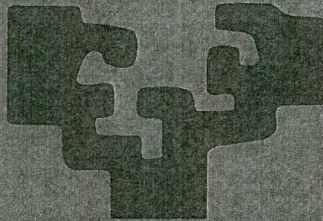


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**UNIVERSIDAD DEL PAIS VASCO
EUSKAL HERRIKO UNIBERTSITATEA**

**DEPARTAMENTO DE FILOLOGIA INGLESA Y ALEMANA
INGLES ETA ALEMANIAR FILOLOGI SAILA**

TRANSVASES CULTURALES:

LITERATURA

CINE

TRADUCCIÓN

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Edita: FACULTAD DE FILOLOGIA
Dpto. Filología Inglesa y Alemana
Imprime: EVAGRAF, S. Coop. Ltda.
Alibarra, 64 - Vitoria
D. L. VI - 139 - 1994
I.S.B.N. - 84-604-9520-5
Vitoria-Gasteiz 1994

THE COMMUNICATIVE DIMENSION IN THE TRANSLATION OF DAVID LODGE'S *NICE WORK*

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The translation approach used in this paper is that of Hatim & Mason, widely developed in their book *Discourse and the Translator* (1990). To apply their view of the translation activity as a communicative process, we have to consider a literary work from the point of view of communication, that is, as a discourse. Although the literary text has a primarily aesthetic function, it can also be analysed as a discourse that an addresser has produced for an addressee with an intended purpose. Literary communication can be described as highly institutionalised. Conventionally, the participants in the literary communication do not judge the referentially interpretable objects of communication according to truth criteria. The truth or falsity of a reference is measured according to the relation between the referents and the reality socially validated and accepted by the participants in communication. The acceptance of the “fictivization” of the literary text implies that the roles in the process of communication have become fictivised. That is, that the producer’s role and the reader’s role are inscribed within the literary text (Schmidt 1978: 203-7). The narratological concepts of “implied author” and “implied reader” come to mind, both to be distinguished from the real person writing or reading.

The “fictive” discourse is usually characterised, then, by its self-reference and by the representation of an illocutionary act deprived of a given contextual situation. Thus, the fictional discourse provides the receiver with the necessary clues to establish the contextual situation. These clues range from the usually well-defined communicative instances (I-addresser and you-addressee), spatial and temporal references, the interrelation between addresser and addressee to some other information, implicit or explicit, necessary to establish the contextual situation (Iser 1975:278 cit. in Domínguez Caparrós 1981:111)

Basically, the reading of a literary work as a communicative transaction is an active process in which four different types of interaction take place:

- the interaction between the participants (writer and reader)
- the interaction between the signs in the text
- the interaction between the participants and those signs, and
- finally, the interaction between the text and other texts (intertextuality)

I am only going to concentrate on the problems regarding the interaction between the participants found in *Nice Work*. We know that in a literary discour-

se, the producer of the text, or speaker, constructs a world as object, the addressee and himself within his own discourse. Discourse theorists have called the act of speaking, or producing a text, **enunciation**; and the producer of discourse **the subject of the enunciation**, and the result of the enunciation is **the enunciated**. Thus, in a literary work we must distinguish between the subject of the enunciation (or implied author, for narratologists) and the subject of the enunciated (or narrator). As you know, the implied author is distinct from the “real man” (novelist) and from the narrator⁽¹⁾. In narrative texts, the implied author’s voice can take different forms: that of a dramatised, or undramatised, narrator, which the translator should be aware of. In *Nice Work* the distinction between the novelist, the implied author and the narrator becomes blurred. In the **Author’s Note**, D.L., the novelist David Lodge, breaks the usual anonymity of the implied author. He can be described as an omniscient self-conscious narrator, aware of himself as writer, attempting to inscribe the real world within the fictional one. In that note, he also informs that the location of the fictional world, Rummidge, is the real Birmingham, indicating with which specific real world the readers have to establish an isomorphism.

In relation to the **enunciation** of *Nice Work* as a narrative discourse, I am going to discuss problems regarding the participants (implied author-implied reader), spatial and temporal context and modality of the enunciation, which characterises the communication between the implied author/narrator’s attitude towards the implied reader.

