

The Reception of *The Country Girls* in Spain: Translation Strategies to Overcome Cultural Leaps

Elena Alcalde Peñalver | María Amor Barros del Río

e.alcalde@uah.es | abarros@ubu.es
University of Alcalá | University of Burgos

Recibido: 20/12/2017 | Revisado: 06/05/2018 | Aceptado: 24/07/2018

Abstract

The aim of this study is to analyze how the elements of Irish culture and society transmitted by Edna O'Brien in her debut novel, *The Country Girls* (1960), have been translated to the readers in Spanish. First of all, a contextualization of the translation of the novel will be provided. Next, a section on literary translation and cultural references, as well as translation strategies in this field will be included. Thirdly, a descriptive study will be applied comparing extracts from the source text and the target text. Fourthly, the strategies used and their adequacy for the cultural transposition of the ST into the TT will be assessed. In the concluding section we will reflect on whether the degree of cultural transposition resulting from the translation into Spanish allows the transgressive nature of the novel to have a similar impact on the recipient culture as a contemporary edition of the original text in English.

Keywords: Cultural references; translation strategies; literary translation; Edna O'Brien; Irish literature

Resumen

La recepción de The Country Girls en España: estrategias de traducción para superar las diferencias culturales

El objetivo de este estudio es analizar cómo se han traducido al español los elementos de la cultura y la sociedad irlandesa transmitidos por Edna O'Brien en su primera novela, *The Country Girls* (1960). En primer lugar, aportamos una contextualización de la traducción de la novela. A continuación incluimos un apartado sobre traducción literaria y referencias culturales, así como estrategias de traducción en este campo. En tercer lugar, llevamos a cabo un estudio descriptivo para comparar extractos del texto original y del texto meta. En cuarto lugar, evaluamos las estrategias utilizadas y su adecuación para la transposición cultural del TO en el TM. En el apartado final reflexionamos sobre si el grado de transposición cultural resultante de la traducción al español permite que el carácter transgresor de la novela tenga un impacto similar en la cultura receptora al tratarse esta de una edición contemporánea del texto original en inglés.

Palabras clave: Referencias culturales; estrategias de traducción; traducción literaria; Edna O'Brien; literatura irlandesa

1. Introduction

Descriptive studies in literary translation broadly focus on different varieties of translation; strategies used to translate; results; and the evolution of the discipline (Hurtado 2001). They consider translation both as an agent and a means to establish cultural contacts (Fernández 2014). It is useful to compare an original work with its corresponding version in another language, and to analyze how its different characteristic elements have been transmitted. This approach will be employed in the present study of the strategies used in the translation into Spanish of Edna O'Brien's debut novel, *The Country Girls* (1960). A comprehensive approach including both cultural and linguistic elements will allow us to go beyond what would otherwise constitute a merely superficial study of the translation of the book. Finally, the transgressive nature of the original version will be assessed in its translated version into Spanish.

Toury (2000: 201) states that in a descriptive translation study a systematic analysis of the translator's performance cannot be conducted, since the same norms are not always applied in the translation process. In order to overcome these shortcomings, it is necessary to apply a methodology that goes beyond the descriptive approach and extends the field of study of the translation to the context of production of the original work. A methodology based on the tripartite approach proposed by Enríquez (2005) offers that broader approach. Hence, the authors propose, first of all, a contextualization of the translation of the novel to delve into its historical and social circumstances, as well as the reception of the translation in Spain. Next, a section on literary translation and cultural references, as well as translation strategies in this field, will be included to provide the reader with contextualised information about the translation framework upon which the analysis is based. Thirdly, a descriptive study will be applied comparing extracts from the Source Text (hereinafter ST) and the translated Target Text (hereinafter TT). It is important to acknowledge the degree of arbitrariness and subjectivity involved in this third step. This means that the results of this study are not prescriptive, nor do they claim to typify translation errors or establish norms on how the work should have been translated. Our only aim is to analyze how the elements of the Irish culture and society transmitted by O'Brien in her novel have been translated to the readers in Spanish. Fourthly, the strategies used and their adequacy for the cultural transposition of the ST into the TT will be assessed. In the concluding section we will reflect on whether the degree of cultural transposition resulting from the translation into Spanish allows the transgressive nature of the novel to have the same impact on the recipient culture as a contemporary edition of the original text in English.

2. Contextualisation of the novel and key cultural issues

The Country Girls is the debut novel of Irish writer Edna O'Brien. Published in 1960 in London, it is a novel that exposes in a realistic and innocent way the transition

from childhood to adulthood in mid-20th century rural Ireland. It recounts the tale of two young Irish women growing up in a country that clings to tradition and is fearful of change. With its sequels, *The Lonely Girl* (1962) – later renamed *Girl with Green Eyes* – and *Girls in their Married Bliss* (1964), the trilogy was published in 1986 with an added epilogue. *The Country Girls* presents with sharp doses of innocence, satire and sometimes crudeness, the sexual awakening of two Irish girls who are impelled to emigrate first to Dublin and then to London in search of a fuller life. The immediate success of the first novel, which in 1962 won the Kingsley Amis Award, coupled with the rigid censorship and scandal that its publication caused in Ireland – to the extent that her books were publicly burned in her hometown – launched Edna O’Brien to fame.

