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“You Mean We’re Not Real People?”
A Semiotic and Sociolinguistic Perspective on the Transposition of Dialogue in the Spanish Translations of John Updike’s “Rabbit” Books

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September 2014
I, Owen Harrington-Fernández, certify that this thesis is all my own work and that I have not obtained a degree in this university or elsewhere on the basis of any of this work.
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<tr>
<td>AAVE</td>
<td>African-American Vernacular English</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DTS</td>
<td>Descriptive Translation Studies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SAE</td>
<td>Standard American English</td>
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<tr>
<td>SPS</td>
<td>Standard Peninsular Spanish</td>
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Lastly, not an acknowledgement, but a dedication: para mi abuelo, quien vio el comienzo de esta etapa de mi vida, y cuyo recuerdo es testigo de su final.
Abstract

Despite the vast amount of research on translation in recent decades, the issue of fictive dialogue has yet to gain prominence in the field. Viewed from a monolingual perspective, dialogue is already problematic in that it defies a concrete definition. It is written language, yet its function is to represent oral discourse. From a translation perspective and beyond this ontological conundrum, dialogue warrants consideration because it is a crucial characterisation device. The illusion of communicative immediacy that authors create by removing themselves as proxy not only allows characters to interact with one another directly, but also allows readers to observe the behaviour of characters without the intrusion of the narrator, thus raising the issue of how characters perform their identity through language. With this in mind, the overarching question this thesis asks is the following: if the language characters use in dialogue changes, as it must do in translation, how does this change affect how they perform their identity through language?

This project compares John Updike’s “Rabbit” books and their Spanish translations to explore whether the linguistic identity of the main character, Harry “Rabbit” Angstrom, his wife, Janice, and the African-American community, are codified in the target dialogue. With regards to translating Harry Angstrom’s voice, the focus is on transposing his source text idiolect in order to reflect salient character attributes; the focus with regards to the African-American characters is on finding a suitable target language vernacular that constructs an intratextual speech community; finally, the focus for Janice’s voice is on reflecting her gender in Spanish. Informed by a theoretical framework constructed with translation, sociolinguistic and semiotic theory, the analyses describe the translation shifts and losses that are in evidence in the professional translations, and put forward alternatives that recast the voice of the characters in line with the identity described in the source narrative.
SECTION I

Chapter 1

Introduction

1.0 The Object of Study: John Updike’s “Rabbit” books and their Spanish translations

The case study for this thesis is John Updike’s “Rabbit” saga and its translation into Castilian Spanish. In Updike’s own words, the saga, which comprises four novels, is “a running report on the state of my hero and his nation” (1995: vii). The original texts were published in roughly ten-year intervals, beginning with Rabbit, Run in 1960, followed by Rabbit Redux in 1971, Rabbit is Rich in 1981 and finally, Rabbit at Rest in 1990.¹ The only translations of the “Rabbit” books currently available in Spain are those published by Tusquets Editores. It is important to note that these were not the first available in Spain. Javier Aparecio Maydeu, who reviewed the Tusquets Editores translation of Rabbit is Rich (El País, July 2002), points out that Argos Vergara had previously published translations of the first two “Rabbit” books. These, however, are no longer in circulation. Tusquets Editores reinstated the saga in Spain with its own translations, thus becoming the first publishing house to offer all

¹ The four “Rabbit” books have since been collected and published as one “mega-novel”, called simply, Rabbit Angstrom (Updike 1995). This new edition, however, comes with changes, “restorative rather than revisionary”, but substantial enough that an entire new scene is added to the second book, Rabbit Redux.
four “Rabbit” books in Castilian Spanish. In chronological order: “Corre, Conejo”, translated by Jordi Fibla, was published in 1990; “Conejo en Paz”, translated by Iris Menéndez, was published in 1992; “El regreso de Conejo”, also by Menéndez, was published in 1993; and “Conejo es Rico”, translated by Jaime Zulaika, completed the tetralogy when it was published in 2002. The comparative analysis undertaken here reveals that the various translators did not use Rabbit Angstrom (the tome that collected the four books) as the source text, as none of the amendments Updike implemented in this later collection feature in the Spanish texts. Further close reading of the translations demonstrate that they correspond to the “Rabbit” books as originally published by Knopf in the United States and Andre Deutsch in Europe. Therefore, the case study takes these four original publications as the source texts and the Tusquets Editores translations as the target texts.

In his Spanish reincarnation, the eponymous Harry “Rabbit” Angstrom remains in Brewer and the Mt Judge suburb still towers over the city as a brooding theological presence. He is the son of Earl and Mary Angstrom and he is married to Janice Angstrom (née Springer), with whom he has one son, Nelson. Textual evidence throughout the four Spanish books suggests that no changes have been made to accommodate the story to its new Castilian readership. Yet there are changes, sometimes subtle and other times conspicuous, which indicate that, despite the overt strategy of remaining faithful to the original, there are some underlying and fundamental departures from the source text worthy of inquiry. In general terms, this project explores how the characters’ identities might be affected by the translation of their dialogue. One particular change (or shift, in translation parlance) is worth mentioning at this preliminary stage because it inspired this project to tread the path of identity. In Rabbit is Rich, Harry’s full name is given as Harold C. Angstrom, the

3 Incidentally, efforts were made to contact Tusquets Editores; their company policy, however, is to not discuss individual translators, but rather allow the translator’s work speak for itself. A copy of this correspondence may be found in the appendix.
“C” a “mystery initial”, according to Updike (1995: xxi). In the translation, Harry’s full name becomes Harold G. Angstrom, a mysterious change in itself, but one that begged the question, what other elements of Harry’s identity change in the Spanish texts? Following this line of thinking, the question of language and its potential as a reflection of a speaker’s identity became crucial and, in this thesis, the question not only relates to how Harry’s linguistic identity “changes” in the translation, but also how the decisions made during the translation of dialogue affect the linguistic identity of his wife, Janice Angstrom, and the group of African-Americans Harry befriends in *Rabbit Redux*.

This thesis is divided into four sections. This first section serves as a general introduction to the topic and lays out the general aims and objectives. Section II discusses the interdisciplinary framework which, firstly, situates this project in a Translation Studies paradigm; and secondly, brings together sociolinguistic and semiotic concepts in order to carry out the comparative and descriptive analyses in Section III. Before this takes place, however, a summary of the “Rabbit” books is offered in the following section in order to supplement the analysis that will ultimately establish whether the characters of the source text are the “same” as the characters in the target text.

1.1 Summary of the “Rabbit” books and critical responses

In the introduction to the Everyman’s Library edition of his saga, Updike stresses that Harry Angstrom is not his alter-ego; nevertheless, he is an extension of himself insofar as the character provided a medium for him:

Harry “Rabbit” Angstrom was for me a way in – a ticket to the America all around me. What I saw through Rabbit’s eyes was more worth telling than what I saw through my own, though the difference was often slight. (1995: vii)
In line with Updike’s view, Ristoff (1988/1998) offers one of the most comprehensive studies on how the American landscape – the America all around Harry and Updike – shapes the fictive universe of the “Rabbit” books. His textual analysis, based on a scene-centred approach (as opposed to an agent-centred approach) reveals the underlying layers of American culture. The most impressive element of this study, however, is how Ristoff’s scene-centred approach never loses sight of the pre-existent “I” that is Harry Angstrom, because, as Boswell (2001:235) explains at length:

It is wrong […] to look to Rabbit Angstrom for a comprehensive, sociological account of American society. One can, however, find there a comprehensive account of one American’s life, primarily his internal life. America is only entered, Updike explains in his introduction, through Rabbit. As a historical account of the second half of the American Century, Rabbit Angstrom does not take the reader into the smoke-filled rooms and foreign battlefields where history is generally thought to be made. The history that happens in Rabbit Angstrom occurs off-stage, as background. Rabbit’s interaction with American history is limited to his television watching and newspaper reading. Although the work addresses many of the most important American historical events of the last forty years – Vietnam, the moon shot, and the late-seventies hostage crisis, to name but three – it never lets these events become anything more than embroidery on the complex fabric of Harry’s internal life.

This tapestry of American culture can only be apprehended through Harry’s subjective position. However, his position is recursively shaped by the multiplicity of discourses that, though placed in the background by Updike, are crucial to creating a character that is real – or, to be more exact, to creating a character with a plausible identity, someone who could very well be real. In Rabbit is Rich, when Harry asks in jest, “are we not real people?”, the question is Updike’s metafictional sleight-of-hand to indirectly remind the reader that Harry may not be flesh-and-blood and that his hometown Brewer, based on Reading, Pennsylvania, may only exist in its fictive transfiguration. Nevertheless, Harry
represents a real man shaped by a non-fictive subjective position in much the same way that Brewer is merely the fictive name given to Reading, a real place with its own geographical location.

This section summarises the four “Rabbit” books in chronological order, but to iterate the storyline therein is tantamount to recounting the life of its eponymous character. It is a story that begins in *Rabbit, Run* with Harry playing a makeshift game of street-basketball with the neighbourhood kids and ends thirty years later in *Rabbit at Rest*, when a final game of basketball induces the heart attack that kills him. Between these two games that book-end the story, Updike chronicles six decades full of political upheavals, cultural revolutions and personal or familial strife, all lived through by a character whose wish is to return to his high-school glory days, when he was a “first-rate” athlete romancing cheerleaders and not a peripatetic kitchen gadget salesman stuck in a “second-rate” marriage with a “dumb mutt” for a wife.

Harry’s desire to regress and escape is the central theme of the first book. Unlike its more righteous peer, *On the Road* (Kerouac 1957), “*Rabbit, Run* was meant to be a realistic demonstration of what happens when a young American family man goes on the road – the people left behind get hurt” (Updike 1995:x). Feeling shackled by a substandard marriage to an alcoholic wife who is carrying their second child, Harry runs away. His escapade is cut short, however, and he fails to reach his intended destination, the “white sun of the south”. Instead he ends up back in a suburb of Brewer named Mt Judge, in the ironically named Sunshine Athletic Association, with his old coach Tothero. On Tothero’s advice, Harry meets Ruth, a part-time prostitute whom he gets pregnant. Now caught between two pregnant women, Harry seems to make the final decision to return to Janice when she gives birth to their daughter, Rebecca June. Old disputes between Harry and Janice resurface, however, and Harry runs out on her once again. During Harry’s absence, and under pressure from her parents, Janice gets drunk and accidently
drowns baby Rebecca. At the funeral, Harry is overcome with guilt and announces to the mourners in attendance that it was Janice, not him, who killed the baby: “You all keep acting as if I did it. I wasn’t anywhere near. She’s the one.”4 He sees the mourners as “a wall against him” and, for the third time in the novel, he “turns and runs” (Rabbit, Run: 296). He seeks refuge with Ruth, but is greeted by a scorned woman who wants nothing to do with him and is planning to abort their child: “I’m dead to you [Harry] and this baby of yours is dead to you too” (Rabbit, Run: 306). In this crisis, basketball no longer offers Harry the absolution he seeks: “it’s like when they heard you were great and put two men on you and no matter which way you turned you bumped into one of them”. Harry is now “marked” by two women, Janice and Ruth, from whom, for the fourth and last time in the novel, he “runs. Ah: runs. Runs” (Rabbit, Run: 309).

Harry eventually returns to Janice and Brewer, “but instead of continuing where Rabbit, Run ended in June, 1960, Updike reintroduces Rabbit in ‘real time’, July, 1969” (de Bellis 2005: xxiii). If Rabbit, Run is the story of Harry as a pseudo-rebel against the banality of middle-class life, Rabbit Redux stands as its antithesis – “the novel was meant to be asymmetric with Rabbit, Run” (Updike 1995: xiv). In this new decade Harry and Janice’s roles are reversed; Harry becomes a responsible citizen and a conservative family man and Janice takes up the mantle of rebel (Boswell 2001:76). She has an affair with a co-worker in her father’s car dealership, Charlie Stavros– a foreigner, much to Harry’s chagrin – and separates from Harry in her quest to find a “valid identity” (Rabbit Redux: 104). The Civil Rights movement, the Vietnam War and the moon landing contextualise this novel, and though each of these events is of thematic significance, it is the moon landing that provides the central metaphor: “the novel is itself a moon shot: Janice’s affair launches her husband, as he and his father witness the takeoff of Apollo II in the Phoenix bar” (Updike 1995: xiii). Abandoned by Janice and sole

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4 Italics in the original.
Introduction

carer of Nelson, who is now twelve years old, Harry befriends three African-Americans, Buchanan, Babe and Skeeter. Babe has been helping seventeen-year old runaway girl, Jill, to wean off drugs, but as an underage white girl in a bar whose clientele is predominantly African-American, she is too much of a liability to keep around. Buchanan’s plan is to pawn Jill off on Harry, who, clouded by marijuana and feeling lonely, is all too easily duped. In spite of the illicit circumstances of their coming together, Harry and Jill become romantically involved, though it is the other Angstrom in the house, Nelson, who becomes infatuated with her. The situation is further complicated when Skeeter, now a fugitive, is invited by Jill to Harry’s home. After Harry physically assaults Skeeter, he – rather incomprehensively – agrees to let him stay. Throughout this time, Janice lives with her lover, Charlie, and calls Harry repeatedly threatening to divorce him for “tak[ing] a darkie into the house along with that hippie” (Rabbit Redux: 216). Harry and Janice reconcile eventually, but before this “docking” of sorts takes place, the family home is set on fire, causing the death of Jill, the second underage girl to die in the saga.

