

TEMA 646

TL 153

TL 153

UNIVERSIDAD DEL SALVADOR
FACULTAD DE HISTORIA Y LETRAS

THESIS



THE ACT OF TRANSLATING

A LINGUISTIC AND HERMENEUTIC APPROACH

USAL
UNIVERSIDAD
DEL SALVADOR

Raúl Eduardo Narváez.

FEBRUARY 2002

CONTENTS

PAGE

<u>THE ACT OF TRANSLATING</u> : Introduction-----	1
---	---

PART I

THE ACT OF TRANSLATING

1 <u>THEORETICAL ASPECTS</u>	5
1.1 <u>INTRODUCTION</u> (1)	5
2 <u>LINGUISTICS AND TRANSLATION</u>	5
2.1 Linguistic Model	9
2.1.1 Types of Equivalence	10
2.1.2 Formal and Dynamic	10
2.1.2.1 Principle of a "Shared Significatio"	13
2.1.2.2 Equivalent of social function	18
2.1.2.3 Equivalence on the affective level.	26
2.2 Translating:linguistic model definitions	31

USAL
UNIVERSIT Part II
DEL SALVADOR

THE ACT OF TRANSLATING: APPROACHES

3 <u>TRANSLATING HERMENEUTIC APPROACH</u>	37
3.1 Definitions.	37
4 <u>LINGUISTIC MODEL AND HERMENEUTIC APPROACH</u>	42
CONCLUSIONS	
5 <u>TRANSLATING: IMPOSSIBLE OR POSSIBLE?</u>	44
5.1 Impossible	44
5.2 Possible	48

5.3 Conclusion	51
6 HERMENEUTIC APPROACH: STEINER	52
6.1 Introduction	52
6.2 Trust	54
6.3 Aggression	56
6.4 Incorporation	61
6.5 Restored parity	62

Part III

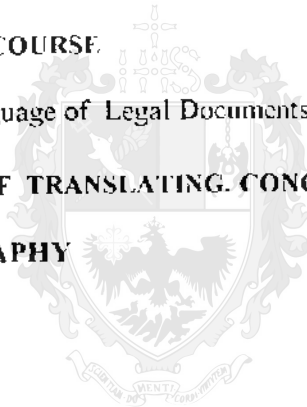
THE ACT OF TRANSLATING: TWO NEW DEFINITIONS

7 TWO NEW DEFINITIONS	65
* Translating: An Adventure in the Fields of Culture	
* Translating: "An Exercise of Freedom"	
7.1 Translating: "An Adventure in the Fields of Culture"	65
7.2. Translating: "An Exercise of Freedom"	106
7.2.1 Conclusions	122
7.3 "The Selfish Giant" by Oscar Wilde <i>Translated as "An Exercise of Freedom" and as "An Adventure in the Fields of Culture"</i> .	123
7.3.1 Approaching the Text	123
7.3.2 The Selfish Giant Original and Translation by R. E. Narváez	142
7.3.2.1. Original	142
7.3.2.2 Translation	149
7.3.2.3 Conclusions	157
<i>"The Selfish Giant" translated as "an exercise of freedom" and as "an adventure in the fields of culture"</i>	

PART IV

THE ACT OF TRANSLATING: SPECIALISED TRANSLATION

8 SPECIALISED TRANSLATION	162
8.1 Translation: Technical and Scientific	164
8.2 Discourse: Technical and Scientific	164
8.3 Technical Translation	162
8.4 Terminology	170
8.5 Terminology in Texts about Science	171
8.6 Acronyms	177
9 LEGAL DISCOURSE	179
9.1 The Language of Legal Documents	179
10 THE ACT OF TRANSLATING: CONCLUSIONS	184
11 BIBLIOGRAPHY	187



USAL
UNIVERSIDAD
DEL SALVADOR

THE ACT OF TRANSLATING

INTRODUCTION

The essence of the act of translating has implied, from early times, dealing with different and often extreme approaches. The aim of this work is to offer a general view of two of them - *the linguistic approach and the hermeneutic approach*- and to demonstrate that both approaches can intervene simultaneously during every act of translating -the intervention of one does not discard the possible intervention of the other. To that effect, although specialised translation is included in the analysis, much greater attention has been paid to literary translation. In addition, in Part III, by means of abundant evidence, the act of translating is defined as consisting in "*An Act of Freedom*" and also in "*An adventure in the Fields of Culture*".