2.1. Assessment of Edna O’Brien’s works in the Spanish context

Despite her prolific literary production, until 2016 only seven of O’Brien’s novels had been translated into Spanish, and almost all of these a long time after their first publication in English¹. It is extremely surprising that the Spanish translation of her debut novel, *The Country Girls*, did not reach bookstores in Spain until 2013, more than half a century after its publication. This chronological lag is disconcerting when compared with other more immediate translations, such as its first version in German (*Die Fünfzehnjährigen*, 1961), in Italian (*Ragazze di campagna*, 1961), in Swedish (*Två flickor på Irland*, 1962) and later in Polish (*Czekajac na miłość*, 1974) and in French (*Les filles de la campagne*, 1988). The complete trilogy can even be found in Dutch (*De Buiten Meisjes Trilogie*, 1998) and Lithuanian (*Kaimo Mergaičių Trilogija ir Epilogas*, 2006).

There are various possible reasons for this delay in the Spanish context. Firstly, the cultural and geographical distance between Spain and Ireland, as well as the low level of contact between the two countries during the middle decades of the 20th century, meant that the Spanish publishing market did not consider Irish literature as a corpus. Thus, male Irish writers such as Shaw, Beckett and Joyce, to name a few, were acknowledged as British authors. The marginality of Irish studies in relation to the British metropolis in the field of English philological studies in Spain at the time is evident. According to Praga Terente (Barros-del Río 2017), academic attention to Irish studies had to wait until the beginning of the 21st century, when the Spanish academic community began to acknowledge the singularity of Irish artistic, literary and cultural production as a discipline of study. Secondly, there are striking similarities and historical and cultural coincidences between 20th century Spain and Ireland. The few studies that relate the contexts of the two countries in the mid-20th century (Barros-del Río and Gómez Cuesta 2009; Downey and Crespo MacLennan 2008; Jaspe 2011; Martín Ruiz 2014) refer to political regimes characterized by a lack of freedom and the strong presence of the Catholic Church. Thus, just as *The Country Girls* was censored in Ireland for its explicit sexual references and bold criticism of ecclesiastical

institutions, it is logical to infer that during that period this type of narrative found no place in Spain. Last but not least, it should be noted that in recent decades the Irish government has engaged in the active promotion of Irish art and culture through the establishment of various institutions such as *Culture Ireland* and *Literature Ireland*. Created in 1994, *Literature Ireland* has among its objectives the translation of Irish literature into other languages through its «Translation Grant Program». The publishing house Errata Naturae benefited from this program for the publication in Spanish of *Las chicas de campo* (*The Country Girls*) and its sequels *La chica de ojos verdes* (2014) (*Girl with Green Eyes*) and *Chicas felizmente casadas* (2015) (*Girls in their Married Bliss*), all translated by Regina López Muñoz.

2.2. Reception of *Las Chicas de Campo*

As for the reception of the novel, despite the short period of time that has elapsed between its publication in Spanish and this article, editor-in-chief at Errata Naturae, Irene Antón, states that more than 7,000 copies have already been sold in countries including Argentina, Mexico and Chile, as well as in Spain². According to the publishers, this success has been achieved in part thanks to the publication of other novels of Edna O'Brien, which fuel the readers' interest in her first novel. Among the literary reviews analyzed, literary magazines of national media outlets such as *Babelia* of *El País* (Galán 2013) and *El Cultural* of *ABC* (Monmany 2013) made much of the element of «scandal» to enhance the promotional appeal of *Las Chicas de campo*, retaining for the Spanish public the infamy that has often accompanied O'Brien in her literary career (Woodward 1989; Schiff 2013). However, the relevance of this reputation is questionable as regards the Spanish translation of the novel, since the thematic and cultural transgressions offered by the original work may not be as new or transgressive for a 21st century readership, and could even lead to some disappointment based on the expectations created. This study will try to elucidate whether the novel's translation into Spanish has been able to accurately convey the cultural context and particularities that framed the original work and its transgressive nature. It is hoped that an analysis of its linguistic and thematic components will shed light on this question.

3. Specific references in literary translation

The polysemic nature of the literary message makes the task of literary translation particularly difficult, since there are linguistic and extra-linguistic factors that the translator must consider (Meregalli 1989). This is so because the author of a literary work always draws on a series of cultural references, such as proper names, institutions, works of art, gastronomy, festivals and customs, or even intertextual references, such as quotes from other works or songs, in order to reflect the framework in which the work is developed (Schäpers 2016). These references are essential to understand-

ing the specificity of the literary work, and are aspects that the translator has to convey to the reader. In this sense, Nord stated that «translating means comparing cultures» (2001: 34) and Nida affirmed that in a truly successful translation «biculturalism is even more important than bilingualism, since words only have meanings in terms of the cultures in which they function» (2001: 82).