Even though Rabbit is Rich “inaugurates [the] second half of the saga” by telling its readers that forty-six year old Harry and his country are “running out of gas” (Boswell 2001: 130), it is the most light-hearted of the four books. The context of Rabbit is Rich is the alleged gas shortage of the 1970s, the news “hook” of the decade that Updike uses to parallel Harry’s own mid-life decline; but as Updike himself says:

The paradox was that although the theme was running out of gas, I was feeling pretty good. And so the book is kind of an upbeat book in spite of itself. It’s really a cheerful book, very full, it seems to me insofar as I can be a critic, of itself and its material (Updike 2005: 226)
Even though it is the most comical, in a manner of speaking it is just as sinister as the other three books. Young women are spared for the first time in the series, but death is now a lugubrious constant in Harry’s life: his parents, Earl and Mary, Janice’s father, Fred Springer and even Skeeter, have passed on. “When you think of the dead”, Harry thinks wryly, “you got to be grateful” (Rabbit is Rich: 8). With the death of Fred Springer, his widow Bessie Springer and daughter Janice inherit Springer Motors, the family business. As part-owner, Harry is now the Chief Sales Representative of the company, but his title belies how much power he really has. It is the Springer women, Bessie (Ma Springer to the rest of the family) and Janice who truly control the company. When Nelson returns from college, pregnant fiancée in tow and ready to drop out, Bessie and Janice remove Charlie Stavros, who had been hired by Fred Springer when he first opened the franchise, and instate Nelson in his position despite Harry’s continuous protestations and threats to quit: “if Charlie goes, I go” (Rabbit is Rich: 115). The friendship between Charlie and Harry is perhaps the most curious of all the relationships in the books. The man Harry spends his working day with, the man he calls “about the only friend he has in the world”, is the same Charlie with whom Janice had had an affair in Rabbit Redux. However, the most important relationship in Rabbit is Rich is between Harry and Nelson, as Boswell points out:

In the case of Harry and Nelson’s oedipal drama, the rival sexual object is not Janice, as one might immediately assume, but Jill, whom Nelson feels Harry “killed”. In Rabbit Redux, Updike makes several oblique references to the possibility of a sexual relationship between Nelson and Jill. In Rabbit is Rich, he seizes upon this tantalizing possibility as the basis for Nelson’s resentment for his father. (Boswell 2001: 149)

The feeling is mutual, for Harry also resents Nelson. Boswell (2001: 153) further argues that “Nelson reminds Harry of his mistakes”, chief among which is Nelson himself, conceived out of wedlock and the reason why
Harry and Janice got married. When Nelson announces that he is going to become a father and that he intends to marry his fiancée, Pru, Harry still finds enough paternal goodwill to try and get his son out of the situation with advice that reprises the central theme in *Rabbit, Run*: “you could just, I don’t know, not make any decision, just disappear for a while” (*Rabbit is Rich*: 193). This “fatherly” moment – fatherly insofar as, for once, Harry puts Nelson’s feelings before his own – is rare. An “unnatural father” in Janice’s view, Harry spends much of the time bemoaning the mere presence of his son because, as he tells Janice at the beginning of the novel, “the kid has it in for me” (*Rabbit is Rich*: 70). In the midst of this conflict, Harry harbours the fantasy of finding his illegitimate daughter; he is convinced that a client that shows up to Springer Motors, is, in fact, his daughter. The encounter piques his curiosity enough that he confronts Ruth – the woman with whom he had the affair in *Rabbit, Run*. She admits that she has a daughter, but denies that Harry is the father. Inconsistencies in her story and narratological clues intimate that the girl in the opening scene of the novel in indeed an Angstrom. The end of the novel comes with the birth of Nelson and Pru’s baby girl, Judy, and thus Harry becomes a grandfather, and through this granddaughter he can fulfil his fantasy of being father to a girl.

Harry is laid to rest in the last novel, *Rabbit at Rest*. Harry’s death, as Updike saw it, had to come in the fourth and final book:

> All men are mortal; my character was a man. But I, too, was a man, and by no means sure how much more of me would be functioning in 1999. The more research I did to flesh out my hero’s cardio-vascular problems, the more ominous pains afflicted my chest. As a child, just beginning to relate my birth to the actuarial realities, I had wondered if I would live to the year 2000. I still wondered. I wanted Harry to go out with all the style a healthy author could give him, and had a vision of a four-book set, a squared-off tetralogy, a boxed life. (1995: xviii)
The narrative begins with Harry in the Southwest Florida Regional Airport in December 1989, waiting for a plane carrying his family: Nelson, Pru and their two grandchildren. Death permeates this opening scene: “what he has come to meet […] is not his son Nelson and daughter-in-law Pru and their two children, but something more ominous and intimately his: his own death, shaped vaguely like an airplane” (Rabbit at Rest: 3). The airplane as a harbinger of death motif is inspired by the topical news of time, the Pan Am 747 plane crash, “ripping open like a water melon five miles over Scotland and dropping all these bodies and flaming wreckage all over […] Lockerbie” (Rabbit at Rest: 8). Harry learns that his heart is a ticking bomb inside him – “tired and stiff and full of crud, [a] typical American heart” (Rabbit at Rest: 166) – immediately after Nelson announces that “they think they know exactly what kind of bomb blew up that Pan Am flight” (Rabbit at Rest: 159). Harry’s first heart attack has a redeeming quality to it, however. Aboard a Sunfish vessel with his granddaughter Judy, they capsize, and for a few frantic moments Judy disappears from his sight, but when “the sail’s edge eventually nuzzles past his drowning face” he is relieved that “he has dragged along Judy into the light”, a cathartic moment for a man partly responsible for the death of two young girls.

As in Rabbit is Rich, Nelson visits with a secret. Since taking the reins of Springer Motors he has become addicted to cocaine; worst still, he has embezzled money out of the company to support his habit. It is not Janice or Nelson who reveal this secret to Harry, but Thelma Harrison, wife of Ronnie Harrison, an old schoolmate of Harry’s, and the woman with whom Harry has been having an affair during the interstice between the last two books. To save Springer Motors, Harry comes out of retirement while Nelson checks into a drug rehabilitation clinic. The sequence of events that follows from this revelation lead to Harry’s ultimate demise. Firstly, Nelson hits rock bottom and checks into a rehab clinic; Harry then checks into a hospital to have a catheter inserted, and whilst recuperating, the extent of Nelson’s debt are revealed. The
$150,000 he embezzled from the company results in the Toyota franchise pulling out of Springer Motors. To help with their dire economic situation, Janice enrolls in a night-time course to become an estate agent, leaving bed-bound Harry recuperating in Pru’s home. With the family business nearing bankruptcy, Nelson in rehab and Janice in class, comes the most shocking of all of Harry’s sexual indiscretions, his final salvo in his oedipal war with Nelson: he sleeps with Pru. Under the burden of guilt, he finally completes the trip he aborted in the opening of *Rabbit, Run*: he drives – and reaches – the south, to culminate a forty year peregrination. Harry spends his final days idling the time away until he meets a young boy on a basketball court, whom he challenges to a game. Harry wins the game with a glorious but fatal basket:

> The hoop fills his circle of vision, it descends to kiss his lips, he can’t miss […]
> His torso is ripped by a terrific pain, elbow to elbow. He bursts from within; he feels something immense persistently fumbling at him, and falls unconscious on the dirt […]. An airplane goes over, lowering on a slow diagonal. (*Rabbit at Rest*: 506)

Harry’s life deteriorates to parallel the entropic decline of – as the epigraph of *Rabbit at Rest* intimates – that “old remembered world”. Miller (2001:163) in fact, puts forward the argument that Updike may well have timed Harry’s death to coincide with the end of the Cold War. The potential to make such an extrapolation is certainly there when Harry, days from his demise, waxes existentialist about it: “the cold war. It gave you a reason to get up in the morning”. Whether as a metonymic representation, or as an individual self, as Heddendorf points out, the sheer volume of information the reader has about Harry by the end of the saga, helps to create a character that is more than just a fictitious construction:
After four lengthy volumes we readers, at least, do recognize Harry. We’re acquainted with his uncircumcised penis, his tendency to sneeze, his queasiness about eating animals. We’ve been told the address of every place he’s lived. We know the eyebrow cowlick he’s handed down to his son, Nelson, and granddaughter, Judy. These enumerated particulars begin to seem insistent, as if claiming more than the conventional roundness of fictional characterization. “Here stands (walks, talks, copulates) an individual,” say these traits, “despite the best efforts of mass society” (Heddendorf 2005: 242).

The “Rabbit” books are so vast and full of a seemingly endless potential for textual analysis that a summary such as the one here could hardly do it justice. Many themes have not been dealt with simply because they are not central to the object of study here, which is, as Heddendorf touches on, how Harry, Janice and the African-American community talk, and how this talk, represented in dialogue, helps to create well-rounded characters; the challenge in translation, is to reconstitute these characters with the “same” semiotic profundity.
Chapter 2

Aims, Objectives and Structure of this Thesis

2.0 Introduction
The aim of this thesis is to establish whether the translation of dialogue causes a semiotic shift in how characters perform their linguistic identity. In order to test this hypothesis, Section II anchors this project with a theoretical framework that satisfies the interdisciplinary nature of this thesis. Section III takes three different types of linguistic identities (based on self-identity, collective identity and gender identity) and analyses how the professional Tusquets Editores translators approached the translation of dialogue – in essence, the objective of these chapters is to explore whether the translators discriminate between these three types of identities in dialogue. Following this descriptive exercise, the three analyses move on to discuss the translation issues pertinent to each linguistic identity, with a view towards offering alternative translation strategies tailored specifically to the speakers’ linguistic identities.

The aim of Section II is to specify the concepts in general terms as each analysis will then be prefaced with an outline of the specific theories and concepts that are pertinent to the thematic unit explored therein. Given the breadth and depth of the topic studied, the theoretical section is divided into three distinct disciplines. Section II thus begins with a chapter that situates this project in a Translation Studies paradigm. The discussion and reflections on key translation texts from a historical and critical perspective will provide a framework that is, crucially, founded on the translation concepts and terminology that will enable the interdisciplinary approach to operate in a more cogent fashion. As the
literary review in Section II explains, translation theory does not offer enough of a scope to test the hypothesis comprehensively, therefore the framework’s theoretical reach is widened to include sociolinguistic and semiotic theory. Sociolinguistics is the branch of Linguistics that studies language in a social context. By reviewing the key texts here, the concept of *language-identity nexus* will be postulated. Although the language-identity nexus is foregrounded with sociolinguistic tenets, it is a highly semioticised concept; even more so in terms of the identities explored here, which are not empirical (as would normally be the case in Sociolinguistics), but (inter and intra)textually constructed. Necessarily, then, the language-identity nexus is reframed in Chapter 5 through Charles Sanders Peirce’s typology of signs: the *symbol*, the *index* and the *icon*. Each of these signs represents a unique type of semiosis, yet neither occurs in isolation. Instead, the three signs work together in a careful orchestration of signification which points towards an interpretation. This *hermeneutic continuum*, as it is termed here, is also crucial in translation terms because if source and target language-identity nexuses are to be equivalent, the translations must encode the target dialogues with the “same” hermeneutic continuum.

The term “linguistic identity” is nomenclature for various types of linguistically relatable identities. In this thesis, the term is divided into three different types of identities, each providing a delimited thematic unit for the three chapters in Section III. Chapter 6 explores Harry “Rabbit” Angstrom’s identity as reflected in his source idiolect, and then compares the source-oriented results with Harry’s target idiolect. The focus here is on whether the translators of the “Rabbit” books reproduce markers of orality in Harry’s dialogue, whether Harry indexes his angst though his use of swear words, and whether Harry’s social identity influences his language use in the target text. Chapter 7 looks at how the translators of the Tusquets Editores texts approach the dialogue of the three African American characters who speak African American Vernacular English (AAVE), a sociolect which in the original books characterises their cultural identity. The focus here is on whether the
translation constructs an intratextual speech community, which stands as the semiotic object of their ethnic identity. Lastly, Chapter 8 isolates the linguistic strategies through which Janice reflects her gender identity in the source dialogue, in order to establish whether the translations also construct her dialogue with language that reflects her womanhood.

Each chapter in Section III approaches the analysis by, firstly, comparing the linguistic features that characters use in dialogue to reflect their identities in the source texts and the target texts, and secondly, establishing how the translation of the characters’ dialogue causes a semiotic shift in the (re)construction of their identity. This descriptive exercise represents the first phase of the analyses. Once the linguistic shifts and semiotic lacunae have been isolated in the Tusquets Editores texts, the next phase moves on to propose alternative versions. These alternatives, based on the sociolinguistic and semiotic theories that are discussed in Section II, are offered with a view towards replicating the diversity of character voices in the original texts. Although the common thread of each chapter is language and identity and the issues that encumber the translation of dialogue, each section, defined by its own set of specifically-tailored research questions, also requires a subtly different approach. That is, there is no single theoretical framework that is heuristically valid and that could be applied universally to how Harry, the African-American characters and Janice use language in dialogue. In order to reflect the inherent heterogeneity of the linguistic variations analysed, each chapter is prefaced with a set of research questions refined to serve the particular object of study. Lastly, Section IV discusses the contribution this research makes to the wider field of Translation Studies community.
3.0 Introduction

It is as appropriate as it is clichéd to begin this historical account of translation as an academic discipline by acknowledging its debt to James Holmes, whose work, and in particular his seminal text “The name and nature of Translation Studies” ([1972] 1988), is regarded as the genesis of what is known today as Translation Studies.\(^5\) Holmes had two missions for his paper. The first was to propose the name “Translation Studies” for a discipline that had, at various points, been called, “translatology”, “science of translation” or “translatistics”. His second mission was to define the “scope and structure” of a discipline that had been treated as a marginal preoccupation by adjacent disciplines such as Comparative Literature or Linguistics (Bassnett and Lefevere 1998). Holmes’ foundational statement created something of a boom in translation research. Guided by the scheme outlined in Holmes’ article, Translation Studies burgeoned through the 1980s and 1990s and

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\(^5\) Holmes initially presented a version of this article as a paper at the Third International Congress of Applied Linguistics in Copenhagen, August 1972. It only became widely available in 1988, when a collection of his papers were published in a work edited by Raymond van den Broeck (1988). Nevertheless, Holmes’ legacy had already influenced the work of such scholars as Gideon Toury, Itamar Even-Zohar, Anton Popovič or André Lefevere, to name a few.
paradigms delineating specific avenues for research began to take form, namely, linguistically-oriented approaches and aesthetics-based approaches (Venuti 1998:8). Of these, Gideon Toury’s (2012) *Descriptive Translation Studies* (hereafter DTS), which develops further the section Holmes reserved for testing empirical data in his scheme – the descriptive branch – is particularly relevant to this thesis. Toury (2012:4) represents Holmes’ well-known map in diagrammatic fashion below:

Holmes envisaged a discipline that, as per academic tradition, bifurcates into a descriptive branch and a theoretical branch. The descriptive branch, DTS, “constantly maintains the closest contact with the empirical phenomena under study” from three different research perspectives: process-oriented, product-oriented and function-oriented (Holmes [1972] 1988). The theoretical branch of “pure” translation studies, according to Holmes, is interested in “using the results of descriptive translation studies, in combination with the information available from related fields and disciplines, to evolve principles, theories, and models which will serve to explain and predict what translating and translations are and will be” (Holmes 1988:73). This present study relates to the Holmes/Toury map, in the first instance, as a descriptive piece of research that will compare the source and target dialogues in order to ascertain if the linguistic shifts that occur during the process of dialogue translation result in a shift in the representation of the characters’ semiotically-coded identities, an intrinsic and crucial element of the translation as a product.
In this sense, this study is product-oriented because it “describes an existing translation” and is interested in the most “intimate descriptions of the finest linguistic detail of the text” (Malmkjær 2005:18). However, this is also a study on the level of process for two reasons. Firstly, the task of describing how the linguistic identities of the characters may have been changed in translation necessarily entails a discussion on the decisions made by the translators. Secondly, the descriptive analyses are accompanied by sections that propose alternative translation strategies which maximise the potential of dialogue as a characterising device vis-à-vis identity. These alternatives may also be considered as process-oriented.

