

‘What? Who?’

**An Introduction to Translation
and Translators**

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Introduction

The main purpose of my work is simply to put some insight in the mysterious and unknown world of the translators, who every day for centuries have provided us wonderful worlds, knowledge of far-away nations, who have made possible since the very beginning of time to establish relationships between the human kind, while receiving little to no recognition for this task.

As it is stated in the title, this research project focuses on the two indispensable pillars for a translation: the text that has to be translated and the translator.

With that in mind, the project starts trying to find a definition more accurate (or at least more explanatory) than the one we can find in the *common* dictionaries. Secondly, there is a brief explanation of the translation through History, which is divided in a brief introduction of the origins of the translation and why was it needed and six sections, in which the history of the translation and its most relevant events are summarised: Translation in Ancient Times, Translation in the Middle Age, Translation in the Renaissance, Translation in the Seventieth and Eightieth century, the Translation in the Ninetieth century and the first half of the Twentieth and the Contemporary translation. Inside this last section, there is a short explanation of what equivalence means in translation, focused on Eugene Nida's point of view of the subject. After that, the following section will be centralised on the process of translating itself: the different stages, it has common mistakes made, etcetera. Also, inside this part it can be found my own 'experience' when I translated *The Man Who Married Himself* and the final product, *L'home que va casar-se amb ell mateix*.

The next part is about the translators, their role in the world of literature. There, it can also be found the results of the experiment designed in order to prove the influence of the translator in the translation. Also, in that point it can be encountered the summary of the interview I made to Francesc Parcerisas, a Catalan poet, translator and literary critic, alongside with a brief biography of him and a list of his most noted works and translations.

Finally, and also related with the previous section, there is an explanation of what are the automatic translators, how do they work and if there are prospects

of them substituting the human who do this task or, if otherwise, the automatic machines are a functioning tool, but will never (or at least not in a near future) achieve the accuracy of the human translators.

Definition of translation

Translation is defined as *the process of translating words or text from one language into another*¹ or *something that is translated, or the process of translating something, from one language to another*². Given only these definitions, translation may be seen as a mechanical, impartial act such as an equation, no information needed, but the words and their meanings in the language the text is being translated from and to.

Certainly, the knowledge of the languages is required. But translation goes further than this, especially literary translation. The context, the influences of the author of the text, the interpreting and influences of the translator, their cultures, knowledge... are all factors equally important when translating.

Valentín García Yerba, in his book *Teoría y práctica de la traducción* references to the *Dictionary de Linguistique* to define translation as 'enunciate in another language what has been enunciated in an original language, maintaining semantic and stylistic equivalences' (1984, p.30). Along the same lines, Wei Lou (2009, p. 154) states that 'translation is no longer considered a single, unified reproduction of the original, but a kind of rewriting which reflects a certain ideology and literary norm'.

Thereby, when portraying a literary translation (or any kind) it is absolutely prohibited to translate word per word the original text, maintaining the original structures, just to be absolutely faithful to the initial work. More than prohibited, the reason behind not being a practice among good translators, is that, if a work is translated exactly the way it is written in the source language, when put in the target one, it will not make sense, as grammatical structures, idioms, slang, and so on it cannot always (almost never) be literally translated. On top of that, if the translation is carried out by this method, the **human component** will be surely lost.

In addition to all those definitions, it is important to keep in mind that translation is **not** a science; therefore it lacks the precision and accuracy that characterise

¹ OXFORD DICTIONARIES, Oxford University Press, 2014 <www.oxforddictionaries.com>

² CAMBRIDGE DICTIONARIES ONLINE, Cambridge University Press, 2014
<www.dictionary.cambridge.org>

those. Eugene Nida (1996, p. 55), when asked 'what is translation, a science, an ability or an art?' admits that it is a combination of the three. There are skills needed to translate, and it is certainly an art, especially literary translation, but, although not being a science in the technical meaning of the term, it can be studied as one.

An important remark made by Walter Benjamin in his essay *The Task of the Translator* (1968), and quoted again in Edith Grossman's book *Por qué la traducción importa* (2011, p.22-23) is that just as the great literary works, its meaning and tone are completely modified through the ages, the literary translations of such pieces evolve through the years, changing at the same pace the mother tongue of the translator does. Anyhow, this is not an opinion universally shared. Francesc Parcerisas, when asked on the subject (see ANNEX, p.24) stated that, from his perspective, literary translations needed to respect the distance (either throughout the time or cultural distance) in order to maintain its accuracy regarding the original.

To summarise, translation is the act of translating words from a language (source language) into another (target language), but taking under consideration the words do not stand for themselves, but are part of a larger group (be it a sentence, paragraph or text) therefore have a close relation with the other words surrounding. Other aspects to have in mind, especially in literary translation are the intention of the author in the original work, the context in which it is set, and always aiming to transmit the message, more than keeping the same original words.

History of translation

The first names that appear being related to translation are Cicero and Horace (first century BC), who discussed the practice of such discipline. Their texts were used until the twentieth century, for reasons which will be stated after. Another personality on the field was Saint Jerome (fourth century AC), who developed the **norm of translating**³ known as **sense-for-sense translation**⁴.

As the previous facts state, translation has been a practice carried out for ages, but the study of the translation as an academic discipline began only some decades ago, in the late half of the twentieth century. Apart from that, translation was also used as a language teaching method, known as **grammar-translation**⁵.

Origins of translation

Translation is needed the moment two or more languages have to coexist, because, obviously, if just one language was spoken this discipline would be pointless. So, when did it all started? Why did humans develop more than one language? From this point, two paths can be taken. The first, the scientific one, says that, by now, there are no signs of finding the origins of the languages. They have gone as far as thinking that probably our ancestors thousands of years ago already had simplified forms of language, but the more complex ones date from around 3000 B.C. According to that, probably as they starting

3 Definition of **norm of translation** according to Gideon Toury (HERMANS, 2012, p.3): *performance instructions for translators and distinguished different kinds of norms operating at different stages of the translation process. Preliminary norms govern the choice of what to translate in the first place; the initial norm steers the translator either toward preserving as much as possible of the original or toward producing a well-formed new text. Various operational norms guide decision making during the actual business of translating, with matricial norms regulating the macrostructure of the text and textual-linguistic norms affecting microstructures.*

4 **Sense-for-sense translation** is a method in which it is intended to preserve the meaning the words and phrases had in the source language, in opposition to the method known as 'word-for-word'. St. Jerome said to prefer such method as, from his point of view, literal translation often felt 'unlovely' (not attractive, natural to the reader).

5 **Grammar-translation method** (TUGRUL MART, 2013, p.103): *The purpose of the method was to help students read and understand foreign language literature. It was an efficient way of learning vocabulary and grammatical structures. Through focusing on the rules of the grammar of the target language students would recognize the features of two languages that would make language learning easier.*

expanding around the globe and evolving while doing that, they all formed their languages and that is why it is hard to pinpoint a concrete origin.

The other path is the 'mythological' one. Based on words from the Bible (Book of Genesis) the whole human kind spoke one language. After the Flood, God commanded humans to <<increase in number and fill the earth>>⁶. People did the exact opposite. They stayed in a delimited region, where they build a city and the highest tower possible, so they had physical evidence of their power. The Lord, angry to be had ignored in such a blatant way, sentenced humanity not to understand each other. After that, people assembled based on the language they spoke and settled around the globe.

