given talks on song translation and concerts in combination, I have published academic papers on my own song translations, and I have been generously funded by my university in connection with the production and release of my two albums of translated songs.

## **What made you first interested in translating?**

It seems to me, both from my own experience and from observing readers of translations making comments on the internet and my translation-studies students engaging in various research projects, that we human beings have something akin to an instinctive fascination for translation. We can't help but respond to them, perhaps especially to subtitles, where both source and target text are available to us at the same time: 'Why did the translator choose this phrase instead of that phrase? Oh, my goodness, that translation is just so wrong!! Isn't that supposed to be x rather than y?' I think this fascination ultimately stems from the fact that translation is a puzzle where the pieces never fit together perfectly. There is (almost) never a perfect match and this becomes like an itch that can never be scratched. It keeps us alert!

Having said that, my own, initial interest in translation evolved over time in a slightly different direction. Song translation is different from many other forms of translation in that a close, semantic rendering is often not possible, because the lyrics need to fit into the pre-existing

I think this fascination ultimately stems from the fact that translation is a puzzle where the pieces never fit together perfectly.

music. This forces the translator to be creative, and for me, translation became a place where I could exercise my creativity, joyfully and freely; where I could juggle the challenge of trying to pay homage to the source text with creating a new text that would work with the music, one that because of this, and because of the fact that I was the one who was going to sing the translated song, would ultimately be a form of self-expression.

## **Can you remember the first translation job/task you received? Did you need any special qualifications?**

Being a song translator I don't receive commissions, I self-elect to translate songs. I am not a trained translator, thus my qualifications stem from my language background, my expertise in translation theory, and the experience I have accumulated as an active song translator.

## **What attracted you to translation as a career?**

I wouldn't consider my translation activity as a career, but it has certainly been part of my career as a scholar.

## **What apps, tools, or resources could you not live without in your work?**

The internet, and a good thesaurus.

## **What are you most proud of of your production/work?**

The highlights are obviously the two music albums mentioned in the general background section above.

## **What has been your biggest professional reward? What do you enjoy most about your work?**

I enjoy performing the translated song, experiencing it taking on a life of its own.

What I enjoy most about my work is the flow I enter into when I work on a song lyric – I forget all about the world around me and focus completely on finding the perfect balance between equivalence, singability and a dash of my own flavour. I also enjoy

the polished result, the way the lyrics fit rhythmically into the overall framework of the music, and the source-text-anchored, yet fresh poetry I have created. And I enjoy performing the translated song, experiencing it taking on a life of its own. I enjoy it when people say things like – ‘I know that song, and I kind of understand the words in English, but hearing it in Norwegian, my own language, made my whole experience of it so much more powerful’.

## **What do you find most difficult about the kind of translation you do?**

The most difficult thing about translating songs is finding correspondences that will fit in with the existing melody. There’s a lot of syllable-counting and a lot of looking for different synonyms before finding one that will work inside the musical frame. Very often, whole chunks of meaning need to be entirely rewritten in order to create a good fit. And sometimes, you just have to make things up.

Syllable counting (to match the number of musical beats in a line) is of course only part of the issue. In stress-timed languages, there’s the issue of word stress and sentence stress needing to match the patterns of strong and weak beats in the music. Often (although not always), if an unstressed part of a word ends up on a strong beat, it sounds strange. There are also other aspects of singability that one needs to be aware of. Some vowels, for example, are very hard to sing on high notes, so words containing them need to be avoided in those places. Furthermore, if a given line ends in a long note, it is often an advantage if the last word of the line ends in a vowel.

## **Can you describe your translation process? Do you read the whole text or do you translate as you read?**

When I translate a song I first memorize the source-text lyrics, familiarizing myself with them by singing them over and over again, thus internalizing the way the musical properties of the words (stress, phonetic qualities, the percussive function of the consonants) interact with the music.

This helps in evoking suitable translation solutions in my brain (rather than theoretically workable, but ultimately not very fitting ones). Some songs are translated in a couple of hours, but most of them take days, sometimes weeks (which is okay, because I don't usually work under the pressure of a deadline). The process churns away in my brain as I go about my other business, and all of a sudden, an excellent solution may occur to me in the middle of doing something completely different. I try to write it down there and then, so as not to lose it. I do a lot of polishing and trying out different alternatives. As the new lyrics are coming together I sing them out loud to myself to check how they work, to make sure they are in fact singable.

The process churns away in my brain as I go about my other business, and all of a sudden, an excellent solution may occur to me in the middle of doing something completely different.

## **Do you think the translation profession is well paid?**

I do not get paid to do this, because I do it for myself. In fact, I am often the one that has to pay, for example for permissions to perform the song with new lyrics live, or to record it and release it on an album. The small amounts of cash that come out of giving concerts and selling CDs go towards paying my musicians, paying for studio time, and so on.

## **What is your favorite “un-translate-able” word or phrase?**

If by ‘untranslatable word or phrase’ you mean words or phrases in a source language denoting concepts that are not lexicalized in the target language and thus have to undergo explicitation when translated, I think one of my favourites must be the Norwegian *ufisk* – literally translated into English as *unfish*, meaning fish that is considered unfit for human consumption. We also find the same morpheme *u-* (*un*) in front of words like *vær* (weather), i.e. *uvær* (unweather – meaning weather that one would rather not be outside in), and *dyr* (animal), i.e. *udyr* (unanimal – meaning a very unpleasant type of animal (or metaphorically, human being); a beast).



## How has knowing multiple languages impacted your life?

It has given me an interesting career, and the opportunity to experience the world from multiple perspectives. It has enabled me to interact directly and authentically

One of my favourites must be the Norwegian *ufisk* – literally translated into English as *unfish*, meaning fish that is unfit for human consumption.

with people whose backgrounds, upbringing and culture are very different from my own. It has allowed me to be a mediator between languages and cultures for other people, watching them reach new insights through realizing the different ways in which people think, express themselves and communicate.

It has allowed me to experience a greater degree of creativity, I think, than if I'd only had one language at my disposal. It has opened up the world to me, and unlocked potentials in my brain that would otherwise have gone unused.

## Future projects, either connected to translation or not.

In the not too distant future, I wish to venture into literary (prose) translation, and, possibly, translation of non-fiction, from English into Norwegian. I envisage myself retiring early, adding to my pension by doing translation work.

## How do you engage with language outside of translating? Do you write? Are you an avid reader? Both? What are you currently reading or what would you recommend?

I read novels by contemporary Norwegian authors, possibly with the subconscious intention of preparing for my future life as a literary translator!

I do enjoy both reading and writing a lot. At the moment I read novels by contemporary Norwegian authors, possibly with the subconscious intention of preparing for my future life as a literary translator! All these ingested words and styles might one day

provide raw-material for my own translation output. As for writing, I do write a lot through my work, mostly in English, and mostly academic articles. I also write popular science articles though, in Norwegian, for newspapers and such, although these are getting harder and harder to get published, since all academics are presently expected to disseminate research results in this way. So, in other words, the competition is getting fierce.

**Are you currently translating anything? If so, what is it?**

I'm translating a collection of poetry by the Norwegian poet Margrethe Aas, into English. The texts are about various geographical locations in the central part of Norway, more specifically about the physical and mental interconnections between human beings and their architectural and natural surroundings in these areas. I cooperate very closely with the poet, and also with a group of contemporary musicians who are composing music based on the poems, which will accompany readings of the poetry.

**What has been your favourite work to translate so far?**

They are all my favourites!



# The power of intuition in translating literature

An interview with Miguel Koleff

**Academic profile:** PhD in Modernist Literature; Specialist in Lusophone Literature.

**A word that defines me:** essayist.

**Profession:** Regular collaborator of the local newspaper Hoy Día Córdoba, where I write journalistic articles, facts of everyday life with a perspective from Lusophone literature.

**When you worked with Saramago's texts, what was the most challenging translation problem?**

One of the characteristics of Saramago's works that posed a challenge for me were proverbs or popular sayings. In one particular case, the saying had no one-to-one similarity in the target language so I could not resort to a literal translation because the translation terms or equivalents did not work, but I found a phrase that conveyed a similar meaning. On the one hand, it made me think that there is a saying in Spanish and I might not know about it. I thought of all the possibilities, did a lot of research, but could not find it. In that case, I looked for an explanation and I put the sentence together as if it were a saying but playing upon semantics and syntax.

**In that case, did you consult with any expert, specialist, or a colleague?**

I consult with my colleagues all the time. If I could, I would work with colleagues all the time as if they were walking dictionaries. For example, when I come across a word I do not know, I turn to Brazilian colleagues, but with Saramago and with the literature I work with the most, which is Portuguese, sometimes Brazilian colleagues cannot help me solve the lexical problems because these entail Portuguese usages. Now I have

Without being an official translator, what was it that I thought authorized me to translate that work? The fact of being "saramagoan".

more Portuguese friends, so I have people I can consult with, but the sources have to be linguists or at least familiar with the language or the will to understand what you want to ask them. Specifically, in one of Saramago's works, I did resort to a friend of mine who has a degree in Literature, that is to say, she does not speak any Portuguese, but she did a very fine reading in terms of sounds and semantics, and she was a very resourceful linguist. I translated the texts, then I sent the texts to her on a rolling basis so that she could read them, but then I would make a list of all the questions about which I had doubts. We would meet in the café; I would bring my list and she would bring her list of things she had observed. Those meetings were long and the lists were long, as well. I trusted her common sense a lot and that is how I finally gave shape to the translation.

**Although you do not have formal training in translation, you are very much guided by intuition, such as making use of the proofreading step...**

Indeed. In the case of Saramago's translation —The Second Life of Francis of Assisi—, there was also a stage of revision. The work was published in a volume that included

My starting point is an error, in fact, because I assume that as a reader I understand it so well that as a translator I will translate it well.

Saramago's five plays. This meant that it was necessary to give the whole work a Castilian touch. The other translator and some other translations that already existed were from Spain; that is to say, the Spanish register was followed. Some important changes were introduced. For example, I remember that

the pronoun "*vosotros*" had to be added and the pronoun "*ustedes*" had to be removed, and since I did not even know how to conjugate verbs with the pronoun "*vosotros*", that step was left in the hands of the proofreader.

**Was that your greatest professional reward as a translator?**

Yes, I think so. Because it is Saramago and he is the author I have worked with all my life. Without being an official translator, what was it that I thought authorized me to translate that work? The fact of being "Saramagoan". I feel that I could understand what Saramago could say. As much as I could modify a structure of his speech, I was confident that I was being faithful to his ideas. I had the sensibility, the certainty that I can translate Saramago because I know his work inside out. I felt I would not betray him. It is my only resource. I am not a translator, and Saramago being a Nobel laureate, a super important figure, but I still feel I could do a good job.

I translated another book that was written by a Brazilian writer, Michel Laub, and the translation was published here in Córdoba, Argentina. The title of the novel is called

*Lejos del agua* (the original title in Portuguese is *Longe da Água*) and for me that job is well done. I followed Michel Laub a lot, at the time I did the translation I had read everything the author had written up to that moment, some things I liked, others I did not. This translation differs from the first one in that there is no such a thing as being “Laubian” because the writer is very young; the writer must have been 30 years old when I did the translation. At that point he was entering the canon, but I do not know if he is still a valuable writer today or if he got lost along the way, as happens with many young writers. I stopped following him so I do not have that much contact with him. But why did I accept that translation? Because I had the feeling that Cordobese Spanish was a means of communication. I read that work in Portuguese and found that the same register existed in the Spanish of Córdoba. I perceived a linguistic and sound similarity.

**That is to say, you could localize that work well, the same local color could be found in both languages and cultures...**

Yes, I found those points of connection and it was easy for me. I found sympathy with the language, not with the author.

**What is your translation process like?**

In the case of Saramago’s work, I had previously gathered much documentation; I had even written an essay on this text; that is to say, I had already studied the work. My starting point is an error, in fact, because I assume that as a reader I understand it so well that as a translator I will translate it well. When I got the translation assignment for this work, I had analyzed the text so much, I had even taught classes on the text, I felt that the text was going to be absolutely transparent to me. I consider that to be an error. For example, certain stylistic resources such as irony, take me a long time to translate. Since this text was a play, my way of working was to set up the matrix: mark the acts, the frames, the scheme of the play, the characters. I do not overwrite the Portuguese source, I have it in hard copy and I create the Spanish translation on the screen. I make a first translation, a rough draft, but I move forward until I have translated the whole text. If I only translate and polish just one frame, one scene and do not translate the whole book, I feel that I am not being totally faithful to the whole process and I’m afraid of betraying the author’s thinking. Along this process, I take down some notes. I highlight the parts that pose some difficulty to me. At one point I had to translate the title of a work that in Portuguese is called *O remorso de Baltazar Serapião*. I had always taken the word

Linguistic awareness and that is exactly what the translation process requires of me.