In our study, these factors are based on the specificity of the Irish culture and society and, as will be illustrated through different examples, they cannot always be transmitted in a fully transparent way into Spanish. In the particular case of *The Country Girls*, the challenge to be overcome lies not in the linguistic barrier, but in the barrier imposed by cultural references which are meaningless for readers who are unfamiliar with Irish culture. Indeed, Nida considers these cultural differences a greater challenge than language for the translator: «Differences between cultures may cause more severe complications for the translator than do differences in language structure» (1964: 30). Accordingly, the translator must be an expert professional who makes successful intercultural communication possible (Whitte 2005). All this means that the translator may be forced to intervene to explain the implicit content and facilitate reading comprehension (Schäpers 2016).

For this study, we divided our analysis into four different areas: translation of intralinguistic cultural references (regionalisms, characteristic elements of orality and accent), stylistic issues related to the landscape translated in the novel, translation of taboo words and translation of extralinguistic references related to history and religion. The importance of intralinguistic cultural references in the novel is based on the fact that *The Country Girls* is a novel written in an elegant and precise language that evokes the daily rural and urban life of postwar Ireland, which is particularly evident in the author's efforts to capture accents and colloquialisms that broaden the reductionist view of the Irish prototype. Second, the literary ability of Edna O'Brien is also reflected in her great lyricism in describing the Irish landscape, thus meriting another category for analysis. Third, *The Country Girls* includes open allusions to (female) sexuality, which was taboo at the time and a key theme in the novel that deserves close attention. Fourth, the novel's frank criticism of the Catholic Church is a challenging historical matter that also requires critical exploration. It is our understanding that these are four key strands of analysis of the narrative of *The Country Girls*, the first two from a linguistic point of view and the latter two because they contributed to the scandalous reputation of the novel at the time of its publication.

The analysis of the translation of intralinguistic and extralinguistic cultural references will be based on the techniques of domestication and foreignisation as will be explained below. However, the analysis of references related to landscape and sexuality will be based on a contrastive linguistic analysis of the original text and its translation. The examples that will be analysed follow the same structure: an excerpt of the source text (ST) in English (O'Brien 1988), its corresponding translation into the target text (TT) (O'Brien 2013), and a gloss between brackets with its literal translation into English so that the reader can appreciate the subtle differences in register,

syntax, etc., between ST and TT. Then, each example is followed by an in-depth analysis. Translator's footnotes containing references are also included.

3.1. The translation of intralinguistic cultural references

Numerous authors have classified cultural references into different thematic categories and studied them exhaustively (Gamero 2005; Igareda 2011; Mayoral 1994). As regards translation strategies, it should be remembered that the translation of cultural references is based mainly on techniques of foreignization and domestication, although some authors feel this dichotomy is too rigid because it may undue weight to some items while ignoring others (Olk 2013). For the study of intralinguistic cultural references in our analysis we will follow both categories of foreignization and domestication since they include the main characteristics that constitute the specificity of the novel. According to Venuti, domestication implies «an ethnocentric reduction of the foreign language to target language cultural values, bringing the author back home» (1995: 20). This occurs through syntactic structures, cultural terms and conventions with which the target language reader already feels familiar, which allows the work to be received in a transparent way. Foreignization means «choosing a foreign text and developing a translation method along lines which are excluded by dominant cultural values in the target language» (Venuti 1998: 242). However, we agree with Massardier-Kenney et al. (2016: 9) and Bush (2016: 166) when they state that domestication and foreignization are not two completely opposing options between which the translator has to choose, but in fact their use is constantly negotiated during the translation process. In this sense Errata Naturae also indicated that for the translation of *The Country Girls*, «the use of notes and explanation or omission of cultural elements is something that we consider in each particular case with the translator during the process of editing the book»³. Since the translation of *The Country Girls* into Spanish reveals both techniques, it is appropriate to follow the more detailed classification offered by Pedersen (2007), which differentiates the procedures that can be adopted for each of them:

Techniques oriented to the source language (foreignization):

- Specification (use of hyponyms). It means using a word with a more specific meaning than the general term applicable to it. An example would be the translation of «window» in English as *ventanuco* in Spanish.
- Loans from the other language (the use of «selfie» without any changes in Spanish or other terms that have been adapted such as *líder*).
- Addition of information to facilitate the understanding of the text. An example of this would be the use of footnotes by the translator with clarifying information.
- Calque or literal translation. An example would be the English term «Normal School» from the French language (*École Normal*).

Techniques oriented to the target language (domestication):

- Generalization. This technique would be the opposite of specification (i.e. translating *ventanuco* as «window»).
- Substitution: replacing one term with another.
- Creation of neologism. In some cases it is necessary to create a new term to convey a new reality from the other language. This is what happens nowadays with many terms related to new technologies (*tuitear, bloguero*).
- Transposition: one cultural element of the original culture is replaced by another one of the target culture. This is done when we change the title of a movie or song to one that is well known by the target audience.
- Omission of the cultural reference. In some Arab countries greetings include many more words that are not necessary in English, in which case it would be enough to use only «Good morning!»
- Compensation: adding cultural references in the TT to compensate for possible losses of the source text.