Whatever the case may be, human kind has a lot (around five thousand, although many of them are disappearing because of reasons not relevant for the explanation) of languages. But despite that fact, they have been able to communicate perfectly whenever they have needed it. Consequently, a lot of experts hold the belief translation started the moment more than one language existed. Concrete evidence of translation goes back to the third millennium before Christ; date from which there have been found the first evidence of translation in Mesopotamia. Sumerians, being the first culture with a developed writing system (they had scribes and even a pedagogic system to teach the script), developed the first bilingual dictionaries, after they were conquered by the Akkadian empire. From there, translation expands.

Translation in the Ancient Times

It is also throughout translation that the Romans adopt the Greek culture, which finds its starting point in the translation Livius Andronicus makes to Latin of the epic poem written by Homer in the ends of the eighth century before Crist, the *Odyssey*. Romans translated an important volume of Greek works, mainly because the latter was a nation they considered superior.

Also in the Western world there is evidence of translation around that time. Buddhist sacred texts are being translated from Sanskrit to Chinese through a very particular method: a prestigious Buddhist monk explains, orally, what the

⁶ Genesis 9:1

text meant in his language; Chinese interpreters translated orally his words that were being written down by Chinese monks. Finally, the scribe made the final version of the text, considering all the notes the monks had taken.

This method, proven to be complicated and expensive, proves the importance that was given to the religious texts.

In this first period, two translation norms appear: **word for word translation** and **sense for sense**.

The first one would be the same as literal translation; simply doing the mechanical art of putting the words from a source language into a target one. Cicero and Horace, relevant characters from this era, advise against that method. Anyhow, when the Jewish community from Alexandria translates the Bible from the Hebrew, uses this method, as they considered it was the best way to avoid subjectivity when translating the word of the Lord.

The latter is a method which focuses on the meaning of those words, the idea behind the text, so the translation is as loyal to the original as possible. In words of Cicero: 'I did not translate as an interpreter, but as an orator, keeping the same ideas and the forms, or as one might say, the figures of thought, but in a language which conforms to our usage and in so doing, I did not hold it necessary to render word-for-word, but I expressed the general style and force of the language.'

Translation in the Middle Age

At the beginning of this era, the production of translations is low for two reasons: as the knowledge and culture is reserved for the monasteries, the translations are more limited, as not so many people can access to the required materials. Secondly, Latin has remained as the language for the upper classes, the ones who know control the knowledge; therefore, there is no need for translation. The few that are made basically focus on translating religious text into Vulgar Latin so it is possible to evangelize the population.

The most important institution from this time is the Baghdad School, an institution which translated many philosophical and scientific texts from Greek to

Arab. The School did not have a very long existence, but it is of a great importance in translation history, especially during the Ninth century. As a special feature, all the translators were specialists in the field they were translating (Astronomy, Medicine, Mathematics, Philosophy, etc.) and, something rather uncommon in the history of the field that concerns this project, they had a very high social recognition.

A century later, the School of Toledo, in Spain, and until the thirteenth century, has a very important paper in the translation from Arab. The normal procedure of this School was for the translators to work in pairs: one translated from Arab to Spanish and another from Spanish to Latin. The Spanish King Alfonso X the Wise gave special support to the School, even gathering together a group of translators whose work was revised by the King himself.

Translation in the Renaissance

The Renaissance is one of the most important eras for translation in Europe. The invention of the printing press, the rediscovering of the Ancient cultures through the Humanism, and the displacement of Latin in favour of the Romance languages, are all circumstances that foster the translating activities.

But as translators studied in depth languages in order to do accurate translations, they also think about the problems the translation carries. It is also around that time when they start to reflect their inconformity with the little recognition they are given.

In this era, the method used is basically the **sense for sense**, as it is easier to understand for people (the new bourgeois, the intellectual class) who do not speak the source language. Of course, the exception it is found on the translation of sacred texts.

Translation in the Seventieth and Eightieth century

In Europe, the translations do not follow the original during this epoch. Their only aim is to be beautiful, adapting literary works to the norms of classicism, making the translated versions lose their particularities to make them *beautiful* in the target language. This type of free translation is originated in France, but

because of the status of role model the French culture had back then, it is quickly extended through Europe.

The name they receive ('les belles infidèles') comes from a comment Gilles Ménage made about a translation of J. Perrot d'Ablancourt, where he compared the translation of the latter with a lover he had had when being young, the one he had named *la belle infidèle*. With that comment, Ménage meant that translations could be either beautiful or faithful, but not both at the same time. This statement has been proven wrong through time, and even before the time *Monsieur Ménage* made it. But that does not prevent the spread of the tendency.

Even if *les belles infidèles* had the supremacy around Europe, that does not mean there are not translators who dissociate of this tendency.

On the other side of the world, in China, a very important translation process is taking place, again related with religion, this time the Catholic. The people who want to approach this religion to the Asian country think the best way to do it is through the Enlightened sectors of the population, therefore bring not only religious texts but also treatises on sciences such as Astronomy and Mathematics. It is thanks to this task that Chinese works are translated to Latin, approaching the oriental cultures to Europe.

Translation of the Ninetieth century and first half of the Twentieth century

During this era, Romanticism and the *Sturm und Drang* are the major movement. Nations want to bring to their cultures the main works of Universal literature. It is around this time when translation gains recognition again, as it is considered a parallel process to the creation of literary work. The more translations are made, the more the work expands.

Also in this stage, translations become the tool for the social revolutions that are happening around Europe and Asia. The fight for the independence of India from the British Empire, ignited by the translation to Marathi of the *Bhagavad-Gita*; the socialist movements empowered by the translations of the originals, etc. Also the modernisation of countries such as China and Japan happens thanks to the translation of scientific works.

Contemporary translation

The contemporary era of translation, which goes from the second half of the twentieth century until current days, it is characterised by the influence the development of technologies in the field of translation, such as data bases or automatic translation programs.

It is also since the fifties that translation starts to be studied as an academic discipline.

During the last decade of the twentieth century, translation establishes as a discipline for itself. Consequently, translator training programs and books presenting to students different methodologies begin to appear.

Although it had established as an independent field, translation is still tightly related with Cultural studies and it is a helpful tool for diverse social moments. For instance, it is because of translations that literature from post-colonised countries arrives to Europe and other 'developed' countries, showing the reality to a society who had been numb to the life in those countries.

THE CONCEPT OF EQUIVALENCE

In the field of translation, equivalence is reached when the work in the target language **is equal to** the one in the original language. Stress made on 'equal to' as the aim is always to accomplish the same effect on the reader as the original, not necessarily using the same words.

But, as simple as this concept may seem, it has been at great length in translation studies.

The first person to mention this concept in one of his works was Roman Jakobson (PONCE MÁRQUEZ, 2008) who stated that absolute equivalence does not exist, although any message can be expressed in any language, as main purpose of the latter is to communicate even through differences, be them cultural, grammatical or geographical.

Despite being the one who introduced this concept, the true development of the equivalence theory comes from Eugene Nida, who distinguished two different types of it: the **formal equivalence** and the **dynamic equivalence**.

Formal equivalence consists on staying as close to the original as possible, imitating in the target language the grammatical structures, syntax, and, as much as possible, the sonority and phonology. In other words, a literal translation. (PONCE MÁRQUEZ, 2008)

On the other hand, dynamic equivalence consists on approaching the original work as much as possible to the target reader. *The translation should not sound as a translation*. Francesc Parcerisas, when talking about this particular method (see ANNEX, p. 21) exemplifies it using a rather extravagant example, but helpful to understand the concept nonetheless. He says that Nida used this type of equivalence to approach the Bible to the different cultures. If, for example, he was translating the Good Book for a Amazonian tribe, he could not use animals such as the mule or the donkey when explaining the birth of Jesus, as the natives probably had never seen or know what these animals are. Hence, the translator, to really get to the target reader, should use common animals in that certain area, that usually illustrated a poor environment, so the original message ('the son of God was born in a barn, surrounded by animals and filth') arrived to the readers. To use this system it is required an absolute control of the target culture by the translator. If the translators are actors of the same part in different languages, it is important they know the environment will change depending on the language they act.

