



Este artículo tiene sus comienzos en una comunicación presentada en la Sección de Traducción del III congreso internacional de ESSE celebrado en Glasgow en 1995. Después, envié una copia de mi trabajo a David Lodge pidiéndole sus comentarios y algunas aclaraciones. En ese momento la editorial Anagrama acababa de hacerse con los derechos de las obras de Lodge en España. El autor quería que se hiciera una nueva traducción de su novela *Changing Places* y mandó mi trabajo a la editorial como prueba de la justificación de una versión nueva. En 1997 Anagrama publicó una nueva traducción de *Changing Places* aunque respetando el título de 1990. Este artículo es por lo tanto una versión revisada y aumentada del trabajo inicial que, en mi opinión, ofrece datos de interés y aclaración sobre las ediciones publicadas en España de la novela en cuestión.

On changing '*Changing Places*'

*This article has its origins in an unpublished paper presented in the Translation Section at the ESSE 3 conference in Glasgow in 1995, a copy of which I sent to David Lodge for comment. At that time the publishers Anagrama had just taken over the rights for Lodge's books in Spain and he was interested in having a new translation commissioned. He therefore forwarded a copy of my paper as 'supporting evidence' that a new translation was justifiable. Anagrama subsequently published a new version of *Changing Places* in 1997, although the title *Intercambios* of the 1990 translation was retained.*

*This present article is therefore a slightly expanded and revised version of my original text which I believe sheds some light on the story of the Spanish editions of the novel *Changing Places*.*

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INTRODUCTORY REMARKS

This article has its origins in a paper presented at the Translation Section of the ESSE 3 Conference held at Glasgow in 1995. I chose to examine the translation of David Lodge's novel *Changing Places* into Spanish as I thought that the very format of the novel with all the metafictional, differing genre-type writing, inter-linked linguistic, textual and cultural elements would be a challenge to the translator. Having commented on the fact that translation evaluation frequently involves more criticism than actually appreciating or understanding underlying problems or choices when translating, I set out to define what I thought might be translatable and what might be problematic. Therefore my initial attitude was clearly one of sympathy and comprehension towards the translator. Having defined certain parameters from which to work, I started to compare the original English text with the Spanish translation and found numerous, unexpected problems and inexplicable inconsistencies. After presenting the paper at Glasgow, I sent a copy of the text to David Lodge inviting him to offer any comments he wished with a view to clarification. Not only did he reply giving clarification, he also informed me that he had sent a copy of my paper to his new publishers, Anagrama, as "supporting evidence" that a new translation needed to be commissioned. In 1997, Anagrama published a new translation of *Changing Places*, maintaining the title published in 1990 by Versal, namely *Intercambios*.

INTRODUCTION

The debate of whether adequate translation is possible or not is one that has preoccupied translators throughout all ages and in varied circumstances and genres. In general, one can affirm that source language centred texts

that are linguistically self-conscious, and in particular works of literature, are those that present more problems and that have most to lose. However, no matter how inadequate one feels certain translations to be, one cannot but accept the importance of translated literary texts produced in the seventeenth, eighteenth and nineteenth centuries and their role in making classics of all times and cultures available to readers in general. Similarly, nowadays, works of literature are rapidly translated and this is the case in particular with novels by well-known or controversial authors, where translated versions appear within a couple of months of their publication in the original language. Without doubt, literature in translation is an influential current in our ever-narrowing world culture and is consequently also big business - at least for publishers and possibly some authors.

THE WORK OF THE TRANSLATOR

Generally, the work of translators is undervalued and subsequently underpaid, and these are required to supply a translation as quickly as possible, sometimes even anonymously, without being given any opportunity whatsoever to write a foreword discussing the problems entailed in translating and defend themselves against possible criticisms. This has somewhat improved over the last decade with translators' names now included on the frontispiece or book cover and not just alongside the ISBN number. The general reader intent on following the story thinks nothing of the translator and literary academics concern themselves with pinpointing misinterpretations, faux pas and the like and generally picking holes in a translation. In other words 'evaluation' usually equates 'criticism'. Clearly the translator is an invisible and all-too-often forgotten figure who is only



remembered when mistakes or illogical sequences appear.¹

This lack of recognition of the role of the translator is also reflected in reviews done of novels published in translation, where translated works are judged in the same way as untranslated books frequently with no mention whatsoever of the translator. The review in these cases is made on the novel produced by the translator. Related to this is the question - is it really valid to evaluate or pass judgement on a modern novelist in translation without knowing the original?

