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Translating orality, re-creating otherness

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This article discusses the problem posed by linguistic variation for interlingual translation, in particular by the relation between language, context and identity in speech and orality, within the framework of Descriptive Translation Studies. It starts by defining linguistic variation as a correlation of linguistic form, communicative meaning and sociocultural value. It examines the particular case of literary representation of varieties to suggest strategies and procedures for their translation. It ends with an analysis of selected examples of canonized British fiction and their translation into European Portuguese, and a discussion of causes and consequences of the patterning resulting from the translation of speech and orality in fiction.

Keywords: translation studies; literary translation; linguistic variation; speech representation; orality; Charles Dickens.

This article aims to discuss the use of formal features predominantly associated with orality and speech (spoken discourse) to represent otherness and a marginalized identity in fiction and more specifically the problem such formally mimetic diction poses for interlingual translation – by associating language, identity and context. It first defines

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linguistic variation as a correlation of linguistic features and contextual, extralinguistic meaning. Second, it considers how spoken discourse is represented in fictional dialogue, as literary speech and orality. The third part examines the interlingual translation of such literary varieties, analysing examples drawn from Charles Dickens' *Oliver Twist* and its European Portuguese translations published in the second half of the twentieth century.

Orality and linguistic variation

No language is homogenous. Oral and written discourse, dialects and accents vary and correlate with contextual information. Orality – defined as “the aesthetic representation of otherness, the assertion of marginalized identities through a variety of art forms” (Bandia 2011, n.p.) – is here considered as literary representation of spoken discourse to show (vs. tell) a character's marginality by giving him/her a specific voice (i.e. a formally mimetic characterizing diction).

<<Insert Figure 1 about here>>

According to Bell (1991, 185), linguistic features of an individual's discourse convey information about uses and users. Hatim and Mason (1990, 58) relate structure and texture to extralinguistic dimensions of meaning: communicative and pragmatic meaning and socio-semiotic value. This study of translation addresses linguistic varieties defined as (1) a patterning of sounds, grammatical structures, vocabulary, texture, structure (linguistic form) that may carry (2) contextual information on users and uses, in terms of time, space, sociocultural group, situation, and individuality (communicative meaning), that is also associated with (3) a given social status and prestige within a linguistic community (sociocultural value) (Rosa 2012, 80).

A speaker's communicative competence – encompassing both linguistic competence and extra-linguistic knowledge of the experiential context in which a language is used (i.e. verbal and non-verbal codes) – offers awareness of the relation of a set of linguistic features with communicative meaning and sociocultural value.¹ Communicative meaning includes information on time (to identify a speaker's age), physical space (to identify a speaker's region), social space (to identify a speaker's sociocultural group), as well as a specific communicative situation (to identify relations between speakers, the use of channels or the functions of interaction), and sometimes even a particular speaker's preferences (to identify a speaker's individuality). It is also the communicative competence

developed within a given community's evaluative attitudes towards varieties that enables their association with various degrees of power, social status and prestige, i.e. the sociocultural value of varieties, here equated with overt prestige (Labov 1972).

Taking the parameter of sociocultural value or prestige as focal point, varieties may be represented along an axis extending from maximum to minimum prestige (or even stigma, i.e. negative evaluation of a linguistic form), based on the speakers' evaluative attitudes towards language use. A standard variety (especially in its formal and written use) is associated with high socio-cultural status and prestige and located at the extreme of maximum prestige; other varieties because of their deviation from the standard are identified as nonstandard (Taavitsainen and Melchers 1999, 8) and located further along this axis, according to the speakers' attitudes.

Speech and orality

Oral and written discourse, speech and writing tend to differ linguistically, by exhibiting different patternings of textual-linguistic features. However, as linguistic varieties, rather than two water-tight separate modes, oral and written discourse should be considered two extremes of a continuum that displays overlap.²

Some formal features are, however, expected to occur more frequently in (spontaneous oral) speech and consequently tend to be associated with spoken discourse: such as ejaculations and exclamations (clausal: "Aren't you clever?" and phrasal: "Goodness gracious!"), tags ("You failed, didn't you?"), fillers ("well", "um"), changes of topic ("By the way, are you coming?"), reformulations ("I gave you the book back... well, both books actually"), false starts ("I was offered...she offered me a lift."), stressing ("I really need that!"), hedging (i.e. word/s used to lessen the impact of an utterance, e.g. "kind of"), backchanneling (listeners' behavior during communication, e.g. "Seriously?"), forms of address (pronouns, verbs, titles and nouns used to address a specific speaker, e.g. "Aunt May, are you coming?"), frequent use of deictic forms ("here/there", "this/that"), lower lexical density (fewer lexical vs. grammatical words), higher dependence on context ("Give me that!"), and strong interpersonal component (vs. referential component) (see Amador-Moreno 2011, 3-4).