To develop the two approaches mentioned above, it is shown how in early times, there used to be a strong tendency to emphasise only the role of language and to exclude other extra-linguistic aspects of the process. Consequently, the notion of the act of translating involved the notion that it mainly consisted in replacing SL words by TL counterparts. This approach, so briefly presented here, was based on the assumption that words are clear-cut and distinct entities and that each word normally has only one distinct meaning. This idea goes with an equally wide-spread notion that language itself, or that any individual language, is but a list of words, of names of objects, etc., which, as a rule, have at

least one equivalent in other languages. Such view, a duplicate of the naming account described in the *"Book of Genesis"*, incidentally emphasises the fact that translation can be reduced to an activity consisting in a word-for-word substitution or in a literary craft operation. However, anyone who has ever attempted translating is aware of how illusory all these perspectives are. Yet, the idea to the contrary still persists among many a technologist of this "New Millennium" who, via state-of-the-art technologies, are continually offering experiments in translating by means of electronic programs, generically known as MT (Machine Translation). But as translation is concerned with many linguistic and extra linguistic issues other than words, a mechanical substitution can be successful only under certain totally restricted conditions. Consequently, human intervention will never be eliminated from this operation performed upon two languages at once. To exemplify it, and at the same time to demonstrate the partial possibility, or even complete impossibility of machine translation, it is hereinafter included the machine translation of the first five sentences of this second paragraph, for which purpose the program *"Global Link Power Translator -Version 6.0"* was used:

"Para desarrollar los dos acercamientos arriba expresado, se muestra cómo en tiempos tempranos, había una tendencia fuerte para dar énfasis a sólo el papel de idioma y excluir otros aspectos extra-lingüísticos del proceso. Por consiguiente, la noción del acto de traducir envuelto la noción que consistió principalmente reemplazando SL formula por colegas de TL. Este acercamiento, tan brevemente presentado

aquí, era basado en la asunción que las palabras son entidades claro-cortadas y distintas y que cada palabra normaly tiene sólo un hecho y el significado distinto. Esta idea va con una equally noción del ancho-cobertor que el idioma él, o que cualquier idioma individual, es pero una lista de palabras, de nombres de objetos, etc. que, como una regla, tenga uno por lo menos equivalente en otros idiomas. Tal vista, un duplicado de la cuenta de nombrar describió en el "el Libro de Génesis", a propósito da énfasis al hecho que la traducción puede reducirse a una actividad que consiste en una substitución del palabra-para-palabra o en un funcionamiento de destreza de litarary.

The idea of using machines to provide translations has been recognised since the 1930s, but in fact, the actual development of this new possibility took place just after the Second World War. At that time, the valuable contributions offered by information theory and computer science were optimistically indicating that MT, initially proposed by Warren Weaver, could be performed satisfactorily. Now, it has been recognised that machines are not likely to replace human intervention, they just constitute another valuable tool among the many already available.

PART I



USAL
UNIVERSIDAD
DEL SALVADOR

PART I

THE ACT OF TRANSLATING

1. - THEORETICAL ASPECTS

1. 1 INTRODUCTION

As José Luis Sánchez González soundly states in the foreword of the *"Manual de Traducción Inglés Castellano"* by Juan Gabriel López Guix and Jacqueline Minett Wilkinson (1997)¹ to deal with the act of translating *"entraña, entre otras, la dificultad de unir los aspectos teóricos y prácticos de la disciplina"*. His statement incidentally implies that a conscientious analysis of any of its numerous definitions or specific issues presupposes the previous step of developing relevant concepts related to linguistics and their application to the theory and practice of translation.

2 LINGUISTICS AND TRANSLATION

In his *"Curso de lingüística general"* translated by Amado Alonso, Saussure (1945:47)² states that:

"...las cuestiones lingüísticas interesan a todos cuantos - historiadores, filólogos, etc. - tienen que manejar textos."

¹LÓPEZ GUIX, Juan Gabriel, MINETT WILKINSON, Jacqueline: *"Manual de Traducción Inglés Castellano"*. Gedisa. Barcelona, 1997

²FERDINAND DE SAUSSURE: *"Curso de lingüística general"*. Editorial Losada S.A., Buenos Aires, 1945.

Although translators are not explicitly mentioned, they are implicitly included due to the conspicuous osmotic relationship between translation and linguistics. In its essence, translating consists in working with two written texts simultaneously, the source text (ST) and the target text (TT). In our case, this statement comprises working with textual material written in the standard English used in Great Britain/United States or in the Spanish used in Spain/Argentine Republic. In this latter case, especially the one in use in Buenos Aires.