Roman Jakobson’s text, “On Linguistic Aspects of Translation” ([1959] 2000) is equally important to the field, and given its semiotic overtones, perhaps even more relevant to the present study. In Jakobson’s view, a philosophy of language necessarily resides in semiotics: “for us, both as linguists and word-users, the meaning of any linguistic sign is its translation into some further, alternative sign, especially a sign ‘in which it is more fully developed’” (Jakobson [1959] 2000:114). It should be noted that the term “translation” in his quotation should not be mistaken for – in Jakobson’s own words – “translation proper”. Rather, this is Charles Sanders Peirce’s use of the term, as a metaphor for the cognitive/semiotic process of interpretation. The translation of a sign into a “more fully developed sign” is not a trajectory of meaning from source to target text; it is a trajectory of meaning from the object that resides outside of language, but through interpretation, becomes concretised in the perceiver’s mind. For Jakobson, this philosophical tenet manifests itself in three types of translations:

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1) Intralingual translation or *rewording* is an interpretation of verbal signs by means of other signs of the same language.

2) Interlingual translation or *translation proper* is an interpretation of verbal signs by means of some other language.

3) Intersemiotic translation or *transmutation* is an interpretation of verbal signs by means of signs of nonverbal sign systems.

(Jakobson [1959] 2000:114)

These three categories represent Jakobson’s most valued contribution to the field. With due deference to intralinguistic and intersemiotic translation, however, interlingual translation holds a privileged position in Translation Studies. The “cardinal problem” – as Jakobson deems it – for interlingual translation is to find “equivalence in difference”, i.e., to relay two equivalent messages but in two different linguistic systems. On the question of equivalence, Jakobson’s gnomic point, “languages differ essentially in what they *must* convey and not in what they *may* convey” suggests that all languages are mutually translatable, even if what they “may” relay should be relayed through circumlocution. On point, neither are grammatical incongruences reason enough to found a notion of untranslatability: “no lack of grammatical device in the language translated into makes impossible a literal translation of the entire conceptual information contained in the original” (Jakobson [1959] 2000:115). This, however, comes with the caveat that in certain texts where grammatical functions carry a “high semantic import”, such as poetry, equivalence becomes much less likely. Nonetheless, certain concepts have been taken for granted in this prefatory discussion, when the reality is that concepts such as *translatability* and *equivalence* require definitions that restrict their usage. This matter will be taken up in the following section.
3.1 Translation and imperfect symmetries: equivalence and shifts

In layman’s terms, the notion of equivalence in translation is unproblematic. Translation is, after all, the reconfiguration of meaning from one language to another, a transposition that can only occur if the source text and the target text is the “same”, i.e., equivalent; otherwise, it is not a translation. Such a view, however, takes too much for granted. For example, what is the nature of equivalence? Which barometer can be used to measure “sameness” – can “sameness” be measured at all? Is equivalence a necessary condition of translation, its raison d’être, or can a text be called a translation even when it does not purport to be a replica of the original? Furthermore, what does equivalence apply to: is it to words, to sentences or to the entire text? Whether equivalence is a necessary condition of translation may be debatable; what is not, however, is that the debate has defined the trajectory of translation scholarship. Since its inauspicious beginnings, the study of translation has been, in one way or another, about how target texts “match” the source texts. The age-old dichotomies “literal vs. free” and “word-for-word vs. sense-for-sense” shaped a discipline whose theoretical landscape was narrowed down to the concept of equivalence:

It can be argued that all theories of translation – formal, pragmatic, chronological – are only variants of a single, inescapable question. In what ways can or ought fidelity be achieved? What is the optimal correlation between the A text in the source-language and the B text in the receptor-language? (Steiner [1975] 1992: 275)

Even to this day, in a discipline that has matured and amassed a plethora of sophisticated theories and frameworks to isolate and describe translation phenomena, the notion of equivalence pervades. It “pervades” because it is not always seen as beneficial. For its harshest critics (c.f., Snell-Hornby 1988; Gentzler 2001), equivalence is no more than an irrelevancy that does more damage than good (Kenny 2009:98). Snell-Hornby (1988:13–22), for example, posits that the notion is an illusion.
Situation this Project in a Translation Paradigm

Her argument is based on a comparison of the etymologies of the English word “equivalence” and the German word äquivalenz: what may, on first reading, seem like “perfectly symmetrical readings of a common tertium comparationis”, closer inspection reveals “subtle but crucial differences […] between the two terms”. Yet to circumscribe a theoretical exposé of the concept in etymological terms seems too circular. The term “equivalence”, after all, is a metaphor, the given name to describe the imperfect symmetry between a message in L1 and a message recast in L2. The tertium comparationis of the linguistic approaches to translation is not “equivalence” as such, but the imperfect symmetry the terms pins down in theory. This notwithstanding, Snell-Hornby believes that the “illusion of equivalence” is symptomatic of linguistic approaches which are “hopelessly inadequate” (ibid: 20). These approaches can be described as tributaries that stem from two different traditions. On the one hand, there is Eugene Nida’s (1963; Nida and Taber, 1969 [1982]) approach, based on Chomsky’s generative-transformational grammar model, and on the other is Catford’s (1965) approach, based on the work of M.A.K Halliday.

Nida was one of the first to put forward a heuristic survey of equivalence, a phenomenon which, for him, could be “oriented” in one of two ways. The first orientation he called formal equivalence, which he describes as a strategy that “focuses attention on the message itself, in both form and content” (Nida 1964:159). The second he called dynamic equivalence, a strategy that “is not so concerned with matching the receptor-language message with the source-language message, but with the dynamic relationship [so] that the relationship between receptor and message should be substantially the same as that which existed between the original receptors and the message” (ibid). By citing Belloc, Nida presents his typology from the point of view that “there are, properly speaking, no such things as identical equivalents” (Belloc 1931:37).\(^7\) Nida seems to have been patently aware that translation is not the

\(^7\) Quoted in Nida (1964: 159).
practice of matching source and target data, but of mining a creative field in which devices for symmetry seek to establish a dialectal relationship between source and target message in order to bind the texts together with a mutual communicative aim. If Nida’s attempt to formalise translation as a scientific field – as the title of his earlier work suggests, c.f., *Towards a Science of Translation* (1964) – no longer carries academic import, his work nevertheless succeeded in “point[ing] the road away from a strict word-for-word equivalence” (Munday 2008:43).

Catford’s (1967) Hallidayan exploration of translation formalises the linguistic shift concept by dividing it into two categories: a textual equivalent, “any [target language] text or portion of text which is observed on a particular occasion […] to be equivalent of a given [source language] text of portion of text”; and a formal correspondent, “any [target language] category (unit, class, structure, element of structure, etc.) which can be said to occupy, as nearly as possible, the ‘same’ place in the ‘economy’ of the [target language] as the given [source language] category occupies in the [source language]” (Catford 1967: 27). For Catford, shifts occur in two different guises. The first type, level shifts, occurs between levels of language; that is, when meaning in one of the four levels (phonology, graphology, grammar and lexis) is expressed in one of the other three in the target language. In relation to translation, however, Catford understands that level shifts can only take place between grammar and lexis (1967: 73). Category shifts, on the other hand, are contingent on a classification of language in four categories: units, structure, class and intra-systemic shifts. Although Catford and his linguistic approach has been much maligned by contemporary translation scholars, in particular Snell-Hornby (1988), there can be no disputing that his contribution to the field has been invaluable because, irrespective of the many turns the discipline has taken or whatever avenues of research are opened and followed, Translation Studies should never lose sight of the fact that its object of study is, first and foremost, language. Of course, translation is not exclusively the domain of linguistics, as no
linguistic theory could encompass the socio-cultural, historical or political variables that are also crucial to translation, whether as a process, function or product. However, the process of translation is a reconfiguration of source meaning in a target language, with all the intersystemic incongruities that this implies on the linguistic level of competence (Bakker, Koster and van Leuven-Zwart, 1998: 269). If nothing else, Catford’s work gave Translation Studies the theoretical tool to describe instances where equivalence cannot be achieved. Through the prism of “shifts”, then, the analyst may describe what remains invariant and what does not in a translation. Catford’s work may be “dated” in strictly synchronic terms, but its influence is such that it is a way off being relegated to “mere historical fact”, as Snell-Hornby contends.

A clear indication of how Catford remains relevant can be found in the many re-workings of the concept of “shift”. Malmkjær (2005:21) contends that Catford’s work remains “one of the most thorough, systematic and well informed” attempts to draw a linguistic theory from translation, to such an extent that Toury’s (1980) re-conceptualisation of the notion of equivalence “is formulated against the background provided by Catford”. To understand how shifts operate in Toury’s methodology, it is necessary to explain the difference between what he terms an adequate translation and an acceptable translation. Toury frames choices made in the realm of translation in praxis in the form of norms. The first, “basic choice which is made”, constitutes the initial norm:

Any translator is called upon to make an overall choice between two extreme orientations: heavy leaning on the assumed original (adequacy, in our terminology), and sweeping adherence to norms which originate and act in the target culture itself, thus determining the translation’s acceptability, whether as
Thus, an adequate translation is one that adheres (or, tries to remain as faithful as possible) to the source text; whereas an acceptable translation is one created in adherence with the conventions of the target culture. For Toury, in the production of an acceptable translation, “shifts from the source text [...] would be an inevitable price for taking that course of action” (2012:80). Toury’s work accommodates Catford’s “shifts” into his own descriptive theory that holds culture (rather than language) as the discipline’s superordinate object of study. What is particularly important about this, in the context of this thesis, is that the concept of shifts has developed beyond its original strictly linguistic conception, and is now relatable to those abstract objects that reside outside the borders of language, such as the object that is of central concern in this thesis, identity.

Inspired somewhat by Toury’s conceptualisation of norms, van Leuven-Zwart (1989, 1990) offers a model for the comparison and description of shifts. For her, the first ontological distinction that is necessary is between microstructural and macrostructural levels of the text. She defines the microstructural level as the “semantic, stylistic and pragmatic shifts within sentences, clauses and phrases”, and the macrostructural as “such things as the attributes and characterization of persons, the nature and ordering of the action and the time and place of events” (1989:151–155). On this principle, this project falls in line with the ethos of van Leuven-Zwart’s model. Despite the impressive range of the model and her claim that seventy of her students applied the model successfully, its use and application is somewhat inhibited by its complexity and the inherent subjectivity in analysing “decontextualized word-chunks”, as Munday (1998a:3) explains:

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8 Emphasis in the original.
It is extremely difficult to keep track of all the different kinds of shift as there are 8 different categories and 37 subcategories, not all clearly differentiated. Perhaps because of this, the model tends to focus on decontextualized word-chunks in extracts from novels. This throws up the question of whether it was actually possible for the seventy or so students collaborating on van Leuven-Zwart's analysis to have all interpreted the categories in the same way.

One of the ways in which translators may deal with shifts that are avoidable to a degree has already been mentioned here. Nida’s dynamic equivalence, is, in a manner of speaking, a strategy that attempts to bridge an interlingual and intercultural incongruence. Newmark (1995:45) believes that translation could either be source-language oriented or target-language oriented. In its purest form, a source-oriented approach strives to produce a “semantic translation”, which “differs from ‘faithful translation’ only in as far as it must take more account of the aesthetic value” of the text. A target-oriented approach, on the other hand, strives for a “communicative translation”, which “attempts to render the exact contextual meaning of the original in such a way that both content and language are readily acceptable and comprehensible” (1995:47).

Most unusually, Newmark (1995: 85) takes Catford’s “shifts” and reformulates the concept as a translation procedure, as something that the translator strives for, rather than something that should be avoided, or made contingencies for, when a shift is unavoidable. Notwithstanding this ontological discrepancy, the procedures Newmark itemises will prove useful to the analysis in Section III:

*Synonymy:* “A near TL [Target Language] equivalent to an SL [Source Language] word in a context, where a precise equivalent may or may not exist”
Modulation: Vinay and Dalberrnet define “modulation” as a “variation through a change of viewpoint, of perspective and very often of thought” (quoted in Newmark, 1995: 88). Newmark rejects this definition as short-hand for describing anything that is not literal translation; therefore he restricts to instances where negatives can (or must) be turned positive and vice versa.