*remorso* as repentance, but then, after so much work with the text I realized that it was not repentance, but remorse. That takes a lot of linguistic awareness and that is exactly what the translation process requires of me. It is not the same for me to use one word as the other.

### **Are you currently translating anything? If so, what is it?**

Another writer that I call post-Saramagoan because he won the Saramago Prize, is Gonalo M. Tavares. I work on some of his texts in my classes. I know a lot about him, but I am not familiar with all his work. I consider him to be an extraordinarily complex writer. During the pandemic he wrote *The Plague Diary*, which consisted of 90 diary entries, one for each day. During the month of July we made this diary bilingually from the library of the School of Languages, with international collaborators. Even Tavares participated in this initiative and I had the chance to get to know him. He is looking for another translator in addition to the official one. He asked whether I or someone from my research team would be able to translate his works. I replied “Of course!”, but it can turn into a huge challenge for me. I feel like I have not fully grasped his way of thinking yet. From the point of view of language and register, I love it because I like the Portuguese of Portugal more than that of Brazil. For me it would be a much more enriching experience. From a personal point of view, it would require a lot of work from

You can imagine that translating the potential Nobel Prize winner for the Portuguese language is no small thing, right?

me since there are idioms, expressions, and as I have no systematic study of Portuguese from Portugal but from Brazil. I have always approached Portuguese from Portugal only in an intuitive manner. I feel that Brazilian Portuguese is more transparent, and that I am better able to solve the translation problems. Sometimes I feel that Tavares’s

texts are impenetrable. His writing is overly complex. When you get a good grasp of it, his work amazes you because the author has achieved a magnificent combination of poetry and prose. He mixes scientific and technical discourse with his literature. He is a Renaissance man, with an explosive mind. While I do not feel that I fully grasp his thinking, I still do not want to decline his offer and miss the challenge! In this case I do not have what I do with Saramago: I still cannot define myself as a Tavares specialist.

I wanted to tell this at the interview to show the fears that I do not have while teaching since I have been a Professor for many years now. If this project comes to fruition, it would be something special because Saramago, of all the authors I read and study, predicted that Tavares will be the next Nobel Prize of Literature in the Portuguese language. You can imagine that translating the potential Nobel Prize winner for the Portuguese language is no small thing, right?



# Reflections on translation and philology

An interview with Matías López López

**Profession/Position:** Professor of Latin Philology, Universidad de Lleida (UdL).

**Languages you translate from and into:** I have professionally translated from Latin into Spanish (Latin authors: Plautus, Seneca, Petronius, Gualterus Anglicus —among others—). At present, I am also planning to translate from French to Spanish; I also backtranslate: Latin translation of poets into Catalan.

**Country of residence:** Spain

**A sentence that defines you:** “Hay que ser artistas lo más posible: funcionarios ya somos por Imperativo Legal” [You have to try hard to be an artist: we are already civil servants by Legal Imperative]

**Can you remember the first translation job you received?**

In my case, translation is not a profession but an aspect of my philological activity; this applies to both editorial commitments and free exercises et amore. The philological attitude is inseparable from the translating activity; that instinct is prior to contract work or the decision to translate.

The philological attitude is inseparable from the translating activity.

**Which was your first published translation?**

Seneca’s *Dialogues*: probably not the first, but certainly the most important.

**What attracted you to translation as a career?**

The very infeasibility of the attempt, the inevitable transformation of everything original into ‘something else’ once translated.

## **What does a day in the life of a freelancer/translator look like?**

It is something like a relentless monastic discipline.

## **What do you wish people knew about translation as a career?**

I do not believe in rules in translation: all it takes is for a combination of two linguistic competences to coincide in the same person and little else; the rest is unfamiliar terrain. There is an ocean of bibliography on the science and art of translating; it happens with translation like with books teaching you to write commentated texts on literature: they are good readings, but they can never act as manuals.

## **What in your education prepared you most or best for translation?**

It is a relatively sterile retrospective effort: nothing prepares you in a decisive way. Surely, in the case of a student of Classical Philology, their own daily practice, since

There is an ocean of bibliography on the science and art of translating.

“practices makes perfect”; but no one has had a translation teacher: it is possible to admire a specific translator, but that translator did not learn his/her trade either because s/he followed the method of a great teacher.

## **What apps, tools, or online resources could you not live without when you translate? Do you use paper dictionaries?**

I try to use only paper dictionaries; if I turn to online dictionaries, it is because at a specific moment I do not have a conventional dictionary at hand.

## **What’s your least favourite thing to do and how do you tackle it?**

I would dislike any imposed or commissioned translation (luckily, it has never happened to me); even out of revenge or hostility, it is convenient for a translator to have some kind of personal relationship —some secret link— with the author to whom s/he is going to translate. As I see it, something can only be well translated within an affinity of feeling. The truth is that it resembles love: ‘If you attract me, I will translate you’.

## **What do you find most difficult about the kind of translation you do?**

In the case of translation into current languages of Greek-Latin classics, the almost insurmountable difficulty of putting on a satisfactory linear axis (the target language)

the globality of a vision of the world (that contained in the source language) that, in certain aspects, is revealed to us as extremely distant or unintelligible. Above all, because in any translation the target language is in charge. All this explains—you will have noticed without any doubt— why, in the best translations of the ancient classics, the apparatus of explanatory notes is so abundant (I would say ‘necessarily superabundant’), with the consequent risk of reading the translation without any interference.

### **Can you reveal to us any “secrets” about your translation process?**

It is not possible to answer this question accurately. We would already enter an area close to psychoanalysis. I could say, for example, that I establish a direct dialogue with the translated author: ‘I understand you, so and so, I understand you’, or else ‘What a pity you stayed here, because you were about to say this or that’ (in this second case, betrayal of the unconscious is frequent and, why not say so, translator’s infidelities: the honest translator, then, opens up a footnote; the one who gets to the point, hopes not to be caught). So, I thought I would not be able to answer your question, but in the end I *do have one secret*: my translation secret is to establish a dialogue with the author.

### **What’s unique, challenging or interesting about your particular language combination?**

Considering Latin my preferred language of experimentation, I tend to think that, except for historical limitations, there are no “dead languages” (as these are very living dead, someone who is definitely not dead, or not as dead as others) but dormant brains. In my literary conception of translation, I am above all interested in the fact that, although I go for translation of meaning rather than ‘word by word’ (as already stated by Saint Jerome), the challenge—which is felt with special intensity when working with classical languages— it is still to achieve a symbiosis between educated language and plain language, between etymological meanings and ordinary meanings. The novice translator should start their work with something that “the System” no longer guarantees: a general culture as broad and comprehensive as possible.

My translation secret is to establish a dialogue with the author.

### **How important is technology in translation as a profession?**

For me, technology is not important in translation work and I ignore it completely.

## **What do you think are the most common mistakes amongst new translators?**

I would establish a distinction between translations to “go to the point” (technical, commercial, administrative, etc.) and translations so as not to interrupt intercultural continuity. In the latter, which are the ones that really interest me, the historicist criterion is crucial: i.e. you have to handle all the available translations of the same work and not lose sight of the fact that a good classic (ancient or modern) should be re-translated every twenty years or so.

## **Do you usually use CAT tools when you translate?**

Although I respect them, I reject all sorts of pre-configurations: I find it as horrendous as composing poetry with a dictionary of rhymes. No, I never use these kinds of resources.

## **Can you describe your translation process? Do you read the whole book or do you translate as you read? If you work in a team, how do you divide the tasks?**

Personally, team translation does not seem viable and I have always rejected it. In general, I reject teamwork. The translation of any work that has not previously been learnt from cover to cover should not be undertaken. But I think that all translations without exception are carried out passage by passage (poem after poem, chapter after chapter, etc.).

## **What helpful and not-so-helpful work habits have you developed over the years?**

I am only going to refer to the greatest danger that a translation faces once it has been undertaken: that the translator abandons it or sees it as an intermittent, temporary job; in that, translating is like a novel: if you start, any long interruption will ruin the project. If I say this, it is because of my personal experience. When you return to what

you left behind (no matter how noble the reasons for abandonment may have been), you know absolutely nothing and that feeling is like having a serious gap from the brain point of view or learning a completely unknown language.

Except for historical limitations, there are no “dead languages” but dormant brains.

## **Do you think the translation profession is well paid?**

I don't know: I was never paid for any of them. I tend to think that the translation, in general terms, is poorly paid. When I hear people say things like "they pay me a certain amount per page or word," it gives me the impression that some noble talent is being exploited there.

## **What's the best advice related to languages that you've ever received?**

I remember two specially because of their direct impact on the translating activity: that translating is also imitating, that is, the translator is obliged to capture the 'music' inherent in each text and reproduce it; and that there are no easy or difficult texts or authors, but timely or untimely, or, at most, works that one can cover or works that it is better not to face. I do not remember well if these guidelines were taught to me or I have learned them on my own; I would say that the latter is the case: that they are worth, then, as general guidelines, unrelated to a specific authorship.

The novice translator should start their work with something that "the System" no longer guarantees: a general culture as broad and comprehensive as possible.

## **What is your favourite "un-translate-able" word or phrase?**

I always like to go back to the examples of *odi et amo* (Catullus) and *carpe diem* (Horace): everyone seems to understand these formulas directly, but the truth is that they are very difficult and they refer to a special case of translation, namely, the translation that must be accompanied by an explanation (and I am not referring to footnotes here), that is, the translation that must contain—in its own expression—elements of some connotation that is not obvious.

## **How has the knowledge of multiple languages impacted your life?**

Quoting (and translating from Latin) Ennius the poet, we have as many hearts as we have languages; thus, the knowledge of several languages implies the plurality of hearts, that is, of mentalities, because not in vain did the Romans believe that the heart is the seat of ideas.

## **How important do you think is travelling for a translator?**

In my opinion, it has a very relative importance (I would dare say null). Balzac, although he was not a translator, knew women better than anyone without having

had much time to get out of his desk and get to know them. The best thing a translator can do is stay on the anvil at his desk and set a schedule; travel will only bring you evil distraction.

### **What do you enjoy about translating?**

Although it is a mirage, the illusion —and this is what it is, an illusion— that what I am writing in Spanish (generally, in Spanish) is exactly what Seneca or Petronius would say if they were Spanish speakers.

### **How long does it take you to translate, on average?**

This question is unanswerable in mathematical or statistical terms. I do know that all literary translation is subject to the principle of maximum slowness that Nietzsche applied to philology. But, to refer to specific passages, I like to compare those moments —sometimes hours— to complex chess moves.

### **How do you engage with language outside of translating? Do you write? Are you an avid reader? Both? What are you currently reading or what would you recommend?**

It is profitable for the translator to be, above all, a good reader. It is always better, in order to translate well, having read a lot than having written a lot: not always is a good writer right in the translation facet. Now, it is desirable for a translator to like writing; this desire will make it easier for you to express yourself in an excellent way.

### **Are you currently translating anything?**

I am translating Catalan poetry into Latin: a very strange thing, I know, but don't tell me that it is not a pleasure to get a poet whom you know and meet on the street to enter —for the sake of the translating operation— the payroll of those who used the language of Ovid or Lucretius!

### **Future projects, either connected to translation or not.**

I want to sink my teeth into some 19th century French author, but I don't know yet how. This is interesting for translation: as time progresses, the type of translation —or the kind of interpretation— that I would like to carry out changes its aspect, that is, there is a mental translation that is prior to the written translation.

### **What has been your favourite work to translate so far?**

It gave me great satisfaction to be the one who, for the first time in Spanish, translated (and edited, and annotated) the *Cena Trimalchionis* separated from the rest of the novel [*Satyricon*] by Petronius.

### **Is there anything you'd like to add in closing?**

Perhaps I am missing a question on the limits of the translator's betrayal; or even, whether translating by imitating as well as you can could lead to a magnificent translation in a clumsy language (if the original were clumsy). Translating is not adorning. Translating is never putting a single word too many; or not a single word less than necessary.

### **Can you give us information about your teaching/research experience?**

Except for a PhD course that I taught many years ago on the Spanish versions of Horace, I have not taught on history or on theory and practice of translation. Certainly, I would like, at the same time, say here that the teaching of the Latin language through literary texts is a constant practical exercise on the art of translating. And a plea: the translation must be recognized –as it has not yet been fully recognized– as research work.

The knowledge of several languages implies the plurality of hearts.

### **What is missing from translation courses?**

Possibly, there is too much doctrine on theoretical models. On the other hand, what I'm certainly missing is more linguistic discussion.