The process of translating

Stated that translation is not a mechanical action (or at least should not be portrayed as one), it is obvious it has a process behind, to achieve the final objective: **make the most accurate possible representation of the original work.**

According to Francesc Parcerisas (see ANNEX, p.19), the process of translating is divided in two great parts: **reading** and **rewriting**.

In the first part, the reading that has to be done is a reading in depth, profound enough so that it is possible to understand the text in its entire extension. According to Jaume Tur, this comprehension has three levels (1974, p.299) the **philological comprehension**, the **comprehension of the style**, and the **comprehension of the whole**. In each part, different aspects of the text are being understood and assimilated by the translator, sometimes even unconsciously.

Philological comprehension

In this part, it comes to light the knowledge of the source culture the translator has. The philological comprehension of a text does not only consist on knowing the meaning of a word, but also in knowing that the word 'x' has three meanings and how they should be used.

In this part, there are a few common mistakes often made by translators (TUR, 1974, pp.299-300):

a) Mistakes caused by the misunderstanding between words with same or similar phonetics:

1. Wrong choice between the different meanings of the same word.
2. Confusion caused by words with similar phonetics.
3. Mistakes for misunderstanding words of several languages with the same phonetics.

b) Mistakes caused by the wrong comprehension of the context:

1. Incorrect order of a word in a sentence.

2. Incorporation of inconvenient words inside the author's ideological system.
3. Usage of words that does not fit with the ambient of the work.

Related with the latter mistake in section b, it is possible to relate the distance Mr. Parcerisas talked about in the interview. If a work is set in the England of the eighteenth century, it is important to maintain the treatments, formalities between characters, expressions, etcetera, used in that particular era. If not, more than a translation, what the translator is doing is an adaptation of a work to another period of time.

Tur, in the same essay, states that it is very important not to condemn a translation for a few mistakes. There have been splendid translations discredited by the critic because of isolated mistakes and also the opposite, middling translations being praised when they were nothing more but a mechanical translation that had lost the original intention of the author.

Comprehension of the style

This part is the rather easy part (compared with the others) of the first stage of the translation, but it is in the good execution of such part that depends the quality of the final product.

In this part, the translator needs to notice what goes further than the language: that sentence that, even apparently sounding nice, has behind the crudest of the sarcasms, the tragic emotion of the grand final monologue of the protagonist before he stabs himself with a dagger.

The correct comprehension of the style is what causes the reader to shiver when they are reading the freezing cold that accompanied the character through her trip to the mountains, the little heart attack when we think the lover is dead, the melting inside when they finally get together for good.

Comprehension of the whole

During the translation is important the translator keeps in mind the order in which the reader discovers the story line. There cannot be any preview or insinuation of what is coming next.

In this part, the two comprehensions that were done before are linked together, alongside with the author's ideology, the succession of the events, the nature of the characters, their developing (if there is such) during the story.

The second part, the interpretation, the **rewriting**, asks that to the translator to almost become one with the author, understand their intentions, the context in which the story is set, and the epoch in which the story develops.

It is important that the translator does not put his or her personal experiences, feelings on the story, or even their own story plot inside of it. Translation needs of creativity, but not too much. On the same lines, if there is any kind of mystery or metaphor, the translator cannot clarify anything, make it more understandable or change the author's opinion. If, for instance, the main character is a misogynistic, homophobic and xenophobic man that supports war, the translator cannot make it a pacifist communist who believes we are all the same, no matter gender, sexual orientation or origin. Along the same subject, the translator has no right to correct false interpretations. If the story is set in the tenth century and there is the belief the Universe spins around the Earth, the translator cannot correct that.

'The translator is the central link between a chain that starts with the author and ends with the reader of the translated work.' (TUR, 1974, p.303) Therefore, the translator needs to always have in mind the author but also the target reader.

In the more philological aspect of this second part, it is important the translator, even if the values of style do not always (almost never) meet between two languages, finds the way to make **equivalences**, so, even if not expressed with the same words, the readers both receive the same ideas.

TRANSLATION OF *THE MAN WHO MARRIED HIMSELF: L'HOMME QUE VA CASAR-SE AMB ELL MATEIX*

“Per què no?”

Amb aquestes tres paraules, el meu bon amic el reverend Zatarga va canviar el curs de la meva vida. Quan les va dir, acabava de passar-se dues hores al telèfon amb el bisbe Fleming discutint amb terrible deteniment diverses seccions de la Bíblia. Va assenyalar que el Levític prohibeix als cristians casar-se amb la seva germana, tieta, mare, sogra, filla o fins i tot la seva néta (en cas que se sentissin temptats). Però no hi ha cap norma en les sagrades escriptures que digui res en contra de casar-se amb un mateix. Així que quan li vaig dir al reverend Zatarga que això era exactament el que volia fer, ell va concedir-me aquestes tres paraules plenes d'esperança:

“Per què no?”

Per suposat, la Bíblia també s'oblida de prohibir el casar-se amb rebesàvies, taules o el peix. No em sorprendria si el bisbe Flemming acabava casant-se amb el seu púdel francès després de tot això. O el seu llençol –al cap i a la fi ha estat dormint amb ell durant anys. De totes maneres, un cop vaig convèncer el bon reverend perquè em deixés casar amb l'home dels meus somnis, vaig haver de convèncer a la meva mare i el meu pare. Hauria de dir que entre una religió internacional, establerta fermament durant dos mil·lennis i els meus humils pares, els últims eren molt més difícils de persuadir.

Al principi, no hi havia manera que la meva mare s'ho prengués seriosament. D'acord, hi havia molt poca gent que s'ho prengués seriosament, però necessitava que ella sabés que estava parlant seriosament. No parava de fer preguntes estúpides com “per què t'has de casar – no pots simplement viure amb tu mateix?” o “què et posaràs pel casament?”

I desgraciadament, el casament va tornar al meu pare bastant boig. Literalment. Fins i tot anys després del casament, es passava dies escrivint articles per una varietat de diaris, llibres de rècords i butlletins d'administracions espacials assegurant que havia estat la primera persona en tenir relacions

sexuals a l'espai. Semblava bastant convençut, malgrat que el més a prop que havia estat de l'espai era el botó gran del teclat de l'ordinador. Quan se li demanava amb qui se suposava que havia tingut relacions, acostumava a fer una breu pausa dramàtica, dirigia la seva mirada desorbitada a cap a qui hagués fet la pregunta i cridava amb veu estrident: "amb mi mateix!"

Havia esperat que els meus amics es mostressin solidaris amb la causa, però em sembla que tot era com una gran broma per ells. Normalment em donaven suport, però després del casament es van passar moltes estones rient-se de mi. Alguns dels seus regals de núpcies eren bastant degradants: revistes pornogràfiques, guants de seda, fins i tot un mirall pel sostre. I em van decebre al no reprimir les rialles quan el reverend Zatarga recità els vots matrimonials: "et prens a tu mateix en matrimoni, per viure com un de sol? T'estimaràs i et consolaràs, obeiràs i honraràs la teva persona en la salut i en la malaltia, i et seràs fidel mentre visquis?". Juro que un dels meus amics es va pixar de riure.