- (1) “Perhaps I should explain, for the benefit of the readers who have not been here before, that Rummidge is an imaginary city, [...] I am deeply grateful...” [Author’s Note]. (my underlining)
 “Tal vez convenga explicar, en beneficio de aquellos lectores que no hayan estado antes aquí, que Rummidge es una ciudad imaginaria [...] Me siento profundamente agradecido...” [Nota del Autor]

In example (1), we can see that the translator has chosen a third person (convenga), with an impersonal use, for the first “I”. This option may be justified by reasons of formality and elegance. However, as we go on reading, we realize that we are dealing here with a common device of metafictional literature: the attempt to inscribe the real world within the fictional one, explicitly pointing to the writer’s awareness as a story teller by making regular authorial intrusions. Metafictional writers can also be found in the Spanish literary world, using these types of metafictional devices. Therefore, before changing any language element, the translator should judge its narrative function in the text. In the case we are discussing here, the author also had the choice of the impersonal form, e.g. a passive form ‘Perhaps it should be explained ... that’; however he opts for his own protagonism.

This protagonism of the novelist-implied author- narrator (the protagonism

of this triple figure) is a narrative device that sets up a specific communicative relationship between the participants in the literary communication and that serves the general intention of the text. From the very beginning, this communicative relationship can be described as direct and explicit. Therefore, it would have been more appropriate to use a form that explicitly expressed the first person singular, viz. “Tal vez deba/debería explicar...”. The subject of the present subjunctive “deba” or of the conditional “debería” is the first person singular “I” (yo), whereas this is not in the case of “convenga”, used by the translator.

This explicit protagonism of the implied author in the ST is not always neglected in the TT. In some cases it is transferred to the TT, as at the end of example (1) and in example (2):

- (2) “A character who rather awkwardly for me, doesn’t herself believe in the concept of character” [*Nice Work*: 39] (my underlining)
 “Un personaje que, no con poco embarazo por mi parte, no cree precisamente en el concepto de personaje” [*Buen Trabajo*: 38].
- (3) “And who is Charles? While Robyn is getting up [...], I will tell you about Charles, and other salient facts of her biography” [*Nice Work*: 41]
 “¿Y quién es Charles?. Mientras Robyn se levanta [...], yo informaré al lector acerca de Charles, y de otros hechos destacados en la biografía de ella”. [*Buen Trabajo*: 40]. (my underlining)

In example (3), the translator has substituted the referent “lector” (reader) for the deictic personal pronoun “you”. The use of “you” does not only refer to “the person reading”, but to “the person reading here and now”. It transposes the “reader” to the real world in opposition to the narrative one. In this example, I would have used the second person pronoun (“te”/“le”) in order to establish the opposition between “you” that is “not-I” and “I”; and both “I” and “you” belonging to the enunciation world in a clear contrast with the enunciated world (the narrative): “yo te informaré [lector]”, “yo le informaré a usted [lector]”. The translator would encounter here the problem of choosing the formal or the familiar use of the second person - “tu” or “usted”. The familiar option would be more suitable to the humorous tone of the novel, (or tenor of the discourse) that we will see later. Thus, these authorial intrusions also set up a real relationship between author and reader. “I am telling you a story” is different from “a story”.

- (4) “Since the election of the Tory government in 1979, which allowed the pound to rise on the back of North Sea oil in the early eighties and left British industry defenceless in the face of foreign competition, or (according to your point of view) exposed its inefficiency...” [*Nice Work*: 33].
 “Desde la elección del gobierno conservador de 1979, que permitió que la libra se alzara a caballo del petróleo del mar del Norte, a principios

de los ochenta, y que dejó a la industria británica indefensa ante la competencia extranjera, o (según los puntos de vista) demostró su ineficiencia...[*Buen Trabajo*: 32] (my underlining)

- (5) "...; and in the *Cambridge University Reporter* for the 18th February, 1981, occupying a column and a half of small print, sandwiched between contributions from two of the University's most distinguished professors, you may find Robyn's impassioned plea for a radical theorization of the syllabus". [*Nice Work*: 49]. (my underlining)

"..., y en el *Cambridge University Reporter* del 18 de febrero de 1981, ocupando una columna y media en letra pequeña, situada entre colaboraciones de dos de los más distinguidos profesores de la Universidad, cabe encontrar la apasionada apelación de Robyn en favor de una teorización radical del *syllabus*". [*Buen Trabajo*: 47].