# Passion and happiness, key elements of a vocational translator

An interview with Txema Martínez

**Profession(s)/Position:** Poet and translator

**Languages you translate from and into:** English, Catalan, Castilian

**Country of residence:** Catalunya

**Can you remember the first translation job you received?**

When I was 18, with the EOI English degree under my arm, I thought I was ready to translate from English. But my first professional experiences were traumatic: a lot of work, tight deadlines, and poor compensation. Under these conditions, it is hard to create, which is essentially what translating is about, and grow as a translator. Besides, my knowledge at the time also made me feel hesitant about my skills, and thus made me translate more slowly.

If you don't live this endeavour with passion and happiness, it's impossible for you to become a good translator.

I wanted to do translation because I've always been fascinated by languages, and I seemed to have a certain ease with them.

**Which was your first published translation?**

*Canvi cultural a la societat del Segle d'Or* (1998), by Henry Kamen, published by Pagès Editors. At first, I would translate essays and novels, but soon after I gave that up and was offered to translate the daily edition of the local newspaper SEGRE from Spanish.

## **What attracted you to translation as a career?**

I am not a standard professional translator because my profession is, in fact, journalistic translation. The translations outside the newsreel translation are purely vocational, for mere pleasure.

## **What do you wish people knew about translation as a career?**

I miss paper dictionaries, their smell and their feel, the fact of carrying them around, buying them in bookshops, browsing through them and spending money on them.

I think it's important to highlight the vocational nature of this profession. If you don't have a feel for languages, if you don't have language awareness, if you don't live this endeavour with passion and happiness, it's impossible for you to become a good translator. Translation can never be a burden, a chore: it has to be a pleasurable activity through which you feel you're

contributing to, that you're doing your work, that you're becoming a better person, that you're acquiring culture and, by doing so, you feel alive, and give life to the others. Translation needs to project this liveliness; otherwise, it's totally useless.

## **What in your education prepared you most or best for translation?**

The best school is, on the one hand, total immersion, in all respects. By travelling, by reading, learning about other people's lives from other cultures and races, from films and series. On the other hand, though, you need to keep abreast of languages: being always on the alert on the languages you're working with, because they evolve and adapt to different situations, in line with language users, who use language to express their thoughts.

## **What apps, tools, or online resources could you not live without when you translate? Do you use paper dictionaries?**

To be honest, I miss paper dictionaries, their smell and their feel, the fact of carrying them around, buying them in bookshops, browsing through them and spending money on them. All these gave them a priceless added value because they were valuable items. But nowadays they are obsolete tools, and they are offered online. They're faster, easier, and cheaper to get, but I feel that, sometimes, getting things easier diminishes their essential purity, and a rush, poorly meditated translation is a bad translation.

## What's your least favourite thing to do and how do you tackle it?

Deadlines are one of the worst aspects of translating because you're jeopardising quality in your attempt to meet a deadline. In theory and in practice, this is counterproductive. All the translators in the world schedule their working day according to pages for translation, which is a foul practice in itself, because every time the text is different, just like the state of mind of the translator. Overall, though, this is all part of a profession, and most publishers don't care about all that; they only care for deadlines, at a minimum quality standard. Fortunately, there are always exceptions to the rule.

All the translators in the world schedule their working day according to pages for translation, which is a foul practice in itself.

## What do you find most difficult about the kind of translation you do?

In my case, I have always translated poetry without a pre-assignment. I must say that I've always published what I've translated. What I find most difficult of all is finding the right tone. I think this is the biggest challenge faced by a translator. Before translating, you need to find the right intonation of the text, it's as if you sounded a tuning fork to attune the essence of the original text with the target text you're trying to produce. When you get to this gateway, when you *feel* the original text, when you understand its intention and depth, everything gets much easier.

## Can you reveal to us any "secrets" about your translation process?

I guess everyone has their own tricks. In my case, I suppose it's achieving a linguistic framework in my mind. I know this may sound silly and simple, but it helps me *keep the text under control*. When I read the original for translation purposes, I see nouns, adjectives, and verbs. These are my main building blocks. And I go from there, transferring everything into my own language: I have the three pillars on which to build my new text, and then, I can move them around as I need it.

Translating means being suspicious of everything even yourself. Be suspicious, be on the alert, and you'll be on the right track..

## **What's unique, challenging, or interesting about your language combination?**

At the end of the day, what really works is experience. The more you translate, the more you've lived and the more you read, the better translator you'll be and

Technology cannot solve your incompetence, rather the opposite: it will bring it to the fore and will unveil it.

the more you have to lean on intuition, rather than on reason. It is intuition that leads you to interesting translating discoveries. Simultaneously, you have to support yourself on suspicion. Translating means being suspicious of everything even yourself. Be suspicious, be on the alert, and you'll be on the right track.

## **How important is technology in translation as a profession?**

Technology is like everything in life: there is a good and a bad side to it. You should realise that technology is just a tool, not an end in itself. Technology cannot solve your incompetence, rather the opposite: it will bring it to the fore and will unveil it. Therefore, you need to be intelligent and know both your resources and yourself.

## **What do you think are the most common mistakes amongst new translators? What advice would you give us?**

Translation errors abound, and there are as many of them as there are words. But this is, after all, almost uncontrollable if you're looking for perfection, a necessary and genuine endeavour. To me, there are two main problems for translators: first, being so absorbed by the text that you lose sight of the world and become obsessed with it.

The problem is the capital sin of a translator, which is wanting to "be above" the author, and when translating, adding, or disambiguating, or even "improving" the original.

This often makes you lose perspective and look for wrong translation solutions that could significantly betray the original text. Translation can be part of your life, but it is not your whole life. You need to breathe in and take a step back. The second problem, and maybe related to the first, is the capital sin of a translator, which is wanting to "be above" the author, and when translating,

adding, or disambiguating, or even "improving" the original. Machado said that one of the most difficult things is rising to the occasion. This is what I mean. A translator should not be above or below. Otherwise, we fail as translators, and even also as individuals.

## **Do you usually use CAT tools when you translate? If so, which one/s?**

In SEGRE there has been a translation machine from the beginning, in 1997, that we keep fine tuning and adapting to the Lleida dialect (it translates from Spanish, its original edition). Failing this, it would be nearly impossible to translate a newspaper every day so fast. The machine keeps you from “wasting” time writing, but, of course, on the other hand, although it has evolved enormously and is quite reliable, it is still a minefield that the translator/editor needs to solve.

## **Can you describe your translation process?**

Ideally, you must read it entirely before starting, as you need to know where you tread on, the keys to translating it, finding the right tone, etc. But in real life, most professional translators don't do it because of the deadlines. If this is the case, it is good practice to read the beginning and the end of the book and read a few chunks from the middle. And then getting down to translating it. This is a much lesser evil than the major evils imposed by deadlines.

## **What helpful and not-so-helpful work habits have you developed over the years?**

When translating, it is essential to be organised, keeping routines and protocols. Every translator has their own. But it is important to have working habits because they compensate you with time, self-confidence, and reliability.

## **Do you think the translation profession is well paid?**

I think it is very badly paid and, nowadays, it is difficult to make a living out of it. I am afraid this will remain an endemic disease, will get even worse and I don't think it will ever be solved. Most translators need other income sources, other jobs, and this is a handicap for everyone, mainly for culture.

It is important to have working habits because they compensate you with time, self-confidence, and reliability.

## **Do you have any advice for up and coming translators?**

My advice is a true and correct cliché, passion. Do things enthusiastically and with conviction. Only that will give you full satisfaction and the feeling that you're growing as a translator and as a Reader, culturally and biographically. If you are uncertain that

you do your best, that you're being honest, then you'd better give it up. When you fool yourself, you let yourself down, even more so your readers.

### **Could you share with us funny anecdotes and curiosities?**

Whenever someone translates your work. As a poet, the translators of my poems have asked me some incredible questions: "this *nosaltres* (*we*), how many people do you refer to, two, or more than two...", "when you say *tu* (*you*), are you referring to a man or a woman", "when you say *sota* (*under*), how high exactly"... There is nothing like being translated, and translate, to understand other languages, as they reflect the culture and the society that uses them.

### **What do you enjoy about translating?**

The best thing about translating is the work in progress, seeing how you stumble, fall, and you stand up again, and learn from every error. You feel you grow as a translator, and the text flows better every time. And, finishing the work, it's like climbing a mountain, you have the satisfaction of realising that you've climbed it and you've achieved something.

### **How long does it take you to translate, on average?**

I have translated mainly poetry. And poetry only needs peace and quiet. My most ambitious translations are Shakespeare's Sonnets and Poe's complete poems, which took me twelve years and three respectively. Translating, in my case, is something deeply connected to my life as an adventure.

### **What has been your favourite work to translate so far?**

The best thing about translating is the work in progress, seeing how you stumble, fall, and you stand up again, and learn from every error. You feel you grow as a translator, and the text flows better every time.

I am a writer and, therefore, everything related to literature is connected to this fact. I write, I translate, I read, and these activities are communicating vessels, sometimes I'm fully aware of that, but sometimes I'm not. But there is always a connection. My life project would be, now that I have translated the longest and most difficult part of Shakespeare's work, I would like to translate all his lyrical poetry, in one

publication. I feel this would be a remarkable feat for the Catalan language and its translating tradition.

# The importance of reflecting dialect in translation

An interview with Anushiya Ramaswamy

**Profession:** Professor of English

**Languages you translate from and into:** From Tamil to English

**Country of residence:** United States of America

**A sentence that defines you:** Home is Everywhere

**How did I begin translating?**

I am an accidental translator. When the professional translators I approached in 2001-2003 in Tamil Nadu to translate Tamil Dalit poetry for a book project refused—some quite vociferously, I must add—I began doing the translation myself, with great trepidation. It is an unwelcome feeling that still engulfs me each time I begin a new project. When I began the translation project with N.D. Rajkumar's eviscerating poems of raped and killed Dalit women who transmogrify into local goddesses, I'd had no prior experience in translation work. As I held the issue of the *Dalit* literary journal that carried the 12 poems of Rajkumar, I chanced on Cheran's Eros-driven poem of dark-skinned immigrants and the lover waiting with a single rose in the back cover. I had read Cheran's poems in Sri Lanka when he was a fiery young Tamil poet; but this poem, written in the late 1990's, ruminated on the migrant. In a daze I translated it and stuck it on my university office door. I learned something about the literary translation process then—one needs a certain intimacy (this is Spivak's word) with the source language. By intimacy, I mean, there has to be a part of oneself that finds fulfilment in that language, call it a mother tongue, a language with ghosts, what one carries everywhere. But that is not all that what the term intimacy means.

As my translation projects multiplied, I became a much better writing teacher.



I translate minor literature —the poems, novels and short stories of Sri Lankan Tamils who have suffered a civil war for decades— as well as Dalit literature. Both require the translator to enter the Dionysian realm of these seemingly powerless discourses, not as a metropole but as an intimate. Shobasakthi, the Sri Lankan Tamil writer I translate uses a spoken Tamil of all kinds of registers and dialects, including the Nineteenth-century Biblical translation Tamil, identifiably “Christian Tamil,” as well as the common Portuguese nouns that have entered standard Sri Lankan Tamil (“cozinha,” kitchen for “cusini”; kadeira or chair for “kathirai”). His stories abound in puns, rich idioms, obscenities and humour. My abiding interest in dialect in translation comes from the challenges of translating his island-inflected Tamil. I footnote extensively, desperately aware that the imperial language I am translating into would treat this discourse as either quaint or irritatingly non-modern (that is, lacking transparency).

The danger —to the translator, of course— of translating literature reflecting and recording the unremitting cruelty of men is that of freezing: of being unable to proceed, of coming to a complete halt in the middle of the translation, the kind of refusing to get out of bed in the morning kind of behaviour that can last for years. I put away

Shobasakthi’s novel *Box* for two years: ten pages into the translation, I stumbled onto the story of the 15-year old girl Natchiar who is captured by the military. I had to read Anne Carson’s *Grief Lessons*, her translations of Euripides to make my return.

I am deeply interested in what gets left out of drafts.