In the light of this proposal, the following three sections analyse the strategies used by the Spanish translator of *The Country Girls* in relation to the intralinguistic cultural references that characterize the style of O'Brien. Within each category, particular examples are briefly analyzed in terms of domestication and foreignization; and within these two broad strategies, the specific technique used according to Pedersen's classification (2007) is discussed.

Even though the novel was published in the United Kingdom, Edna O'Brien had already confessed her difficulties fitting into British society, stating that «the language is the same, although Irish people use it in a completely different way, with another vitality» (Galán 2013). Indeed, *The Country Girls* is notable for its foregrounding of the characteristic Irish accent, which is achieved through the orality of the characters and the regional colloquialisms they use. These represent a stylistic tool that the author uses to enrich the novel and contextualize it in a specific geographical area and vernacular (Tello 2012). References will be grouped into three distinctive subcategories: regionalisms, orality in Ireland and Irish accent.

3.1.1. Regionalisms

Some key examples featuring typical words of the geographical area (regionalisms) are explored below. These frame the work and allow the author to impose a particular style in depicting the characters:

Example 1

ST: «Ask me nicely, Hickey, and call me dotey.» (4)

TT: ¿Por qué no me preguntas con un poco más de delicadeza, Hickey? Y llámame «reina». [Why don't you ask me with a little more delicacy/tact, Hickey? And call me queen.] (11)

Analysis: «Dotey» is used in vernacular language of the region to refer to something charming and beautiful. The technique of translation used is domestication, and more specifically transposition, since the translator opts for *reina* [queen], which is commonly used in Spanish to address someone in a loving way. Another example along these lines that we can also find is the use of «ducky» (4) (translated as *amapola* [poppy]), which again shows the technique of transposition for a word that someone would use in Spanish.

Example 2

ST: «An Irish colleen» (92)

TT: -Una moza irlandesa. (162)

[A young Irish girl.]

Analysis: The proper noun «Colleen» can be used with the meaning of «girl» in Ireland and describes a particular look associated with Irish ancestry. Girls described as «colleens» usually have darker hair, fair skin and blue eyes, as opposed to the red haired and freckled look also common among Irish people. In this case, the translator uses the technique of compensation since she translates it as «moza irlandesa», which, according to the Royal Spanish Academy, is defined as a young girl. This word is used in a colloquial context in Spanish, especially in fixed expressions such as «es una moza» (she is a fine pretty lady). Nevertheless, its use is more archaic and would not be used for example among teenagers.

Example 3

ST: *I named him Bull's-Eye because his eyes were speckled black and white, like canned sweets.* (3)

TT: Le había puesto ese nombre porque en los ojos tenía unas manchitas blancas y negras que me recordaban a los caramelos mentolados*. (10)

[I had given him that name because in the eyes he had some small black and white spots that reminded me of mint candies.]

Footnote: *Bull's-Eye es el «blanco de la diana» y por su similitud pasó a denominar, como señala la narradora, unos famosos caramelos de forma circular y rayas concéntricas: Bull's-Eye Candy.*

['Bull's-Eye' is the «shooting target» and because of their similarity, as the narrator says, famous sweets of circular form and concentric stripes were named after it: Bull's-Eye Candy.] (10)

Analysis: In this case the translator does not change the original name in Spanish and adds an explanatory note so that the reader does not lose the meaning from the English version. «Ese» is used in Spanish to refer to a previous case when the dog's name is mentioned.

3.1.2. Characteristic elements of orality in language

Although O'Brien wrote her first novel once she had settled in London, she endeavored to depict Irish peasantry according to Hirsh's description of what Irish country life was like at the time: «Country life was characterized by its orality, organicism,

and closeness to nature» (1991: 1122). Indeed, O'Brien succeeded in projecting the essence of «Irishness» onto her writing and adapted her language as much as possible to rural Ireland. In her work, orality is a recurring feature that allows the author to transfer an informal tone used by the characters to express themselves. The following examples illustrate this:

Example 1

ST: «There's a play in the town hall, missus. You ought to go over,» Hickey said. (6)

TT: Hay una función en el ayuntamiento, señora. Debería ir a verla –propuso Hickey. (15)
[There's a play in the town hall, madam. You should go and see it, suggested Hickey.]

Analysis: According to the *Cambridge Dictionary*, «missus» is an oral and informal way of referring to a lady (in Spanish the word «parienta» is sometimes used to convey this meaning). In this case, the informal element of orality is lost, since the translator opts for transposition as a subcategory of the domestication strategy.

Example 2

ST: She said «Cheerio» to Miss Moriarty. (19)

TT: Salió despidiéndose de la señorita Moriarty. (37)
[He left saying goodbye to Miss Moriarty.]

Analysis: «Cheerio» is an informal way of saying goodbye to someone. This informality is lost in Spanish by opting again for the substitution technique and thus neutralizing the colloquialism of the original text.

Example 3

ST: She was the best mama in the world. (6)

TT: Era la mejor madre del mundo. (14)
[She was the best mother in the world.]

Analysis: According to the *Cambridge Dictionary*, «mama» is used by small children to address their mother. In the novel it serves to emphasize and transmit to the reader the close relationship between one of the protagonists and her mother. In this case, the translator has opted for generalization as a strategy of domestication and omits the childlike language, which affects the sense of closeness between the characters in the ST.