In examples (4) and (5), we can see that the "I"-you" complicity has been broken or ignored, favouring the impersonal form.

In short, *Nice Work* is characterised by a personalized discourse that establishes an explicit *I-here-and-now* relationship with a *you*, marked by an imperfective temporal aspect in its narrative time and a familiar tone reflected not only in the direct address but also in the use of abbreviated forms ("doesn't") and in the use of colloquial and vulgar varieties of English.

Narrative time

The text clearly plays with past and present references, it being sometimes difficult to distinguish between the spatio-temporal context of the enunciation and that of the enunciated. Most events narrated in the past tense follow the events narrated in the present tense chronologically. The past tense is used as an unmarked tense of narrative but it does not go back to events prior to those described in the present tense, except in those passages that involve recollection of the past. In short, we can assert that *Nice Work*'s temporal situation, in both enunciation and enunciated, is characterized by an imperfective aspect. As Uspensky says (quoted in Lozano et al., 139),

El aspecto imperfectivo permite al autor desarrollar la descripción desde dentro de la acción - esto es, sincrónicamente en lugar de retrospectivamente - y situar al lector en el centro de la escena que está describiendo.

- (6) "She was tempted [...], but the work ethic that had carried her successfully through so many years of study and so many examinations now exerted its leverage on her conscience once more". [*Nice Work*: 95]

"Experimentó la tentación [...], pero la ética del trabajo, que durante tantos años de estudio y tantos exámenes la habían llevado a buen puerto,

ejerció ahora, una vez más, su poder sobre su conciencia. [*Buen Trabajo*: 92].

In example (6), the translator uses “now”/”ahora” with a past tense, but instead of the indefinite preterite, “ejerció”, the use of the imperfect preterite, “ejercía”, seems more appropriate. The imperfective and durative aspects of the latter are more in accordance with the immediacy adopted by the narrator in relation to the narrated, as has been pointed out before.

Aspectual differences always constitute a translation problem when translating from English into Spanish, since the Spanish verbal system has two forms for the simple past tense with aspectual differences (el pretérito imperfecto -imperfect preterite- y el indefinido -indefinite preterite), while the English verbal system only has one form (the aspectual differences being realised lexically). The verbal system constitutes a problem due to language differences, but the recognition of the narrative function of temporal aspects will help the translator to decide which form to use in each case.

This tense shift demands that the translator pay special attention to the spatio-temporal deictic elements. See example (7).

- (7) “A column entitled ‘Bulletin’ informs her that Marilyn French will be discussing her new book, *Beyond Power: Women, Men and Morals*, at a public meeting to be held later in the week in London,...” [*Nice Work*: 47]

“Una columna titulada “Boletín” la informa de que Marilyn French comentará su nuevo libro, *Más allá del poder: mujeres, hombres y moral*, en una reunión pública que ha de celebrarse más tarde, aquella semana, en Londres...” [*Buen Trabajo*: 46] (my underlining)

The present tense used in the narrative indicates that the time of the enunciation is the same as the time of the enunciated. Thus, in this example, “later in the week” is referring to the week of the enunciation; therefore the translator should have chosen a deictic referring to a present point in time rather than a past one. For example, “al final de la semana” would have been more appropriate. The use of “aquella” puzzles the reader about the narrative time, since it refers to a past point in time rather than a near future one.

Focalization: free indirect speech

The past tense narrative generally uses anaphoric elements. But there are cases where deictic elements appear in the past tense narrative with an anaphoric function. In fact, they are key signs to distinguish the characters’ words from the narrator’s in the use of free indirect speech as a device to indicate different focalizations. As I said before, the events in *Nice Work* are presented not only from the implied author-narrator’s point of view, but also from the various cha-

racters' perspective. In some cases the implied author-narrator adopts not only the characters' point of view but also their words.

- (8) "What the hell was he going to do with this woman every Wednesday for the next two months?" [*Nice Work*: 116]
 "¿Qué demonios iba a hacer él con esa mujer cada miércoles, durante los dos meses siguientes? [*Buen Trabajo*: 112] (my underlining)
 (¿Qué demonios iba a hacer con esta mujer cada miércoles,...)