In another part of the same book, Saussure deals with the subject-matter of linguistics and states (1945:46) that:

"La materia de la lingüística está constituida en primer lugar por todas las manifestaciones del lenguaje humano, ya se trate de pueblos salvajes o de naciones civilizadas, de épocas arcaicas, clásicas o de decadencia, teniendo en cuenta, en cada período, no solamente el lenguaje correcto y el "buen hablar", sino todas las formas de expresión.

Y algo más aún: como el lenguaje no está las más veces al alcance de la observación, el lingüista deberá tener en cuenta los textos escritos, ya que son los únicos medios que nos permiten conocer los idiomas pretéritos o distantes".

Therefore, language is by nature an instrument of communication, a means of expression which can be captured and described scientifically through both observation and analysis.

According to Kelly³ "*Linguistics assumes that language is an instrument and that its essence can be described by relating observed behaviour to scientific models.*"

Substantially empirical, this approach with its centre of interest in the observable expression finds its complement in another non-empirical or anti-empirical -the hermeneutic approach. Here language is a creative entity or "*logos*" with its interest in the intention or cognitive and affective levels of the act of communication.

With reference to these two approaches to language it is relevant to quote Graciela Maturo (1995:11)⁴ who declares that:

"Para las tradiciones más antiguas de la tierra, el lenguaje es Verbo, soplo espiritual, inspiración en el sentido etimológico del término; soplo divino, energía creadora que hace al hombre tal y que proviene de los dioses, transformándose a la vez en instrumento apto para su conexión con el plano superior.

³KELLY, L.G. "*The True Interpreter -A History of Translation. Theory and Practice in the West.* Basil Blackwell, Oxford 1979, p. 71ano. Gedisa. Barcelona, 1997.

⁴MATURA, Graciela: "*Introducción a una hermenéutica del texto*". Tekné. Buenos Aires, 1995.

La comunicación de tipo utilitario, función que también se cumple con el lenguaje, no es para las tradiciones sino una función subsidiaria, que de ningún modo sustituye a la función relevante de la palabra. Esta noción revelatoria y divina del lenguaje no sólo se encuentra expresa en el Evangelio de San Juan, sino en muy disímiles tradiciones; así, por ejemplo, la mitología de los dogon africanos, según advierte el antropólogo Marcel Griaule, comprende una doctrina del Verbo, como también la encontramos en las tradiciones de los aztecas, muiscas, quechuas y guaraníes, para sólo referirnos a América.¹ Ésta, desde luego, se nos dirá, es la zona del mito, de lo no cuestionado, de lo que no ha pasado a la reflexión. Pero tenemos también toda una línea filosófica que viene trasladando al plano del concepto estas verdades contenidas en el mito; una línea que se inicia en el Cratilo de Platón, pasando por Plotino y los filósofos neoplatónicos, por los Padres de la Iglesia, para ser retomada por Dante y los humanistas del Renacimiento: Marsilio Ficino, Pico de la Mirandola, Giordano Bruno".

¹ Cfr. Briceño Guerrero, Luis: "El origen del lenguaje". Monte Ajoila, Caracas. 1969

For certain, these two complementary linguistic perspectives have exerted their influence upon the theory of translation -each characterizes the nature of the act of translating in accordance with their specific functional view of language. Therefore, the personal view a translator will have of the act of translating will depend on the function he assigns to language at the

moment of performing such act. *"To each stream of language theory, there corresponds a theory of translation. Linguists' models assume that translation is essentially transmission of data, while hermeneutic theorists take it to be an interpretative recreation of text"*- KELLY (1979:34)

2.1 LINGUISTIC MODEL

In the field of translation, the view of language as an instrument of expression facilitates, first of all, the contrastive analysis of the linguistic units of the two texts, the ST and TT, with the purpose of verifying the existence of possible equivalent semantic charges. In fact, that is the core of the work of any translator or interpreter -to find equivalence where there is neither linguistic nor cultural parity. This in fact explains why, on the cover of the book *"La traducción basada en el significado"* by Mildred L. Larson (1989:207)⁶ published in Spanish by Eudeba, there appears the sub-title *"Un manual para el descubrimiento de equivalencias entre lenguas"*. For Larson every translator at work is under the pressure of an endless search for mutual lexical equivalents in the two languages he is dealing with.

According to Kelly (1979:25)⁷ it is obvious that *"the values that instrumental theories of language seek in translated*

⁵KELLY, L. G. *"The True Interpreter"*. Basil Blackwell. Publisher Ltd. Great Britain., 1979.

⁶LARSON, Mildred L. *La traducción basada en el significado -Un manual para el descubrimiento de equivalencias entre lenguas*. Eudeba, Buenos Aires, 1989.