Regarding the contextual dimensions of meaning, communicatively, spoken and written discourse are mainly correlated with different (auditive or visual) channels;

sociosemiotically, speech tends to lose in prestige to writing, because speakers' evaluative attitudes tend to consider speech as deviant or even incorrect (Leith 1997, 34).

However, Walter J. Ong offers a different view by means of "orality", defined as a specific way of "managing knowledge and verbalization in primary oral cultures (cultures with no knowledge at all of writing) and in cultures deeply affected by the use of writing" (1982, 1). He suggests that primary orality and primary oral cultures ("untouched by writing", Ong 1982, 9) are associated with a more frequent recourse to mnemonics, formulae and aggregative structures (rather than analytic), additive structures (such as long sentences with clauses coordinated by "and" instead of complex subordinate structures), redundancy, conservativeness, a special focus upon matters of immediate human activity, agonistically toned discourse, an emphasis upon interpersonal meaning, empathetic and participatory identification (instead of objective and distanced communication, focused on ideational meaning), and strongly situational and minimally abstract frames of reference (Ong 1982, 31-57).

Orality has been operative in studying intercultural and interlingual relations in a postcolonial context, which is not the focus of this article. However, important here is the statement that "to varying degrees many cultures and subcultures, even in a high-technology ambience, preserve much of the mindset of primary orality" (Ong 1982, 11). This may also have a bearing on the translation of some varieties interpretable as the distinctive voices of marginalized social groups whose characterizing diction also includes features of orality. As stated by Taivalkoski and Suchet (2013, 2): "[v]oices represent identities and subject positions; they can be silenced, manipulated or cherished" by translation. Interestingly, such individuals and groups tend to lose visibility in translated texts due to translation strategies that manipulate or silence their singularity.

Speakers' attitudes tend to apply a binary opposition between the extremes of the currently most prestigious use of formal written standard language (the grapholect), and the less prestigious or even disparaged use of spoken language – encompassing oral standard, regional and social nonstandard. These varieties are seldom or never used in writing, where they tend to be considered wrong or lacking.³

Literary varieties

Literary fictional varieties defined as "the representation of nonstandard speech in literature" (Taavitsainen and Melchers 1999, 13) cannot, however, be equated with authentic language use. They have been most influentially studied by Chatman (1978),

Page (1988), Blake (1981) and Chapman (1994), who suggest that several filters contribute to their representation, such as linguistic stereotypes, or the organizing of authentic language use into categories defined by salience and deviation from the standard,⁴ and especially a fictional repertoire of selected linguistic features previously used to represent literary varieties, which results from a culture-specific literary tradition. Further filters may also result from the repertoire of a given author, or the need for readability constraining the density of deviant features.

For our purposes, fictional discourse will be defined as characterizing vs. non-characterizing discourse; and group vs. individual characterizing discourse.⁵ Characterizing discourse usually enables the distinction between narrator discourse (which tends to be standard and non-characterizing) and character discourse. It tends to concentrate in dialogue representation and may convey situation-related information (e.g. degree of formality, emotions) and speaker-related information (e.g. social group, profession, region or individuality). Characterizing discourse can offer information on a group (related to time, space, profession or age) or individual. It contributes to character profiling by generating a specific voice or formally mimetic characterizing diction.

Literary speech and orality

Linguistic features associated with speech and orality are also used to create a specific and verisimilar discursive profile. Among the features of such character diction are: simulation of non-linguistic signs (silences, sounds of laughter); graphic signals of paralinguistic signs (intonation, volume); forms of address; literary nonstandard accents and dialects; a predominance of phatic, expressive and conative functions (Jakobson 1960) revealed by the use of exclamations, questions, expletives, imperatives, repetitions, emphatic structures, and the use of the words “yes” and “no” (Chatman 1978, 202; Chapman 1994).

Additionally, fiction may also recreate the mindset of orality as a specific discursive profile associated with illiteracy, socio-cultural marginality, and lack of power and skills by resorting to linguistic features such as those mentioned by Ong, which tend to be stigmatized as are their users and contexts.

In a nutshell, literary varieties can be understood as a rather complex re-creation of a correlation of linguistic features, information on speaker and situation, and prestige, which is filtered by norms of literary discourse representation. Translating formal features is not

particularly difficult. Translating formal features correlated with information on speaker, situation, and prestige, further filtered by a poetics of fiction and used to indirectly offer contextual information about a character, however, does pose problems.