### **How has your translation work impacted on your academic life?**

I am a Professor of English —of rhetoric and writing, specifically. As my translation projects multiplied, I became a much better writing teacher. I listen closely to the student text (another powerless text), listening for the unsaid, and then coaxing it out in revisions. I am deeply interested in what gets left out of drafts. In Composition studies with its valuation of Apollonian clarities, I try to find a felicitous way for the singular, that which doesn’t fit in easily, what resists to survive. Spivak (I count her theorizing as a profound influence on my own translation activities), argues for “Breast Giver” as being closer to the original Bengali title as well as the short story itself —of Yashoda who spends her whole life as a wet nurse to the local rich family only to develop breast cancer and die a lonely death years later— than the title “Wet Nurse” of another translator, because of the material, historical and feudal lines that criss-cross throughout. Let me tell a story as to what I mean by intimacy. A few years ago, a small Dalit village near Madurai was burned down by men who came at night with lit torches and kerosene cans. When I asked one of the men from the destroyed village, months later, after the police had arrested the culprits (his non-Dalit



neighbours, as always) about his material losses, he said: “We had a TV but no Godrej bureau.” What did he mean? The most valuable thing in his hut was the television, a luxury purchase made possible through monthly payments and it had been destroyed in the fire. The Godrej bureau, pronounced by him as “Kaatrich bee-row” is more complicated. It is a steel almirah (that Portuguese word again, reminding us of the multiple European colonizations in the subcontinent) made in the Victorian style with a strong lock. This piece of furniture would usually be part of a woman’s dowry, following her to her new home. In a thatched roof and a hard-packed earth floor hut it would be a safe place to keep the good clothes, official papers, and anything else the family regarded as important protected from rodents, thieves and damp. A symbol of prosperity and belonging to the lower middle-class by dint of monthly payments, he could have chosen to pay for the steel bureau over a television set. I don’t know if the cupboard would have survived the fire. What I found deeply tragic was how it figured as personal complicity in his narrative of terror and loss.



# Revisiting my experience with literary translation

An interview with Cristina Solé Castells

**Profession(s)/Position** University Professor of French Literature

**Languages you translate from and into:** Catalan, Spanish and French

**Country of residence:** Catalonia

**Can you remember the first translation job/task you received?**

It was *Guide de l'architecture de La Seu d'Urgell*, translated from Catalan into French, 1991, for Institut d'Estudis Ilerdencs.

**What attracted you to translation as a career?**

I'm not a professional translator. I do literary translations occasionally, when I'm asked and I like the subject or the author.

**What do you wish people knew about translation as a career?**

I would like them to understand the enormous responsibility one has, being a translator. Also, I'd emphasize the fact that one cannot translate topics properly that one does not specialize in.

One cannot translate topics properly that one does not specialize in.

**What in your education prepared you most or best for translation?**

I never had any academic preparation to become a translator. I learn by comparing original versions against their translation and translating literary texts by myself.

## **What apps, tools, or online resources could you not live without when you translate? Do you use paper dictionaries?**

In literature, my experience with machine translation has not been good, so I never use it. I do use though dictionaries, dictionaries of synonyms, antonyms, etc. often in digital format because it saves me lots of time.

The only occasion that I use paper dictionaries is when I translate from French to Catalan because in my opinion, when translating, there is no better online translation tool than the two dictionaries of the French-Catalan dictionary by Enciclopèdia catalana.

## **What do you find most difficult about the kind of translation you do?**

I translate literature. To me, the most difficult thing about what I do, translating poetry, is translating without “killing” the rhythm, musicality of verse, and meaning!

## **Can you reveal to us any “secrets” about your translation process?**

Experience has taught me that, after finishing a piece of translation, you need to give it a “rest” for three or four days, and then re-read it twice. On the first re-read, you’ll discover plenty of source language influence, and you’ll be able to even out translated expressions, etc. On the second re-read, you’ll be able to focus on polishing and give a uniform style.

## **What’s unique, challenging, or interesting about your language combination?**

To me, the most difficult thing about what I do, translating poetry, is translating without “killing” the rhythm, musicality of verse, and meaning!

The language combination French into Spanish, in terms of literary translation, poses a challenge because of cultural aspects. Finding the proper balance to produce a text that remains faithful to its original version, and at the same time, does not create a gap between the original and the target reader is a difficult yet wonderful challenge.

## **How important is technology in translation as a profession?**

As regards translation as a profession, technology is of the utmost importance. But when it comes to literary translation, one should tread carefully, because technology can spoil a good translation.

## **What do you think are the most common mistakes amongst new translators?**

Wanting to translate all types of documents without having the necessary knowledge on the topic for translation. This gives rise to “surreal” translations and brings disrepute to a translator.

## **Do you usually use CAT tools when you translate? If so, which one/s?**

Very few times. Occasionally I have used OmegaT.

## **Can you describe your translation process? Do you read the whole book, or do you translate as you read? If you work in a team, how do you divide the tasks?**

First, I learn about the author and about the intention of his/her book, I read the text, analyse its style, their rhetoric features, and then I start translating. I have only worked in a team on two occasions. We translated together around 20 pages, we wanted to see the problems, decide joint translation solutions to vocabulary, syntax, expressions, etc. Then, we read the translation from cover to cover, individually, and highlighted anything that needed revision. Then, we all got together and agreed on a final version.

When it comes to literary translation, one should tread carefully, because technology can spoil a good translation.

## **Do you think the translation profession is well paid?**

Not at all. I also think it's not sufficiently recognized socially.

## **How has the knowledge of multiple languages impacted your life?**

It has had an enormous influence on the development of my personality –they have made me more flexible and helped me put things into perspective – they've made me feel more liberated.

## **How important do you think is travelling for a translator?**

Travelling is necessary to be updated with the evolution of language, its linguistic habits, its different varieties, and styles, and also its different idiosyncrasies.

**What do you enjoy about translating?**

European novels from the 20th and 21st centuries.

**How long does it take you to translate, on average?**

Phew, I'm a very slow translator. A 100-page novel could take me 2 months of solid work.

**Are you currently translating anything? If so, what is it?**

I don't write, but I like reading. Now, I'm reading *Plaire et toucher. Essai sur la société de séduction*, by Gilles Lipovetsky.

**Have you been working on any special translation recently?**

I've just translated the novel *L'Espoir*, by André Malraux. It is about the beginning of the Spanish Civil War: from its origins in 1936 to 1937. About 700 pages.

**What has been your favourite work to translate so far?**

Someday I'd love to translate *Les Croix de bois*, by Roland Dorgelès. It is about his experience in the trenches during the Great War. I find it very interesting for young people to understand what trench warfare was like. The book has long been translated into English but has never been translated into Spanish or Catalan.

# An approach to translation from a Germanist's point of view

An interview with Eduard Tapia Yepes

**Profession/Position:** University lecturer in German (GSP —German for Specific Purposes)

**Languages you translate from and into:** DE, NL, EN > ES, CA

**Country of residence:** Spain

**A sentence that defines you:** I am a Germanist fully devoted to teaching, translation has helped me move on.

**Can you remember the first translation job you received?**

I started off with a professional German translator friend of mine, who used to send me her reverse translations. She didn't want any limits as regards clients, and managed to set up a very good team of translators.

The first translation job I remember is a report on the geodata infrastructure in Germany. I also recall having to familiarize myself intensely with the subject.

**What in your education prepared you most or best for translation?**

I have not received any education as a translator but as a linguist. In this respect, sentence semantics has helped me have a more precise and thorough view of every phrase and predicate. Good tagging of verb typologies regarding their lexical aspect or Aktionsart (state verbs, action verbs, inchoative verbs, causative verbs) and their interaction with the semantic roles involved in each predicate, helps finetuning the translation with a more suitable adverb, for example.

One thing that has always been very interesting for me is tracking the etymology of words.

## **What apps, tools, or online resources could you not live without when you translate? Do you use paper dictionaries?**

I am using paper dictionaries less and less because the process of searching for words is slower if we compare it with the large number of online tools available. I am more interested in the Linguee format, as it gives you more usage *frame*, and the context of the translations available is much clearer. I also enjoy the discussion forums on translation available in online dictionaries such as [www.leo.org](http://www.leo.org).

## **What do you find most difficult about the kind of translation you do?**

During the years I translated more intensely, I used to translate texts of different subject matters (e.g. chemistry, economy, geology, medicine, engineering, logistics, history of art, history, animal food, sports clothing). Perhaps I was more confused with texts on topics I was not too interested in (e.g. engineering or logistics). Other than that, I must say I have learnt so much, about many disciplines, while I translated.

## **What's unique, challenging or interesting about your particular language combination?**

My language combination has a very interesting feature: all the languages I translate from are Germanic and, to a higher or lesser extent, they're all related. One thing that

The semantic shifts among similarly rooted languages shed light on the overriding views of each language: some of them focus more on results, and others on processes.

has always been very interesting for me is tracking the etymology of words (German dialectology also helps: German dialects are a true open book of history). In this respect, the semantic shifts among similarly rooted languages shed light on the overriding perspective or point of view of each language some of them focus more on results, and others on processes, for instance. Thus, while

German tends to nominal style, which emphasizes a resultative/stative perspective (e.g. *Durch kurzes Drücken der Taste erfolgt das Ein-/Ausschalten*; literally: 'Through brief pressing of the button the switching on/off succeeds'), a Romance language like Catalan often uses verbs (i.e. sentences): '[L'aparell] s'encén/s'apaga, si prem breument el botó'. This accentuates a more processual/active nuance instead.

## **How important is technology in translation as a profession?**

If you're referring to CAT tools, I think they're essential. I remember endless glossaries I had to create every time I started a translation. Nowadays, with such software as



Across, Trados for example, the translation history and percentage of hits of a word, phrase or sentence, speed up the translation task.

**What do you think are the most common mistakes amongst new translators?**

Failing to schedule your time, failing to do some research before translating, failing to read the text to get the gist or failing to read the whole sentence before starting to translate it. You need to have an approach, a view. These are essentials for a translator, in my opinion.

**Do you usually use CAT tools when you translate? If so, which one/s?**

Yes, Across is my favourite. “It is developed by Germans (Across Systems GmbH) and I find it very effective I am also familiar with Déjà Vu or Trados, and think they work just fine. I must say, though, I haven’t used them systematically.

**What helpful and not-so-helpful work habits have you developed over the years?**

Positive things that translation has given me, I would highlight down-to-earth scheduling and time organization. This has been an effective strategy when planning my lectures, for example. On the negative side, I would say there is a danger of pushing yourself too hard. After a long day’s work, you say to yourself: “come on, one more paragraph and enough for today“. This paragraph ALWAYS becomes a few paragraphs more. This is a danger that you need to stop, otherwise you overload yourself. Especially if you want to work professionally and stay fresh the next day.

**Do you think the translation profession is well paid?**

I couldn’t tell. There are plenty of translation agencies paying really bad fees (4 and even 3 cents of a euro, per word). On the other hand, your workload is mostly “guaranteed”, but I was never too keen on working under these conditions. Difficult as it may sound, I think that the ideal situation is investing time and effort on building up your own client portfolio (private clients and fair translation agencies). This is what I did, and it worked for me. Working only for agencies can be extremely ungrateful.

Positive things that translation has given me, I would highlight down-to-earth scheduling and time organization.

## Do you have any advice for up and coming translators?

I wonder if I'm the best person to give advice on that, as I don't work as a translator anymore. Nevertheless, I would say that a quality first read and good time scheduling are essential. It's worth spending some time at the beginning of your translation task, to build a very general translation picture in your head and to schedule your work, day by day."

## What's the best advice related to languages that you've ever received?

Learn as many of them as you can.

## What is your favourite "un-translate-able" word or phrase?

German is chock-o-block of untranslatable words and phrases. You always come across (lexicalized or *ad hoc*) compounds whose main root is based on a word equally applicable to several entities [ $\pm$ animate]/[ $\pm$ living], which increases the possible translations of that compound. For example, *Leistungsträger* (made up of *Leistung* ['performance' or 'service'] and *Träger* ['bearer'], main root word) has acceptable translations into Catalan like 'result', 'talent', 'provider of any type of service (business or person)' or 'leading player of a team sport', among other possible translations. In this respect, I would deal with it just as I said before: a previous and accurate analysis of the semantic roles of each predicate.

Likewise, another interesting aspect would be fully lexicalized compounds requiring roundabout, nearly acrobatic, expressions when translating them. To mention just a few, I would say *Schadenfreude* ('fun or happiness generated by someone's misfortune'), *Fernweh* ('urge to go round the world' or 'just the opposite of the Galician word *morriña*'; literally: 'distance ache') or *Ruinenlust* ('satisfaction when observing abandoned, run-down spaces or landscapes, based on pleasure or nagging feeling at the passage of time').

I would finally add to the above a few fossilized expressions, culturally accepted in German, but not in Catalan. Facing this, the translator's skill has to come to the fore.

One of these expressions is: *Viele Grüße unbekannterweise* (literally: 'my regards as a stranger'). Here, we would understand this expression as "someone (A), by means of an intermediary (B), who sends regards to a third person (C). The key element here: A and C don't know each other yet. I have

Difficult as it may sound, I think that the ideal situation is investing time and effort on building up your own client portfolio.

always liked this expression as I find it very elegant and polite. In my translations, I always phrase it as a concessive expression: ‘Dóna-li records igualment/de totes maneres’ (tot i que no el/la conegui) (in English, Give him/her me regards, despite the fact that I don’t know him/her).