Similarly, as occurs with the novel I have selected, the work can be placed in a slightly different context and judged in a different light. *Intercambios*, the Spanish version of *Changing Places* (1975), appeared in 1990 and was recommended as a 'must for those readers who have already enjoyed *El mundo es un pañuelo* and *¡Buen trabajo!*'², the Spanish versions of *Small World* (1984) and *Nice Work* (1988), which had previously appeared in 1989.³

LODGE AND HIS FICTION

In an interview with John Haffenden in March 1984, Lodge stated the following about his fiction in general and *Small World* in particular:

Yes, I obviously do write for an educated audience, and also for a peer group of academics and novelists, but - like all modern novelists from Henry James onwards - I write layered fiction, so that it will make sense and give satisfaction even on the surface level, while there are other levels of implication and reference that are there to be discovered by those who have the interest or motivation to do so. That is partly what you hope will guarantee the re-readability of the book. I think *Small World* will give pleasure to readers who don't catch allusions to Lévi-Strauss or T.S. Eliot because it has a strong plot, which is the great strength of romance as a genre. (Haffenden 1985:160)

Can a translator hope to achieve more than a surface level rendering of the original? Lodge introduces in his novels a series of metafictional, literary, linguistic, stylistic and visual elements that make them particularly problematic for translation. Therefore, it seems logical that at some point reference might be made to the difficulties the novel presents the translator. However, apart from two very brief footnotes referring to the reasons for the confusion between 'sparrow' and 'swallow' (1990:82) and 'Rummidge' and 'rubbish' (1990:84), English words transferred into the Spanish text, there is no comment whatsoever.

CHANGING PLACES⁴ AND INTERCAMBIOS⁵

In this article, I wish to offer firstly an analysis of some of the problems that arise in the trans-

¹ The following rhyme sums up this idea very neatly:
Many critics, no defenders,
Translators have but two regrets;
When they 'hit' no-one remembers,



lation of *Changing Places* and discuss the way the translator has dealt with them. This analysis is therefore seen from a different perspective from that of the general reader or of the literary critic.

FACTORS INVOLVED IN THE TRANSLATION OF *CHANGING PLACES*

The very format of the novel is problematic itself and requires differing methods of translation. With reference to this point Newmark 1988:47 makes the following general observation: "Semantic translation is used for 'expressive' texts, communicative for 'informative' and 'vocative' texts." According to this, we can presumably affirm that a novel is a piece of literature, which, due to its being an expressive text on a macro level, requires semantic translation. However, in the case of *Changing Places*, the very forms of some of the chapters require a more communicative approach. This is applicable for example to Chapter III, entitled *Corresponding*, consisting of letters and correspondence, Chapter IV, entitled *Reading*, made up of various texts including small advertisements, newspaper articles and headlines, meeting agenda, children's essays, Chapter XI, entitled *Ending*, written in the form of a film script, etc. The use of intertextuality should contribute to the cohesion and theme of the novel and not detract from it. In other words, the reader ought to be able to recognise these texts as differing pieces of discourse and interpret them as such with a view to furthering the story. If a close translation of these original English texts is produced, the effect may be strange, comic or incomprehensible. Therefore, different methods of translation are necessary depending on the form of discourse.

The main problems this novel presents can be classified into three groups: firstly, those related to the literary techniques and the types of discourse included, secondly, those related to

dialects and idiolects and, finally, those related to cultural items and in particular to geographical and academic setting. Naturally, all these are intertwined in the original - American culture produces American idiolect - British newspapers produce texts following standard discourse. However, in translation they fragment, as some components *are* translatable whereas others are not.

TRANSLATABLE ITEMS

Firstly, I shall mention briefly elements that are theoretically translatable such as differing narrative technique and types of discourse. Correspondence, newspaper articles and advertisements, children's letters, lapel button texts, weather forecast language, conversations (face-to-face or by telephone), film script, etc. all exist as discourse types in the target language and can be translated, although some textual reorganisation may be required to conform to Spanish discourse norms.