Translating literary speech and orality

The first studies to focus on the negotiation of prestige to examine the translation of linguistic varieties were Brisset (1996, on theatre translation into “Québécois” in Canada), Cronin (1996, on fiction and theatre translation into Hiberno English and Irish Gaelic in Ireland), Dimitrova (1997, on the translation of Swedish fiction into English and Russian), Rosa (1999, 2001 on the subtitling of British English into European Portuguese), and Leppihalme (2000a, 2000b, on the translation of Finnish fiction into English and Swedish). Following Dimitrova (1997), Rosa (1999, 2003, 2013), and Leppihalme (2000a, 2000b), this article also addresses the translation of literary varieties by focusing on the parameter of prestige, represented as an axis, to identify translation strategies. The prestige of each variety depends on the language under consideration and is as variable as its speakers’ evaluative attitudes. The organization of varieties along an axis of prestige will consequently depend on the axiomatic of values of a given linguistic community towards language use at a given moment in time.

<<Insert Figure 2 about here>>

Figure 2 represents contemporary varieties of European Portuguese along a prestige axis, simply identified as standard, oral, regional and social nonstandard following evaluative attitudes of speakers. Maximum prestige is associated with the written, standard and formal use. Less prestigious varieties considered nonstandard are speech, followed by regional and--the least prestigious--sociocultural nonstandard. User attitudes towards language use consider European Portuguese oral varieties as distinct from the standard (Rosa 1999, 2003, 2012; Ramos Pinto 2009b), even if for the descriptive linguist this is not the case.

This appears to be the case for English, too: “standard English is particularly associated with the written language. In fact, it can be said that the grammar of spoken language is stigmatised” (Taavitsainen and Melchers 1999, 5). Nonstandard accents tend to be associated with provinciality or lower social status (Wells 1982, 34 quoted in Taavitsainen and Melchers 1999, 15; although regional accents have been rising in

prestige); nonstandard grammar and lexis have been associated with lower prestige (e.g. with rough, rustic, simple, uneducated or vulgar speakers) since the sixteenth century (Leith 1997, 42-43).

Translating literary varieties: shifts, procedures, strategies

Following Rosa (2012), to understand, describe and explain the translation of literary varieties, this study also adopts the concepts of shifts, procedures and strategies, adapted to study the translation of literary varieties. According to Chesterman (2005, 24), translation strategy is defined in “its basic problem-solving sense as a plan that is implemented in a given context” and will be understood as a global strategy resulting from a patterning of micro-level procedures. Translation techniques/procedures are defined as “routine, micro-level, textual procedures.” Their operation may be analyzed by a comparative textual analysis of source and target texts (STs and TTs) to identify dissimilarities or shifts, defined as “the result of a procedure [...] observable as kinds of difference between target and source.”

If an ST has features of literary varieties deviating from the standard (or grapholect), translators may choose among a range of translation procedures, namely the: omission, addition, maintenance, or change of such linguistic features and their associated contextual information. All translation procedures except for maintenance operate shifts that far from being merely formal also have consequences in terms of the above-mentioned contextual dimensions of meaning. A different patterning of formal features in the TT may consequently portray a different user, a different communicative situation and a different degree of prestige.

The patterning of shifts reveals three strategies: normalization, when ST less prestigious discourse is translated as standard; centralization, when ST less prestigious discourse is translated as more prestigious, though not normalized; and decentralization, when the opposite occurs and ST standard (written and formal use) is translated as less prestigious discourse.

<<Insert Figure 3 about here>>

Interestingly, most translation shifts appear not to be motivated by formal differences between source and target languages (obligatory shifts) but are non-obligatory,

constrained by the target context (Toury 1995, 57) and influenced by stylistic, ideological or cultural factors (Bakker, Koster and van Leuven-Zwart 1998, 228). Accordingly, such shifts may contribute to identifying ideological, evaluative and intersubjective preferences for translation strategies, which appear to be strongly motivated by linguistic stereotypes whose profile also heavily depends upon prestige. In socio-cultural contexts still strongly marked by the written standard's power and prestige, it comes as no surprise that normalization has proven to be the most pervasive strategy.⁶ It has even been posited as a translation universal (formulated as the law of growing standardization by Toury 2012, 303). Though less frequent, centralization occurs in translations attempting to recreate some type and degree of deviance (Dimitrova 1997; Rosa 1999, 2003). Decentralization strategies are rare, usually resulting from a very strong ideological and/or political motivation, such as the influence of nationalist movements or the aim of increased translator visibility (see Brissett 1996; Cronin 1996; Lane-Mercier 1997; Findlay 2000; and Chapdelaine 2006).

As for the consequences, a normalization strategy that omits less prestigious discourse obliterates ST variation and creates a TT fully reduced to the prestige of the TL grapholect. ST characterizing discourse becomes non-characterizing in translation, both in relation to external authentic use and to the narrator's internal diction. Character and narrator diction thereby coincide and narrative functions associated with such ST distinctions are not replicated in the TT. All other translation procedures (i.e. maintenance, change or addition of less prestigious discursive traits) contribute to centralization or decentralization strategies, to some degree recreate literary variation in the target text, and maintain or increase the repertoire of characterizing discourse, even if the contextual meanings associated with TT discourse representation suffer shifts, as is often the case.