### **How has knowing multiple languages impacted your life?**

This may be a stereotype but speaking languages has enabled me to know more people, have access to jobs and, ultimately, living things I would have never lived otherwise. Saving money on languages is setting limits to your life. In every aspect of your life.

### **How important do you think is travelling for a translator?**

Extremely important. Not only travelling but also keeping contact, one way or another, with that culture. I keep in touch with German friends despite distance and pandemics.

### **What do you enjoy about translating?**

I like the phase of revising and adapting the draft translation. In my opinion, this is the most creative and beautiful part of translating.

### **How long does it take you to translate, on average?**

I remember I used to have very busy times, tight deadlines and long texts, and at that time, I would translate, on average, 1500 words per day to ensure that I had enough time to revise it several times. When the deadlines were generous, the average rhythm slowed down, and my average went down to 500/800 words per day.

### **How do you engage with language outside of translating? Are you an avid reader? What are you currently reading or what would you recommend?**

Yes, I love reading for pleasure. The problem is that I —like many people— usually have very little time available to do so. Summertime is a great time of the year to read. Now, I’m reading a reedition of *Calendari de llegendes, costums i festes tradicionals catalanes* by Aureli Capmany, published in 2018 by Sidillà. “Paremiology is one of my interests and these two volumes are full of proverbs. I find them a GREAT historical wealth for any language, and they just keep it alive. Whenever the tone of the translation allows it, I try to use as many proverbs as I can.

I am also reading an unpretentious detective novel that explains an interesting story. This is about the novelization of a real character from the early 20th century, Enrique Cazeneuve, founder of the first private detective agency in Barcelona. The book is entitled *Cazeneuve i la revenja dels desvalguts* and was also published in 2018, in this case by Capital Books. As I said above on Capmany's book, this book also shows the meticulous task of recovering genuine expressions from that time in Barcelona. Unsurprisingly, one of the two authors, Oriol Molas, is a philologist. The other one is Ferran Grau.

### **What has been your favourite work to translate so far?**

I remember a translation assignment I received in 2013 on the fourth centenary of the expedition of Christopher Columbus to the Western Indies. This was a German text published in 1892 in Fraktur or gothic case. Since no word processor recognised this case type (mainly due to its variety of ligatures), the translation agency I was working for gave me this assignment. Thus, it became, not only a translation job, but also a transliteration one (typography and calligraphy are also some of my interests). I remember this task dearly, as I enjoyed it enormously.

# The translation process in a globalised world

An interview with Isabelle Weiss

**Profession/Position:** Company Director, Translator

**Languages you translate from and into:** EN/FR/IT to DE\_DE/DE\_CH; DE/FR to EN

**Country of residence:** United Kingdom

**A word that defines you:** Hard-working, pragmatic. As a boss I have been called “sympathetic”.

**Good afternoon, to begin with, thank you for giving us some of your valuable time, as we know you’re a busy person. For our readership, could you provide us with some biodata?**

Born in German-speaking Switzerland, after doing my Maturity exam I was passionate about getting a job in England, and by a lucky coincidence I got one as a trilingual secretary/translator at a woodworking company in Leicester. I was fascinated that a “disappearing dog” was a “ziehender Mitnehmer” in German. At that time, no women were allowed on the factory floor, so I never got to actually see these planing and moulding machines. After a spell working at an international bank in Geneva, I went on to study Linguistics in Tübingen and then was awarded a grant to do a post-graduate degree at Cambridge. I was doing editorial work and translations on a freelance basis when in 1986 I won a request for proposal from Acorn in Cambridge to translate their user manual and all the software for their newly launched BBC Acorn computer. This was the time when personal computing was all the rage, and there were plenty of companies in the US and the UK needing their brand-new software translated. It was all uncharted territory: terms like hard disk and RAM had no equivalents in other languages, so it was all very exciting and creative (how do you translate “Undo” into various languages when you only have the space for 4 characters?). This is when I decided to set up a translation company that would provide linguistic services to this new industry, but with an important difference: translators, project managers and DTP staff would all work together, under one roof.

## **You are the director of a successful translation company. How did you start in the translation industry?**

More or less by accident, in 1970, when it was unusual for a Swiss person to work in the UK, and anyone with 2 or 3 languages was considered a “translator”. But once I got into it I loved it and I knew this was what I wanted to do.

My “break-through” came when I hit on computers as a new field of translation, with little competition. See above, with the launch of the BBC Computer by Acorn in Cambridge in 1986.

## **What translation project are you most proud of and why?**

CAT tools are such a fantastic help, firstly you never risk losing any work, you cannot mistakenly omit anything, and you can recycle your own texts and that of others.

There are 3: That first User Manual for Acorn, in 1987, which marks the start of ALPHA, and later, in 1992 an educational CD-ROM of “Sophie’s World”, based on the novel by Jostein Gaarder, which we translated into 8 languages, and which won a first prize at the Frankfurt Bookfair. This was done for a small publishing house in Cambridge,

Galileo Publishing. I am proud of it because it was such an interesting project to do and involved recruiting several translators who were passionate about philosophy, and enthusiastic and creative. It gave us a tremendous sense of camaraderie and achievement but involved some very hard work and many long hours. We even had famous actors come over into our small studio to speak some of the parts. The third is a collection of scholarly essays from Spanish into German on a Bestiary written in the 16<sup>th</sup> century for Don Juan de Austria, a son of Charles V. I loved it because it was so different and involved a great deal of research and looking at these amazing pictures of real and fantasy creatures.

## **What are you particularly proud of in relation to your company?**

I believe, and I have evidence, that in the over 33 years of existence we have provided a sympathetic and fertile environment for translators of all age groups. Quite a few started with us as interns, straight after their university studies, or even wrote their final thesis at Alpha, some are still here 20 years later. Others joined later in their career. All in all, we must have provided employment to some 1,000 people, and not only translators, of course, but also project managers and linguistic and technical support staff. We have managed to create a very international and friendly atmosphere, and currently have more than 35 different nationalities at our headquarters in Cambridge,

with other, smaller offices around the world in places such as Berlin, Montpellier, Bologna, Tallinn and also the Far East. I am equally proud of the fact that some of our customers have been with us for many, many years as well, and continue to see the benefit of our inhouse model and philosophy.

### **What do you see changing in the translation industry in the next few years, and further into the future?**

When I started out in 1970, I was using a manual typewriter. This was supplanted by the IBM golf ball typewriter, which miraculously had a correction ribbon! The next big change were computers and word processors, and around 1988 the first CAT tools, and machine translation like Systran. But the most important revolution in my mind came about in December 2016. I had been experimenting with Google Translate in the summer of that year and was pretty disillusioned with the output from English into German. But in December artificial learning and neuronal networks were introduced, and overnight the scene had changed, with a big bang. Suddenly, the results were remarkable, even unbelievable for certain types of text. That morning I knew that translation would never be the same. Gone were the days when you started from a blank segment. The translator was inevitably going to become a post-editor. This is where we are now. The groundwork is being done by the machine, our task is to spot where it's gone awry, has missed out something, picked a term that's not correct in the context, or got its knickers in a twist, as they say.

### **What language combinations are most difficult to get translators?**

This is a tricky question. With globalization, we can no longer think in terms of just European languages plus perhaps Chinese and Japanese. Some of the big internationally active companies request rare languages like Welsh or Icelandic, Quechua or Azerbaijani. Gone are the days when Bulgarian or Latvian were considered 'exotic'. On top of that of course you have specializations. Finding an expert who can do a German automotive servicing manual into Azerbaijani could prove difficult. But closer to home, it has been and continues to be notoriously difficult to find Scandinavian mother tongue speakers, especially Norwegians, simply because there are very few translation courses and fewer and fewer people interested in taking up the profession, when other, better paid jobs are available.

### **What are the most popular language pairs?**

The language pairs most in demand for us are English into most of the European languages, with French being the one most in demand, followed by German. Increasingly, Chinese and Japanese are wanted as target languages. Being active in



the Gaming industry, we also have an increasing demand for Chinese, Japanese and Korean into English and other languages. Spanish to English and vice versa is very important too, but here the rates are very low: there is a huge number of translators, and there is big competition from Latin America. Many large projects are wanted for the Mexican market, or for other specific South American countries.

**Isabelle, take us through a standard workday for you — what are some of the things you do as the director of a translation company?**

I think I am very atypical here, so perhaps this is not interesting for your audience. After all, I did not set out to be an entrepreneur, all I wanted to do is translate, with other translators around me. Alpha is big, and I am fortunate in having a really good management team. So, I can concentrate on doing a lot of translation, review, providing feedback to translators, getting involved with problem-solving and meeting clients. I am also very much involved with recruitment. When I first started out, of course, I was doing sales and marketing, trying to get business, but also recruiting and testing translators, project managers, and desktop publishers. In the early days I was also doing layout and DTP jobs myself, and a lot of quality control, to make sure translations did not contain errors that had crept in at the typesetters. And of course, I was sending out invoices and writing reminders to clients who were slow in paying, and other administrative tasks.

**What has been your biggest professional reward? What do you enjoy most about your work?**

I am proud of the fact that my personal success as a translator has allowed a big company to evolve, providing employment —and I hope— some pleasure and satisfaction to a lot of people over the years.

**How do you view the future of translation? Any trends and breakthroughs you envisage?**

I envisage that with machine learning translation engines will become better and better at taking into account context and working with subject matter-specific (or client-specific) terminology. If you divide up the text function into informative, operative and expressive, I would say that purely informative texts, such as instruction manuals or product descriptions that convey facts and are not concerned about style or emotions, can be handled admirably by an engine such as Google translator or DeepL. It can perform its job without much input from a human. If, on the other hand, we think about expressive texts as in fiction or poetry, or other texts that rely heavily on the language, on wordplay and metaphor, then that's a different story. Here, the machine is clearly at a



disadvantage. The same can be said of the third category, operative texts, i.e. texts whose aim is to engage and persuade the reader (to make a purchase, for example, or to donate for a good cause). This is about eliciting a particular response—and relies heavily on feelings and emotions—

not something a machine is very good at. We know that with robots, the main issue scientists are now struggling with is sympathy and empathy. It looks like we are still a long way from artificial empathy—which means that humans are ahead of computers when it comes to anything involving emotions.

I do not believe in doing a rough draft and then doing research later and re-formulating many sentences..

### **In your opinion, what should people know before considering a career as a translator?**

Translation is not a glamorous job. It is mostly pretty hard work, sometimes with unsocial hours, and with limited possibilities for promotion. Ironically, if you are a good translator and want to keep translating, you REMAIN a translator. You may get faster, you might be able to get work that suits you better and that you find interesting, but essentially you continue to be paid on the basis of the number of words translated. If you are looking for financial improvement you may need to take on other responsibilities and tasks, or even give up translation, change to translation coordination, project management, or set up your own company!

Translation involves languages, of course, and you need to be particularly good at your own mother tongue, keeping up with the latest trends. But just as importantly, you need to be good with computers and tools, be able to pick up new software skills quickly, and make the best use of new features. This technical aspect is becoming more and more important. 25 years ago, when CAT tools were first introduced, there were a few established translators who refused working with these, saying: “I am an excellent translator – I don’t need a CAT tool”. These days, with that attitude, no-one would ... even consider you for a job or a project.

### **What are working conditions like for a translator these days?**

As a freelancer, starting out, it can be very tough. If you cannot list relevant projects or employment on your CV, agencies will be reluctant to include you in their database. Even if you pass their test, you may be waiting for a long time before you actually get a project. Many would-be translators are forced initially to take on another job. I see this on the applications I receive: many are working in the retail sector as shop assistants or in a multilingual service centre, or as language teachers, doing the

occasional translation project. If you are really serious about embarking on a full-time translation career, it is definitely worth applying for an internship with a translation company, and then take it from there.

### **What is the value of doing an internship?**

It provides you with what is most important —some experience. It is your chance to test out the water and see for yourself what the professional environment is like, and whether you feel it is right for you.

At Alpha, we choose our interns very carefully, more carefully even than candidates for actual translator jobs. Because an internship is demanding on both parties. The company must find resources to train and mentor the intern, someone who is patient and can provide guidance and feedback. Typically, we take on people where we feel there is a real chance that we will be able to offer them employment after the internship is over. This contrasts with many translation agencies who take on interns constantly, keeping them for 3, 4 months, then replacing them with the next one, paying nothing or very little.

### **What in your education prepared you most or best for translation?**

Good grounding in languages and grammar, first having to learn “High German” at school (while speaking Swiss German). Good all-round education (in Switzerland at that time the commercial Matura exam at 18 contained around 16 subjects, including accountancy, history, and shorthand in 3 languages). Emphasis on good writing style and a passion for literature.