PROBLEMATIC OR UNTRANSLATABLE ITEMS

Secondly, we turn to names, dialect and idiolect. Logically, in a work of literature part of the characterisation is achieved through the names and the speech of the figures that appear. Lodge wrote the following in 1992:

In a novel names are never neutral. They always signify, if it is only ordinariness. (...) The naming of characters is always an important part of creating them, involving many considerations, and hesitations, (...) (Lodge 1992:37)

All the names of characters are transcribed without comment and Zapp is one of the few that retains its full significance due to the transfer of the English word 'zapping' into Spanish. Regarding the speech of characters,

the translator should at least be aware that certain characters use specific idiolects - are these idiolects translatable? If they are principally characterised by tenor, then the translator ought to be capable of reflecting this to some extent. If they are related to geographical dialect, then the translator has to make certain decisions. In some texts, and an obvious example here is *Pygmalion*, it is essential for the translator to differentiate the juxtaposed dialects or one of the main themes of the play is missed. In *Changing Places*, we have the deliberate juxtaposition of British and American English with characters musing about the oddities of expression, pronunciation of one or the other. Unable to transfer the juxtaposition of geographical dialect in Spanish, the translator omits these musings. However, he does manage to differentiate American and British characters via cultural means - Americans are known to be less inhibited, more colloquial in speech than the British and this is reflected through tenor and as in the English original through the actual content of what is said. However, in the case of the young Anglo-Irish girl Bernadette - the Spanish reader is left puzzled by her and the way she describes another female character in a curious mixture of crude language and childishly spelt Spanish as in the translation of 'yaller-hared whoor' [pendona de cabeyo amariyo] (p. 152). Other idiolects that are also problematic are as follows: the slang and colloquial English of Wiley Smith, the gabble on Radio 1, the informal language of the newspaper advertisements, etc. All of these are basically untranslatable either due to a lack of a Spanish equivalent or because the use of a similar Spanish equivalent would create a different character. Can and should these idiolects be taken into account and can an attempt be made to reflect them in translation or should they simply be standardised?

CULTURE SPECIFIC ITEMS

Thirdly, with reference to cultural items and in particular in this novel to the milieu in which the novel is set - university campus life in two countries - and here I also include literary references - how much is translatable or is it sufficient merely to transcribe elements without explanation? Background knowledge is culture-bound to a certain extent and therefore, allusions and references may be lost. In this sense, it is significant that the subtitle of *Changing Places: A Tale of Two Campuses*, is omitted in the Spanish and similarly, a translation of a pun referring to *All's Well that Ends Well* (p. 31) is poorly done and the reference is lost. [Todo está bien si bien acaba] (p. 36).⁶

THE TRANSLATOR OF *CHANGING PLACES* / WRITER OF *INTERCAMBIOS*

The translator of this version *is* successful however in that he reproduces the storyline and manages to achieve the contrast between American and British attitudes. He also produces a comic novel and succeeds in drawing the reader's attention to the language and form of the novel, not, however, in exactly the same way as Lodge. The Spanish reader is faced with a series of chapters and texts, some of which contain syntactically irregular sentences in Spanish, others are comic, illogical and sometimes incomprehensible. I previously stated that elements related to literary technique and differing discourse were theoretically translatable, but that some changes might be needed on the level of textual reorganisation. This is not done and frequently, texts such as letters, telegrams, newspaper headlines, advertisements, etc. become incomprehensible in the Spanish because the translation is too close to

When they 'miss' no-one forgets. (Graham 1989:61)





the English both in syntactic and textual organisation. There are also several examples of unfortunate calques or anglicisms such as the following: 'María y el Fantasma Sagrado' (p. 18); 'no podía permitirse el lujo de viajar a sus expensas' (p. 46); 'Antiguos textos ingleses señalados' and 'los cuadernos de sellos' (p. 22); 'una secta milenaria' (p. 55); 'tablero de avisos' (p. 62); '<< Deja a Jane Austen tambaleándose >>' (p. 72); 'un cigarillo de marihuana' (p. 97) or 'un vivero piscícola' (p. 156). There are even plain grammatical errors and spelling mistakes including 'por la mañana siguiente' (p. 168); 'convergir' (p. 172); 'esa maldito audición' (p. 174). Another important element that reveals a lack of knowledge or comprehension of the two languages is the way the translator continually transfers the stressed words written in italics in English and brackets them in Spanish. English uses phonological means i.e. stress displacement for emphasis to alter meaning, whereas Spanish uses syntactic reorganisation. Similarly, the frequent use of geographical dialect and varying idiolects means that the Spanish version is standardised and sometimes misrepresented. Finally, elements related to cultural and geographic references are mistranslated. In particular, numerous references to academic life become inexplicable in the Spanish translation — the 'eithers' and 'ors' (p. 18) in the preparation of exams become 'stills' and 'yets' [los todavía y aúnes] (p. 23) in Spanish. The television programme 'University Challenge' (p. 36) becomes a university party (p. 41) [Se presentó borracho en una fiesta de la Universidad] — therefore what is wrong with appearing there drunk? The whole point of the line 'the transformation of the dim Rummidge lecturer into Visiting Professor Philip Swallow' (p. 37) is lost. In fact, we have an inversion of effect here: 'the transformation of the unknown/dark Professor from Rummidge into the visiting teacher Philip Swallow' [la transformación del oscuro catedrático de