Analyzing the translation of literary speech and orality

Let us examine a selection of English-language marginal discursive profiles created by formally mimetic discourse, resorting to less prestigious oral, regional or socially nonstandard literary varieties in order to consider the consequences that may result from translation shifts in the indirect characterization of literary characters in the novel.⁷ Literary precedent to the use of literary varieties of English goes as far back as Chaucer and many novelists make use of them to indirectly characterize traditionally minor socio-culturally and morally marginal characters (Page 1988, 58, 86, 103-104; Chapman 1994,

18, 23, 59, 221). However, Charles Dickens' "commitment to the spoken language" (Page 1988, 168) makes him stand out among other English language novelists for his use of group and mostly individual characterizing discourse. Furthermore, Dickens is the most retranslated nineteenth-century canonized British author in Portugal, which also allows for the consideration of more retranslations. Dickens was initially translated into European Portuguese in the 1860s, first serialized in periodicals and later published in book form. Among the most retranslated texts are his 1843 first Christmas Book "A Christmas Carol: A Ghost Story of Christmas" (over 25 translations, 1863-2010) and his third novel *Oliver Twist, or, The Parish Boy's Progress* (1837-1839) (17 translations, 1876-1993). This article considers three characters appearing in the initial scenes of *Oliver Twist*: Mrs. Thingummy (the nurse who helps Oliver's mother), Mrs. Mann (the woman who takes care of Oliver until he turns nine), and Mr. Bumble (the beadle who takes Oliver to the workhouse on his ninth birthday) to consider how their ST marginal diction is recreated in retranslations into European Portuguese (published 1952-1993).

Mrs. Thingummy, the nurse: "Lor bless her dear heart!"

As often happens with Dickensian characters, Mrs. Thingummy is immediately defined in her social marginality and insignificance by both her name and her use of socially nonstandard discourse (marked by a deviant grammar, lexis, and spelling), as illustrated by (1):

(1) Lor bless her dear heart, when she has lived as long as I have, sir, **and** had thirteen children of her own, **and** all on 'em dead except two, **and** them in the wurkus with me, she'll know better than to take on in that way, bless her dear heart!
(Dickens 1837-1839/1999, 2, my emphasis)

In (1), Mrs. Thingummy's discourse is represented using forms relatable to both speech and orality. The repeated formulaic exclamations that flank her sentences ("Lor bless her dear heart", or later "poor dear") are features of orality, associated in the first case with low sociocultural status and in the second with the oral expression of sympathy and affection. The deferential form "sir" used to address the doctor also signals his superior rank within both the communicative situation and the wider fictional social hierarchy (Chapman 1994, 79). The marked orality of the succession of additive clauses coordinated by "and" (in which she seems to lose track of the purpose of the initial subordinative

“when”) reaches a climax with “... **and** all on ‘em dead except two, **and** them in the wurkus ...”. Her discourse becomes more markedly marginal here: spelling is deviant and slurred (probably also as a result of the alcohol ingested, as the narrator does not fail to mention), grammar becomes clearly deviant (marked by the choice of the preposition “on” for “of” in: “all **on**’em”, or the oblique form of the pronoun instead of the subject form in: “and **them** in the wurkus”). This is further strengthened by the immediacy of the aggregative formula later used to address Oliver’s mother: “Think what it is to be a mother, there’s a **dear young lamb** do” (Dickens 1837-1839/1999, 2, my emphasis). Interestingly, after this initial concentration of features of socio-culturally marginal speech and a markedly speech-like and orality-like style, her subsequent discourse incoherently adopts standard grammar, lexis and spelling. Perhaps once the intended narrative effect had been attained, legibility determined that Mrs. Thingummy’s utterances should then be represented as standard.

In the European Portuguese translations, Mrs. Thingummy adopts a much less characterizing diction, since the TT exhibit fewer features of mainly spoken discourse only occasionally relatable to orality and sociocultural marginality:

TT Examples

(1a) **Que Deus a abençoe**, pobre mulher -disse a empregada, guardando à pressa no bolso uma garrafa cujo conteúdo acabava de provar, com evidente satisfação -Quando ela tiver vivido tanto como eu, senhor doutor, quando tiver treze filhos e perdido onze; visto que não tenho senão dois que estão comigo no albergue, então há-de pensar de outra maneira. (Dickens 1952, 18)

(1b) **-Valha-me Deus!** -exclamou por sua vez a enfermeira. -Ninguém morre por ter um filho, pobre mulher. Eu tive treze e e ainda aqui estou. (Dickens 1972, 1)

(1c) **Que Deus a guarde!** Quando chegar à minha idade, depois de ter treze filhos como eu tive, embora Deus me tenha levado onze e deixado apenas dois, que vivem comigo aqui no albergue, pensará de outro modo,

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“**May God bless her**, poor woman,” said the maid, quickly tucking inside her pocket a bottle, the contents of which she had just tasted, with evident satisfaction. “When she has lived as long as I have, Doctor, when she has had thirteen children and lost eleven; since I no not have but two, who are with me in the workhouse, then she will think differently.”