### **What apps, tools, or online resources could you not live without when you translate? Do you use paper dictionaries?**

After using CAT tools now for well over 20 years, I would not like to do without them. I am particularly fond of memoQ. Nor would I be happy if the Internet suddenly shut down. You can find out so much, at the click of a button. Compared to the times when you had to call up friends or go to the library, in the hope of finding something useful, for example about welding, or typography ... I remember once taking a 2-day trip to Madrid, just to find books on art in multiple languages, to help our teams translate a big arts-related project. This was around 1990, and I remember being amazed at how much material they had in the Madrid book stores, in the main European languages!

## **What's your least favourite thing to do and how do you tackle it?**

There are certain types of translation I don't enjoy, contracts for example. Or dealing with reviewers who "know everything better", but are paid to find mistakes, while they are clearly not linguist. In the same vein: Accepting client's corrections when they are clearly not right, are inconsistent, or will create problems further down the line. You've got to take it stoically or with a sense of humour.

## **What do you find most difficult about the kind of translation you do ?**

I do all sorts of translations: user interfaces, user documentation, presentations, marketing materials, whitepapers, video subtitles, accident reports, corporate communication, articles on veterinary medicine, cookery recipes, online games texts, licence agreements. They all have their own challenges. The most difficult projects are those where the client does not specify their expectations clearly. That is most often the case with so-called Transcreation jobs. You get a marketing brochure in English and the client says, "we don't want a 1:1 translation, we want a transcreation".

I am aware that most literary translators cannot live from their earnings and usually hold another job that pays their wages. That I think is very sad.

With no further clarification it is usually impossible to know exactly how much liberty you can take, to what extent you can re-formulate. So that first job is typically VERY difficult. Similarly, but on a different level, if my client sends machine translated material and says: "Please just go over this and make sure it does not contain any serious errors. Don't bother with anything stylistic or preferential, and don't touch the syntax" – well, that's a tall order!

## **Can you reveal to us any "secrets" about your translation process?**

My own "secret" is to always translate a text in a way that is acceptable and usable, even if suddenly there is no time to go over it again. From what I have been able to observe, these days, many translators always do a draft first, and then various cycles of refinement. For me, of course it is great to go over a translation again, and polish it, and so on, but essentially, I do the research and the thinking when I translate. If I later have the time, I go over it again —some if it is for publication, or a speech.

One piece of advice I give to translators is to "read out the final text aloud to themselves". That way, you can spot which sentences are too convoluted, too long, too repetitive. If you cannot read a text out without difficulties, it is most likely a poor translation.

Naturally, this is even more important if you are translating a lecture or a speech to the shareholders, for example.

### **What's unique, challenging or interesting about your particular language combination?**

My most common language combination is English to German (DE\_DE). The biggest challenges are: Adapting style/register and terminology to your audience. 16-year old gamers use a very different language from 40-year old programmers, or 50-year old CEOs. Some companies love to use English terms, they feel it makes them look up to date. Translators tend to be more conservative, they like to use the more old-fashioned terms,

I particularly like doing creative or tricky translations where I have more liberty and fewer constraints.

and not use too many English expressions. Often, our clients see that as a disadvantage, they want texts that reflect modern usage of a particular group, they do not want conservative, prescriptive language. So, the difficulty is striking a balance between modern usage and correct grammar. Even though English and German are of course

from the same language family, their syntax is quite different. CAT tools often tempt translators to leave sentence components in exactly the same order as the original – but that does not make for a nice, natural translation. As a translator into German you need to consider the emphasis of a sentence, and also the rhythm across sentence boundaries. US-English in particular loves using nouns (your computer ... your computer ...). In German you would use a pronoun in the second instance. You also must have the courage to divide up overly long (marketing) sentences into shorter, more succinct ones.

### **How important is technology in translation as a profession?**

It has become all-important. Translators who refuse to use CAT tools or MT do not have a chance of survival.

### **Do you usually use CAT tools when you translate? If so, which one/s?**

Absolutely, for the last 25 years I have always used CAT tools, first Trados, and since memoQ appeared on the market, memoQ – if I have a choice, others if I must. CAT tools are such a fantastic help, firstly you never risk losing any work, you cannot mistakenly omit anything, and you can recycle your own texts and that of others. I am also a great fan of the integrated Termbase function where you can add new terms on-the-fly. This really helps consistency and saves a lot of looking up in the concordance.

### **What do you think are the most common mistakes amongst new translators?**

Junior translators tend to over-translate. They often use a stilted style, and they shrink away from using English terms, even when these are now commonly used in most fields. They tend to translate too literally, for fear of getting the meaning wrong, if they dare to be a little more courageous. Before embarking on a large translation project, always make sure you ask for reference materials, a glossary, a style guide. If none are available, perhaps suggest that you will create a glossary of the main terms and get these approved. Or offer to translate 3-4 pages upfront and submit them for feedback. The last thing you want is to spend 6 weeks on 50.000 words, and then find the client is totally not happy. If you are freelancing, never accept a job before you have had the chance to at least see a sample and are confident that you can do a good job.

### **What helpful and not-so-helpful work habits have you developed over the years?**

From my early years —working with a typewriter (where if you left out a sentence or made a howler you might be forced to retype an entire page) I have retained my habit of making sure that my “first pass” is usable and fine. Unlike many other translators, I do not believe in doing a rough draft and then doing research later and re-formulating many sentences. I do go over it again when I have finished, but that’s usually for stylistic changes, adding logical connectors, or perhaps joining two sentences, or breaking a sentence up that’s too long and does not read well. But in principle, once I am through, the translation could be used if necessary.

### **Do you think the translation profession is well paid?**

Difficult to give one answer. Clearly, some translators are managing to earn a reasonable living, but overall and for many language pairs the rates have been decreasing, especially over the last 15 years, and now with the introduction of machine translation, the profession is, overall, not very highly regarded. And clients will always find someone “who will do it for half the price”. Fewer and fewer companies employ staff translators; the work is mostly done by freelancers, and competition is tough. I am aware that most literary translators cannot live from their earnings and usually hold another job that pays their wages. That I think is very sad.

### **Can you offer any advice to translators in the early stages of their careers?**

Try to find an area that interests you personally and where you know there is work. This could be oenology, or sports, finance, or law. Or Games! If Games, I strongly recommend that you choose Japanese, Chinese, or Korean as one of your working languages.

### **Are you currently translating anything? If so, what is it?**

Of course, I am always translating, usually several very different texts every day. This weekend, for example, it was some games content for a world-famous multiplayer online game, from a rather weird English source (the original was in Chinese), into German, an instruction booklet for a medical device, and product descriptions for an Italian manufacturer of luxury shoes. Oh, plus a couple of pages for a leaflet on coffee capsules.

I am always translating, not something, but lots of things. Usually projects that no-one else is keen to do, either because they involve overnight or weekend work. I also translate projects that are specifically for a Swiss audience. Not everyone is aware of this, but the way German is written in Switzerland is quite different from standard German (and of course the way we speak is unintelligible to other speakers of German). I particularly like doing creative or tricky translations where I have more liberty and fewer constraints.

### **What has been your favourite translation project?**

My favourite translation project was outside the “industrial/commercial” industry. And I was not the translator, but the “midwife” for the publication of the English translation. I had discovered one of the great novels of 20<sup>th</sup> century German literature, a work that never made it into the bestseller lists, because it came out at the wrong time, right after WW2 when the German literary circles were not interested in a 900-page book with a baroque style in the manner of Don Quixote. I realized to my astonishment that this book, which is a semi-autobiographical work about an exiled anti-fascist who spends 5 years in Mallorca, had been translated and published in French and Spanish, but not in English. It is Vigoleis Thelen’s semi-autobiographical Quixotic novel “The Island of Second Sight” in the translation by Donald O. White for which he was awarded the 2013 Pen Translation Prize.

# Reflections on literary translation

An interview with Brian Worsfold

**Profession/Position:** Professor of English (Retired), University of Lleida

**Languages you translate from and into:** Catalan/English; Castilian/English

**Country of residence:** Catalunya (Spain)

**Do you remember the first translation job that you received?**

I carried out many short translations (French/English/French; German/English/German), mostly of literary texts, at Grammar School in England in preparation for 'A-levels' in French and German.

The first paid translation (Castilian/English) I undertook was for the design and construction of a large-scale poultry factory in Egypt. The job was offered to me by an entrepreneur in Lleida.

Direct, oral translation; that is, simultaneous interpreting, requires great mental agility and can be exhausting.

I translated (Castilian/English) the documentation relating to the project of the emblematic building (Transfronterera) on the new university campus in Lleida (Cap Pont). This included later the instructions for the international competition for the adjudication of the project to a firm of architects. This work was requested by the Rector of the University of Lleida.

No special qualifications in translation were required for either of these two tasks.

I have never decided to work as a translator.

**Which was your first published translation?**

The first translation published in book form was that of *To the Death, Amic*, the novel on the Spanish Civil War by John Bryson (Australian author and journalist). The



novel was published in Castilian as *Hasta la muerte, amigo* by Editorial Milenio (Lleida) in 2006. The translation was carried out in collaboration with Maria Vidal-Grau and Núria Casado-Gual.

### **What attracted you to translation as a career?**

I do not regard translation as an activity that forms part of my professional career. All translations I have carried out have been on a specific request.

### **What do you wish people knew about translation as a career?**

Professional translating is a rigorous and demanding career. Direct, oral translation, that is, simultaneous interpreting, requires great mental agility and can be exhausting in certain circumstances, especially if the person speaking is not used to being translated simultaneously.

### **What in your education prepared you most or best for translation?**

During my education, translation was carried out as a technique for learning a foreign language, in my case, French and German. I believe it to be a poor aid to learning a foreign language and as being misused by language teachers. Translation should be taught as a skill separate from reading and speaking a foreign language.

### **What apps, tools, or online resources could you not live without when you translate? Do you use paper dictionaries?**

When I translate, I use MS Word. I divide the page into two columns and in the left-hand column I place the text to be translated and I write the translation in the right-hand column. I use Google to check meanings and bilingual paper dictionaries for vocabulary equivalents.

### **Can you describe your translation method and techniques?**

In the case of the novel *Hasta la muerte, amigo*, the author John Bryson asked us to translate his novel into Castilian. The three translators are well-acquainted personally with John Bryson, who lives in Sydney. When translating fiction, it is important to know ‘the voice’ of the author which has a bearing on her or his style. In some instances, it may be necessary, too, to be familiar with other writings by the same author, with her/his background, with her/his education, and with her/his formation.



The translation of literary texts requires hard work, prolonged concentration and, above all, time. The translator needs to give her/himself ample time to mull over any word(s) or phrase(s) that may present difficulties or doubts. Given sufficient time, the appropriate word or phrase will rise to the surface of the early-speaker translator's consciousness.

**What do you find most difficult about the kind of translation you do (please specify which kind of translation you do)?**

In respect of literary texts, the most difficult aspects of this kind of translation is to translate humour, authorial voice, attitude, and pace, that is, the dynamics of the narrative.

**Can you reveal to us any “secrets” about your translation process?**

To have extensive knowledge of the author's background and experience and be familiar with other texts created by the author. The translator must read the target text repeatedly and discern the meaning of the narrative.

**What's unique, challenging or interesting about your particular language combination?**

I have translated only into English. The translator's knowledge of the source language needs to be adequate, but the translator's knowledge of the target language, that is, the language into which the original text is being translated, must be profound and based on wide-ranging experience in that language.

**How important is technology in translation as a profession?**

Technology is important for some kinds of translation, for example, technical and administrative. However, technology, especially automatic machine translation, is not helpful for literary translation which requires time for reflection and revision on the part of the translator, especially in terms of translating voice, attitude, and narrative dynamics, which, to my knowledge, machines do not reproduce adequately at present.

When trying to speak or write in a foreign language, don't translate!

## **What do you think are the most common mistakes amongst new translators?**

Common mistakes are to be found in the use of ‘false friends,’ insensitivity towards ambiguity, misspellings, and misunderstanding of vocabulary in the source text.

## **Do you usually use CAT tools when you translate?**

No. I do use the Google search engine when in doubt about a word, an expression, or an idiom or popular saying, for example.

## **Can you describe your translation process? Do you read the whole book, or do you translate as you read? If you work in a team, how do you divide the tasks?**

Bilingual and multilingual persons translate unconsciously between their languages all the time, but do not necessarily make translators.

I translated a novel in collaboration with two other translators. With English as my first language, I undertook a draft translation of the whole novel from English into Castilian. Following this, the two collaborating translators, both bilingual Catalan/Castilian speakers, reworked and revised my

translation to generate the final text in Castilian. (The author had requested from the start that his novel be translated into Castilian, with distribution planned principally throughout South America.)