Compensation: “This is said to occur when loss of meaning, sound-effect, metaphor or pragmatic effect in one part of a sentence is compensated in another part, or in a contiguous sentence” (Newmark, 1995: 90)

Couplets: “Couplets, triples, quadruplets combine two, three of four [translation procedures] respectively for dealing with a single problem” (Newmark, 1995: 91)

Notes: Newmark (1995: 92) highlights three types in his taxonomy: “notes at bottom of page (i.e. footnotes); “notes at end of a chapter” (i.e. endnotes); and a “glossary at the end of book”.¹⁰

Equivalence, lest it should be forgotten, is a postulated condition that is not observable – inasmuch as there is no physical manifestation of equivalence in two texts purporting to convey the same message but in different languages; and though translation is not a science in the strictest sense of the word, how equivalence has been brought about is no less serendipitous to how gravity became known to man. The analogy, if not entirely congruent, is enlightening nevertheless because gravity, like equivalence, is an intangible phenomenon that has never been actually

¹⁰ This list is incomplete, as only the strategies that are relevant to the present study are included here. For a full list and extensive discussion of translation procedures, c.f. Newmark (1995:81-101)
observed – yet its existence is never doubted. In fact, without a working notion of gravity, much of what is known today about the universe would have remained out of the astrophysicist’s reach. Equivalence has not been granted this status of indisputability, despite the fact that, without doubt, much of what is known about translation today would have remained in obscurity had it not been for the light shed on it by the tacit knowledge of equivalence. As Berman (2000:297) succinctly puts it, “all translation is, and must be, the restitution of meaning”. Without equivalence, the task of the translator becomes as impossible as a mathematician’s attempt to solve an equation without the equals sign. Ultimately, to say that equivalence is problematic is a fair assessment. After all, it is an ineffable abstraction whose definition and application is at the mercy of the subjectivist practitioner or scholar. Nonetheless, the indeterminacy that equivalence inheres must be accounted for, instead of allowing indeterminacy to render it invalid because, as Eco (2001:10) says, “in spite of much philosophical speculation, while there is no absolute synonymy for lexical items, different sentences in different languages can express the same proposition”.
Chapter 4

Fictive Dialogue as the Location of Linguistic Identities

4.0 Introduction
When Umberto Eco (2009:82) asks, “why are we deeply moved by the misfortune of Anna Karenina if we are fully aware that she is a fictional character who does not exist in our world?”, he is, by implication, wondering what it is about fictional characters that seem “real” to the reader. He concludes that characters have the power to evoke real feelings and emotions because “unlike other semiotic objects […] fictional characters will never change and will remain the actors of what they did once and forever”. Beyond their asynchronous nature, however, characters also seem real because they perform identities that resonate in the non-fictional world. This section argues that one of the ways (if not the main way) characters perform an identity is through their use of language as it is presented in dialogue, because, as David Lodge (1966:47) says, “it is in dialogue, above all, that the novelist has most opportunity, if he so wishes, to suggest continuity between his fictional world and the real world”. Given that interlingual translation presupposes linguistic shifts (Toury 1980:12), it may logically follow that a shift in the language characters use may cause a shift in their identity, therefore contradicting Eco’s belief that “characters will never change”; and if Eco’s belief is contradicted, can it be said that the characters in the Spanish translations are as “real” as those in the original?
The question above is rather difficult to answer. To find out what constitutes a “real” character would require an ontology of fictive characters that is beyond the scope of this thesis. Therefore, this thesis focuses on dialogue as a characterisation device, as a literary phenomenon that forges characters’ identities, and, crucially, a phenomenon that warrants its place in translation scholarship. Dialogue is constructed with a type of discourse which is also particularly difficult to place in an ontological category. It appears in novels as language that characters speak spontaneously, yet it is judiciously crafted by the author and represented graphically on a page. What is inescapable is the social nature of dialogue and the “continuity” it creates between characters and “the real world”. It is precisely this link – the contiguity between the character and the social or “real” world – that creates a semiotically-coded identity for the characters. Before a semiotic conceptualisation of identity can take place, however, it is necessary to explore how language can reflect, shape and mediate identities:

Fictive dialogue is the type of discourse where the social, historical and personal background of the narrator and of the characters can be constructed through the interplay of standard and non-standard varieties of a language. Variation may signal the social distance separating one character from the others, and the narrator from the characters; it may either foster the reader’s sympathy for a character or completely alienate that character. Furthermore, the symbolic association between the language variety spoken and the behaviours and values the speakers stand for has ideological consequences.

(Brumme and Espunya 2012:20)

Brumme and Espunya (2012:20) call this phenomenon the variational space in dialogue, as it is here where characters acquire the linguistic attributes that indirectly characterise them. In the “Rabbit” books, two varieties are relevant: idiolect (an individual’s idiosyncratic use of language) and sociolect (the linguistic features of a language user that reflect his/her membership of a speech community). In fictive terms, an idiolect is crucial to the differentiation of a particular character vis-à-vis
the other characters in the novel, signalling “the social distance separating one character from the others”; and a sociolect is crucial to the transmission of the ideologies associated with a speech community’s position in its cultural environment, often carrying “ideological consequences” that may “alienate […] character[s]” (Brumme and Espunya 2012:20). Yet such statements still refer to language as the object of study in Sociolinguistics, which normally entails the study of data compiled from examples of real life speech in order to theorise abstractions that relate to language in a social context. It is important not to lose sight of the difference between traditional sociolinguistic research and the type of research that is being carried out here. Mimetic novels, such as the “Rabbit” books, are fictive representations of reality and therefore may not be constrained by the indeterminacy that is inherent in language variation. “The author is an artist, not a linguist or a sociologist, and his purpose is literary rather than scientific”, says Ives (1950:138), who furthers his argument by saying that for this reason, literary dialects “are deliberately incomplete”. If Ives’ statement is taken as valid, then a literary dialogue is never a perfect reflection of speech in all its heterogeneity.

Los personajes que toman la palabra en un diálogo de una novela no entablan su conversación de la misma manera que dos conocidos que se encuentran, por ejemplo, en la calle o una familia al desayunar todos juntos. Cualquier transcripción de una conversación auténtica rinde cuentas del fuerte anclaje en la situación real de comunicación, la complejidad de la interacción entre los interlocutores y los implícitos que subyacen a cada acto de comunicación. Para que el lector de una novela llegue a tener la impresión de que los personajes están hablando como en un diálogo real y cotidiano, habrá que valerse de recursos capaces de crear esta ilusión. (Brumme 2012:13)

As Brumme points out above, the artificial nature of literary idiolects and sociolects is based on the transcription of markers, in the first place, to signify the oral nature of this discourse, and secondly, to orchestrate the different character voices running through the story. There have been various attempts at finding an appropriate term for this literary device.
Gregory (1967) refers to this literary practice as *the written to be spoken as if not written*; Krapp (1926) uses the more succinct term *eye dialect* in order to highlight the visual (as opposed to aural) dimension of literary dialects; and Paul Goetsch (1985) prefers to stress the mimetic elements of speech transcription with the term *feigned orality*.\(^{11}\) Although these three terms are nominally different, each refers to the author’s “attempt to represent in writing a speech that is restricted regionally, socially, or both” (Ives 1950:137).

The challenge in translation lies in the fact that idiolects and sociolects are defined by their cultural and social specificity, which poses great difficulties for the translator, as Leppihalme (2000:247) explains:

> The use of dialect in literary dialogue is one way of creating linguistic richness and individuality, and some texts achieve their effects largely through a careful balancing of dialectal and non-dialectal elements. It is well known, however, that in translation these effects are difficult to retain.

Leppihalme acknowledges that the difficulties of transferring dialogue are due to the differences in speech conventions from one culture to another. This has led translation scholarship to reach the conclusion that it is “usually quite impossible to render [intralinguistic] variations in a satisfactory manner” (House 1973:167). The view that arises thus is that it seems inevitable that there will be some residual (socio)linguistic features that the translator will not be able to transfer to the target text. The concept of untranslatability reveals just this: during the process of translating aesthetic language, some elements of the source text are sacrificed in favour of intelligibility in the target text, or elements of the source text are favoured in order to remain as faithful as possible to the source text. Therefore, save for the transposition of the entire semiotic system – a translation chimera – it can be assumed that losses are

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\(^{11}\) For a detailed account of these conceptualisations, c.f., Brumme (2012:27)
incurred in the translation of dialogue. House singles out *intralinguistic variation* as the root cause of these losses. Essentially, she claims that the issues salient to dialogue translation stem from the varieties of language use that depart from an idealised “standard” – precisely the linguistic features that occasion idiolects and sociolects. As a consequence of this, and as Leppihalme’s (2000) study highlights, source linguistic varieties are often standardised in the target language, to the point where the practice is becoming a trend. It is a phenomenon that Toury (2012:30) considers prevalent enough to formulate it as the *law of growing standardisation*. According to this law, the language the characters speak in the target dialogue will be neutralised and divorced from its source text “network of relations”, therefore attenuating the semiotic value of characters’ identities. In this dual dialectics of a “fidelity and transformation” – as Lane-Mercier (1997:43) calls it – characters may be transformed to the point where their linguistic identities, and the concomitant self and cultural identities their language reflects, may be inconsistent with their source text counterparts. A framework that ties together these phenomena, language and identity is formulated here in such a way that it is applicable to both the source text and the target text; thus, within the realm of language and society, the following section will put forward a set of principles that synthesise language and identity in a symbiotic relationship.

### 4.1 The Language-Identity Nexus

The idea that language and identity are inextricably linked is not a new one. Malinowski (1923) was the first on record to articulate the link between language and society through his *context of situation* conceptualisation – i.e., the notion that extralinguistic factors in the immediate environment of an utterance must be factored into the meaning of said utterance. J.R Firth (1951, 1957) subsequently elaborated on Malinowski’s ideas and developed his own theory that drew attention to the context-dependent nature of meaning. However, it was Labov’s (1963) seminal study of phonological patterns in Martha’s
Vineyard that crystallised the language-society synergy. Labov successfully demonstrated that language users subconsciously exercise linguistic agency in order to represent their social status, race or education background. In other words, Labov demonstrated that language users not only utter words but also perform their social identity through language. Robert LePage (1980) and LePage and Tabouret-Keller (1985), focusing on the identity aspects of sociolinguistics, developed the concept of *acts of identity*, which “reveals that the language choices that we make are a central element of our conception of ourselves not just as members of social groups but as self-contained individuals” (Watt 2010:77). Thus the trajectory of sociolinguistic scholarship seems to have followed a natural progression from linguistic issues through to identity via socially-inclined research.

Labov paved the way for future quantitative analyses of linguistic features that index identities. From the qualitative perspective, however, there is a need to calibrate the multifarious concept of “identity” in order to accommodate it into linguistic parameters. This, however, should not be taken as a suggestion that identity is somehow shoehorned into an epistemology of linguistics; as Joseph (2004:3) observes, even though language does not offer a complete picture of people’s sense of an intangible self, it does play a significant, and perhaps essential, role:

[…] it is not the case that language entirely determines how we conceive of a person. But how they speak, inseparably from what they say, plays a very fundamental role. In a large number of instances our contact with people is purely linguistic, taking place over the phone, etc. Under these circumstances we seem to be able to size them up, to feel that we know *who they really are* – that “deep” identity again – more satisfactorily than when we only see them and have no linguistic contact.
In his treatise on language and identity, in fact, Joseph reserves a special comment for fictional characters that is relatable to Eco’s earlier-quoted statement:

Perhaps the people whose identity we feel we most fully comprehend are the great literary characters, the Lears and Emma Bovarys and, closer to earth, the Harry Potters. Their authors have captured something even more remarkable than the inner essence of an actual human being – persons in a sense more real than any actual individual. (2004: 1)

Presumably, by “more real” Joseph is alluding to the same idea as Eco. That is, characters do not change, and are therefore spared the ambiguity inherent in the identities of real people who move from context to context, giving their identity a new value in each context. Instead, fictional characters are created with an identity that, under the thumb of the skilful writer, coheres in a handful of scenes. This is at the heart of the translation issues explored in this thesis: translation between cultures changes the language and the context through which and in which characters operate, and in light of this trans-textual phenomenon, their identities may also change. The question remains, however: what exactly is a linguistically-defined identity? For Joseph, the study of how language and identity become inextricably linked in a semiotic communion must begin with an account of Pierre Bourdieu’s attack on the essentialists’ wont for categorising identity in discriminate and homogenous groups:

One can understand the particular form of struggle over classifications that is constituted by the struggle over the definition of “regional” or “ethnic” identity only if one transcends the opposition […] between representation and reality, or, more precisely, the struggle over representations […] Struggles over ethnic or regional identity – in other words, over the properties (stigmata or emblems) linked with the origin through the place of origin and its associated durable marks, such as accent – are a particular case of the different struggles over
classifications, struggles over the monopoly of the power to make people see and believe, to get them to know and recognize, to impose the legitimate definition of the divisions of the social world and, thereby, to make and unmake groups. (Bourdieu 1991: 221)

The important point to make here is that Bourdieu is not saying that identities are fallacious, but the arbitrary border between social groups is. Whether it is arbitrary or not is inconsequential, because once such borders are enforced they exist as mental representations. As Joseph explains it, “they are every bit as real as if they were grounded in anything ‘natural’” (2004:13). The role that language plays in this framework is both to demarcate such groups through sociolects, and to reflect and shape self-identities in the form of idiolects.

4.1.1 Bucholtz and Hall’s identity principles

The concepts and ideas expounded throughout the works cited here are summarily enacted in Bucholtz and Hall’s (2005) identity principles, which will be applied in this study as a framework to establish how characters forge an identity through linguistic interaction. The first of these is the emergence principle:

Identity is best viewed as the emergent product rather than the pre-existing source of linguistic and other semiotic practices and therefore as fundamentally a social and cultural phenomenon. (Bucholtz and Hall 2005:588)

This principle posits that identity is not a psychological mechanism for self-categorisation, but a manifestation of the “self” that surfaces through linguistic performance in particular sociocultural contexts. The discussion on identity here does not have as its aim the characterisation of the fixed identification categories of race, religion, education and social status. Instead, these categories provide the cultural schemata needed in order to make inferences about the more transient elements of
identity that are not just manifested, but are performed in specific social contexts. This is the crux of this first principle: identity is in some way determined by spontaneous “semiotic practices” which are a “cultural phenomenon”; it is also what Gumperz & Cook-Gumperz (1982:1) have in mind when they say that:

We customarily take gender, ethnicity, and class as given parameters and boundaries within which we create our social identities. The study of language as interactional discourse demonstrates that these parameters are not constants that can be taken for granted but are communicatively produced. Therefore to understand issues of identity and how they affect and are affected by social, political, and ethnic divisions we need to gain insights into the communicative processes by which they arise.