⁷KELLY L. G. *The True interpreter*. Basil Blackwell Publisher Ltd, Oxford, 1979.

texts depend on the expressive means used. The assumed end is reduced to transfer of information, though this in the context of affectivity is extremely wide, wider indeed than the 'information' of communication theory. The basis for equivalence is parity of expressive function in the linguistic units used; parity of means will ensure parity of result."

Contrary to what might be expected, this possibility of finding "*parities*" in different languages, theoretically known as "linguistic equivalencies", does not imply an exact and bound correlativity of categories and/or linguistic functions. For that reason two concepts have been developed:

- (1) "formal equivalence"
- (2) "dynamic equivalence"

USAL
 2.1.1 TYPES OF EQUIVALENCE
 DEL SALVADOR

2.1.2 FORMAL AND DYNAMIC

It was E. A. Nida (1964:166)⁸ who characterised *dynamic equivalence* as "*the closest natural equivalent to the source-language message*". "*Formal equivalence*" as the correspondence between linguistic units. Semantic charge is not taken into account in this case.

⁸NIDA, E. A. (1964): *Towards a Science of Translating*. E.J. Brill, Leiden,

In his valuable book *"A Linguistic Theory of Translation"*, J.C.Catford, when dealing with *"Conditions of Translation Equivalence"* (1969:49)⁹, devotes the beginning of the chapter to the expansion of the concept "equivalence" and to consider the conditions in which a TL item can function as a translation equivalent of any given SL item. He states that *"7.1...The SL and TL items rarely have "the same meaning" in the linguistic sense; but they can function in the same situation. In total translation, SL and TL texts or items are translation equivalents when they are interchangeable in a given situation. This is why translation equivalence can nearly always be established at sentence-rank -the sentence is the grammatical unit most directly related to speech-function within a situation. 7.2 As our examples in Chapter 5 showed, in total translation SL and TL items have overlapping meanings; their contextual meanings include relationship to certain situational features in common. In the case of Eng. "I have arrived"/Russ. "ja prista" we saw that even for the rough characterisation given in 5.4 we to specify 8 situational features: 5 for the English text, 6 for the Russian. Only three of these (a speaker, an arrival and a prior event) were common to both. The TL text must be relatable to at least some of the situational features to which the SL text is relatable. Presumably, the greater the number of situational features common to the contextual meanings of both SL and TL text, the 'better' the translation. The aim in total translation must therefore be to select TL equivalents not with 'the same meaning'*

⁹CATFORD, J.C.: *A Linguistic Theory of Translation*. OUP, London, 1969.

as the SL items, but with the greatest possible overlap of situational range.

Apart from these considerations, Catford, in previous chapters, defines and categorises the types of equivalence as "*textual equivalence*" and "*formal correspondence*" (1969:27)⁶. "*A textual equivalent is any TL form (text or portion of text) which is observed to be the equivalent of a given SL form (text or portion of text).*

A formal correspondent, on the other hand, is any TL category (unit, class, structure, element of structure, etc.) which can be said to occupy, as nearly as possible, the 'same' place in the 'economy' of the TL as the given SL category occupies in the SL. Since every language is ultimately sui generis, -its categories being defined in terms of relations holding within the language itself- it is clear that formal correspondence is nearly always approximate."

Although these types of equivalence are distinctively characterised, the presence of one does not tacitly exclude the possible intervention of the other. Both of them can coexist in the same item and thus contribute to produce the "*natural equivalent*" Nida refers to both in his definition of dynamic equivalence and of translation¹⁰.

According to L.G. Kelly (1979:25)¹¹ there are three ways of assessing equivalence:

¹⁰NIDA, E.A: *Language Structure and Translation*. Stanford University Press, California, 1975, p.33.

* *The basic one is*

the Augustinian principle of a shared significatio;

* *the second is*

equivalent of social functions of the object referred to;

* *and the third is*

equivalence on the affective level.

2.1.2.1 PRINCIPLE OF A SHARED SIGNIFICATIO

The Augustinian principle of the shared *significatio* derives from the nature of words and their possibility of sharing parity of meanings or synonymy. In "*The Magistro*" (1995:110)¹² Augustine characterises the word as a conventional sign which strikes the ear.

5.12.47.-AUGUSTINE: *You observe, I think, that everything expressed by an articulated sound accompanied by some significate (i) strikes the ear so that it can be perceived, and (ii) is committed to memory so that it can be known.*

ADEODATUS: *I do.*

AUGUSTINE: *Then these two things happen when we utter something by such a sound.*

ADEODATUS: *Yes.*

¹¹ KELLY L.G: *The True Interpreter*. Basil Blackwell Publisher Ltd, Oxford, 1979.