## **We find this point very interesting. How did the collaboration with the other translators go?**

The collaboration with the two other translators went very smoothly. We have a long-standing friendship and agreement. There were no ideological or stylistic discrepancies. The novel is a humanistic account of one family member’s experiences in Barcelona during the Spanish Civil War (1936-1939). It is fundamentally anti-fascist.

## **What helpful and not-so-helpful work habits have you developed over the years?**

I usually write down the draft translation on paper first. When transferring the written text to the computer screen, I translate in short bursts, never spending more than one hour at a time without resting from the laptop monitor. I translate when I feel like translating, never forcing myself to sit down and struggle with the text.

### **Do you think the translation profession is well paid?**

I have not been paid directly for translating. I have copy-edited documents and reports, and, on occasions, I received some payment. I do not know if the translator's profession is well paid.

### **What piece of advice would you offer to translators in the early stages of their careers?**

The work of the translator is important work and carries with it great responsibility. As more and more people speak other languages, it may be concluded that translation in many contexts is becoming less necessary, but, unfortunately, the reverse is true. Just look at the European Union with all its misunderstandings and misrepresentations, many of which are due to poor communication skills and bad translations.

### **What's the best advice related to languages that you have ever received?**

When trying to speak or write in a foreign language, don't translate!

### **How has the knowledge of multiple languages impacted your life?**

I have lived outside England in countries whose official language is not English (Saudi Arabia, Catalunya, Spain) since 1967. This has been made possible by my knowledge of various languages, a major factor in my life to date. My life course would have been entirely different had I not spoken Spanish at a certain moment, for example.

### **How important do you think is travelling for a translator?**

Persons working as translators find themselves travelling widely with professional objectives. However, 'tourism' is not important for a translator in a professional sense.

### **What do you enjoy about translating?**

There is a certain satisfaction to be gained when the translator feels s/he has produced an accurate and precise text.

### **We would like to ask you a true classic question in translation, do you think a translator is born or is made? What evidence do you have of either?**

I do not think translators are 'born.' Bilingual and multilingual persons translate unconsciously between their languages all the time, but do not necessarily make

translators. Translators develop from their language competence, general knowledge, life experience, stylistic sensitivity, empathetic capacity, close-reading and interpretative skills. The translation of literary texts is an art. The translator of a literary text needs to have a level of linguistic competence in her/his early-language equivalent to that of the author of the target text's linguistic competence in her/his early-language.

It is true, however, that some translators, in particular of literary texts, are of a creative genius comparable to the author whose work(s) they translate. An example is David Magarshack who translated Fyodor Dostoyevsky's novels from Russian into English. Also, the Kenyan writer Ngugi wa Thiong'o is well-known for having translated some of his own novels, written originally in English, into Kikuyu, his early-language. He has done this in order to promote his early-language, Kikuyu.

### **How long does it take you to translate, on average?**

This depends on the type of translation. When translating literary texts, all intermediate versions are drafts until the final version is achieved. The generation of draft versions requires a lot of time, with continual rewriting. Long periods of reflection must be allowed for alternative words and expressions to suggest themselves. This is a function of the translator's mental focus and creativity. Given time, alternative vocabulary and forms of expression will auto-suggest. The translation of a literary work might take up more time than the author's original creative endeavour.

### **How do you engage with language outside of translating? Do you write? Are you an avid reader? Both? What are you currently reading or what would you recommend?**

I do not write in any structured or routine way. For my profession, I have read and studied many literary works, mainly novels in English, but I would not say I am an avid reader. I read very slowly, taking weeks over a medium-length novel, for example. I enjoy reading 19th and early 20th centuries novels in English. At present, I am reading H. Rider Haggard's *Montezuma's Daughter* (1893).

### **What has been your favourite work to translate so far?**

John Bryson's novel *Hasta la muerte, amigo*, with Maria Vidal-Grau and Núria Casado-Gual. I also enjoyed working with Marta Miquel-Baldellou on a translation of *Prime Time*, a play by Núria Casado-Gual about ageing.

**Do you usually work or consult with specialists in other fields such as History, Philosophy, Literature or any technical area?**

When translating John Bryson's *Hasta la muerte, amigo*, the translators were in easy reach of the author by email who responded to all queries regarding specific events, locations, and actors in the Spanish Civil War (1936-1939).

When I copy-edited technical texts on aspects of medicine, I almost always undertook the copy-editing with the author at my side. This can be laborious, even tedious, for the author of the text, but it means that any doubts, ambiguities, or technicalities can be resolved with mutual agreement in real time. It also guarantees further the accuracy, precision, and correctness of the translation, which is important for the field of medical science.

On specific request, I have translated an Information Sheet on the Antic Hospital de Santa Maria (Lleida), a video sound track for a new helicopter acquired by the Generalitat for search and rescue, and a biotext for the Lleida artist Ureña.

The generation of draft versions requires a lot of time, with continual rewriting. Long periods of reflection must be allowed for alternative words and expressions to suggest themselves.

I should add that most of my work in this area has been copy-editing texts that have been written by non-early language speakers of English, principally in the field of medical research, but also in physical education (sports psychology).



# **Index of authors**





## **Mariona Sabaté-Carrové and Lorena Baudo**

Professors Mariona Sabaté-Carrové and Lorena Baudo work on translation studies at the University of Lleida (UdL), Catalunya, and the National University of Córdoba (UNC), Argentina, respectively. Mariona and Lorena met in 2020, during a teaching experience at the UdL and, between coffee breaks, planted the seed of this volume. In April 2020, amidst the Covid-19 pandemic across the globe, this project was already underway. The first contacts with collaborators began and now, one year later, our project has materialized into this e-volume. We are delighted to show you this work.

Prof. Lorena Baudo holds a PhD in Intercultural Studies. Ms. Baudo is also an English-Spanish Certified Translator and Interpreting Specialist. She obtained her graduate and postgraduate degrees from the School of Languages, National University of Córdoba, where she teaches translation methods and techniques, terminology, news translation, technology and consecutive interpreting. Lorena is currently the Director of a team of researchers-in-training made up of undergraduate and graduate students working on the field of translation and intercultural tensions: Contact: [lorena.baudo@unc.edu.ar](mailto:lorena.baudo@unc.edu.ar). For more biodata and academic details, browse through this link: <https://sites.google.com/view/lorenabaudo/about-me>.

Prof Mariona Sabaté Carrové is a tenure professor at the University of Lleida, (Catalunya). She teaches several degree and master subjects (e.g. scientific and technical translation, reverse translation, languages in contrast and in contact) in the Department of English and Linguistics of the UdL, and enjoys translating academic and specialized texts. Currently involved in a research project funded by the Spanish Ministry of Science and Innovation on audiovisual translation as a teaching resource for teaching foreign languages (TRADILEX). Contact: [mariona.sabate@udl.cat](mailto:mariona.sabate@udl.cat). For more biodata and academic details, visit <https://tradic.uned.es/en/mariona-sabate-carrove-2/>.

## **Marta Baduy**

Marta Baduy is a Sworn Translator and Teacher of English. At present she is in charge of the subjects *Translation Methods and Techniques*, *Terminology and Documentation* and *Legal Translation* of the Translation Program at the School of Languages, National University of Córdoba (UNC). Marta holds a Master's degree in Translation and she is the Director of the Off-site Specialization Program in Translation at the abovementioned university.

Marta is the Director of the Research Project on *Terminological Variation. A plurilingual contrasting study in the legal and technical-scientific fields and its computerized representation and management*.

Besides, she is the Head of the Ethics Board of the Sworn Translators' Association of the Province of Córdoba, a Member of the School Executive Board on behalf of the Teaching Staff, a Member of the Committee in charge of drafting a new Translation Program Plan of Studies.

Marta has been a speaker in many different congresses, seminars and experts' meetings on topics related to specialized translation and terminology. Contact: s.baduy@unc.edu.ar.

### **Gemma Benseny Bonet**

I'm a 24-year-old girl from Catalonia and am just starting my career. I have a BA in English Studies from the University of Lleida. I graduated recently, and I am currently working as an English teacher at a language school in Lleida. It's my third schoolyear there already and I enjoy being in contact with students of all ages. Besides, I'm learning a lot especially from those who have special educational needs.

My first contact with translation was at university, where I was given a scholarship to carry out translation tasks. My interest in that field has not stopped ever since. Future is more uncertain nowadays, but next year I'd like to do a masters in translation. I'm really looking forward to the beginning of new experiences. If I had to choose some words to describe me, I'd say that I'm a responsible and committed person, someone who finds happiness in simplicity. I'm enthusiastic and feel at ease and motivated teaching, preparing classes, travelling or having a coffee with a friend. Contact: gemmabenseny@hotmail.com.

### **Mariazell-Eugènia Bosch Fábregas**

Mariazell-Eugènia Bosch Fábregas is a PhD researcher at University of Vic-UCC. Her thesis focuses on the objectification and dehumanization in *Family Guy* through a comparison between English and Spanish subtitling. She holds a bachelor's degree in English Studies (University of Barcelona), partly completed in Germany (University of Cologne) and a master's degree in Translation Studies (Pompeu Fabra University). She is a former visiting scholar and member of the Center for Energy and Environmental Research (CEER) at Altınbaş University (Istanbul). Her research areas are gender and audiovisual translation. She has participated in five national and international congresses and in three doctoral conferences. Her most recent publications include a book chapter on censorship (Comares 2018), on animalization (Publicacions URV 2020) and on rape joking (Comares 2020) in *Family Guy* and its Spanish translation. She has been co-teaching theatrical translation at UOC, and she currently teaches translation and English at Universitat de Lleida. Contact: mariazell.bosch@udl.cat.

## **Laura V. Bruno**

M.A. Laura V. Bruno specializes in the study of the translation process. Having graduated as English to Spanish translator, she obtained her master degree in Translation Studies from Faculty of Languages at National University of Córdoba (FL-UNC), Argentina.

Currently, she is coordinator at the Research Center on Technologies (CIFAL-FL), and she works as a research professor for the Research Group on Cognitive Psychology of Language and Psycholinguistics at National University of Córdoba. Her research training on translation process also included stays at the University of Lleida (Spain).

She is now Adjunct Professor of Technical and Scientific Translation at the National University of Córdoba and the National University of de La Rioja (Argentina). In addition, she serves as head professor of the Graduate Specialization on Translation Studies at the Faculty of Languages (UNC).

She has presented many works in national and international scientific events and has published many scholarly works including ebooks, chapters and papers. Contact: lbruno@unc.edu.ar.

## **Antuel D'Adam**

Antuel D'Adam is an English-Spanish Certified Translator who holds a postgraduate degree in Interpreting with a concentration in Economics and Finance, degrees which he obtained from the School of Languages (FL), National University of Córdoba, Argentina. Apart from actively working as a translator, proofreader, and interpreter, he is also finishing his BA in English Language and Literature thesis, which, together with his engagement in the research group Post-Translation and Interculturality from a Latin-American Argentina (P-TIAL), his position as a representative of fellow alumni at the Council of the FL, and his keen interest in geopolitics and intercultural processes, has resulted in his work herein. Contact: antuel.dadam@mi.unc.edu.ar.

## **Paula Estrella**

She joined FaMAF after finishing her PhD thesis at the School of Translation and Interpretation of the University of Geneva. Paula was part of the ISSCO/TIM research group and during her thesis she was working on context-based evaluation of machine translation systems, in particular on the Framework for the Evaluation of Machine Translation (FEMTI).

Before that, Paula completed her studies at FaMAF and her Master's thesis consisted of the implementation of a statistical machine translation system for websites using freely available tools. More information on what her lectures and publications at <https://www.famaf.unc.edu.ar/~pestrella/index.html>. Contact: pestrella@gmail.com.

### **Marta Giné Janer**

Marta Giné Janer, Professor at the University of Lleida (Translation: French). As a translator, she has produced numerous versions of literary works from French into Catalan and Spanish, by writers such as Musset, Gautier, Villiers de l'Isle-Adam and Jouhandeau, among others. She has translated poems by Màrius Torres from Catalan into English: *La Dernière rose*, L'Harmattan, París, 2008 and *Paroles de la nuit*, L'Harmattan, París, 2010, in collaboration with Norberto Gimelfarb. She has led several research projects on the translation process in literary and cultural relationships between France and the Spanish-speaking universe. She is the author of many books and papers on the history of translation, contrastive literature, etc. As a writer, she has published:

- “Entretiempo” in *Dones i literatura a Lleida*, Publicacions de l'Ajuntament de Lleida, 1997 (short narrative).
- *I anem de fred en fred, sense pensar-hi*. Edicions Saragossa, Barcelona, 2016. Award “Paraules a Icària” (2016), section “Ritmes”. Poetry.
- “No s’enyoren els llocs sinó els temps”, finalist short story in “Premi de narrativa curta de la revista digital *Descriu*, 2019, published in *Els viatges singulars, Cròniques cap al fons d’un mateix*, Scito Edicions, València, 2019.
- “Estudiar: Presó”, finalist short story of “Premi de narrativa curta de l'Ajuntament de Constatí”, 2020, published in *Relats d’escola*, Silva Editorial, Tarragona, 2020.