Vaig tenir una magnífica lluna de mel a Las Vegas, jugant-me tots els meus estalvis sense ningú que em donés la llauna per tots els diners que m'estava gastant. Tenia una suite a l'hotel Luxor per la nit de la consumació....

Tenia moltes raons per casar-me quan ho vaig fer, deixant a part els beneficis fiscals, per suposat (tot i que fer entendre a l'inspector d'hisenda que jo era el meu propi marit va ser un infern). Des que vaig entendre el concepte del matrimoni, havia desitjat una parella amb la que pogués confiar. Volia algú que estigués amb mi sempre, a qui pogués explicar els més profunds, foscos secrets sense que se'n rigués de mi. Desafortunadament, tot i que no tenia molts problemes per trobar nòvia, tendia a tenir molt mal gust escollint-les. Després me'n vaig adonar que la meva parella perfecta estava més a prop del que ningú hagués pogut pensar.

En conjunt, penso que el matrimoni va ser un èxit en gran part. Eren comptades les ocasions en les que discutia amb el meu cònjuge; en realitat, vaig convertir-me en un gran conversador. Les poques vegades que discutíem, sempre guanyava jo. I el sexe era, bé, -era tot allò que jo volgués que fos. Per suposat, hi havia intromissions dels mitjans, un munt de *periodistes venuts* intentant treure algun profit d'aquesta inusual unió. Vaig trobar alguns dels seus articles

divertidíssims, i alguns bastant ofensius, especialment aquells que em donaven el sobrenom de l'home més cregut i/o narcisista del món. No em considero un egoista, simplement gaudeixo de la meua pròpia companyia.

Suposo que va ser cosa de les hormones, una etapa de la vida o alguna cosa així que em va fer anhelar un fill. El *cliché* era que em vaig adonar que era mortal i que, per tant, volia traspassar els meus gens. Després de dies de valorar els pros i els contres, vaig decidir trencar amb el meu marit per trobar una muller. Vaig tenir una conversa amb el reverend Zatarga, que em va informar que no podia presentar el divorci immediatament. Necessitava una justificació legítima. Curiosament, voler un fill no estava en la llista de motius pels quals divorciar-se.

Tal i com el bon reverend em va explicar, només em podia divorciar si havia viscut lluny del meu cònjuge durant almenys un any, el que seria difícil sense una important intervenció quirúrgica, o si el meu cònjuge m'havia tractat cruelment o havia estat empresonat durant almenys un any. No estava especialment disposat a apallissar-me a mi mateix o anar a la presó només per divorciar-me de mi mateix. Això deixava només una opció: l'adulteri. Només havia de tenir relacions sexuals amb algú que no fos jo; sexe normal, heterosexual i humà, i seria lliure dels murs del matrimoni.

I així va ser com em vaig treure l'aliança de mala gana i vaig començar a buscar una parella. Els meus amics van ser cruels amb el tema, dient que m'estava separant per evitar quedar-me cec. Crec que la meua mare va quedar-se tranquil·la quan li vaig dir que la relació amb mi mateix estava concloent. El meu pare simplement va aturar-se un moment per donar un efecte dramàtic a la situació, em va dirigir la seva mirada desorbitada i va cridar amb veu estrident: "amb mi mateix!". Potser està realment en un altre món.

Esperava necessitar un temps per trobar a algú que estigués disposat a dormir amb mi i que no hagués llegit bastant els diaris com per saber que ja estava casat, però aviat vaig trobar una noia de Malàisia no especialment atractiva que va ser relativament fàcil de seduir. Honestament, el sexe va ser bastant decebedor. Semblava no saber res sobre què agradava als homes, mentre que jo m'havia convertit pràcticament en un expert. Suposo que l'experiència

tampoc va ser especialment plaent per ella – no tenia molta pràctica en donar plaer en membres de l'altre sexe.

El divorci va ser fàcil després d'això. L'església semblava tenir moltes ganes de separar-me, com si el meu matrimoni hagués estat un gran error. Vaig sentir-me sol durant bastants mesos després de la ruptura. Almenys el psiquiatra local (expert en trastorns de personalitat múltiple) va parar d'enviar-me les seves maleïdes targetes de visita cada setmana.

Vaig necessitar pràcticament una dècada per trobar una bona esposa que no pensés que estava casant-se amb dues persones a la vegada. La majoria d'aquest temps va ser només perquè els mitjans s'oblidessin de "l'home que va casar-se amb ell mateix". Mentrestant, vaig escriure una autobiografia amb aquest mateix títol. Inclòs en el llibre hi havia un informe detallat del matrimoni amb mi mateix, amb els alts i baixos de viure amb la meva persona, com vaig tractar amb les crítiques cap al meu cònjuge i jo, i alguns detalls íntims de la meva relació. Crec que van ser aquests capítols els que van fer del llibre un gran èxit quan va ser publicat anys després. La gent simplement tenia curiositat per saber els detalls d'aquest matrimoni tan inusual. Suposo que els feia pensar. Llegirien el meu llibre i es preguntarien: "és fàcil viure amb mi? Si hagués de viure amb mi, podria fer-ho?". Van deixar de buscar el seu Senyor o Senyoreta Perfecta per preguntar-se a ells mateixos si serien mai bons esposos per algú.

No vaig assabentar-me de cap imitador que s'hagués casat amb ell mateix, el que probablement significava que o bé els mitjans de comunicació havien perdut l'interès o l'Església estava determinada a no permetre que passés una altra vegada. De totes maneres, això ja és part del meu passat. La meva dona i jo acabem de traslladar-nos a una nova casa, suficientment gran per acollir el nostre bebè quan neixi. Ara sóc feliç. De fet, ara mateix sóc incapaç de deixar de somriure. Els nostres veïns del costat són el bisbe Fleming i la seva adorable esposa, el púdel francès.

COMMENTARY OF THE TRANSLATION *L'HOME QUE VA CASAR-SE AMB ELL MATEIX*

The following is a commentary on my translation of the short story written by Charlie Fish under the title *The Man who married himself*. References to the original text in English will be made in *italics*, and references to the translated text in Catalan will be in **bold**.

First of all, a good translation requires an excellent understanding of the work and the intentions and aims of the author behind it. This is the reason why a good translator will not only inquire topics related with the text to be translated such as matters of style and vocabulary but also the context that environs the work itself. For instance, if the novel that has to be translated is set in a little town in Germany during II World War, it would be advised to document oneself on the topic. Nevertheless, there is no need to become an expert on the Axis nations.

I had to do a previous research, which basically consisted in a brief exchange of e-mails with the author to ascertain the motivations behind the writing of such peculiar story. Through them, I discovered that what appeared to be just a bizarre story on an extremely narcissistic character was actually a questioning of the institution of marriage. According to the author (see ANNEX, p. 9):

“Even in a secular society, marriage is a deeply ingrained tradition teeming with expectations and prejudices. Questioning the nature of that tradition can be surprisingly controversial: Should people of the same gender be allowed to marry? Should marriage always be between only two people? Is a person less successful in life if they have not married by a certain age? Is marriage necessary to bring up children? This story does not ask all of these questions directly, but it does highlight the fact that questioning the norms of marriage can be curiously contentious in our society.”

Knowing that, the final text had to reflect and communicate this feeling to the reader. This is probably the hardest part of the translating process: the lack of words to transmit the appropriate impressions to the translation. It is not a matter of a language being poorer than the other, but the shortage of units of language that mean exactly the same in both languages, what forces the

translator to be creative and rewrite the story in another language accomplishing the same 'final product' as the author. I had to make the reader ask the same questions the original text brought up, in a different language. So, I had to change the words but keep the essence. The hardest part was probably when expressions were involved, or synonymous of words that weren't the same in Catalan. For instance, the expression *good book* would be literally translated to Catalan as **bon llibre**. The English expression refers to the Bible, whereas the Catalan one simply means that a book is good. In the Catalan version this is translated as **sagrades escriptures**, a synonymous/equivalent of the word *Bible*.