In addition, five translator's footnotes should be included within this section. These clarify references to popular Irish songs of the time, as well as a quote from Shakespeare's *Macbeth*. The footnotes can be read in full on the page indicated in the TT.

Example 1

ST: She rode off singing, «I will and I must get married». (15)

TT: Se alejó cantando «The Humour is on me Now». (30)
[She went away singing «The Humour is on me Now».]

Analysis: In this example the translator changes part of the lyrics of the song for the title of the song in English. She also adds that it is a cheerful song sung by the guests of the wedding of the characters played by John Wayne and Maureen O'Hara in the film *The Quiet Man*.

Example 2

ST: She began: *As I was going one morning 'twas in the month of May, a mother and her daughter I spied along the way...* (39)

TT: Se arrancó: *As I was going one morning, 'twas in the month of May, a mother and her daughter I spied along the way...* (75)

[She started singing]

Analysis: The translator leaves the lyrics in English and in the footnote she explains that it is the same song that the character Baba sang in Chapter 2 after stealing the lilacs from Caithleen.

Example 3

ST: The radio was playing –«... where women are women, and French perfume that rocks the room.» (49)

TT: Sonaba la radio -... «*where women are women, and French perfume that rocks the room.*»* (90)

[The radio was playing]

Analysis: In this case the translator explains in her footnote that the lyrics are taken from the song «Buttons and Bows», which was very popular at the end of the 1940s and beginning of the 1950s. She further adds that it was written for the film *The Paleface* starring Jane Russell and Bob Hope, although the most popular version was sung by Dinah Shore. In this version, the singer expresses her regret for having been born in the West and longs for a life in a city of the East to be able to show off her sophisticated clothes and French perfumes. This contextualization in Spanish is quite useful because the song conveys the lifestyle that the main characters of the book aspire to.

Example 4

ST: «I have done the deed; didst thou not hear the noise?» (76)

TT: -Ya lo he hecho. ¿No has oído un ruido?*(136)

[I have already done it. Haven't you heard a noise?]

Analysis: For this quote from *Macbeth*, the translator uses a translation already published, as she mentions in the footnote, in which she even adds a personal opinion of Baba, the character who sings it («the smart girl», *la avispada chica*).

Example 5

ST: «And when the moon shines over the cowshed, I'll be waiting at the ki-i-tchen door.» (78)

TT: «Y cuando la lu-lu-luna brille sobre la vaqueriza, te estaré esperando en la puerta de la co-cocina...»* (139)

[And when the moonlight shines over the cowshed, I will be waiting for you at the kitchen door.]

Analysis: In this case the translator translates the song lyrics into Spanish and adds in her footnote that it is an American song released in 1918 that tells the story of a young soldier who stutters when he sings the song to the lady he is in love with.

3.1.3. Characteristic elements of the Irish accent

Apart from the regionalisms and oral elements that allow the author to express the colloquial tone used by the characters, the marked accent characteristic of Ireland is evident in numerous examples in the English version:

Example 1

ST: Like the eejits who come over to Burren to look at flowers. (10)

TT: Como esos imbéciles que van al Burren solo para mirar las flores. (21)

[Like those stupid people who go to Burren just to look at the flowers.]

Analysis: *Eejit* is used as a colloquialism in Ireland to express that someone is an idiot. In this case, the translation in Spanish loses the colloquial aspect of the original when opting for substitution as part of the technique of domestication. These are some similar examples that follow this same translation strategy: «Where's the aul fella?» (30), translated as «¿Dónde anda el viejo?» [Where is the old man?] (60), or «Whatja bring the chicken in here?» (30), translated as «¿Y para qué te has subido el pollo aquí?» [Why did you bring the chicken up here?] (60).

Example 2

ST: The two youngest were hanging over the wall saying «Good afternoona» to everyone who went by. (24)

TT: Los dos más pequeños estaban sentados en lo alto del murete y diciendo «Buenaz tardez» a todo el que pasaba. (45)

[The two little ones were sitting on top of the wall and were saying «Good afternoon» to everyone who walked past.]

Analysis: To convey the Irish accent, the translator chooses the «z» in Spanish. It is therefore a transposition as a subcategory of domestication, since a cultural element of the Irish accent is replaced by a sound characteristic of peninsular Spanish, although in this case it is not a dialectal example characteristic of any geographical area of this country.

As was shown in this analysis, for expressions and vocabulary typical of an informal register, the translator finds functional equivalents in Spanish that convey the same meaning; however, the Spanish version loses the essence that O'Brien manages to transmit in the original language. The use of domestication as a translation strategy is predominant, which leads to a loss of the regionalism that distinguished the original work in English and made it possible to frame it in the Irish context. Consequently, in the Spanish version, linguistic aspects are no longer a way of transmitting one of the

essential characteristics of O'Brien's work and do not contribute to framing it within a specific geographical area. We consider that a footnote contextualizing the main aspects of the specificity of the English spoken in Ireland could have given important information to the reader in this sense, as the translator did with the footnotes explaining the songs.