¹² AUGUSTINE: *De Magistro* -translated in *Against the Academicians and The Teacher* by Peter King, Hackett Publishing Company, Indianapolis/Cambridge, 1995, p. 110.

AUGUSTINE: What if words are so called because of one of these and names are so called because of the other -'words' from striking (the ear) and 'names' from knowing - so that the former deserve to be called after the ears, whereas the latter deserve to be called after the mind?

In *"Expositions on the Psalms"* (Psalm vi 3) he characterises the word as a sign of arbitrary nature, which implies the reference to the concept of synonymy. To support his view, in his comments about the meaning of two key Greek words which appear in the two first lines of the *"Psalm vi 3"* and their Latin equivalents, he concludes that as they have the same semantic charge, they do not betray the message of the original, namely, the Word of God.

*"3. In fear of which condemnation the Church prays in this Psalm, and says, "Reprove me not, O Lord, in Thine anger" (ver. 1). The Apostle too mentions the anger of the judgment; "Thou treasurest up unto thyself," he says, "anger against the day of the anger of the just judgment of God." In which he would not be reprov'd, whosoever longs to be healed in this life. "Nor in Thy rage chasten me." "Chasten," seems rather too mild a word; for it availeth toward amendment. For him who is reprov'd, that is, accused, it is to be feared lest his end be condemnation. But since "rage" seems to be more than "anger," it may be a difficulty, why that which is milder, namely, chastening, is joined to that which is more severe, namely, rage. But I suppose that one and the same thing is signified by the two words. For in the Greek *quimos*, which is in the first verse, means the same as *orgh*, which*

is in the second verse. But when the Latins themselves too wished to use two distinct words, they looked out for what was akin to "anger," and "rage" was used. Hence copies vary. For in some "anger" is found first, and then "rage:" in others, for "rage," "indignation" or "choler" is used. But whatever the reading, it is an emotion of the soul urging to the infliction of punishment. Yet this emotion must not be attributed to God, as if to a soul, of whom it is said, "but Thou, O Lord of power, judgest with tranquillity." Now that which is tranquil, is not disturbed. Disturbance then does not attach to God as judge: but what is done by His ministers, in that it is done by His laws, is called His anger. In which anger, the soul, which now prays, would not only not be reprov'd, but not even chastened, that is, amended or instructed. For in the Greek it is, Paideuhs, that is, instruct. Now in the day of judgment all are "reprov'd" that hold not the foundation, which is Christ. But they are amended, that is, purged, who "upon this foundation build wood, hay, stubble. For they shall suffer loss, but shall be saved, as by fire." What then does he pray, who would not be either reprov'd or amended in the anger of the Lord? what else but that he may be healed? For where sound health is, neither death is to be dreaded, nor the physician's hand with caustics or the knife."

This word-based concept of shared significatio permits in certain cases the actualisation of both types of equivalence, dynamic and formal, in the same item. A simple but practical example is the one which follows.

1	2	3	4
---	---	---	---

The	rose	is	red
La	rosa	es	roja
<i>Article</i>	<i>Noun</i>	<i>Verb</i>	<i>Complement</i>

The componential analysis (CA) of the lexical items in the structures to be contrasted is an effective way of assessing the actualisation of the shared *significatio*. Of the flower "Rosa", in the first entry of the "Diccionario de la Lengua Española"-Real Academia Española (1992) can be read:

Definition "A"

ROSA (del lat. rosa) f. Flor del rosal, notable por su belleza, la suavidad de su fragancia y su color, generalmente encarnado poco subido. Con el cultivo se consigue aumentar el número de sus pétalos y dar variedad a sus colores: suele llevar el mismo calificativo de la planta que la produce

REAL ACADEMIA ESPAÑOLA (1992): "Diccionario de la Lengua Española" -
Twenty-First Edition, Real Academia Española

UNIVERSIDAD
DEL SALVADOR

Of the same flower and also in its first entry, in the "Dictionary of Contemporary English" (1995) can be read:

ROSE n. 1.- **FLOWER** [C] a flower that has a pleasant smell, and is usually red, pink, white, or yellow, or the bush that this grows on.

LONGMAN GROUP LTD.: "Dictionary of Contemporary English". Longman Group Ltd., 1995.

If the key components in both definitions are analysed contrastively, a one-to-one semantic equivalence can be verified. In