The previous was one of the two 'issues' I found in the first paragraph of the story. The second one was the term *Leviticus*, the third book of the Hebrew Bible. In Catalan is known as **Levític**, but I was unsure whether add or not a brief note of the translator explaining what is it.

The text was clear; it didn't have any archaisms or extremely elaborated sentences, so it was generally easy to translate. The few doubts I had were with literal translations that didn't make much sense in Catalan. For example, when in Catalan there is a reference to a fish you keep as a pet, it is simply referred to it as **peix** (*fish*), and it is the context the one who makes the reader understand that it is an animal that it is kept as a pet, not to eat it.

Also related with animals was the second matter in the second paragraph. In English, a poodle is a dog of a breed with a curly coat that is usually clipped. But when I searched for the official translation of it in Catalan, it appeared there was not an equivalent of it. I had to use the online dictionary *Termcat*⁷, that has specialised dictionaries, and there I found the answer. It could be either translated as **caniche** or **púdel**. I chose the second option due to being more 'Catalan-normalised'.

The next paragraphs were easily translated, no major doubts related with grammar nor did vocabulary appear. The most elusive fragment of the whole story was the phrase *cheap journalists*. The context made me think that it was referring to journalists that do anything for money, similar to paparazzi, although

⁷ TERMCAT, Centre de terminologia, 2014 <www.termcat.cat>

that term, if accepted in Catalan, did not sound quite right for me in the translation. After some thought, I decided the most appropriate translation would be **periodistes venuts** (*sold journalists*) which meaning would be something along the lines 'a journalist that does anything for money, even if it is lying'.

Another great dilemma occurred when the protagonist decided to cheat on himself and had an intercourse with a *plain-faced Malaysian girl*. The literal translation of it is **una noia de Malàisia amb la cara plana/simple**. Of course, when describing people, that made no sense. As the context suggested that *plain-faced* was a polite way to say the girl was average, not very attractive, it is translated in Catalan as **una noia de Malàisia no molt atractiva** (*a not very attractive Malaysian girl*).

Strictly referring to translation, this is the process I followed and the obstacles I found along the way. Anyhow, after I did the first draft of the translation, I had to edit/ correct it several times. Words that weren't quite the right one as they had initially appeared, etc.

In conclusion, this first attempt of translating has shown me that translation requires a lot more than knowing that *blue* is translated in Catalan as **blau**. You need to know if we're talking about the sky, the eyes of a person or an old shirt, if the context of the sentence is happy, sad, romantic,... and many other details that, even if we don't notice while we're reading, the translators need to realise so the story makes sense.

TRANSLATION OF PHRASES

ORIGINAL	LITERAL	FINAL
Good book	Bon llibre	Sagrades escriptures
Pet fish	Peix mascota	(el) peix
Will you keep yourself as a husband	Et mantindràs a tu mateix com a espòs	Et prens a tu mateix en matrimoni
Penthouse suite	Suite àtic	Suite
Cheap journalists	Periodistes barats	Periodistes venuts
The best conversation	El millor "posseïdor" de	Un gran conversador

holder around	conversa dels voltants	
Plain faced	Cara plana/simple	No especialment atractiva

The role of the translator

Translators are given a very important task, that, even if under recognized when being good, it will be extensively criticised when bad, and that is to translate someone else's work from a language to another. Normally, the author is not able to read, to understand the translation, therefore has to rely on the translator to be as accurate to the original version as they can.

With that mind, then, what makes a good translator?

First of all, it would be interesting to determine what a translator is. A good definition of what exactly the translators have to aim to be is the one Ralph Manheim made: 'translators are actors that pronounce the lines like the author would have if he spoke that second language'.

Through History, the role of the translators has gone unrecognised most of the time, with a couple of punctual exceptions. From centuries ago, there are documents found in which translators reflect on their paper on society and regrets on the little recognition they get for their work.

Translators, when deciding to become so, know that, the better they are at their job, the less they will be noticed. Almost like an assassin committing the perfect murder, if it were not for the name in the front page, the reader would not know there has been an intermediary between the original version and them. But that does not detract the fact that if they are good, they need to be recognised for their contributions to the literary world.

'Is there someone who has a certain predisposition to become a translator, then?' According to Eugene Nida (1996), bilingual people (people who have two mother tongues) are natural translators, unconsciously translating phrases from a language to another. Of course, their skills are able to improve highly with experience and instruction. But, to this certain types of people, translation comes as something natural, not that hard to understand, as they have been conscious of the different systems, structures, words, etc. different languages use to express the same. Francesc Parcerisas, when asked about the matter in the interview, agreed, but added that bilingual people may also encounter some

problems, as when we are talking about them we refer to people who have lived under the cultural influence of such language (see ANNEX, from p.19).

If I may add my personal experience, being a person with an Spanish parent and a Catalan one, even if those two languages are very close and come from the same one (Latin), you notice those little changes, how things have to be said in a certain way in Catalan but they cannot be simply translated to Spanish, they need to be modified. But nevertheless, the fact I have been noticing this since I was young does not make me a translator instantly, as sometimes I encounter a lack of words or the inability to find a word or expression that means the same that the one I know in a certain language to put it in the other.

That being said, translators have to have two imperative qualities: a practically categorical knowledge of their mother language (or the target language) and a perfect acquaintance of the language they are translating from, the subject language.

Jaume Tur also says that (1974, p.298) translators need an ease for expression, as it is a basic instrument for the translating activities, alongside a good theory base of the two languages implied in the translation.

Translation, just as any other discipline, has had its conflicts during its history. For instance, there is the case of Constance Garnett, the first to translate to English the Russian literature with a very particular point of view. Her method of work was more than questionable: she skipped passages, made mistakes and applied Victorian sensibilities to authors such as Tolstoy and Dostoevsky. As the Russian-born American poet Joseph Brodsky said, the reason why English readers were unable to distinguish between both of the aforementioned Russian authors was because they were not reading any of them, but a third: Mrs. Garnett.

With that in mind, one of the most important tasks translators have is **not to let their translation be influenced by their emotions, points of view, experiences, or even their creativity.**

Another task the translator does is **the approach of foreign countries and cultures to the readers.** Nowadays it can be said that we have 'the world in the

palm of our hands'. But some decades ago it wasn't that easy, to explore the world, and with travelling as a privilege reserved to a few, books were the budget-friendly option to discover the world without having to leave the sofa. Therefore, translators need to: first, decide if their translation wants to adapt to the target reader or if, otherwise, it is better to keep the distance, staying close to the original so the reader is conscious the story is not set in their culture or/neither in their time.

An example to illustrate another of the qualities the translator needs is the case of Jay Rubin, Alfred Birnbaum and Murakami's English readers. The latter are divided between the first and the second, both translators of the Japanese author, with very distinguishable and particular styles.

The following are two interpretations of the opening line to *The Wind-up Bird Chronicle* (1997) by Haruki Murakami:

Extract 1

'When the phone rang I was in the kitchen, boiling a potful of spaghetti and whistling along with an FM broadcast of the overture to Rossini's *The Thieving Magpie*, which has to be the perfect music for cooking pasta.'