Thus the semiotic structure for interactional language can be used to predict the phraseology and lexical resources available to the speaker. There is a difference between a character saying, for example, “Whadja do all day?” and “What did you do today?”, and the difference is largely determined by context-specific variables, such as to whom the question is directed, or the cultural context in which the conversation takes place. According to Bucholtz and Hall (2005:20), “nearly all contemporary linguistic research on identity takes this general perspective as its starting point”. The second principle proposed is the positionality principle:

Identities encompass (a) macrolevel demographic categories; (b) local, ethnographically specific cultural positions; and (c) temporary and interactionally specific stances and participant roles. (Bucholtz and Hall 2005:592)

This second principle allows for the view that speakers’ utterances in any given social context will reflect their position within their speech community and by extension, the position of the hearer. This principle is closely associated with the emergence principle. That is, if identity is a
conglomerate of characteristics that surface variedly depending on the context of the interaction, then it logically follows that speakers will take up different positions that pertain to the “macro-structures of society” and that are determined by temporal and interactional parameters. If the first two principles describe the ontology of the language-identity nexus, the third principle, *indexicality*, is the mechanism through which language constructs, constitutes and reflects social identities:

Identity relations emerge in interaction through several related indexical processes, including: (a) overt mention of identity categories and labels; (b) implicatures and presuppositions regarding one’s own or other’s identity position; (c) displayed evaluative and epistemic orientations to ongoing talk, as well as interactional footings and participant roles; and (d) the use of linguistic structures and systems that are ideologically associated with specific personas and groups. (Bucholtz and Hall 2005:594)

Indexicality, based on Peirce’s *index* in his sign theory, is “fundamental to the way in which linguistic forms are used to construct identity positions” (Bucholtz & Hall, ibid.) The concept viewed thus is a methodological tool through which the analyst can explore how the ideas embodied in the first two principles manifest themselves during an interaction. This proposition can be described as the practice of analysing the micro-level linguistic features (verbs, modifiers, predicates) to find the links between the speaker and the macro-structures of society (ideology, text, discourse). This process of signification from the micro-signifier to the macro-signified is, in Bucholtz and Hall’s view, necessarily mediated through the culture-specific ideologies that are pragmatically and semiotically transmitted in social interaction. The speech patterns that possess the inherent quality of indexicality are various. Speech acts (the language speakers use to get something done) and register (the type of language pre-determined by context) have the potential of signifying the speaker’s role in a conversation as determined by cultural-interactional norms, and the symbolic order of participants in
situation types (Halliday 1978: 110-111). Word sequence and tag questions (“isn’t it?”, “wouldn’t it?”, “could you?”) have the potential of signifying the linguistic agency exercised by the speaker.

Bucholtz and Hall (2005:23-24) consider identity to be an interpersonal concept; this is reflected in their fourth identity axiom, the *relationality principle*:

> Identities are intersubjectively constructed through several, often overlapping, complementary relations, including similarity/difference, genuineness/artifice and authority/delegitimacy.

The relationality principle highlights the dynamic, intersubjective nature of identity. The main aim of this principle is “to underscore the point that identities are never autonomous or independent but always acquire social meaning in relation to other available identity positions and other social actors”. This point is self-evident if we take the indexicality principle to be true, i.e. speakers’ speech patterns may represent their social position, and by extension, speakers may also make presuppositions about the hearer’s position. The fifth and last principle, *the partialness principle*, draws from cultural anthropology by challenging the view that “forms of social life are internally coherent”. With this principle, Bucholtz and Hall advocate a postmodern conceptualisation of identity in the sense that cultural representations are always “partial accounts” and highly contextualised:

> Any given construction of identity may be in part deliberate and intentional, in part habitual and hence often less than fully conscious, in part an outcome of interactional negotiation and contestation, in part an outcome of others’ perceptions and representations, and in part an effect of larger ideological processes and material structures that may become relevant to interaction. It is
therefore constantly shifting both as interaction unfolds and across discourse contexts. (Bucholtz and Hall 2005:606)

As well as positing that identities are fractured, this principle also challenges the traditionally held view that “the individual rational subject […] consciously authors his identity without structural constraints”; instead, “agency is more productively viewed as the accomplishment of social action”. The formation for identity, therefore, is in itself a social action that “agency accomplishes”.

Bucholtz and Hall’s taxonomic view of identity proffers categories that are neither monolithic nor stable in their potential as indexical elements of language. Due to the transient and subjective nature of language in context, this analysis employs these identity principles in order to frame a discussion that will be qualitative, rather than quantitative, as a quantitative analysis would not recognise the infinite variables that govern the construction of language in any given context. Sociolects, and in particular, idiolects, are rather complicated concepts to negotiate (Eco 1976:270–271). Testament to this is the paucity of theories that can apprehend the various lects with scientific rigour; however, the principles summarised above will prove immensely valuable in the analysis that follows because, rather than attempt an over-arching conceptualisation of what is, in essence, an abstract notion governed by innumerable social variables, Bucholtz and Hall provide malleable parameters that can accommodate individual instances of identity as they are performed. The principles outlined above will frame the exploration of the characters’ performance as they interact in dialogue; however, of the ones discussed, the indexicality principle is of paramount importance as it is this concept that enables the discussion of how the linguistic in dialogue links to a non-linguistic object in the source text, and will inform, ultimately, how this link can be recast in the target text.
Chapter 5

The Semiotics of Charles Sanders Peirce in Translation: the Hermeneutic Continuum

5.0 Introduction: semiotics in translation
The work of Charles Sanders Peirce can be accommodated into a philosophy of translation fairly easily. In fact, Peirce explains one of his most contested concepts, the interpretant, by using translation as a metaphorical device (Colapietro 2003:191). Therefore, despite the fact that until two decades ago, translation and semiotics had “virtually ignored each other” (Gorlée 1994:10), it is not surprising that Peirce’s theories have grown in influence in the translation landscape. This breakthrough, as it were, has seen a sharp increase in the number of volumes that explore the position Peirce might occupy in a translation epistemology. Petrelli (2003:17), in the introduction to the volume Translation Translation, says that “if we agree with Charles S. Peirce that signs do not exist without an interpretant and that the meaning of a sign can only be expressed by another sign acting as its interpretant, translation is constitutive of the sign, indeed sign activity or semiosis is a translative process”.12 Similarly, Gorlée (1994:10), to whom perhaps the greatest debt is owed by the burgeoning field of translation and semiotics, says that “translation is and may be logically assimilated to semiosis, or sign activity, in Peirce’s sense of this concept”.13 In fact, some key translation theories are tacitly relatable to semiotics. Nida’s dynamic equivalent, for example, with its focus on associative meanings, is certainly congenial to semiotics; Bassnett and Lefevere (1990), who

12 Italics in the original.
13 Gorlée, in fact, coined the term semiotranslation as a label for the Translation Studies paradigm founded on semiotics, especially Peirce’s. (Gorlée 2004:11)
advocated a Cultural Turn away from commonplace traditions in Translation Studies to the study of a “text that is embedded in its network of both source and target cultural signs” also evoke semiotic tenets. The work of Toury is also strongly influenced by semiotics, though more so by the Formalist and Structuralist tradition that viewed cultural phenomena as intertwined in a semiotic macrosystem. Toury’s work on norms takes *polysystem theory* – the idea that literature and translation are integrated into an open-ended system that is governed by cultural norms – as its point of departure (Munday 2008:110). Before an in-depth exploration of how Peirce’s semiotic may be assimilated into the theoretical framework herein, this section discusses Peirce’s limitless semiotic theory. The sheer breadth and depth of his typology is such that this section necessarily restricts its scope to explaining only those concepts that are essential to understanding how Peirce’s typology applied here.

5.1 Peirce’s typology of sign: the symbol, the icon and the index

Although Semiotics in Continental Europe is more often than not associated with the figure of Ferdinand de Saussure, it is Peirce’s “semeiotic” that is, according to Ogden and Richards (1923: 279), “by far the most elaborate and determined attempt to give an account of signs and their meaning”. For one, Peirce’s taxonomy offers a more varied categorisation of signs by outlining three major types – though an important distinction needs to be made, as Sebeok (1994:21) says, “it is not signs that are actually classified, but more precisely, aspects of signs”. The three signs, or aspects of signs, are: (1) the symbol: this is loosely equivalent to Saussure’s linguistic signifier, based on an arbitrary relationship that gains value in a system, for example, language; (2) the icon: this is a sign that resembles its referent, for example, a photograph; and (3) the index: this is a sign based on contiguity or causality, a sign that points to something unseen, for example, smoke is an index of fire, but only if the fire is unseen. Thus, semiosis is a generation of meaning that can take three different forms; what differs among these forms (i.e.,
types of signs) is the manner in which they “mean”, something which cannot be fully understood without accounting for the substrata that underlie each of the three aspects. Whether the sign is an icon, an index or a symbol, its potential for meaning is interpretable through the underlying triadic relationship between the *representamen*, the *object* and the *interpretant*. The nature of the relationship between these three underlying elements denominates whether the sign is an icon, an index or a symbol. This represents another significant departure from Saussure’s semiology, whose famous dyadic sign posits that meaning is generated by the relationship between *signifier* and the *signified*. In Peirce’s own words:

> A sign, or *representamen*, is something which stands for something in some respect or capacity. It addresses somebody, that is, creates in the mind of that person an equivalent sign, or perhaps a more developed sign. The sign which it creates I call the *interpretant* of the first sign. The sign stands for something, its *object*. It stands for that object, not in all respects, but in reference to a sort of idea, which I have sometimes called the *ground* of the representamen. (Peirce: 2.228, 1897)

Peirce broadens and deepens his theory to include another underlying layer made up of further sub-divisions for the representamen, interpretant and object. However, because these sub-divisions play no part in the methodology here, they are left out of this survey. The figure below represents pictorially the relationship between the concepts thus far discussed:

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14 A thorough discussion of these concepts may be found in Gorlée (1994), Sebeok (1994) and TL Short (2007).
The representamen (sometimes called a “sign” – Peirce’s own terminology is often the source of confusion)\(^{15}\) is the concept most closely relatable to Saussure’s signifier in that it is the element of the sign that does the referring; words, for example, are representamens when the sign-aspect is the symbol. The object is also closely related to Saussure’s signified. In the semiotic process, the object is that which is being referred to; thus, the word “cat” is a representamen that points to the object: the furry animal. However, at this stage the sign is no longer a symbol as its function is to stand for something it resembles (its object), and is therefore an icon. Of the three elements that make up the underlying structure of a sign, the interpretant is the most debated. Colapietro (2003: 195), for example, says that the interpretant of a sign is “a representation mediating between (or among) other representations”. Eco (1979:71), on the other hand, offers his definition of Peirce’s interpretant in the context of his own theory of unlimited semiosis. He says that “all semiotic judgements that a code permits one to assert about a given semantic unit should be considered interpretants of that sign”. Every interpretant allows for the interpretation of a concomitant sign,

\(^{15}\) c.f. João Quiroz and Floyd Merrel (2006:41)
which, though unseen, is rendered existentially certain by the existence of the sign that points to it. If the representamen “cat” is a symbol that translates into an object (an iconic representation of a physical cat), the interpretant may, for example, mediate between this icon and another sign that is related, which certainly exists, but cannot be seen (e.g., its genus, Felis). This is the process that the previously-quoted Jakobson describes as “the meaning of any sign is its translation into some further, alternative sign” (Jakobson [1959] 2000:114). Here the representamen (symbol) “translates” into an object (physical entity). This example is too superficial to do justice to the complexity of Peirce’s model, but an example of a semiosis that is as narrow as this one has the benefit of illustrating how the three signs interact with each other as it highlights the procedural nature of sign-action as Peirce conceived it. Thus semiosis, rather than an act, is best viewed as a process that takes place along a hermeneutic continuum that is signposted by symbols, icons, and indices; as Gorlée (1994:158) explains:

It is true that linguistic signs are general and conventional signs, and are therefore first and foremost symbols; yet as such they have implied iconic and indexical components […] Thus in Peirce’s semiotics a symbol must involve both an index and an icon; and an index in turn an icon. This makes a sign not into some kind of thing but into an event, a relation in which one of the three elements plays a predominant role, thereby overshadowing the two others.

Whatever sign takes up the most prominent role depends on where the focus lies. For example, in translation, because it is a transaction between languages that brings about two products, but ones that purport “sameness”, the sign that prevails is the icon. On the other hand, in some sociolinguistic studies, as Bucholtz and Hall (2005) prove, the index sign prevails. The next section will demonstrate how Peirce’s signs take a place of prominence in the methodology here as an “event” shaped as a continuum.
5.2 The hermeneutic continuum

The *hermeneutic continuum* is merely the specific type of semiosis that takes place during the interpretation of a language-identity nexus. It conceptualises the process of reading the language that characters use in dialogue, and how their utterances lead to the abstraction of an identity. Peirce did not design a continuum; this much should be made clear. For Peirce, the entire universe is made up of signs; that is, a person can only appreciate and apprehend the universe through sign action: “all this Universe is perfused with signs, if it is not composed exclusively of signs” (Peirce, quoted in Gorlée, 1994:50). To suggest Peircean semiotics is based on continua would be incorrect – but, as this section demonstrates, this does not necessarily preclude continua from being extrapolated out of Peirce’s theory, especially in relation to translation because as Colapietro (2003:195) says, in Peirce’s semiotic currency, “translation functions synecdochically [because] translation is one of the parts of the universe of signs that most readily lends itself to serve as a means for illuminating the whole” (Colapietro 2003:195).

Sign-action, in general terms, is a circular and cyclical process (Eco 1976). However, the task undertaken here is not a general inquiry, but a commentary on linguistic identities and how they may be reflected through the graphic medium of language. This is a very specific endeavour, a well-defined process that the analyst must approach with a delimited framework that homes in on the language-identity nexus. From written language to an intangible identity via an invisible index is a progressive semiosis: a continuum, tailored specifically for this analysis. This is, admittedly, a reductive formalisation of the vast potential of Peirce’s doctrine, but for a bottom-up analysis that begins at the micro-level of a text, this reduction must be so.
The continuum should not be mistaken as a vertical process analogous to reading from left to right, from word to word, each word representing a semiosis in itself. The continuum is a horizontal process that originates from the linguistic unit on the page. This may be language at any level: a letter, word, sentence, paragraph, discourse or, even, the entire text. This is the point of departure for the continuum. From this point on it rises out of the page and enters into the abstracted domain of cognition. In light of how studies into language use have appropriated Peirce’s index and reshaped it, it is perhaps not surprising that Peirce’s triadic typology is compatible with the language-identity nexus, although nominally it suggests two dimensions, the reality is that the nexus is made up of three spheres: language, identity and the invisible bridge that links the two. The manner in which sign-action orchestrates the stepwise process from language to identity, therefore, is the matter at hand.