3.2. References related to landscape

Landscape and the multiple performances of exile play a relevant role in O'Brien's work. Through memory, the author is able to establish the setting of her plots in order to re-create a country from afar: «One needs the formality and perspective that distance gives in order to write calmly about a place» (Eckley 1974, 27). But the reader must bear in mind that this reading incorporates a difficult relation between land and people, «complicating the traditional cultural and ideological status of the land as site and source of Irish authenticity» (O'Brien 2012:1). The linguistic richness and resources that O'Brien displays to create that sense of place are particularly evident in the following examples:

Example 1

ST: The sun was not yet up, and the lawn was speckled with daisies that were fast asleep. There was dew everywhere. The grass below my window, the hedge around it, the rusty paling wire beyond that, and the big outer field were each touched with a delicate, wandering mist. And the leaves and the trees were bathed in the mist, and the trees looked unreal, like trees in a dream. (3)

TT: Aún no había salido el sol, y el césped estaba moteado de margaritas dormidas. El rocío lo cubría todo. Una bruma leve y vacilante velaba la hierba bajo mi ventana, el seto, la herrumbrosa alambrada de más allá, el vasto campo. La neblina impregnaba las hojas y los troncos, y los árboles parecían irreales, como salidos de un sueño. (10)

[The sun had not yet risen, and the lawn was mottled with sleepy daisies. The dew covered everything. A slight, hesitant haze covered the grass beneath my window, the hedge, the rusty wire fence from far away, the vast field. The mist impregnated the leaves and the trunks, and the trees seemed unreal, as coming out of a dream.]

The lyricism displayed by O'Brien in her descriptions of the Irish nature and landscape is meticulously conveyed by the translator with the aim to portray the particularities of the Irish weather and scenery to the reader. To indicate the different effects of a misty dawn, the synonyms «bruma» (haze) and «neblina» (mist) have been accurately chosen so that the readership is transported to a distinct Irish ambience. Equally, the careful selection of a variety of nouns within a semantic field, such as «césped» (lawn), «hierba» (grass), «seto» (hedge), and «campo» (field), manages to project in Spanish the rich universe of Irish nature.

In addition, it is interesting to consider the following example, which includes a footnote by the translator to explain a highly characteristic element of the landscape of rural Ireland:

Example 2:

ST: «Go to the bog, I suppose,» she said. «The turf is ready for footing and we mightn't get a fine day again». (7)

TT: -Supongo que ir a la ciénaga –contestó-. Hay que apilar la turba, y que puede que no volvamos a tener un día tan bueno. (16)

[Go to the bog, I guess, he said. We have to pile the turf, and we may not get such a good day again.]

Analysis: The translator helps the reader to be absorbed in the landscape by using a variety of adjectives and rhetorical figures that illustrate a wide range of detail. In her footnote, the translator says that in the Irish countryside it was very common to go to the bogs in the months of May or June to cut the turf. She also adds that turf consists of marshes that were left to dry for several weeks and then stacked to complete the drying process, and that they served as fuel in the long winters of the island.

As the selected examples illustrate, the precision of O'Brien's descriptions is so rich and accurate that «the reader almost literally sees the world through the eyes of the narrator» (Jobert-Martini 2013: 109). The Spanish translation mirrors the delicacy of Edna O'Brien's depictions and impersonates its richness through the use of synonyms and family words. The cultural context attached to landscape is naturally incorporated in the use of appropriate vocabulary all in consideration of accuracy. When necessary, footnotes are included.

3.3. References related to sexuality

As stated in section 2 of this paper, a characteristic theme of the transgressive nature of O'Brien's work is sexuality – a taboo subject in the traditional Ireland of the 1960s and the cause of much distress to Irish readers at the time, as the author acknowledged in an interview: «The body was as sacred as a tabernacle and everything a potential occasion of sin» (Roth 1984). Thus, it is not surprising that references to the body and sexuality are constantly present in the author's narrative. The following examples indicate that the most controversial expressions and words have been translated without any attempt of censorship.

Example 1

ST: Baba and I sat there and shared secrets, and once we took off our knickers in there and tickled one another. The greatest secret of all (8)

TT: Baba y yo pasábamos allí el rato y nos contábamos secretos; y, una vez, nos bajamos las bragas y nos hicimos cosquillas. Aquél era nuestro mayor secreto (18)

[Baba and I spent time there and told each other secrets; and once, we pulled down our panties and tickled each other. That was our biggest secret.]

Example 2

ST: «Her bubs are dancing,» Baba said, and we both sniggered. (37)

TT: Le bailan las tetas – me dijo Baba, y las dos nos reímos por lo bajo. (71)

[Her bubs are dancing, Baba said, and we both sniggered.]

Example 3

ST: «Are you fast?» Baba asked bluntly.

«What's fast?» I interrupted. The word puzzled me.

«It's a woman who has a baby quicker than another woman,» Baba said quickly, impatiently. (77)

TT: - ¿Eres «fácil»? – quiso saber Baba.

¿Qué significa «fácil»? – interrumpí. Aquella palabra me intrigaba.