In example (8), the use of "this" in the ST marks free indirect speech, that is, Vic Wilcox's words adopted by the narrator. In using "esa", the words expressing the thought are not uttered by Vic but by the narrator, destroying the free indirect speech. The translation of deictic elements has proved to be particularly problematic since the Spanish translator, Esteban Riambau Saurí, has shown serious difficulties in distinguishing between the Castillian deictic system and that of Catalan. The number of examples would be too large to be mentioned here. However, I suggest that if you ever read the novel in Spanish, it might be worthwhile to pay a little attention to these elements.

Irony

The author-narrator does not always use his voice to express himself, either through his point of view or through the characters' eyes. He also uses other voices in order to make his point. The implied author-narrator may identify himself with other voices or he may distance himself from them. The latter is the case of irony. The phenomenon of ironic distance has been explained as the addressee's recognition of the narrator's intention of not sharing his linguistic behaviour. The addressee infers the enunciator's intention from the context, but those addressees who are not aware of the inappropriateness of the situation will understand the utterance in its literal sense.

- (9) "One of these couples consisted of Robyn and Charles. She had looked around, and chosen him. He was clever, personable, and, she thought, probably loyal (she had not been proved wrong). It was true that he had been educated at a public school, but he managed to disguise this handicap very well". [*Nice Work*: 44] (my underlining)
 "Una de estas parejas la formaban Robyn y Charles. Ella había mirado a su alrededor y le había elegido a él. Era inteligente, con personalidad, y, creía ella, probablemente real (nada había demostrado lo contrario). Ciertamente que se había educado en un centro privado, pero conseguía disimular a la perfección este inconveniente" [*Buen Trabajo*: 43]

In example (9), we can see that except for the almost certain misprint of the Spanish word "leal" ("real" in the text), the TT preserves the ironic tone very

weakly. This example presupposes that being educated at a public school is something negative, a “handicap”, which contrasts with the general view held by British and Spanish people. Being educated at a public school is generally associated with advantage and privilege in both cultures - the British and the Spanish - rather than with handicap or disadvantage. However, the word “handicap” is used ironically or humorously, to make a socio-political comment on the English class system while being sympathetic to the character, Robyn, from the narrator’s point of view. If all this is made explicit, the last sentence becomes something like: “It was true that he had been educated at a public school. This is an expensive, fee-paying school, usually with high standards of excellence. Despite this fact, which is generally considered a privilege for the rich or the élite rather than a handicap, he managed to act as a normal human being, as far as one could see”⁽²⁾. The irony or humour derived from the unexpected yet uncommen- ted identification of “public school education” with “handicap” is lost. A possi- ble solution for the translation of “public school” could be “colegio de pago”, which also conveys the social connotations of privilege as well as producing a similar ironic effect. This problem can be included in a type of translation pro- blem concerning the pragmatic division between “given” and “new” informa- tion, which may cause serious stylistic effects. These problems are discussed in an article entitled “A Pragmastylistic Aspect of Literary Translation” that will be published in *Babel* in the near future.

Registers and dialects

The plurality of voices adopted by the narrator is clearly codified at three levels: the graphological, the syntactical and the lexical. Graphologically, they are differentiated by the use of hyphens and inverted commas. Their phonologi- cal characteristics are graphologically represented by the use of italics and pecu- liar spelling of words. This is particularly important due to the orality or speaka- bility that characterizes this text - not only on the part of the narrator himself but also of the characters’ direct speech. Therefore, the translation of the different voices challenges the translator’s ability to master the different varieties: geo- graphical, temporal, social, registers etc. in both the source language and the tar- get one. The translator should be very careful when transferring these features into the TT, since they are going to define the characters as characters, with a whole set of social values associated to them.

Examples (9) and (10) are two instances of geographical dialects that are always a translation problem.

- (10) “ ‘An’t my garridge’, says the youth in a broad Rummidge accent. ‘Oi juss work ‘ere’ “[N.W.: 101]
 “-No es mi garaje - replica el jovenzuelo, con fuerte acento de Rum- midge-. Yo sólo trabajo aquí”. [B.T.: 97]

- (11) “ ‘Rubbish’, said Wilcox. Roobish. “[N.W.: 149]
 “-Tonterías -dijo Wilcox, de nuevo con aquel acento.” [B.T.: 144]

In example (10), we can notice the mistranslation of the word “garage”, referring here to a petrol station, “una gasolinera”. To transfer the social connotations of dialects in the TT, the translator may have to make explicit some information breaking the ST balance between New and Given information. The discussion on the pragmatic New-Given dichotomy regarding irony can also be useful here.