5.2.1 Alpha point: the symbol
All language, in Peircean terms, is essentially symbolic because “a symbol is a sign which refers to the object that it denotes by virtue of a law, usually an association of general ideas” (Peirce, quoted in Gorlée, 1994: 77; original reference in Collected Papers: 2.249/1903). Whereas semiology posits that semiosis ends at this point by virtue of the sign having signified its denotatum, Peirce, on the other hand, believed that this is merely a starting point. Written language is a graphic symbol that represents the point of departure for the semiosis that occasions the language-identity nexus. The value of the symbol here is thus of linguistic import. In the following quotation, Proni (2003: 263) explains why the representamen (the underlying element that dictates that the sign is a symbol) is the entry point for the translation process:

[The] proposed protocol of translation starts from the Representamen, goes towards the Object and then builds an Interpretant. When the target text is
produced, the receiver will find a new Representamen and, behind it, an Object that corresponds to the translator’s Interpretant.

The language-identity continuum proposed here does not follow the trajectory that Proni outlines above, but both processes begin with the representamen, i.e. with the symbol. Interlingual translation occurs between two linguistic systems that are incompatible, that is, incongruent at the level of symbols. Translation exists because there is no equivalence at this semiotic level. In fact, it could be said that incongruence at the level of the symbol is a necessary pre-condition of translation. This is the idea that Nida expresses in the following quotation; although he does not explicitly reference Peirce, his terminology suggests a kinship between his translation philosophy and Peirce’s doctrine of signs:

Language consists of more than the meanings of the symbols and the combination of symbols; it is essentially a code in operation, or, in other words, a code functioning for a specific purpose or purposes. Thus we must analyze the transmission of a message in terms of a dynamic dimension. This dimension is especially important for translation, since the production of equivalent messages is a process, not merely of matching parts of utterances, but also of reproducing the total dynamic character of the communication. Without both elements the results can scarcely be regarded, in any realistic sense, as equivalent. (Nida 1964: 120)

In the reconstruction of the hermeneutic continuum in the target text, the task of the translator is to find a symbol in the target language that, in Catford’s words, “occupies the same economy” as the symbol from the source language. “Equivalence in difference”, as Jakobson said; and herein is the “difference”. From this point on in the continuum, the imperfect symmetry – the semblance of equivalence – must be achieved by the succeeding signs in the sequence.
5.2.2 Mediating point: towards the icon via the index

Every sign points to something. Therefore, to describe an index as a sign that points towards some other sign would be to offer an incomplete picture of this sign-aspect. A sign is only an index when the object that it points to is unseen. Yet, in its invisibility, the sign is an existential certainty by virtue of the preceding sign. In this hermeneutic continuum, the graphic symbol is a sign that points to the identity of characters. Thus the mediating point is the index. This is not entirely surprising considering Bucholtz and Hall’s earlier-cited indexicality principle, which incorporates Peirce’s index in a sociolinguistic framework that proffers the view that linguistic forms “can be metapragmatically linked with social identities” (Johnstone 2010:32). Thus espoused, the index is not, as Lyons (cited in Laver, 1974; original reference in Lyons, 1968:275) explains, used to “mean a deictic device”, but as Abercrombie (1967:6) advocates, as a sign “which reveals personal characteristics […] of the speaker”.

5.2.3 Omega point: the icon

Eco posits that Peirce’s typology suggests that sign-action is an unlimited semiosis - a process that traverses through signs ad infinitum. The suggestion here that the hermeneutic continuum, defined through a Peircean ethos, reaches an omega point, clearly goes against Eco’s claims. Yet, given that the end-goal here is what language says about speakers’ identities, the icon, which stands as the sign that concretises characters’ identity, must stand as the final sign in the language-identity continuum. The icon, in other words, is the invisible contiguous sign to which the index points:

The term contiguous is not to be interpreted literally […] as necessarily meaning “adjoining” or “adjacent” […] Rather continuity should be thought of in a classical juxtaposition to the key principle in the definition of the icon, to wit, similarity. (Sebeok 1994: 31)
An utterance may function as a synecdoche of the character’s identity – that is, by exposing the reader to a fragment of the character’s linguistic behaviour, it is a fragment that is developed enough to draw conclusions on the shape of the whole: the icon, the character’s identity. This model, applied in the comparative analysis, will test whether the source and target language symbols (necessarily different) generate the same indexical value (dynamic equivalence) for the characters’ identities to be semiotically assimilated in source and target text icons:

When most people consider the relationship between literature and iconicity I suppose they immediately think of images. After all, some might argue, the office of literature is to supply us with powerful emotionally charged images. Or, to put it in a more precise way, since the literary text is linguistic, and consequently not itself the nature of an image […] its office is to occasion or arouse mental images in the mind of the reader. (Jørgen D Johansen 1996:42)

This quotation involves many of the same ideas that give rise to Eco’s question at the beginning of this section: how characters, as an intrinsic part of the story, “supply us with powerful emotionally charged images”. There is no doubt that Eco, as an advocate of Peirce’s doctrine, is fully aware that his question is rooted in Peirce’s icon. No doubt either that Eco, who has written extensively on translation, is aware that his point that characters never change is only applicable in a monolingual context. He does not, however, contextualise his point in translation terms. With the aid of the theoretical framework outlined here, this is what the next section will set out to do.
6.0 Introduction

In the foreword to the Everyman edition of *Rabbit Angstrom* – the edition that finally collected all four “Rabbit” books as one “mega-novel” – Updike spoke of his ambition, as a writer of fiction, to “not describe his work but to call it into being” (Updike 1995:vii). This is precisely the descriptive purview of this chapter: to compare how Updike and the Tusquets Editores translators bring Harry Angstrom “into being” in dialogue. The theoretical framework that was discussed in general terms in the previous section is here further refined to serve the specific purpose of analysing Harry’s idiolect. A discussion on how the concept of “idiolect” applies to this section is followed by an explanatory survey on the specific linguistic phenomena that function as pragmatic indexers of Harry Angstrom’s linguistic idiosyncrasies, namely register, the verbal structures Harry uses to satisfy contextual parameters; politeness, the linguistic strategies Harry uses to negotiate interpersonal imperatives in conversation; and accommodation, how Harry modifies his linguistic behaviour to position his social self in relation to the other participants in the conversation. Based on the Peircean precept that linguistic signs are symbols that have the potential to index an icon, discrepancies in Harry’s
source and target idiolect are established depending on whether there is equivalence at the mediating (index) and omega (icon) points of the hermeneutic continuum. With this theoretical framework in place, the analysis proceeds to answer the following research questions:

- What is the nature of Harry’s idiolect in the source text?
- What is the nature of Harry’s idiolect in the target text?
- What linguistic shifts are revealed by a comparison of Harry’s source and target idiolect?
- Do these linguistic shifts result in a semiotic shift in the iconic representation of the character’s language-identity nexus, i.e., are there elements of the main character’s linguistic identity that are significantly different in the target dialogue?
- Could this semiotic shift have been avoided with a translation strategy that caters specifically for a language-identity nexus?

This analysis is carried out in three main sections. The first section explores whether Harry’s target language idiolect indexes linguistic verisimilitude by adopting markers of orality and an informal register. The second section compares Harry’s use of swear words in the texts in order to explore whether negative polite forms index his angst in the translation. Lastly, the third section explores whether Harry’s target dialogue indexes his social identity by modifying his language in given interactional contexts.

6.1 Towards a definition of “idiolect”

The study of idiolect is fraught with theoretical ambiguities that encumber studies of this type of variation. At an elementary level, and as Downes (1998:270–271) defines it, an idiolect is the idiosyncratic manner of expression of a single individual:
An idiolect [...] reflects each person’s unique position in relation to the structural heterogeneity of a changing language, but also the normative pressures, strong or weak, exerted on them by the various symbolisms available to them. The speaker is “between norms” to a greater or lesser degree. From social networks come pressures deriving from solidarity. From other social loci come other norms, including those made legitimate by the institutions of the society at large and deriving from power/status. Utterances will be interpretable in the light of these norms – for example, the social affiliation or social status, the gender or age identity, being claimed by the use of variables.

An idiolect is founded on the idea that it is a type of language variation that pertains to individuals. Downes, however, goes a step further and states that the theoretical conceptualisation of linguistic individuation is necessarily established within the sociocultural parameters of race, age and gender – categories that are quintessentially sociolectal – that function as the social loci upon which individuals formulate their particular way of speaking. Thus it seems that the relationship between idiolects and sociolects, and the analogous relationship between individual speakers and their immediate cultural environment, corresponds to the Saussurian langue/parole semiotic paradigm. A parole gains its value – that is, its identity – depending on how it operates within the parameters of the langue (language system) that harbours it, in the same way that individual speakers reflect their uniqueness by communicating with a set of linguistic features garnered from the infinite number of possible utterances in the inventory of the linguistic system (i.e., langue). Individual speakers thus manipulate the linguistic system in their own peculiar way, therefore becoming the parole of the analogy; viewed as such and in the context of fictive voices, characters, provided they have an idiosyncratic way of speaking, constitute paroles.

While the above may be a theoretically efficient way of describing idiolect as an abstraction, it does not capture the linguistic features that in
fact formulate empirical idiolects. Such an endeavour, however, is rather onerous because an idiolect is a type of variation with no clear delimitations, and it can therefore be difficult to distinguish between the linguistic features that reflect the individual and the features that reflect the individual as a member of a community. Unlike certain sociolects (for example, African American Vernacular English, which will be dealt with in the following chapter) there is no set of features that can be categorised and exclusively ascribed to a single theory of idiolect. Moreover, the very idea of idiolect precludes quantitative characterisations of a single, all-encompassing lexico-grammatical profile precisely because every idiolect is different; and in any case, as the emergence principle suggests, such instances of variation would prove much too unstable and context-dependent to lend themselves to an analysis that would establish its composite features. Therefore, the approach taken here does not seek to establish linguistic variation per se, but rather isolate the surface linguistic structures that reveal speakers’ unique semiotic-pragmatic use of language. In other words, the aim here is to explore how Harry Angstrom uses language to perform his identity and express his social stance in specific contexts, using an approach that Hymes (1967:9), in relation to the theoretical reciprocity between the individual and the community as inseparable entities, endorses:

No normal person, and no normal community, is limited in repertoire to a single variety of code, to an unchanging monotony which would preclude the possibility of indicating respect, insolence, mock-seriousness, humor, role-distance, etc. by switching from one code variety to another.

According to Hymes, isolating an idiolect is tantamount to establishing how speakers express their social stance; not the sociocultural categories such as race, age and gender, but their affective position, contextualised and defined by these sociocultural parameters. What ultimately occasions an instance of idiolectal variation is the manner in which a single person
uses language in specific contexts. Viewed in this way, the idea of performance – idealised speakers in homogenous communities notwithstanding – becomes crucial to a discussion on idiolect.\textsuperscript{16} Bauman (2000:1) says that when the concept of performance is added to the language-identity equation, identity becomes an “emergent construction”; Bauman elaborates further:

\begin{quote}
[...] Identity is an emergent construction, the situated outcome of a rhetorical and interpretive process in which interactants make situationally motivated selections from socially constituted repertoires of identificational and affiliational resources and craft these semiotic resources into identity claims for presentation to others.
\end{quote}

Performance here can be understood as a “communicative practice” that is commensurate to the manner in which an individual interacts within a specific cultural context, and how this expression is marked with the speaker’s sense of self. An idiolect cannot be isolated by an analysis that focuses solely on linguistic features, as if these features, extracted from an infinite inventory, were exclusively the domain of a single individual. Harry’s language is explored here in relation to how he expresses himself - literally, how he expresses his self - in different contexts, because, as Talbot points out, every idiolect is marked and defined by its inherent heterogeneity:

\begin{quote}
A single individual’s language will vary according to the needs of the social context, in terms of level of formality required by the relationship between the speaker and hearer and what they are talking about, as well as other aspects of the social setting. (Talbot 2010:18)
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{16} Performance is not used with the meaning intended by Chomsky, who views language as a paradigmatic performance/competence abstraction, akin to Saussure’s langue/parole.
What is here termed idiolect, therefore, may be extrapolated further to outline the performance of a social self through language, which is crucial to this project because, as Penas Ibáñez, (2012:55) points out, “social identity should also be an essential concern within translation practice”, a topic in Translation Studies which has hitherto yet to gain traction in the type of translation scholarship that looks at the importance of building a language-identity nexus for characters. For Brumme and Espunya (2012:38), in fact, translation research on dialogue is not only beneficial for Translation Studies, but also highlights the ontological importance of the type of discourse that builds fictive interactions: “the special interest in the narrative strategies used to build fictive dialogue lies in the fact that until today only very few researchers have pointed to its importance in literary translation”.17

6.2 Pragmatic indexers

Thus far the focus has been on describing idiolect from a monolingual perspective, based on the precept that drawing on an episteme of linguistic individuation is a necessary first step before undertaking an interlingual exploration that compares how the same character may have two different idiolects, one in the source language and another in the target language. As the focus now turns to the textual-semiotic aspects, it is important to establish some of the interlingual imperatives of this analysis. The three idiolect-related questions posed here - whether the Harry Angstrom of the target text uses vernacular language, whether his angst is indexed and whether there is a causal link between his social identity and his language use - are explored through three linguistic phenomena that reflect especially the linguistic agency of the individual: register, politeness and linguistic accommodation.

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17 Although “Identity” has been a central concern in Translation Studies, this conceptualisation of identity focuses either on the human variables of the translation process (writers, translators and readers) or on the linguistic identity of a text, but not identity as it is explored here, in relation to the characters.
6.2.1 Diatypic variation: register

The idea of register is predicated upon the distinction between language use and language user, or as Halliday expresses it, the difference between diatypic and dialectal varieties of language (Halliday 1978:35). The tertium comparationis of Halliday’s social semiotic theory is indeed register, which “refers to the fact that the language we speak varies according to the type of situation” (Halliday 1978:32). Therefore register variation is subsumed under the diatypic rubric, and is thus a user-related concept that can be studied through Halliday’s register theory. Halliday (1978:111) elaborates further on his definition of register:

A register can be defined as the configuration of semantic resources that the member of a culture typically associates with a situational type. It is the meaning potential that is accessible in a given social context […] it is defined in terms of meanings; it is not an aggregate of conventional forms of expression superposed on some underlying content by “social factors” of one kind or another. It is the selection of meanings that constitutes the variety to which a text belongs.