Contact: marta.gine@udl.cat

### **Annjo Klungervik Greenall**

Annjo Klungervik Greenall is Professor of English Language at the Department of Language and Literature at the Norwegian University of Science and Technology. Annjo defended her PhD thesis on Paul Grice's Cooperative Principle, in 2002. Since then, Ms. Greenall made a detour via sociolinguistics before ending up with a specialism within translation studies, which is where she currently does most of her work within teaching and research. Her research interests include: the ontology of translation,

translation and language change, translation of pragmatic phenomena (e.g. humour, politeness, swearing), and song translation. Her most recent edited book is entitled *Song Translation: Lyrics in Context* (2021). Contact: annjo.k.greenall@nntnu.no.

### **Miguel Alberto Koleff**

Miguel Alberto Koleff works in the field of Afro-Luso-Brazilian Literature at the School of Languages, National University of Córdoba, where he carries out teaching, research and outreach tasks, both at undergraduate and postgraduate levels. Miguel is the Academic Coordinator of the “José Saramago’s Open Chair” and the author of several publications, among them *La caverna de José Saramago: una imagen dialéctica* (EDUCC, 2013), *Vence también a los leones. Blog de Literaturas Lusófonas* (Ferreyra Editor, 2015), *El perro de las lágrimas y otros ensayos de literaturas lusófonas* (Ferreyra Editor, 2017) along with multiple academic papers. He is a regular collaborator in the “Lusophone Literature Column” of the local newspaper Hoy Día Córdoba. Contact: miguel.koleff@unc.edu.ar.

### **Matías López López**

Matías López López (Lleida, 1960). Doctor in Classical Philology from the University of Barcelona (1986) and, currently, Professor of Latin Philology at the University of Lleida. University teacher since 1982, and also at the Universities of Palermo, Urbino, Bari and Taranto (Italy); Rosario, Mar del Plata, La Plata and Buenos Aires (Argentina); Iasi and Constanta (Romania). Speaker at the Universities of Wales, Lyon and Moscow. Doctoral thesis on Plautus’ comedy: on this author, in 1991 he published a monograph on the speaking names of his comedies, as well as numerous complementary studies, and an annotated anthology on *Miles gloriosus* and *Mostellaria* (2006). Among his contributions stand out the editions of Seneca’s *Dialogues* (2000) and Petronius’ *Cena Trimalchionis* (2007), as well as the translation and annotation of *Fábulas latinas medievales* by Gualterus Anglicus (2001). He was Member and Vice President of the Catalan Section of the Spanish Society for Classical Studies. Contact: matias.lopez@udl.cat.

### **Gabriela Fernanda Lorenzo**

Gabriela Fernanda Lorenzo is a National Sworn Translator of English and Specialist in Interpretation, graduated from the School of Languages, National University of Córdoba in Argentina. Her professional experience as an interpreter includes the performance in numerous instances of consecutive, simultaneous, and liaison interpreting in conferences, meetings, business rounds, and large agricultural fairs. She is a member of P-TIAL, a research group on the language of diplomacy. As a translator and linguistic advisor, she has been continuously working for ten years as

well as in teaching, translation, text revision, and project management for clients in Argentina and abroad. Contact: [gabriela.lorenzo@unc.edu.ar](mailto:gabriela.lorenzo@unc.edu.ar).

**Txema Martínez** (Lleida, 1972) is a poet, translator, columnist, editor and literary critic. He has published books of poems like (*Ulls d'ombra* (Ed. 62, 1997), *La nit sense alba* (Ed. 62, 2000), *Sentit* (Proa, 2003), *L'arrel i la pluja* (Proa, 2008), *Dol* (Ed. 62, 2012) and *Maria* (Proa, 2020), along with several *plaquettes*, like *Kommos* (Slovenian and English versions). He has been awarded several literary prizes. To name just a few, the Salvador Espriu Award, Màrius Torres Award, Joan Alcover-Ciutat de Palma Award, Ausiàs March de Gandia Award, Jocs Florals de Barcelona, and Carles Riba Awards. A compilation of his written press articles has been edited in *Les cendres* (Moll, 2005). He has translated into Catalan the complete Shakespeare's Sonnets (Jordi Domènech Award, Eumo, 2010) and the complete poems of Edgar A. Poe (Quaderns Crema, 2016). An anthology of his poems translated into Spanish by Antonio Cabrera is underway.

*Dol* also received the Josep Maria Llompart-Cavall Verd Award from the Associació d'Escriptors en Llengua Catalana to the best book of poems in Catalan, in 2012.

He graduated in Hispanic Philology and has a PhD Mention International in AV Communication. Currently, he is the head editor of the Catalan version of the local newspaper SEGRE. He has been associate professor at Glasgow Caledonian University, Department of Media and Communication. He has done several readings and conferences all over the Catalan Countries. He has participated in festivals in Catalonia and abroad (France, Italy, Slovenia, Scotland, Latvia...). He has published in several papers: for the last nineteen years, he has published his opinion column on the back page of the local paper SEGRE. He co-directed, together with Pere Pena, the five editions of the International Poetry Festival of Lleida, Mahalta (2005-2011).

Several of his poems have been translated into over fifteen languages, (e.g. Spanish, Galician, Basque, French, English, Italian, Latvian, Gaelic, Slovenian, Finnish, Croatian, Russian), and published in papers, anthologies, or other digital formats. Contact: [txemam@gmail.com](mailto:txemam@gmail.com)

### **Marina Pedrol-Aguilà**

My background is philological with a specialization in the area of French language, literature and culture (BA in French Philology in 2013, MA in French and Francophone Studies in 2014 and PhD in Philology in 2019). On the other hand, I have always been very interested in languages and, particularly, in the links between Romance languages. In addition, my beginnings as a teacher at the University of Lleida led me to investigate certain aspects of the field of translation. Thus, participating in the present



volume has given me the opportunity to bring together these three centers of interest and to deepen my critical reflection on the processes of translation. At present, after a brief period at the Universidad Autónoma de Madrid, I am employed as an Assistant Professor at the University of Zaragoza. Contact: [marina.pedrol@unizar.es](mailto:marina.pedrol@unizar.es).

### **Anushiya Ramaswamy**

Anushiya Ramaswamy is a Professor in the Department of English at Southern Illinois University Edwardsville, USA. She writes on Race, Refugees and Rhetoric. She has translated all the novels of the Sri Lankan-born Tamil writer Shobasakthi, a collection of poetry by the Tamil Dalit poet, N.D. Rajkumar and her translation (with Geetha Sukumaran) of the Sri Lankan-born exilic poet R. Cheran's poems, *Land of Melting Sorrow* is forthcoming. Contact: [anushiya.ramaswamy@gmail.com](mailto:anushiya.ramaswamy@gmail.com).

Anushiya wishes for an editor willing to take on translations that are ambiguous, allusive, nonrepresentational, obscure; the translator can provide notes identifying these moments without resolving the incommensurable in the work itself. Because translation itself is an interpretation, among others.

### **Cristina Solé Castells**

Cristina Solé Castells is a teacher of French literature and culture at the University of Lleida. Her research work delves into novel and theatre of the first half of the 20th century. She shows a special interest in literary and artistic work in 20th century wars. She has authored several articles and book editions.

In translation, she is the author of 6 literary translations of French into Catalan and Spanish, among which *La Esperanza*, by André Malraux (2020), *La Fadeta*, by George Sand (2006) and *La barraca africana*, by Charlotte-Adélaïde Dard (2002).. She translates into Spanish and Catalan documentation from such associations as Amitiés Internationales André Malraux and Les Amis de François de Fossa.

She has led several research projects of teaching innovation, and has worked on aspects related to applying new technologies to university teaching and using virtual environments. She is currently teaching Reverse translation Spanish/Catalan-French/English in the Double Degree Languages and Translation at the UdL. Contact: [cristina.sole@gmx.es](mailto:cristina.sole@gmx.es).

## **Eduard Tapia Yepes**

Between 2002 and 2004, he focused his research on German dialectology under the DAAD Postgraduate Scholarship (German Exchange Service) at the Ludwig-Maximilians-Universität in Munich. The object of study was the description of the South German substandard awareness in Northern, Central and Southern Bavarian speakers, at a phonetic, morphological, semantic and syntactic level.

From 2005 to 2009, he performed teaching and research activities with the FPU Fellowship for Ph.D. Candidates (Government of Spain), at the German Philology Department of the University of Barcelona (UB). There he specialised in phrasal semantics and conversation analysis in multimodal contexts (oral and non-verbal communication of both German native speakers [L1] and German learners [L2, L3]).

Since 2010, he has been lecturing at the University of Barcelona (UB), the University of Girona (UdG), and the Open University of Catalonia (UOC, eTeaching). Simultaneously, he has also been conducting research on diathesis, as well as personal and spatial deixis in German motion verbs in multimodal production contexts. He currently works as a lecturer in German for Specific Purposes at the UOC and the UdG, where he is also a member of the research team 'Second Languages, Tourism and Employability' (SLTE) since 2018. Contact: [etapiay@uoc.edu](mailto:etapiay@uoc.edu).

## **Isabelle Weiss**

I grew up in Zug, the smallest of the Swiss cantons, in the German-speaking part of Switzerland at a time when Swiss women did not have the vote and were somewhat behind the moon.

A passion for languages is probably in my genes. But I would never have dreamt that eventually I would set up a company that now employs some 400 people, mostly translators, but also project managers and other supporting staff. It all came about at the time when computers intruded into everyone's lives. I began translating software, user documentation, and the first electronic games. Loved it, and started expanding into more languages, with everyone working "under one roof". That was and is the big difference, a collaborative approach, allowing interaction and exchange, maintaining excellence, and taking advantage of technological changes. Trying to achieve professional satisfaction even as many fear that MT will make us redundant. Believe me: human creativity and ingenuity still count! [iweiss@thisisalpha.com](mailto:iweiss@thisisalpha.com).



## Brian Worsfold

Brian Worsfold is Emeritus Professor of English (retired) in the Department of English and Linguistics at the University of Lleida (Catalunya, Spain). A graduate of Rhodes University (Makana, formerly Grahamstown, South Africa), he holds a Ph.D. from the University of Barcelona. His doctoral thesis focused on novels in English by Black South African writers. Since obtaining his doctorate, he has published articles on various aspects of literatures from Africa in English, especially from Southern Africa, and is author of *South Africa Backdrop: An historical introduction for South African literary and cultural studies* (1999).

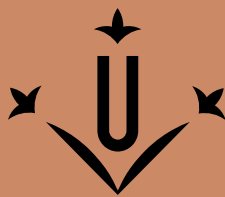
In 1998, Brian Worsfold co-founded the research group Grup Dedal-Lit at the University of Lleida, a group that focuses research on global discourses as represented in works of literature in English. Since 1999, he has undertaken research on aging as represented in literatures in English, and has published widely on the subject, especially as presented in fiction in English from Africa,

Brian Worsfold has translated numerous scientific, technical, and academic texts, from Castilian Spanish and Catalan into English. He has copy-edited several scientific contributions to medical journals such as *Cell and Tissue Research*, *Experimental Neurology*, *The Journal of Cytochemistry and Histochemistry*, and *Neuroscience*.

In 2004, the Australian writer and journalist John Bryson invited Maria Vidal-Grau, Núria Casado-Gual, and Brian Worsfold to undertake the translation of his novel *To the Death, Amic* (London: Hamish Hamilton, 1994), a novel that focuses on the personal experiences of a Catalan family living in Barcelona during the Spanish Civil War (1936-1939). The translation, into Castilian Spanish, was published with the title *Hasta la muerte, amigo* (Lleida: Editorial Milenio, 2006).

Brian Worsfold has been General Editor of the Dedal-Lit collection, published at the University of Lleida, and editor of *Women Ageing Through Literature and Experience* (2005), *The Art of Ageing: Textualising the Phases of Life* (2005), *Acculturating Age: Approaches to Cultural Gerontology* (2011), and, with Elena Urdaneta, *Ideas, Products, Services... 'Social Innovation' for Elderly Persons* (2018).

Brian Worsfold has co-ordinated Grup Dedal-Lit's participation as a partner institution of the European Network in Aging Studies (ENAS), and of the European 7th Framework Project *Social Innovation in Active and Healthy Ageing for sustainable economic growth – SIforAGE* (2014-2018). Contact: [brian.worsfold@udl.cat](mailto:brian.worsfold@udl.cat).



**Universitat de Lleida**