Fáciles son las que tienen bebés con más facilidad que otras mujeres, - contestó Baba deprisa, impaciente. (137)

[- «Are you easy?» - Baba wanted to know.

- What does «easy» mean? I interrupted. That word intrigued me.

«Easy are those who have babies more easily than other women,» replied Baba quickly, impatiently.]

Example 4

ST: «Imagine», said Baba,» she read out, 'Father Tom stuck his long thing,' (105)

TT: Figúrate – continuó- que ha dicho «El padre Tom le ha metido su enorme aparato...». (184)

[Look, she went on, she said, «Father Tom has put his enormous apparatus in it...»]

The selected examples reproduce in Spanish the boldness present in the original work which purposely challenges the traditions and taboos rooted in the society of that time. As was shown in the analysis, the aim of the translator was to convey the author's characteristic tone in the dialogues and reflect the elements that reproduce the scandal of the original work in English.

3.4. Cultural references related to Irish religion and history

Religion and history are two essential aspects that allow the author to frame the original work in a specific historical and geographic context. They are considered here under the same category, since extralinguistic references in the novel to these aspects are not numerous and both reflect the social context of 1960s Ireland:

Example 1

ST: «A nun you are in my eye. The Kerry Order –two heads on the one pillow». (8)

TT: -¿Monja? ¡Y un cuerno! ¿En qué orden te dejarían dormir acompañada? (19)

[- A nun? Yeah, right! In what order would they let you sleep with someone?]

Analysis: This is again a case of generalization, since «The Kerry Order» is translated into Spanish simply as «order».

Example 2

ST: «Who's the archbishop?» I asked, as we had only a bishop in our diocese.

«Who's the archbishop? Are you a bloody Protestant or what?» she asked. (22)

TT: ¿Quién es el arzobispo? – quise saber, pues en nuestra diócesis sólo había un obispo.

¿Qué quién es el arzobispo? ¿Qué pasa, imbécil, es que ahora eres protestante? (42)

[- Who is the archbishop? - I wanted to know, because in our diocese there was only one bishop.

- Who is the archbishop? You idiot, are you a Protestant now or what?]

Analysis: In this example we observe an alteration in the placement of the adjective in English and Spanish that changes the insult to the Protestants of the original. This referred to the rivalry between Protestants and Catholics that has marked the history of Ireland. Nevertheless, this insulting tone falls in Spanish on one of the protagonists rather than on the practice of one of these religious denominations. This makes the translation lose an important part of the controversial dispute between Catholicism and Protestantism in Ireland.

Example 3

ST: They called it a lawn because it had been a lawn in the old days when the big house was standing; but the Tans burnt the big house and my father, unlike his forebears, had no pride in land and gradually the place went to ruin. (10)

TT: Lo llamábamos «prado» porque en su día lo había sido, cuando la casa grande aún estaba en pie; pero después de que los soldados británicos prendieran fuego a la vivienda, mi padre que, al contrario de sus antepasados, no tenía ningún apego por la tierra, dejó que el lugar se echase a perder (22).

[We called it «meadow» because it had once been one, when the big house was still standing; but after the British soldiers set fire to the house, my father, who, unlike his ancestors, had no attachment to the land, let the place get spoilt.]

Analysis: This extract relates to Irish history; specifically the War of Independence that led to the division of the country in 1921 (Jobert-Martini 2013). The so-called Black and Tans⁴, which literally translates as «negros y pardos» in Spanish, became infamous for their brutality during this war episode, during which they carried out events including «Bloody Sunday» (Hurtley et al 1996). The term Tans was used by the Irish when speaking of enemy British soldiers, but nowadays it is used to refer to any British person in a derogatory manner. The translator chooses here to generalize and speak of «British soldiers», so the historical reference of «Tans» is omitted.

On the other hand, a translator's footnote is included on page 249 that explains the historical background of Nelson's Pillar in Dublin, which was destroyed in 1966 by an IRA bomb to be later replaced by what is now known as The Spire on O'Connell Street:

Example 4

ST: It was a penny cheaper from the next stop, to Nelson's Pillar. (147)

TT: Salía un penique más barato desde allí llegar a la Columna de Nelson.* (16)

In the case of references to religious elements, the translator opts for generalizing, while with the historical references she adds footnotes that explain the cultural background behind them. This might be due to the confluence of Spanish and Irish culture in religious terms, since, as mentioned in section 2.1 above, both countries were characterized in the central decades of the twentieth century by a strong Catholic religiosity (Barros-del Río and Gómez Cuesta 2009). This would also explain the absence of footnotes on religious matters.