“**God help me!**” exclaimed the nurse. “Nobody dies because of having a child, poor woman. I have had thirteen and I am still here.”

“**May Good keep her!** When she reaches my age, after having had thirteen children as I have, although God took eleven of them and left only two, who live with me in the workhouse, she will think otherwise, instead of letting grief bring her down.”

em vez de deixar-se abater assim pelo desgosto. (Dickens 1980, 6)

(1d) **-Deus a abençoe, coitadinha, quando** tiver vivido tanto como eu, Sr. Doutor, **e** tiver tido treze filhos, todos eles mortos excepto dois, **e** todos eles no asilo comigo, nessa altura saberá que não deve falar assim, **valha-a Deus!** (Dickens 1981, 18)

“May God bless her, the poor thing, when she has lived as much as me, Doctor, **and** has had thirteen children, all of them dead but two and all of them in the workhouse with me, by that time she will know that she should not speak like this, **God help her!**”

(1e) **-Ora, valha-a Deus!** -exclamou Sally. **“God help her!”** exclaimed Sally. Sally. (Dickens 1993, 8)

Formulaic clausal exclamations marked by exclamation marks (and transcribed in bold above) are recreated in the TTs and may be interpreted as orality features also associated with low sociocultural status, but their aggregative formulaic nature is reduced (“Lor’ bless **her dear heart**” becomes “God help/bless **her!**”, my emphasis) and their redundant though expressive and agonistic repetition, which corresponds to another feature of orality, is avoided in all TTs but one (the 1981 translation). The nurse’s diction is dramatically transedited into standard European Portuguese by syntactical shifts, which transform the ST’s rather long sentence into: (a) three smaller and mainly simple standard sentences (1968); (b) only one brief and simple standard exclamatory sentence (1993); (c) an only slightly less fluent but still standard sentence (1952: “when... and...and...by that time...”; 1980: “When... after... although... and... who... instead of...”); or (d) an elaborately clear, markedly written standard long sentence with a succession of impeccably subordinated clauses (1952: “When... when... since... who... then...”). All these versions display a centralizing strategy and stand in marked opposition to the nonstandard marginal voice of the ST’s poor, probably illiterate, socio-culturally marginalized, drunken workhouse nurse.

Mrs. Mann, the baby farm operator: “My Heart alive!”

Mrs. Mann’s discursive nature is very strongly marked by the ingratiating hypocrisy with which she addresses Mr. Bumble, upon whose goodwill she depends. This creates a very strong contrast to the agonistic harshness with which she addresses her maid, Susan, or refers to the children in her care, when she is sure nobody else is listening, as in the following aside:

(2) (Susan, take Oliver and **them** two brats upstairs, and wash 'em directly.) (Dickens 1837-1839/1999, 5, my emphasis)

This is said right after Mr. Bumble kicks the locked entrance gate, which prevents him from entering. A further illustration of the orality of Mrs. Mann's speech is provided when she flatteringly piles on several forms of address, marking a crescendo of deference with the clear interpersonal purpose of eliciting empathy and appeasing his anger:

(3) 'Goodness gracious! Is that **you, Mr. Bumble, sir?**' said Mrs. Mann, thrusting her head out of the window in well-affected ecstasies of joy. (Dickens 1837-1839/1999, 5, my emphasis)

The following sentence, in turn, allows the reader to picture her accompanying the staccato of her syntax with an additional bow, after each repetition of a deferential form of address, and subservient invitation for Mr. Bumble to enter her house, which consequently stress her lower status and especially, as she intends, his power:

(4) Walk in **sir**; walk in, pray, **Mr. Bumble**, do, **sir.**' (Dickens 1837-1839/1999, 6, my emphasis)

The discursive profile of Mrs. Mann is markedly orality-like (through addition, redundancy, repetition and agonistic tone) and also socio-culturally low status, marked by deviant grammar, lexis and spelling. A further example occurs when she mentions bolting the gate as one of her own good deeds, thus offering an excuse and begging for empathy from the still angry Mr. Bumble:

(5) That I should have forgotten that the gate was bolted on the inside, **on account of them dear children!** (Dickens 1837-1839/1999, 6, my emphasis)