Rummidge en el profesor visitante Philip Swallow] (p. 42). Other mistranslations include: the 'grading system' (p. 96) becomes a 'levelling system' [sistema nivelador] (p. 99); the 'juvenilia of Jane Austen' (p. 18) becomes 'the youth of Jane Austen' [la juventud de Jane Austen] (p. 24). In a reference to Moby Dick he mentions the 'chapter on the whale's foreskin' (p. 195); this becomes 'a chapter dedicated to whaleskin' [un capítulo dedicado a la piel de la ballena] (p. 195). A paragraph also appears in Spanish describing 'a typical or traditional British Saturday', where the words Saturday and Sunday alternate [las pequeñas labores del tradicional sábado británico. No había necesidad, sobre todo, de dar un paseo el domingo por la tarde (...) la copiosa comida el domingo (...) donde los botes de remo están encadenados por mandato sabatino] (p. 33). To an English reader, the frame activated is clearly a typical British Sunday. Lodge terms it 'the secular British Sabbath' and alternates 'Sabbath' and 'Sunday' (p. 28). This is just one example of several mistranslations done of false cognates in the novel. Another detail revealing lack of comprehension occurs when the hour on board a transatlantic plane is referred to as inexact — '(for everybody's watch is wrong by now)' (p. 12) — in Spanish because everyone's watch is 'broken' [(porque en ese momento los relojes de todo mundo están estropeados.)] (p. 18). Another mistranslation which is perplexing is 'Desirée wanted the hospital to put her out for the whole goddam nine months' (p. 208) — this becomes 'Desirée needed the hospital to give birth for the whole goddam nine months' [Desirée necesitaba el hospital para parir durante los malditos nueve meses enteros] (p. 208). When Zapp realises that he is the only man on the plane he comments that 'The odds against such a ratio turning up by chance must be astronomical' (p. 29). The opposite is expressed in Spanish: 'The possibilities (likelihood) of this ratio being due to chance are



astronomical.' [Las posibilidades de que esta proporción sea debida a la casualidad serían astronómicas.] (p.34) Due to modulation, here 'infinitesimals' would be required. The Spanish reader is also puzzled with the following: 'He suddenly felt serene. His heart beat violently, his insides churning' [De pronto se sintió sereno. El corazón le latía violentamente, las tripas se le revolvían] (p. 104), whereas in English we find 'suddenly sober, his heart thumping and his bowels melting' (p. 102). Another particularly puzzling sequence is the one involving the damage done to a roof due to the effect of 'one cubic foot of green ice that fell from the skies' (p. 166). In Spanish it is reduced to 'three cubic centimetres', [un bloque de hielo verde que mide aproximadamente tres centímetros cúbicos, que atravesó el techo y causó daños en la habitación superior de la casa] (p. 166), hardly enough to do much damage! All the preceding items make the Spanish reader constantly aware that he is reading a translated piece of literature.

A closer study of the two texts reveals further problems that clearly demonstrate a lack of comprehension on the part of the translator both of language and concepts but which would pass unperceived by the general reader. We find numerous examples of mistranslation - a 'terraced house' (p. 20) becomes a 'house with a terrace' [casa que tenía una terraza] (p. 26). 'You know?' (p. 218), the filler, is translated by 'you know her.' [Usted la conoce.] (p. 218) and the text adapted. 'An invalid carriage, as they were called (more like euthanasia on wheels, he would have said, a frontwheel blowout in one of those crazy boxed-in tricycles and you were a gonner)' (p. 209) becomes 'an invalid chair, as they call them, (euthanasia on wheels they should be called; if your front wheel bumped without you realising into one of those chairs you'd become a murderer' [una silla de inválido, como las llaman (eutanasia sobre ruedas deberían llamarlas; si la rueda