Extract 2

I'm in the kitchen cooking spaghetti when the woman calls. Another moment until the spaghetti is done; there I am, whistling the prelude to Rossini's *La Gazza Ladra* along with the FM radio. Perfect spaghetti-cooking music.

In the debate of who is the most loyal one to the original work, the author himself said that he thought Rubin's translation was more loyal and conservative whereas Birnbaum is more lively and experimental, not saying which one he preferred. The readers are split between the two of them; some opt for the flowing, neat prose of Rubin, others the 'much more staccato, even neurotic'⁸ Birnbaum's writing. Anyhow, this leads to another conclusion: **translation is nothing more but an interpretation**; therefore, it varies when the subject translating does. Just as there are as many stories as readers a

⁸ OXEDEN, Clive; LATHAN-KOENIG, Christina "New English File. Advanced Student's Book". p. 42-43, Oxford University Press, 2010. (Source: The Observer)

book has, there are as many translations as translators a book has. As Walter Benjamin wonders 'will an adequate translator ever be found among the totality of its readers?' (1968, p.254)

In the same essay, *The Task of the Translator*, Benjamin also mentions the 'poetic' that can be found behind every work of art, the true essence of it. Without that, the piece loses its meaning. Wherefore, **the translator needs to be an artist themselves**. Francesc Parcerisas also talks about this particular aspect of the formation of a good translator. In his words: 'I believe every translator is an author. The good translators are usually people who write very well, even if they have never made works of their own creation.'

Another facet translators should take under consideration is to **never aim to be as good as the original**. Many authors appear to coincide on this fact. For instance, in words of Walter Benjamin 'no translation, however good it may be, can have any significance as regards as the original'. Jaume Tur, in his book *Sobre la teoría de la traducción* (1974, p.299), nuances that translation cannot be judged as an autonomous literary product. It has to always be compared to the original. In the following pages (1974, p.311) cites Goethe to state that those critical translation which compete with the original are also a matter of discussion amongst erudite.

EXPERIMENT: HOW DOES THE TRANSLATOR INFLUENCE THE TRANSLATION

The aim of this experiment is to prove the importance that the human component the translator provides to the translation, the preservation of the author's initial purpose/idea that it is not written in the sentences but in between them. Therefore, another objective behind this experiment is to somehow demonstrate that the online translators, commonly used by thousands and thousands of people, are not as reliable as one may think, as they do translate the text they are given, but without taking it as a whole, just word per word.

To carry out the experiment, five people, with different ages, genders and English levels⁹, were asked to translate a selected paragraph from the short story *The Man Who Married Himself*.

Conclusions of the experiment

The hypothesis at the beginning of the experiment was that the translator (**the human component**) influences greatly on the final product. Their knowledge of the language they are translating to, their command over the original language, etcetera.

Among the subjects of the experiment, there is only one professional translator. Consequently, there are slight grammatical mistakes or sentences that do not sound quite right. Nevertheless, it demonstrates the original hypothesis. Even if the same six subjects were given the same information, story and fragment to translate, the results, yet similar, are not identical.

For instance, there is the example of the term 'spouse'. In English, the word has no gender implied, therefore, it would have been ideal to realise that fact and find a word in Catalan that had the same characteristic of the original. In the

⁹ The following is a list with the basic information of the different translators, who will be numbered in order to refer to them in the commentary of the experiment. (TRANSLATOR NUMBER; GENDER; AGE; ENGLISH LEVEL (based on the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages))

- Translator 1: woman; 42 years old; B2 CEFR
- Translator 2: man; 57 years old; B2 CEFR
- Translator 3: woman; 35 years old; qualified translator
- Translator 4: woman, 45 years old; B2 CEFR
- Translator 5: woman, 17 years old; B2 CEFR

latter language, the most appropriate word is, in my view, '*cònjugue*' as it does not have a gender specification.

TABLE 1

I was my own spouse	<i>L'espòs de mi mateix</i>
	<i>La meva pròpia esposa</i>
	<i>El meu propi marit</i>
	<i>Era l'únic <u>cònjugue</u></i>
	<i>Jo era el meu propi espòs</i>
	<i>Jo era el meu propi marit</i>

In particular, there is the case of one of the subjects who translates but keeps the profanities out (see table 2). As Jaume Tur estates "Sobre la teoria de la traducció" (p.311), quoting Ulrich von Wilamowitz- Moellendorf <<It is not about translating words nor sentences, but receiving and communicating ideas and feelings>>, therefore, it does not matter if there appears 'bad words', as long as it is faithful to the original.

TABLE 2

It was hell, though	<i>Va ser ben complicat</i>
	<i>Va ser un infern</i>
	<i>Va ser l'infern</i>
	<i>Fos un infern</i>

It is hard to point out a good or a bad translation. As Francesc Parcerisas said (interview), 'good' and 'bad' are very arguable terms; there is no rule or absolute law that can be used to discern whether a translation is a good one or not. Anyhow, there are incoherencies (see table 3) that, even being grammatically right, do not make sense in the target language.

TABLE 3

Tax benefits	<i>Avantatges fiscals</i>
	<i>Beneficis fiscals</i>
	<i>Avantatges d'impostos</i>

Also, there are certain expressions used in some of the translations (buscar ejemplos) that are somewhat too formal for the context in which the original is set.

Concluding, the experiment, even if it has not perfect results, proves that, even if in a rough way, translation is greatly influenced by the human component the translator provides to the target text.

FRANCESC PARCERISAS

Biography

Francesc Parcerisas (Begues, Baix Llobregat, 1944) is a poet, translator and literary critic. He is a teacher in the Department of Translation and Interpretation of the Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona (UAB), from the one he has been deputy headmaster and head of the Department of Translation and Interpretation. He, as a distinguished member of the literary generation of the seventies, has published several books of poems, for the ones he has received several awards, such as the Carles Riba prize in 1996 and the Critics' Prize for Catalan poetry and the Generalitat of Catalonia Prize for Catalan Literature, both in 1983. His book *L'edat d'or* has been regarded as one of the most important books of his epoch.



Parcerisas is also one of the most important Catalan translators. His task has been recognised with honours, especially in the field of Poetic Translation (1992 Serra d'Or Critic's Prize for the translation of *The Haw Lantern* written by Seamus Heaney, 2001 Cavall Verd-Rafel Jaume Prize for the translation of *A Draft of XXX Cantos* written by Ezra Pound). He has also written several essays on Translation. One of them, *Hands Free. Metaphors and Papers on Translation* was awarded with the Premi Internacional d'Assaig Josep Palau i Fabre in 2013.

He collaborates with several literary and cultural magazines, writing both critics and essays. Parcerisas has also been the director of the Institute of Catalan Letters, from 1998 until 2004, and since 2010 he is its dean. He also takes part on other Catalan organisations for the language.

Noted works

Poetry

Vint poemes civils (*Twenty civil poems* – 1967)

Homes que es banyen (*Men bathing* – 1970)

Dues suites (*Two suites* – 1976)

L'edat d'or (*The Golden Age* – 1983)

Prose and essay

Cent anys de traducció al català (1891-1990) [with Montserrat Bacardí i Joan Fontcuberta] (*A hundred years of translation to Catalan* – 1998)

La primavera a Pequín. Un dietari. (*Spring in Beijing. An engagement book* – 2013)

Sense mans. Metàfores i papers sobre la traducció (*Hands free. Metaphors and papers on Translation* – 2013)

Francesc Parcerisas has also translated plentiful of works to Catalan, from the ones outstand, for instance, *The Hobbit* and *The Lord of the Rings*, by J.R.R. Tolkien, *The Haw Lantern* written by Seamus Heaney, or *This Side of Paradise*, F. Scott Fitzgerald debut novel.