By way of analogy, it can be said that Halliday reframes Chomsky’s competence and performance structure in narrower parameters in order to incorporate the social aspect of language that is absent from Chomsky's theory. Register theory, according to Halliday (1978:32), “attempt[s] to uncover the general principles which govern […] variation, so that we can begin to understand what situational factors determine what linguistic factors”. In order to explore register in the Hallidayan tradition, first it is necessary to establish the concepts that are relevant to its conceptualisation, namely text, and the variables that establish its register.

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18 Emphasis in the original.
Text, according to Halliday, has no connotation of size; it could be a single speech act or an entire narrative (Halliday 1978:141). The text represents the context in which hearers and speakers exchange and negotiate meanings:

From a sociolinguistic standpoint, a text is meaningful not so much because the hearer does not know what the speaker is going to say, as in a model of communication, but because he does know. (Halliday 2003:172)

Text viewed thus is a tool for predicting the meanings that are predetermined by the situation: it “enables the [hearer] to make informed guesses about the meanings that are coming his way” (Halliday ibid.) To be able to determine the text with greater specificity, Halliday conceptualises a tripartite of text determinants: field, tenor, and mode:

Field refers to the ongoing activity and the particular purposes that the language is serving within the context of that activity; tenor refers to the interrelation among the participants (status and role relationships); and mode covers […] key and genre. (Halliday 1978:62)

In more explanatory terms, the field is the type of social activity that is being carried out; for example, lectures, workplace meetings, or conversations among family members, are types of fields that have pre-coded registers. The tenor of the text, on the other hand, reflects “the aspect of situations [that] involve particular role relationships” (Downes 1998:315); thus the tenor is a means to characterising the interpersonal relationship between the interlocutors. The mode, finally, describes the medium (spoken, written, recorded and so on). In the case of this analysis, the medium is written dialogue.19 Of these three concepts, mode

19 The previous chapter explored the different attempts by various scholars to characterise dialogue (c.f. Goetsch, Brumme, Espunya, et al). It could be said that, in one way or another, what these attempts have in common is Halliday’s concept of “mode”, as it is dialogue as a “mode” that is ultimately their object of study.
is the one register variable that can be expected to remain invariant when the source dialogue is transferred to the target text. According to Hatim (1997:25), on the other hand, “it is tenor […] that is perhaps the more crucial factor in regulating the complex relationships between addressee and addressee”. Each participant, therefore, is an operative variable towards establishing the register. The nature of social interaction, however, also involves a listener (or more than one, for that matter) who fits into the framework as a contextual variable that potentially influences the speaker’s language choices, as Halliday (1978:222) states:

The language we use varies according to the level of formality, or technicality, and so on. What is the variable underlying this type of distinction? Essentially, it is the role relationships in the situation in question: who the participants in the communication group are, and in what relationship they stand to each other.

In the contrastive analysis that follows the variable that is expected to undergo the biggest shift is tenor, the “role relationships” as Halliday describes it, as it is in this textual sphere where characters will be seen to adopt various socio-pragmatic speech strategies in order to establish a speaker-hearer interpersonal dimension. This is where Peirce’s index as a sign that mediates between language (a symbol) and the speaker’s identity (an icon) becomes an important methodological tool. According to Penas Ibáñez (2008:55), if Halliday’s theory is aimed at exploring the identitarian functions of language, it must do so with the aid of another theory, as, ultimately, Halliday’s approach “falls short”:

Among the functions of language studied by older linguists like Bühler and Jakobson, and more recently M.A.K Halliday in his work on language as a social semiotic, there are functions like the expressive and interpersonal functions which get close to, but eventually fall short of, the identitarian function.
According to Penas Ibáñez, Halliday’s framework is appropriate when the aim is to establish either the ideational function of language - the function that “express[es] the speaker’s experience of the external world, and of his own internal world, that of his own consciousness” (Halliday 1978:45) - or to establish the interpersonal function of language - “language which expresses relations amongst participants in the situation” (Halliday, 1978:46) -, but not the identitarian function of language. In his original work on social semiotics, Halliday makes no reference to the identitarian function of language, but as Hatim (1997: 24-26) says, no semiotic conceptualisation of text is complete without it. The argument made is that register, a linguistic phenomenon Halliday relates to the interpersonal and ideational functions of language, is also relatable to the identitarian function.

6.2.2 Diatypic variation: politeness

The work of Brown and Levinson (1978) on politeness as an interpersonal communication phenomenon is also of theoretical importance. In a similar way to Halliday, Brown and Levinson’s ideas take semiotic structure as a point of departure; they say that “this semiotic system is then responsible for the shaping of much everyday interaction, and in so shaping it, constitutes a potent form of social control” (1978:2). For Brown and Levinson, politeness has negative and positive values that act upon face – the speaker and the hearer’s social self-image:20

[...] Certain precise parallels in language usage in many different languages can be shown to derive from certain assumptions about “face” – an individual’s self-esteem. We phrase the derivation in terms of three main strategies of politeness, “positive politeness” (roughly, the expression of solidarity), “negative politeness (roughly, the expression of restraint), and “off-record

20 The concept of face was introduced by Ervin Goffman (1955) as a sociological phenomenon. It was then taken up propitiously by sociolinguists and pragmaticians in the latter half of the twentieth century, when social variables gained traction in sociolinguistic research.
(politeness)” (roughly, the avoidance of unequivocal impositions), and claim that the uses of each are tied to social determinants, specifically the relationship between speaker and addressee and the potential offensiveness of the message content.

Although face, it would seem, is a universal phenomenon, the means by which speakers negotiate politeness is different across cultures, subject to culture-specific elaborations of face-saving and face-threatening acts (Brown and Levinson 1987: 13; Hatim 1998). Although Brown and Levinson are explicit about their shift away from the speaker-identity tenet of sociolinguistics towards a “focus on dyadic patterns of verbal interaction of social relationships”, there is scope nevertheless to find a causal link between the patterns of expressions of politeness and identity because, as Brown and Levinson argue themselves, politeness functions in a semiotic system where the identity variable remains crucial to the semiotic complexion of interpersonal interactions. As complex and varied as these pragmatic issues in translation are, a semiotic perspective that homes in on the identity of the speaker can aid the analysis in coping with such exigencies. As the analysis will point out, face plays a large role in Harry’s use of language; primarily, he uses negative polite forms such as swearing to index his anger and frustration. The question this section of the analysis asks is whether the Harry Angstrom of the target texts also uses negative polite forms. If the analysis finds that the target text does not mirror this identitarian function, the focus will then turn to how this interlingual incongruity changes the iconic portrayal of his identity, and what strategies the translators could have used to avoid this semiotic shift.

6.2.3 Diatypic variation: linguistic accommodation

According to Honey (1997:105) the theory of linguistic accommodation “explores the way speakers adjust their speech in relation to the speech of their interlocutors”. Through the processes of convergence and
*convergence*, speakers will either try to align themselves as closely as possible to the speech of their interlocutor by converging their speech, or try to make their speech as different as possible to their interlocutor by diverging it. Although accommodation theory highlights the interpersonal dynamics between interlocutors, it also purports a frame to explore how an individual speaker manipulates language in order to fulfil the predetermined “ideological and macro-societal factors” implicit in social interactions; therefore, accommodation can “function to index and achieve solidarity with or dissociation from a conversational partner” (Giles and Coupland & Coupland 1991:2-4). Accommodation is sensitive to context, and therefore how speakers accommodate to different contexts will necessarily index different identities, as Penas Ibáñez (2012:52) explains:

Linguistic accommodation – realized in the freedom to strategically choose from linguistic repertoires – involves a linguistic competence that offers the speaker the possibility of switching between dialects, registers, styles, and idiolects. In as much as constant linguistic accommodation entails pressure on the self, we would have to consider enforced linguistic accommodation to be inductive of identity switches.

Penas Ibáñez’s argument here suggests that there is a strong correlation between accommodation theory and some of the identity principles discussed in the previous chapter. The idea of accommodation, extended to the realm of linguistics, is that speakers will change the way they would naturally speak in order to attain communicative success. If this shift is true in monolingual circumstances, then it is also important to study them in an interlingual context, such as in translation, and to explore whether the translation strategies adopted account for accommodation; if they do not - that is, if the target character does not modify language in the same way as in the original, then the identity indexed will also shift.
6.3 Character description: who is Harry “Rabbit” Angstrom?
Although the object of study in this thesis is identity as reflected in dialogue, how the language-identity nexus is created in the source text and recast in the target text cannot be explored exclusively through a linguistic analysis. For this reason, this section explores Harry’s identity through a combination of a textual analysis of “impersonal narrative”, i.e. everything extraneous to dialogue (Walpole 1974:192), and previous scholarly work on the “Rabbit” books.

Harry is sometimes viewed as a selfish individual, others view him as a symbol of the nation, whilst the majority believe both to be true.21 Wilson (1998:89), for example, views the trajectory of Harry’s life as a cline from a man who seeks solitude in Rabbit, Run to a man fully integrated in society by the time he reaches middle-age in Rabbit is Rich: “Updike transforms Rabbit from the traditional solitary American male fleeing society […] to a man integrated into society”. Along a similar line of thinking, Campbell (1998:48) says the following:

Rabbit may lack the heroism and purity of Natty Bumpo, the moral depth of Hester Prynne, the breadth and tragedy of Ishmael, the naïve but stubborn idealism of Jay Gatsby, and the communal commitment of Tom Joad, but he is perhaps more representative of American society than any of them. For Updike has deliberately not sought the heroic, but has chosen to present the ordinary […]..

From a moral standpoint, Harry is often criticised – “to assign heroic status to Rabbit is to invite controversy”, as Greiner (1998:8) puts it – but Updikean scholars “agree that Updike […] created an archetypal American hero, one strikingly real and individual, yet emblematic of his class, his country, and his era” (Broer 1998:3). What is beginning to emerge in this introduction, and what will be further elaborated on in this

21 For a particularly virulent critique of Harry Angstrom see Gordon (1991:17-23).
section, is that Harry Angstrom is a literary everyman precisely because he is individualistic, a metonymic instance of a macrostructure. Greiner (1984:50) also claims that “in Rabbit, Run Updike poses a dilemma that results in the ambiguity he aspires to: Should Rabbit define himself by social convention, or should he indulge his yearning toward individual belief?” Although Greiner poses the question in relation to the first novel of the saga, this tension between society and the self holds true for the four books. The answer to the question “who is Harry ‘Rabbit’ Angstrom?” will come from the resolution of Harry’s inner conflict.

6.3.1 The plausibility of Harry Angstrom

A cursory reading of the “Rabbit” saga reveals some of Harry’s most unflattering characteristics. In Rabbit, Run he deserts his pregnant wife, Janice, and moves in with a part-time prostitute; he eventually returns to Janice only to leave her again. In Rabbit Redux, Harry’s blatant racism comes to the surface. In Rabbit is Rich, an affluent Harry Angstrom makes his son’s life impossible; and finally, in Rabbit at Rest, before the saga closes with his death, Harry sleeps with his daughter-in-law. Moreover, throughout the four-decade span of his eponymous life, he insults Janice repeatedly (his preferred insult is “dumb mutt”), takes advantage of runaway Jill Pendleton, sleeps with his friend’s wife and Janice’s closest friend, makes his son’s life impossible and, in one way or another, is responsible for the death of two girls – how responsible, however, is debatable. Such an itemisation of Harry’s actions should inevitably lead to one conclusion: he is an abhorrent person; and yet, when the entire saga is put into perspective and Harry is viewed as a metonymic representation of the macro-cultural discourses that textualise US society in the novels, the task of evaluating how inherently good or bad Harry is becomes more complex; as Batchelor (2009:73) says:

Rabbit Angstrom personified [Updike’s] man in the middle, the always hopeful quester through the bumps and grits of the mundane, the regular guy stuck on the horns of “yes, but.” Rabbit, Run continues to disturb readers because of
Updike’s refusal to damn the deep-feeling yet shallow-thinking adulterer, yet it is now clear that, when read as a whole, the Rabbit tetralogy […] focuses more on Angstrom’s stubborn-headed belief in American exceptionalism than on his never-ending pursuit of the next willing woman.

Harry’s moral compass does not point in the opposite direction to everyone else’s. As a “stubborn-headed” quester for exceptionalism, Harry embodies an American ideal. Greiner (1984:58) argues that Harry “is a simple man with a limited value system, a decent but flawed adult who finds the little complexities of life – a boring job, a dreary wife, a dingy apartment – too much to handle.” Herein lies the tension that defines Harry. His life is decidedly “second-rate”, but much of his eponymous life is spent pursuing a level of exceptionalism that is always out of reach. Viewed thus, it becomes more difficult to pass a moral judgement because his actions are the actions of someone shaped by society, a synecdoche of the discourses that symbolise American “exceptionalism”:

This reciprocal tension between individual and group identities gives the overall concept of identity much of its power […]. What is particularly interesting about the identity of a successful literary character is that it embodies a group identity – the modern woman, the person trapped within social constraint, the human race generally – in the form of a plausible individual. (Joseph 2004:5)

The “power” of Harry Angstrom’s identity lies not only in his embodiment of a “group identity,” but also in that he is a “plausible individual,” and as Joseph (ibid.:3) argues, language “plays a fundamental role” in determining the plausibility of a character. As the analysis that follows points out, Updike achieves this by constructing Harry’s dialogue with colloquialism. Updike’s everyman uses everyday language to achieve linguistic verisimilitude that recursively ascribes a
plausible identity; if the target text version of Harry Angstrom is to achieve the same, he too must use everyday Spanish.