delantera choca, sin que te des cuenta, con una de esas sillas, te conviertes en un asesino] (p. 209). Measurements inexplicably vary - 'twenty minutes' (p. 51) becomes 'twenty four minutes' (p. 55); '165 pounds 15 and 6' becomes '175 pounds' (p. 151); 'a current account that is in the red' (p. 150) becomes one that is nearly in the red [nuestra cuenta en el banco casi a cero] (p. 151); 'one cubic foot of green ice' (p. 166) as we have seen becomes 'three cubic centimetres' [tres centímetros cúbicos] (p.166). There are also various examples of inversion of meaning - 'bottomless funds' (p. 19) becomes 'lost funds' [fondos perdidos] (p. 25); 'sloppily reverent' (p. 46) - 'irreverent' [irreverente] (p. 50); 'insincerity' (p. 81) - 'sincerity' [sinceridad] (p. 84); 'last letter' (p. 137) - 'first letter' [tu primera carta] (p. 139); an 'act of God' (p. 166) becomes a 'miracle' [un hecho milagroso] (p. 166); 'Your timing is terrific.' (p. 173) said with genuine appreciation becomes 'Your timing is terrible.' [Tu puntualidad es terrible.] (p. 173)

CONCLUSIONS

Regarding literature in translation, Lodge himself has provided us with some interesting and thought-provoking comments. With reference to the question of translatability, he wrote the following in 1966:

That poetry is untranslatable is a basic tenet of modern criticism and appears to follow logically from any critical theory that holds that form and content are inseparable. (...) Novels, on the other hand, are apparently translatable, in the sense that we all read translated novels with some confidence in our judgement of them and their authors. Hence, it is argued, the identity of a novel cannot be determined by the words of which it is composed -, as a poem is so determined - because this identity is not changed when the novel is translated into other, different words. (Lodge: 1966/84:18)



He then proceeded to question and to argue against this postulation.

However, in 1990, Lodge reconsiders his opinion:

In *Language of fiction* (1966) I argued that meaning was as inseparable from verbal form in the novel as the New Criticism had shown it to be in lyric poetry; and that although prose fiction was more translatable than verse, since in it sound and rhythm were less important, nevertheless there was bound to be such a degree of alteration and loss of meaning in the translation of a novel that the critic could never 'possess' it with the necessary confidence.

I no longer hold this position with the puritanical rigour expressed in the first part of *Language of Fiction*. Exposure to the Continental European structuralist tradition of poetics and criticism has shown me that literary narrative operates several codes of communication simultaneously, and in most of them (for instance enigma, sequence, irony, perspective) effects are readily transferable from one natural language to another (and even from one medium to another). A flashback is a flashback in any language; so is a shift in point of view, a peripeteia, or an 'open' ending. (Lodge 1990:155)

Subsequently, translation of a novel such as *Changing Places* is theoretically possible at least on the surface level mentioned at the beginning of this article. As I stated previously, the translator of *Changing Places* does succeed in reproducing the storyline and also the contrast between British and American attitudes and way of life and in producing a comic novel. However, in *Intercambios* (1990) many problems appear that are related to foreseeable difficulties due to the complex form of the novel i.e. metafictional, literary, linguistic, stylistic and visual elements, dialects and idiolects, or cultural references. Yet, at the same time, many others are products of the translator's inadequate knowledge of theoretically translatable

linguistic and cultural items or sheer carelessness. The result is that the Spanish reader is constantly aware that the text in hand is a translation and has only partial access to a surface level rendering of the original and even that is unfortunately seriously flawed - a version which hardly does justice to the original.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

In his letter, David Lodge states that in his opinion 'translations should be written by a native speaker of the second language, but checked by a native speaker of the original language.' He then adds that French is the only language that he can comment on in detail and that he has personal connections with his French, German, Italian and Japanese translators and occasionally answers their questions about his works. Lodge read with 'some dismay', the paper I sent for comment. He is no doubt more than satisfied with the fact that he managed to have a new translation commissioned for the 1997 publication by Anagrama. My intention in the near future is to examine this new translation of *Changing Places* [*Intercambios*] (1997) with a view to evaluating the influence my original paper had on the second translator. Did he do a completely new translation? Did he follow the first translation but do a thorough revision of the work or did he concentrate on the criticisms and comments included in the first version of this article?

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