Summary of the interview

Francesc Parcerisas considers the translation has two essential parts: **reading** and **rewriting**. In the first part, the translator has to understand the original work as a whole, embrace every single detail the author put on the text. Once this is done, the second part starts. Translation, according to him, more than putting words from a language to another, consists on rewriting what the source text said to another language. Related with that, Parcerisas remarks the importance of the connotations a word has. It is important to keep in mind that sometimes the words express something else that changes the tone or the meaning of the sentence. It is important to read in between the lines, because most of the times it is there where lies the significance of the creation, and that is why it is so difficult to translate.

Still related with the first part of the process of translating, Parcerisas criticises the online translators, but stating that, machines are not perfect, but neither are humans. To make the 'perfect' translation, it is required an incredible knowledge of the source language and an absolute control of the target one (normally the mother tongue). He says part of the reason why it is hard to maintain the entire original 'intentions' of the author is because of the poverty of the written languages. Comparing it to a music sheet, he says there is a lack of symbology to express things such as emotions, characters states, etcetera. Talking about

emotions, he said poetry is probably the most concentrated form of language, and a lot of times appears impossible to translate. Parcerisas thinks otherwise. He says it is indeed very hard, but that does not make it impossible. Actually, from his point of view, if the poem is good, there will always be something that can be translated to any language. You may lose metric, rimes, alliterations... but the essence, the 'poetic' as Walter Benjamin called it, will remain.

All translators are writers, even if they have never been published as an author. Francesc Parcerisas also raises the importance of the figure of the translator by saying that it is thanks to them that some authors have reached a spot in foreign literatures that they would not have achieved otherwise. Hence, one of the tasks of the translator is to approach foreign countries to readers. But approaching does not mean giving it to the reader on a silver platter. The reader has to do a bit of work to reach it, so that, if you are reading a novel from the sixteenth century and the language is different from the one used nowadays, you will have to make the effort to understand it.

To conclude, Francesc Parcerisas also stated that, even if the better the translator is, the less they will be noticed, that does not cancel the fact they have the right to be recognised for the task they do in the literary world.

Automatic translators

The first investigations on the field of technology applied to translation started in between 1950s and 1960s. The experts aimed to create a device which could replace the human translators and obtain the same results faster and cheaper. Soon enough they discovered that, at least with the technology that was accessible at that time, it was impossible to achieve that goal and also the systems that would have to be designed to reproduce the cognitive processes of the brain get to a level of complexity that it is doubted they will ever be reached. Since then, experts focus on improving the beneficial parts of the automatic translation, but assuming its limitations.

The problem comes when people who are not familiarised with the limitations of the automatic translator uses it just like it was as good as human translators. From those experiences, the myth that automatic translators are useless extends and denigrates its positive aspects.

To translate a sentence (a single sentence) the translator (be it human or automatic) needs to know the context where this sentence belongs, a very extended knowledge of the source language and a plan of how will this sentence be formulated in the target language, having in mind the purpose/type of text it will be inserted in. The quantity of memory resources that would be used to do such process in an automatic system would be practically infinite, as the resources would be constantly collapsing because of an excess of information.

Also, the process that nowadays automatic translators such as Google Translate use is one where they translate sentence per sentence, hence the program does not take under consideration the information given in the previous phrases.

To illustrate this fact, the same fragment the subjects of the experiment were asked to translate has been put on Google Translate, which has been asked to translate it from English to Catalan. This is the result:

Jo tenia moltes raons per casar-se quan ho vaig fer, a banda dels beneficis fiscals de curs (tractant de fer que l'inspector fiscal entén que jo era el meu

propi marit era l'infern, però). Des que vaig entendre el concepte del matrimoni, jo anhelava un soci que podia confiar. Jo volia tenir algú amb mi sempre, a qui jo podria dir a tots els meus més profunds i foscos secrets, sense tenir ells es riu de mi. Per desgràcia, tot i aconseguir núvies en general no era un problema massa gran per a mi, jo tendia a tenir terriblement mal gust. Llavors em vaig adonar que la meva parella perfecta estava més a prop de casa del que ningú podria haver adonat.

En conjunt, crec que el matrimoni va ser un gran èxit en la seva major part. Jo poques vegades vaig discutir amb el meu marit; de fet, em vaig trobar a mi mateix per ser el millor titular de conversa al voltant. Les poques vegades que em diuen, sempre em van guanyar. I el sexe era, bo - va ser tot el que vaig fer d'ella. Hi va haver certa intromissió dels mitjans, per descomptat, un munt de periodistes econòmics que tracten de treure profit d'aquesta inusual unió. He trobat alguns dels seus articles divertits, i altres molt ofensius, sobretot els que em doblatge o la / l'home més vanitós i narcisista en el món. No crec que jo sóc com un egoista, m'acaba de passar a gaudir de la meva companyia.

Suposo que era una cosa hormonal, una etapa de la vida o alguna cosa així, que em va fer anhel de sobte un nen. El clixé és que em vaig adonar que era mortal, i per tant jo volia transmetre els meus gens. Així que després de molts dies que pesen els pros i els contres, vaig decidir dividir del meu marit amb la finalitat de trobar una esposa. Vaig tenir una xerrada amb el reverend Zatarga, i ell em va informar que jo no podia sol·licitar el divorci en qualsevol moment. Jo havia de tenir una justificació legítima. Curiosament, amb ganes d'un nadó no era a la llista de bones raons per al divorci.

As it can be easily read, the translation obtained from Google Translate is barely legible. Even in the same sentence there are concordance incoherencies: 'jo tenia moltes raons per casar-se quan ho vaig fer,'. If there is a translation of single words, using the automatic translator like it was a bilingual dictionary, then it gives results more meaningful, but despite that, automatic translators such as Google Translate are not the most reliable of the sites because, on top of its inaccurate system of translation, it can also be

edited by the users anonymously, without proving any accreditation or evidence to support their modification.

Another of the limitations the automatic translator has, more related to style, it is the inability to perceive the intention/idea of the author, which is written in between the translation, that 'poetic' that needs of the human component the human translator brings to the act, identifying that idea in the source language and reflecting it into the target one.

If there is the need to use an automatic translator, there are a series of aspects to keep in mind:

- The text that has to be sent to the translator needs to be formed of short and concise sentences, which avoids aspects the translator is unable to understand, such as the confusion occasioned by complex syntax or the abuse of pronouns. Before establish a norm for the usage of the system, it should be done an evaluation of the linguistic quality and lacks and limitations.
- After the translations are automatically made, there should always be somebody who revises those translations, to make sure everything has been properly translated and there are not any mistakes.

But, if their use has to be monitored, limited and double-checked, what are the advantages of using an automatic translator?

First, it is cheaper, as it can translate great lengths of text in a shorter time than human translators. Secondly, when it comes to documents that are produced periodically (instructions manuals, for example) it reduces the costs. In the third place, when using the Internet, sometimes the user may come across a webpage written in a foreign language that needs/wants to read at the moment. Automatic translators give it to them in a matter of minutes, sometimes even seconds.

In conclusion, it could be said that, even if automatic translators continue developing and improving, there is little to no chance that they get to the point where they can substitute human translators. Their lack of ability incorporate in their systems the human component, the ability to understand other human beings, makes them an invalid substitute of the people who work in said field.

That does not mean that automatic translators cannot be used. Always keeping in mind that they have limitations and their translations need revising, automatic devices are the perfect tool to help people who need an occasional translation or be a tool used in companies to cut down in costs and obtain good results.