Example (12) illustrates Shirley’s voice, Vic’s secretary. Her voice is characterized by the use of syntactically incomplete sentences; however, the translation does not reflect this aspect of her speech, which denotes her uncultured, lower-class background. Her speech is an example of social dialect:

- (12) “ ‘Quite a change for you, isn’t it, this kind of place? After the University, I mean’ “ [N.W.: 145]
 “- Este lugar ha de ser un cambio muy grande para usted, después de la Universidad ¿no es así?” [B.T.: 140]
 (-Vaya cambio, ¿no?, este tipo de sitio...Digo...después de la Universidad, y eso.)⁽³⁾

At the lexical level, the characters belonging to the industrial world show a general tendency to use slang and a non-standard variety of English, as we see in the case of Vic’s colleagues’ voices such as Brian Everthorpe’s, illustrated in examples (14) and (15). Although the novel attains a great deal of humour from the contrastive worldview between the industrial and the academic world, the characters belonging to the latter are also characterised by their own colloquialisms. And, of course, the author-narrator is not left behind. The whole novel demands a great deal of knowledge on the non-standard varieties of English and Spanish. Example (13) is just an instance of the translator’s general shyness about transferring slang words with sexual reference. Obviously, this is not a case of language distance, since in Spanish we use the same poultry imagery.

- (13) “As quick as a lizard she darts out her tongue and licks his cock from root to tip” [N.W.: 292]
 “Rápida como un lagarto, saca la lengua y le lame el miembro desde la base hasta la punta” [B.T.: 284] (my underlining)
 (... y le lame la polla ...)
- (14) “‘I’d like to talk to you again, when your shadow, or your guardian angel, or whatever she is, will let me get a word in edgewise.’” [N.W.: 140]
 “-Volveré a hablar contigo cuando tu sombra, o tu ángel de la guarda, o lo que sea, me permita hacer uso de la palabra.” [B.T.: 136] (my underlining)
 (...me permita meter baza.)

- (15) ““Sorry, but the security johnny insists that you sign...” [N.W.:103]
“-Lo siento, pero el guarda insiste en que firme usted...” [B.T.: 99]
(-Lo siento, pero el tío de seguridad insiste en que firme usted...)
(my underlining)

In examples (14) and (15), you can also realize the translator's formalizing tendency that I considered one of the main failures of the resulting TT, since the vulgar register and the colloquial tone of the novel contributes largely to its general intention: the humorous parody of Industrial Novels. In addition to the informal and vulgar variety of English, humour is also a great challenge for the translator, but dealing with humour lies beyond the scope of this paper.

What I have tried to show you here is the importance of the awareness of the macro-structures of a literary discourse to transfer the ST intended effect to the TT. We must remember that literary translations attempt to achieve two goals: acquainting a reading community with the original and using the translation as an original text in its own right.

The examples given here are just some instances of how the macro-structures can be linguistically encoded in the text and the problems they may cause to the translator. In conclusion, there is a hierarchy involved in the decision-making process of translation. If, in the act of reading, both the top-down and the bottom-up processes are working simultaneously, in the translating activity, the top-down process precedes the bottom-up one. According to Hatim & Mason, the contextual factors regarding the semiotic dimension, the pragmatic action and the communicative transaction should be taken into account in this hierarchical order before deciding on the specific linguistic items used in the encoding of the TT. The Spanish translation of *Nice Work* illustrates the unawareness of these factors and their interrelation.

NOTES:

¹. I am not discussing here the latest theories on authorship and subjectivity in narrative texts. My aim is simply to point out the specific play on authorship present in David Lodge's *Nice Work* and its importance in the novel.

². This sentence also appears in Leo Hickey et al.'s article "A Pragmastylistic Aspect of Literary Translation".

³. The options given in brackets are mine. They are given as an improvement to those given by E. Rimbau Saurí, but not as "the" solutions.

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