Here (as in example 2) the salience of the oblique personal pronoun "them" in place of the standard demonstrative determinant ("those") or even the possessive determinant ("my") is more than enough to signal her low status. The following line has a similar effect, with her status marked by the relative clause introduced by "as is" instead of the standard "who

are”, the southern English and dialectal “a-telling” and “a-coming”, which are also accompanied by uses of an occasional nonstandard “ain’t” in other sentences:

(6) 'I'm sure Mr. Bumble, that I was only **a telling** one or two of the dear children **as is so fond of you**, that it was you **a coming**,' replied Mrs. Mann with great humility. (Dickens 1837-1839/1999, 6, my emphasis)

In the European Portuguese translations, the orality of this character’s strongly agonistic (either empathetic, ingratiating and subservient or aggressive, harsh and authoritarian), repetitive, redundant, grammatically deviant and socio-culturally nonstandard discourse is normalized. The Portuguese Mrs. Mann uses a literary, mostly written standard, which predominantly coincides with narrator diction. In the 1968 translation, her only spoken line is rendered in indirect discourse without any formally mimetic features. The normalization of her lines is signaled by the lack of any formally mimetic features deviating from standard grammar, lexis, and spelling (which would be marked in bold as in the examples above). In her complex sentences in Portuguese, all instances of subordination are absolutely correct if not even formal (as in 1972: “so as to”, my emphasis):

TT Examples

(5+6a) E neste meio tempo libertaram-se as crianças -Esqueci-me totalmente de que a porta estava fechada por dentro, por causa das crianças. [...] -Oh, não, senhor Bumble! -respondeu muito humildemente a senhora Mann - Eu tinha ido dizer a um ou dois desses pequenitos queridos, que tanto o estimam, que o senhor Bumble vinha aí. (Dickens 1952, 22)

(5+6b) A porta está fechada, senhor Bumble? Oh, não sabia! [...] -Fui à procura dos meninos a fim de avisá-los de que o senhor estava aqui. (Dickens 1972, 4)

(5+6c) -Como me esqueci que a porta estava fechada por dentro por causa destes queridinhos! [...] -Desculpe, senhor Bumble, é que fui avisar três destas criancinhas, que tanto o amam, que o senhor

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And in the meantime, the children had been set free. “I totally forgot that the gate had been locked inside, because of the children.” [...] “Oh, no, Mr. Bumble,” replied Mrs. Mann very humbly, “I had gone to tell one or two of those little darlings, who care for you so much, that you were coming.”

“Is the door locked, Mr. Bumble? Oh, I did not know. [...] I was looking for the children so as to let them know that you were here.”

“How I forgot that the door was locked inside because of these little darlings! [...] I am sorry, Mr. Bumble, I went to warn three of these little children, who love you so much, that you had arrived.”

tinha chegado. (Dickens 1980, 14-15)

(5+6d) - Imaginem, esquecer-me de que a porta estava trancada do lado de dentro, por causa dos queridos pequenos, coitadinhos. [...] -Garanto-lhe, Sr. Bumble, que estava apenas a dizer a um ou dois dos queridos pequenos que tanto o estimam que o senhor vinha aí -respondeu-lhe a Sra. Mann, cheia de humildade. (Dickens 1981, 21)

“Imagine, to forget that the door was locked inside because of the dear children, the poor little things.” [...] “I assure you, Mr. Bumble, that I was only telling one or two of the dear children, who care for you so much, that you were coming,” answered Mrs. Mann very humbly.

In these sentences, only the interjections (not always recreated) and the use of “no” and forms of address signal a residually speech-like characterizing diction. Mrs. Mann is entirely translated as a literate, standard-speaking character, with only very occasional features of speech.

Mr. Bumble, the superlative beadle: “I inwented it.”

Mr. Bumble, whose name suggests a fat-bellied bumblebee (very noisy but without any sting), is characterized by pompous diction and a presumptuously elaborate discourse, as expected of a character of his importance, namely a beadle. Nevertheless, his low socio-cultural provenance is revealed by a strongly agonistic orality – with profuse irate exclamations – and social marginality, featured in both the deviant spelling representing his low-status pronunciation and the deviant dialect marked by mostly grammatical but also lexical shifts from the standard. One particular spelling shift immediately identifies him as a speaker of Cockney: the use of “w” instead of “v”, already established by literary tradition (Page 1988, 65).