Conclusions

To start the conclusion, it is important to remind what exactly translation is: the act of translating words from a language (source language) into another (target language), but taking under consideration the words do not stand for themselves, but are part of a larger group (be it a sentence, paragraph or text) therefore have a close relation with the other words surrounding. Other aspects to have in mind, especially in literary translation are the intention of the author in the original work, the context in which it is set, and always aiming to transmit the message, more than keeping the same original words.

This translation has been happening since the moment more than one language coexisted: did the different languages appear as a divine punishment as the Babel myth relates or, on the other hand, their origins have a more scientific explanation such as 'people started spreading around the globe and, the further from each other they got, the more their languages distanced too'? If the current situation is a precognition of what it is expected in the near future, the origin of the languages is not something human kind is discovering anytime soon.

The History of translation is divided in six eras: the translation in the Ancient Times, when Romans did an incredible number of translations from Greek works, starting with the translation Livius Andronicus made to Latin of the Greek epic poem *Odyssey*. It is also around the same time when, in the other side of the world, China, is translating through a very particular method, that would be similar to the translation workshops there are nowadays, the Buddhist sacred texts from Sanskrit to Chinese. Also two norms of translation appear in this epoch: the **word for word** translation (literal translation) and the **sense for sense** translation (focused on the meaning of the text rather than the formal aspects).

During the Middle Age, translation decreases for two reasons: the restriction of the languages to the monasteries and the fact that Latin is the vehicular language of the *intellectual* class and the one in which new works are written, so they can still read the Roman papers and also the new ones without needing a translator. The most important Schools of translation during this era are the

School of Baghdad (S.IX) and the School of Toledo (S.X-XIII), the latter specially supported by the King Alfonso X the Wise.

In the Renaissance, the translation gains recognition again: the rediscovering of Ancient cultures and the displacement of Latin in favour of the Romance languages needs of translators to put those antique works into the new languages.

France was the epicentre of culture during the seventieth and eightieth centuries. It is also there was a new 'fashion' in translation origins and spreads through Europe: *les belles infidèles*, translations that are beautiful according to the canons of the epoch but that are not loyal to the original.

The ninetieth and first half of the twentieth century are marked by the Romanticism, which also makes the figure of the translator to regain a social status. The translations are also what, later on the ending of the ninetieth and beginning of the twentieth will help to the formation of international movements such as the Socialists movements and the modernisation of countries such as Japan and China.

Nowadays, translation is marked by technology (not always as helpful as it may appear in the beginning) and also the establishment of translation as an independent discipline inside the academic world.

Also, a fairly important term in the field of translation is the concept of **equivalence**. Nida proposed two different types of it: the **formal equivalence**, which consists on a literal translation, in which remaining faithful at all levels with the original is more important than reaching to the target reader, and the opposite: the **dynamic equivalence**, which proposes a translation that has the aim to reach the target reader, adapting the cultural constraints to the target culture.

The process of translating is divided in two parts: **reading** and **rewriting**. The first has three levels: philological comprehension, comprehension of the style and comprehension of the whole. In the first one, the translator studies the text, what is written in the paper, so then, in the second part, she or he can comprehend what goes further than words, read between the lines. In the last

part, the translator puts together the two comprehensions, and adds the author's intentions and other relevant facts that are in their knowledge. In the final part, the translator rewrites what he has read and absolutely understood to the point the story is practically theirs. That does not mean they can add or modify anyhow the story written by the author. They need to remain as impartial as possible.

The translation made of *The Man Who Married Himself* was a combination of all the aspects that have been summarised in the lines above. There was a process of understanding the text to different levels (on this phase, the possibility of talking with the author of the work was really helpful) and a process in which I poured all that I had embraced during the previous parts of the work.

The translator is given a lot of tasks to carry out. In the following list appear some of those tasks, the five most basic ones, it could be said:

1. Not to let their translation be influenced by their emotions, points of view, experiences, or even their creativity.
2. The approach of foreign countries and cultures to the readers
3. Translation is nothing more but an interpretation.
4. The translator needs to be an artist themselves. Even if they have never written/published their own work.
5. Never aim to be as good as the original.

Opposed to the human translator, there is the automatic translator a device originally created to substitute the first but that, after some research and experimentation, it was proven that it is practically impossible to create a machine that can make the same processes the human brain does when translating as it would require an immense system that would easily be collapsed, making it useless. Therefore, automatic devices cannot be regarded as a substitute but as an aid for the human translators and people in general who are in need of a translation but do not require it to be very accurate.

Personal opinion

Literature has always been one of my main interests, along with foreign languages and countries. Therefore, when we were asked to decide what we wanted to do the research project about, the first thing I thought were my hobbies. Keeping that in mind, the first option was doing a commented edition of a book in English, proposing activities and exercises to work on the story but also on the English language in general, so students could work on a foreign language through a source not as boring as a textbook.

But, when I was trying to decide what book I could work on that hadn't been published in Spanish nor in Catalan, so students could not read the translated version and then answer the activities, a new idea came to me. What if I did my project on translation? It certainly met my interests and was an interesting topic that, even if sometimes I had thought about, I had never done any research nor bother to ask someone to explain to me what the translation consisted of.

The importance of the translator did not strike me until, some years ago, I was reading a short story in English and my twelve-year-old self, young and naïve, thought it was a good idea to use an online translator so I could read it in Catalan.

The first couple of paragraphs were alright, but even I could tell that there were sentences there that didn't make any sense at all.

'So, how do they translate the books? Does the author write the same story a lot of times in different languages?'

This is actually the main idea I have extracted from all these months of work. **The translator is an actor that plays the part of the author in a different language.**

Evaluating the work from a certain distance, I can say I could have done better. I could have done better if I had kept a better organisation system, if I had worked an extra half an hour every day; I know I could have done more.

When I started the project, I had lots of ideas and paths I wanted to take: I wanted to carry out several experiments, interview a lot of people, translate a

whole book and, if I had time, even add activities to it... the list went on and on. Knowing how hard it has been to get to finish this project, a more limited, less ambitious version of the first, I can tell that what I was trying to do was not a research project that was a complete research project. I was trying to do a four-year degree in a few months while also having school work, getting the Advanced Certificate in English and enjoying my tech-free holidays.

But not everything is bad. I knew from the start the language would suppose a burden, because even having a relatively advanced level as I have, it is not the same to know the grammar and to write a project of this magnitude.

Besides that, I think this project has helped develop a lot my English written skills. Trying to find the appropriate grammatical structure, a good synonym for the word I have mentioned in the line above... They are all things that, even if being exhausting while doing the project, when you look at things in retrospective, you realise how much you have learnt.

I also consider I have reached my main aim when starting the project: what is translation? Who are the translators? Two questions mentioned on the title and answered (as good as possible) throughout the project.

Also, thanks to this project I have been able to talk with people I would have never had the chance to otherwise, as it is the case of Mr. Parcerisas. Through the interview/talk I was able to resolve doubts, enlarge the material to refer to in the project.

Translators put the whole world in our language, and we do not even take the time to read their names inked in the front page of the book, typed at the end of the credits in a movie. Through this project, it was my intention to try to understand what exactly translation is, and what the translators have done to become the eternal forgotten.

This project did not have the aim to be anything more than an introduction, a brief introspection on the fundamental topics of translation. Something that, if somebody ever wonders what translation consists on, but does not have the time (or the intention) to read thousands and thousands of essays and papers and divagations on books from the library that have not been touched in years,

can read it and think: 'Oh, so that's what everybody does not talk about when they don't talk about translation'.

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