4. Analysis and interpretation of results

In the light of the above examples, the following results can be extrapolated: Firstly, in relation to linguistic references, the predominant technique used by the translator has been domestication. Regional accents have a specific function in the text because, as Muñoz (1995) indicates, they stereotype the characters that use them to make them look to be from the geographical area where the novel takes place. However, the translator opts for neutralization and acceptability in Spanish. Therefore, the regionalism of the novel in English is lost, and it is not possible to identify it in the Spanish translation (Martín-Ruiz 2014). This differs from the case of Emily Brontë's *Wuthering Heights*, for example, whose Spanish translator Cristina Sánchez Andrade in the 2007 edition had to contend with the northern English dialect, and included an introductory translator's note with an explanation on the strategies of neutralization and acceptability used to produce the TT, as she considered it impossible to reflect the Yorkshire accent (Sánchez-Andrade 2007). This neutralization strategy seems to be in fact a distinct tendency in the literature translated into Spanish, since translators do not generally attempt to reflect the dialect varieties that appear in the original work (Tello 2012). Nevertheless, as mentioned above, although the dialect characterization and cultural essence of *Las chicas de campo* is lost, no direct impact on the transmission of the message of the story has been detected. For this reason, the naturalness of O'Brien's writing style, which contributes to the realism of the plot, is still present in the Spanish translation. The traditional Irish orality that characterizes the author's prose is transferred by means of footnotes, particularly in the case of songs. Secondly, the lexical richness of the author, who is much praised for her descriptive powers (Gordon 2013), is also present in Spanish, especially when evoking the physical land-

scape of Ireland. With this, as stated by Jobert-Martini (2013: 110), «the reader is soon aware of a typically rural Irish context» and the transposition of the Irish «sense of place» is fully achieved. Thirdly, regarding sexuality and religious issues, the Spanish version of *The Country Girls* does not include noticeable alterations from the author's original position. On the contrary, *Las chicas de campo* is consistent with a direct and open use of sexual and colloquial terms that allow a certain impact on the readership despite the time span between the two versions. Nonetheless, due to the long delay between the original publication and the translated version, the novel cannot have the same impact now as it had in Ireland at the time.

There is also a recurrent use of footnotes in the TT (twelve in total), which allow the translator to add information she deems necessary. With this strategy, the publishing house affords visibility to the translator, since the footnotes constitute a tool by means of which she can express from her own perspective the difficulties encountered in the translation of the text (Donaire 1991) and strive to facilitate reading comprehension. Their use is also proof, as Arrojo points out, of the «incompleteness and instability of any text, always open to uninvited or unexpected interventions» (2016: 43). The use of this strategy results in greater clarity of the historical and social context, although we consider that it would have been beneficial to use them in other cases that have remained without contextual explanation, such as the dialectal regionalism characteristic of Ireland and the historical reference to the Tans, as previously discussed.

5. Conclusion

This study of the Spanish translation of *The Country Girls* has followed a methodology based on the tripartite approach (Enríquez 2005). In the first place, a contextualization of the ST was provided to discern the main thematic areas upon which to base the linguistic and translation analysis of the cultural references detected. Next, and in accordance with these thematic areas (language, landscape, sexuality, religion and history), we presented a comparative descriptive study of relevant extracts in English and Spanish. Finally, we conducted an analysis of the strategies used and the extent to which cultural transposition has been achieved.

Given the variations detected in the target text, the Spanish version differs from other translations, such as the Polish one, in the alteration of passages dealing with issues of sexuality and violence (Looby 2013:168). On its side, the Spanish translation maintains the original lyricism of *The Country Girls* and its frankness about sexuality but its regionalism has been neutralised. Footnotes serve to explain the presence of oral characteristics in the text. Given the temporal and cultural distance between the English version and its Spanish translation, we can conclude that the translation into Spanish does not successfully project the subversive nature that the novel had at the time in Ireland. While the passages that refer to sexual and religious transgressions have been carefully translated, and the richness of the Irish landscape has been described in detail, the Spanish version of *The Country Girls* cannot have the same

impact on the recipient culture because it lacks a historical and cultural contextualisation of the original work for the reader. For this purpose, it would have been very useful to include an introductory note framing the work and its plot in its Irish context and introducing the reader to the feminine universe of rural Catholic Ireland. That way, the reader could have understood the transgressive nature of the original novel in its original cultural context, a key element that is missing in the Spanish version. Also, the translator could have included a note explaining the main translation problems and the strategies used, as the translator Cristina Sánchez-Andrade did for the translation of *Wuthering Heights*. This approach would not only have demonstrated the intercultural communication expertise in the translation practice but also it could have enhanced the readers' appreciation of the socially challenging nature of Edna O'Brien's debut novel and its «scandalous» nature.

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Notes

1. The original works and their translations are listed below in chronological order of appearance in Spanish: *August is a Wicked Month* (1965), *Agosto es un mes diabólico* (1972); *Night* (1972), *Noche* (1992); *The Light of Evening* (2006), *La luz del atardecer* (2009); *Byron* (2009), *Byron enamorado* (2009); *The Country Girls* (1960), *Las Chicas de Campo* (2013); *Girl with Green Eyes* (1962), *La chica de ojos verdes* (2014); *Girls in their Married Bliss* (1964), *Chicas felizmente casadas* (2015); *The Little Red Chairs* (2015), *Las sillitas rojas* (2016).
2. Information provided by Errata Naturae Publishing House in private correspondence.
3. Information provided by Errata Naturae Publishing House in private correspondence.
4. Officially the Royal Irish Constabulary Special Reserve, most of the recruits for which came from Britain.