Further examples of deviant spelling marking an urban low-class accent abound, such as “ineddicated” (Dickens 1837-1839/1999, 28). However, “porochial”, “aweer” (Dickens 1837-1839/1999, 6), “just a leetle drop” (Dickens 1837-1839/1999, 6) or “supernat’ral exertions” (Dickens 1837-1839/1999, 7) are examples of eye-dialect, since their use of non-standard deviant spelling (to mark ellipsis, and vowel or intonation changes) actually comes closer to representing speech that is actually standard speech. However, in the cases of eye-dialect the deviance from standard spelling has the effect upon average readers of saliently marking socio-cultural low status, similarly to the other deviant spellings (Golding 1985, 9; Chapman 1994, 21).

The most ironically salient lexical deviation is his use of “fondlins” instead of “foundlings” (Dickens 1837-1839/1999, 7), when referring to the children in the baby

farm; among the various grammatically deviant lines, sentences such as the following are worth quoting:

(8) The kind and blessed gentlemen **which is** so many parents to you, Oliver, when you have none of your own: are a going to **'prentice** you (Dickens 1837-1839/1999, 19, my emphasis)

(9) – and all for a naughty orphan which **nobody can't** love. (Dickens 1837-1839/1999, 19, my emphasis)

(10) 'If **we was** to bind him to any other trade to-morrow, he'd run away **simultaneous**, your worship,' replied Bumble. (Dickens 1837-1839/1999, 21, my emphasis)

(11) 'Juries,' said Mr. Bumble, grasping his cane tightly, as was his wont when working into a passion: '**juries is ineddicated**, vulgar, grovelling wretches.' (Dickens 1837-1839/1999, 28, my emphasis)

In some examples, Mr. Bumble's agonistic nature is expressed by a higher number of nonstandard instances, which are also used to express his anger. Among these are: nonstandard number concord, and the nonstandard choice of a relative pronoun for a human antecedent requiring the use of "who", instead of "which" (8); the clearly nonstandard double negative and again nonstandard concord of a relative pronoun with a human antecedent, since "which" is used instead of the standard "that" or "whom" (9); the nonstandard lack of concord in number between a plural subject and a singular verb form, and the use of an adjective instead of an adverb (10); as well as examples of the above-mentioned deviant spelling (8, 9, 11).

When calm, Mr. Bumble carefully chooses pompous vocabulary, which he involuntarily combines with serious grammatical mistakes. The density of such "slips of the tongue" increases in direct proportion to his anger, something that is ignored in the Portuguese translations. Perhaps his most salient grammatically deviant feature is a severe difficulty with superlatives, for example:

(12) 'Well! Of *all* the **ungratefullest**, and **worst-disposed** boys as ever I see, Oliver, you are the—' (Dickens 1837-1839/1999, 29, my emphasis)

(13) 'Well! of all the artful and designing orphans that ever I see, Oliver, you are one of **the most bare-facedest**.' (Dickens 1837-1839/1999, 22, my emphasis)

Let us consider the translations of only two sentences. The first is used to state bombastically that he invented Oliver's family name, where his Cockney accent is marked by deviant spelling:

(14) The beadle drew himself up with great pride, and said, 'I **inwented** it.' (Dickens 1837-1839/1999, 7, my emphasis)

The reason for this pride deserves further consideration. Mr. Bumble is proud to have invented a system to provide orphans with a proper family name. This system is based on his knowledge of the alphabet, and significantly for him being literate is reason enough to be proud. But he is particularly proud because in addition he imposes the literate abstract categorization of alphabetical order upon the orphans by inventing family names for those who do not have one – even if this abstract system is useless to tell the orphans apart, since it is not based on distinguishing physical (such as red hair, height or girth) or psychological features (such as being shy, talkative, or expressive).⁹ This renders Mrs. Mann's praise even more meaningful: 'Why, you're quite a literary character, sir!' (Dickens 1837-1839/1999, 7, my emphasis). Mr. Bumble is indeed a literary character, his discourse is strongly marked by features prominent in the literary tradition (such as those which distinguish him as a speaker of Cockney), but what she really means is that he is quite a "literate" character, and that his mastery of the alphabet is something to marvel at.

The sentence in example (14) is translated into European Portuguese without any features of deviant spelling, except for the 1981 translation, which changes the second vowel (using "invinteí" instead of "inventei"), a change which is faintly evocative of a socio-culturally marginal use.

TT examples

(14a) -Fui eu quem o inventou -disse ele. (Dickens 1952, 23)

Gloss

"It was I who invented it," he said.

(14b) O apelido que ele tem foi inventado por mim. (Dickens 1968, 6)

"His surname was invented by me."

(14c) -Fui eu quem o inventou. (Dickens 1972, 5)

"It was I who invented it."

(14d) -Fui eu que o inventei. (Dickens 1980, 17) “It was I who invented it.”

(14e) O bedel endireitou-se, cheio de orgulho, e redarguiu-lhe: -Eu **invinteio**. (Dickens 1981, 23) The beadle drew himself up, full of pride, and replied to her: “I **invented** it.”

(15f) -Fui eu quem lhe pôs o nome - disse o senhor Bumble, com presunção. (Dickens 1993, 9) “It was I who named him,” said Mr. Bumble presumptuously.

The second sentence chosen for analysis (13) exhibits the nonstandard grammatically deviant superlatives that characterize Mr. Bumble, who angrily exclaims that Oliver is “one of the most bare-facedest” orphans he knows. Again, it is only the 1981 translation that attempts to recreate this grammatical nonstandard instance:

TT example

-Francamente, Oliver, de todos os órfãos manhosos e astutos que já conheci, tu és **o mais descaradíssimo!**
(Dickens 1981, 34)

Gloss

“Frankly, Oliver, of all the cunning and astute orphans I have ever know, you are **the most cheekiest!**”

With the sole exception of the 1981 version, all Portuguese translations normalize Mr. Bumble’s diction, which consequently corresponds in all TTs to standard Portuguese, pompously elaborate in vocabulary, as in the ST, but without the ironic counterpoint of socio-culturally marginal dialect and pronunciation, which are indispensable to recreate this caricatured character. His orality remains marked in the Portuguese by redundancy, repetitions and formulaic renderings, as well as by his agonistic tone. But his socio-culturally stigmatized discourse disappears and the reader is left with only the comments from the narrator, who often distances himself with ironic comments that alone stress Mr. Bumble’s socio-cultural, moral and narrative marginality.

Final remarks

Discursive otherness represented by a formally mimetic, characterizing diction marked by linguistic features of speech and orality is used to indirectly characterize the three socio-culturally (and morally) marginal characters of *Oliver Twist* selected for analysis. Their otherness is primarily for the purpose of comic effect and caricature and it both signals these characters' marginality and encourages the reader to judge them morally.

Such characterizing dictions undergo significant translation shifts resulting from the procedures of omission and change. Their discursive marginality and otherness is brought very close to the normative center of prestige occupied by the narrator's (usually standard and written style) voice. As a result, their marginal discursive profiles are erased by centralizing and normalizing strategies. Once translated, these characters speak more like the printed page. Characterizing discourse is rendered as almost non-characterizing discourse: ejaculations and exclamations are simplified or omitted; aggregative formulae are simplified, reduced or omitted; repetition and redundancy are cleaned up; coordinative additive syntax is transedited sometimes into the standard subordination of rather complex sentences; and vocabulary is normalized, grammar corrected, and standard spelling used throughout (except for a very few instances). A less varied translated text results, which brings speech closer to writing, character diction closer to narratorial diction, and less prestigious or stigmatized discourse closer to the standard, written, and most prestigious language use. Deviance is corrected, the aesthetic representation of otherness is obliterated, the assertion of marginalized identities silenced because orality is brought significantly closer to literacy.

Notes

¹ Communicative competence corresponds to an awareness of linguistic routines, of the use of speech in social situations or of its use for the expression of personality in a linguistic community; it also includes attitudes, judgments and intuitions towards speech (Hymes 1972, 282-288).

² Such hybridity is also stressed by Gambier and Lautenbacher (2010, 5). On further mode variation, see Hatim and Mason (1990, 49).

³ Orality appears systematically related to speakers' attitudes toward illiteracy, poverty, rural and non-western areas, and defined as a deficit or lack of skills needed to read, write, and use the internet or mobile phones. However, Ong also mentions the rising prestige of secondary orality or new orality (1982, 11).

⁴ Some formal features have an indexical function, leading speakers to evaluate other speakers; linguistic stereotypes include the most salient elements in a variety (Hickey 2000, 58, 65).

⁵ For a more thorough discussion, see Chatman (1978), Page (1988), Chapman (1994), and Rosa (2003).

⁶ See Gellerstam (1986, 91), Robyns (1992), Ben-Shahar (1994; 1998), Venuti (1995), Berman (1996, xviii), Dimitrova (1997, 63), Hatim and Mason (1997, 145), Bassnett and Lefevere (1998, 4), and Leppihalme (2000b, 253). House (1973, 167) or Lane-Mercier (1997, 43) even consider literary varieties untranslatable.

⁷ Analysis of the English examples is based on Hughes, Trudgill, and Watt (2012, 19-36), Melchers and Shaw (2003, 52-52), Gramley and Pätzold (2004, 227-249), and on Chatman (1978), Page (1988), Blake (1981) and Chapman (1994); analysis of the Portuguese examples is based on the author's native command of standard European Portuguese. Both apply Ong (1982).

⁸ Glosses have been backtranslated by the author; both examples and glosses are marked for emphasis by the author (orality and speech features in bold; written standard underlined).

⁹ This creates a very strong contrast to the use of family names or orality in Charles Dickens, whereby his caricatured characters are made memorable.

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