6.3.2 Harry Angstrom’s “inner conflict”

If Greiner believes that Harry’s quest is more for exceptionalism than for “the next willing woman”, Ristoff (1988/1998) develops the role of cultural context in the “Rabbit” books, where Harry becomes the locus for the social text, and the social text, in turn, defines Harry:

Harry Angstrom, the protagonist of the Rabbit novels, is typical of these fictional prisoners of the social text. His incapacity to escape, as well as his capacity to engage in dialogue, to reproduce the collective discourse, to understand public judgement, to express natural prejudices, to understand community concerns, to feel guilty – all these constitute the marks of social interplay and the platforms upon and between which conflicts are generated. (Ristoff 1988:3)

It is no coincidence that Ristoff, who favours a scene-centred approach over an agent-centred one, offers one of the most rounded analyses of Harry Angstrom’s identity. It is precisely because of this innovative approach, the way in which he extrapolates the individual out of the cultural, that he is able to make statements such as the following:

[Harry is] abstracted out of reality and presented by Updike as being at one time individual and social. In other words, the individual stands in relation to society somewhat like the idiolect stands in relation to language – no one can absolutely deny its uniqueness or singularity, but even that uniqueness and singularity can only be affirmed through its deviations from the common ground it shares with language. (Ristoff 1988:2)

Ristoff furthers his argument by situating Harry’s character in a Saussurean dialogic. He says that Harry’s inner conflicts are with the
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langue, and not the parole, where langue is the society in which he lives, and the parole is his own sense of self, a synecdoche of the langue. However, neither Harry nor the United States remain static in the four novels. The 1950s of Rabbit, Run was a relatively tranquil time, or at least this is how it is portrayed by Updike (c.f., Boswell 2001:77 and Batchelor 2013:74), who created Harry Angstrom as a pseudo-anarchist against the domesticity of the Eisenhower era. Ten years later, the United States of Rabbit Redux is a vastly different place, a melting-pot of revolutions brought about by the Civil Rights movement and the rise of feminism. The irony is that Harry’s character is reversed one hundred and eighty degrees so as to remain in opposition to the common trends of his surroundings. This rule of thumb – a trick of situational irony that juxtaposes Harry with his cultural environment – is carried over to the last two novels. In Rabbit is Rich, when the United States is in economic turmoil and gripped by a gas shortage, Harry is rich; and in Rabbit at Rest, when the general mood is one of greed, Harry “gives up and dies” (Boswell 2001:77-78). Despite this apparent irregularity in Harry’s character, he remains remarkably uniform throughout the saga. As Boswell notes (ibid.:78), there is consistency in his penchant for opposition: “whatever everyone is for, Rabbit must be against”. No matter what the prevailing tendencies of the society that contextualises his identity, Harry is always against them. The most outward manifestation of this state of constant opposition – or perhaps as a result of this – is the element of Harry’s identity that Updike warranted significant enough to bestow upon him the name “Angstrom”:

An angstrom is actually a unit of length equal to one hundred millionth of a centimetre, used primarily to specify radiation wavelengths, but in the 1950s angst was the existentialist catchword for the anxiety and despair many intellectuals felt as they considered the absurd nature of individual human existence. Rabbit becomes, then, Updike’s angst-ridden American Everyman, an individual infinitesimally small in the cosmic scheme of things, but one who views himself as the center of the universe. (Campbell 1998:35)
Harry believes that there is something special about him. He is sure, for example, that “[he] give[s] people faith” (*Rabbit, Run*: 144). His relationships with Rev. Eccles and Mrs Smith would suggest that he is not entirely wrong. Rev. Eccles calls him a “mystic” and Mrs Smith, on Harry’s last visit to her house, tells him that “[he] kept her alive” (*Rabbit, Run*: 224). As de Bellis (2001:21) argues, Harry’s fictive life begins with his search for the “thing” that “wants him to find it” and ends with the “thing” finding him to “work him over” and, ultimately, kill him (*Rabbit at Rest*: 136). Harry’s quasi-theological self-belief, however, begins to wane in *Rabbit Redux*. The Harry Angstrom of this novel expresses his angst through the frequent use of swear words, a feature of his idiolect that, though especially pronounced in *Rabbit Redux*, is a constant throughout his eponymous life. Harry is not “intelligent enough” to realise that his inner yearnings and the social fabric that make up his life are irreconcilable, incompatible to the point where erring on the side of one will cause the other to “collapse murderously”.22 Nor does he possess the linguistic and artistic sophistication of his creator (Woods 1998:129). In fact, and as Greiner points out, Harry is “inarticulate” (1984:50), a view echoed by Bob Batchelor (2013:73), who says that Harry is a character “stymied by his lack of getting words out”, because, “despite his work as a day-to-day salesman” he “cannot meet the same standards when communicating with people in his personal life”. This seeming lack of verbal nous manifests in Harry, a character who is not “well spoken” (Greiner, 1998: 9), in a tendency for “vulgarity” (Schiff, 1998:20). If this diatypic manifestation of his angst is to be mirrored in the translation, Harry’s predisposition for the use of swear words must also be a feature of his target language idiolect.

6.3.3 The individual and the social

22 “Interview with John Updike” (quoted in Greiner 1984:80).
The interplay between *langue* and *parole* – to continue observing Ristoff’s analogy – plays out in Harry in reciprocal fashion. Harry is aware that his actions carry consequences for his surroundings; for example, in *Rabbit Redux*, talking about his aborted escape in *Rabbit, Run*, he says that “[he] once took that inner light trip and all [he] did was bruise [his] surroundings” (*Rabbit Redux*: 154). There is a revelation in the way he expressed this regret. Not only does he realise that he affects his environment, he also demonstrates how his cultural environment affects him when he uses the term “trip”, not for its denotational value, but for the symbolic value associated with the 1960s counter-culture. Accordingly, Harry only uses this term in this way in *Rabbit Redux*, the novel that chronicles the 1960s.

The general consensus of why Harry leaves Janice in *Rabbit, Run* points to Harry’s success as a high-school basketball star and his inability to recreate the feeling of success in married life (c.f. Ristoff 1988; Boswell 2001; Batchelor 2009). These views shed some light on Greiner’s earlier-cited claim that Harry is a “quester” for exceptionalism. For Harry, exceptionalism is to be found in basketball. When he approaches a street game in the first scene of the novel, and when, upon holding the ball he realises that his touch still “lives in him”, the remainder of the saga becomes Harry’s quest to find “it” again. The backdrop to this idealist perception of basketball are his “second-rate” marriage and the pressures of adulthood, which feel like “a problem [that] knits in front of him”, and so “he runs. Ah: runs” (*Rabbit, Run*: 309). However, the United States beyond his immediate environment offers no respite; indeed as he leaves his hometown, “net seems thicker” (*Rabbit, Run*: 33). A feeling of exasperation rises in him because “he had thought, he had read, that from shore to shore all America was the same. He wonders, is it just these people I’m outside, or is it all America” (*Rabbit, Run*: 33). Finally, when his map becomes a “net, all those red lines and blue lines and stars, a net he is somewhere caught in” (*Rabbit, Run*: 36), he gives up, squeezes the map into a ball and throws out the window – his only solace is found in
basketball, a trope that is carried through the four novels. Harry’s conversation around the topic of basketball represent an important platform for the performance of his social identity, and his use of language – specifically, how he modifies his language to express solidarity with fellow basketball enthusiasts – becomes an important translation issue vis-à-vis the semiotic recodification of his social identity in the Spanish version.

6.4 Un conejo inverosímil: Indexing linguistic verisimilitude in translation

Reflecting on his most famous character, Updike (1995:xi) says that his “intent was simple enough: to show a high-school athletic hero in the wake of his glory days.” Accordingly, the saga opens with Harry, an “unlikely Rabbit”, playing a makeshift game of basketball with the local children, and as his life comes to a poignant end, playing one final game of basketball in *Rabbit at Rest*, there can be no doubt that Updike created a character who, as the Spanish version would have it in its opening sequence of “Corre, Conejo” (trans. Fibla, 1990) went from *un conejo inverosímil* to one of the most representative everymen of twentieth century American literature (“Corre, Conejo”: 4).

The description of Harry as *inverosímil* may be appropriate in a way not intended by the translator: as a label for a character who may go from using everyday language in the source text, to a target text version of the character whose speech may index more an automaton than a plausible person. To explore this hypothesis, this section focuses on markers of orality that in Harry’s source idiolect index a sense of verisimilitude, and whether translation has recast Harry’s target language idiolect with equivalent markers of orality:

Fictive dialogue is a creation of a unique author. By creating the speech of the character he/she is creating a literary world that can be inspired by the real
world but has to be considered a unique intervention. What the characters say and how they say it belong to the imagination of the author, who selects certain features of linguistic immediacy for the sake of verisimilitude. In respect of the mimesis of oral communication in fictive dialogue form, the author selects features from the written/graphic code in order to represent spontaneous and dynamic oral communication. (Cadera 2012:37)

Dialogue, then, imitates actual speech with textual markers of orality such as colloquialisms, which belong to an informal register of language and are only appropriately used in certain contexts where the interpersonal and ideational conditions are propitious. This is rather a matter of lexical variation, where someone like Harry, a man not “intelligent enough” to articulate his inner yearnings, is inclined to use informal language, tending towards a colloquial expression instead of a more formal correlate. The analysis that follows is thus concerned with markers of orality, with special attention given to colloquial expressions.

6.4.1 Verisimilitude in “Corre, Conejo”

In *Rabbit, Run*, when the reader is first introduced to Harry, his linguistic catalogue is marked with markers of orality. During one particular conversation, for example, he utters “What’s your kick?” (*Rabbit, Run*: 144), “I’ll be damned” (*Rabbit, Run*: 145) and “I’ll support ja” (*Rabbit, Run*: 145), colloquial expressions and an instance of non-standard orthography (to signify the non-standard pronunciation of “you”) that are not rendered in the translation with equivalent markers: ¿De qué te quejas? (“Corre, Conejo”: 176), ¡Quién lo hubiera creído! (“Corre, Conejo”: 176) and yo te mantendré (“Corre, Conejo”: 176) respectively. These examples reflect the semiotic incongruity between these particular source and target text utterances, where the tenor of the source text utterances is informal, and by virtue of replacing the source text colloquial expression with a standard form in the target language, the tenor of the target text utterances is too formal. This incongruity stems from the lack of vernacular and orthographical flexibility offered by the
target language system in these instances. Evidently, the target text does not match the source text register. The strategy of neutralising a source text slang term by substituting it with a standardised target equivalent may maintain equivalence in terms of field – i.e., the subject matter remains invariant – but the interpersonal and identitarian dimension of the utterances change. The question therefore becomes: has the translator compensated for this loss in the same conversation? And if not, are there utterances in this conversation where the translator could have compensated for potential losses? The following are three consecutive lines uttered by Harry during this conversation:

Well I’ll be damned! ¡Quién lo hubiera creído!
What’s you kick? I support you. ¿De qué te quejas? Te mantengo, ¿no?
Quit it […] I don’t care. Sit around all day reading mysteries. I’ll support ya. Deja ese empleo. No me importa. Puedes pasarte el día leyendo novelas de misterio. Yo te mantendré.

The first marker, the slang term “kick”, has no direct translation into Spanish – at least not one that encompasses the layers of signification that allow for the inference that this source language term is (a) slang, (b) contemporaneous, and (c) a metaphor for a formal correlate: “problem,” or shorthand for “what are you complaining about?” A term that could mirror these three semiotic modalities of “kick” does not exist in Spanish. At this point it is clear that a loss will occur unless there is an utterance within the same exchange that allows for a strategy of compensation; ideally, this would be an utterance that could accommodate a term that covers the three levels of signification outlined above. Furthermore, that this strategy of compensation should happen within the same interaction is important – crucial even, given that
substituting a formal term with a slang term remotely (i.e., in a different conversation) would result in a betrayal of the context-dependent maxim of the language-identity nexus. As it happens, the third utterance from the exchange quoted above offers the opportunity to introduce a slang term by substituting *ese empleo* with *de currar*. Harry would thus say *deja de currar* instead of *deja ese empleo*. In the context of this exchange, *currar* is a term that is (a) slang, which would maintain equivalence at the identitarian and interpersonal level, and (c) a metaphor for a more formal correlate: “job”, but not (b) contemporaneous. Thus *currar* would fulfil at least two indexical properties that point towards linguistic verisimilitude – properties which had been lost in the previous line when “kick” was replaced with the formalised *quejas*. The second linguistic marker of orality that was offered as an example above is a mild swear word, “damned”, which does not appear in the Spanish version: ¡Quién lo hubiera creído! Although swear words will be dealt with in more detail below as pragmatic indexers of Harry’s angst, in this context, as a colloquial expression that indexes orality, an equivalent marker could have been adopted into Harry’s idiolect in this exchange. Somewhat serendipitously, the line in which “kick” was translated with *quejas* offers the potential to introduce *diablos* into the utterance, therefore compensating for the loss in the previous line with a similarly blasphemous lexeme, without the need to modulate the syntactical blueprint of the source text. The third marker of orality is the non-standard pronunciation of “you”, graphically coded with the non-standard spelling “ja”, which functions as a mitigating device. Harry is trying to convince his lover, Ruth, to give up her job as a part-time prostitute. In order to fulfil the textual (“text” here is meant in its Hallidayan guise) parameters, the Spanish Harry would need to find an equivalent variation in order to reduce the illocutionary force of his target language utterance. The Spanish language system does not allow for an orthographical variation in this instance. A discourse marker, however, can be used to

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23 *Currar* originates from the language spoken by Iberian gypsies, Caló, and was assimilated into Spanish as vulgate only in the 1980s. For an extensive discussion on Spanish borrowings from Caló, c.f. Ropero Núñez (2006) “Los préstamos del caló en el español actual”.

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fulfil the pragmatic function of Harry’s use of “ja” in the source text. As Fraser (1990:393) says, “discourse markers [can] capture some aspect of a speaker’s communicative intention”. The use of total could function in this way, as it is a discourse marker that reduces the illocutionary force of the utterance. Crucially, total also functions semiotically to index orality as it represents a syntactical departure from the standard, and thus marks out Harry’s language as a performance that accounts for context, rather than an automaton who speaks with generic language. The three lines from above, translated with equivalent markers of orality, would read as follows:

---

Well I’ll be damned! ¡Quién lo hubiera creído!

What’s your kick? I support you. ¿De qué diablos te quejas? Te mantengo, ¿no?

Quit it […] I don’t care. Sit around all day reading mysteries. I’ll support ja. Deja de currar. Por mí te puedes pasar el día leyendo novelas de misterios. Total, te mantendré yo.

---

This alternate translation strategy compensates for the losses of markers of orality – losses incurred by the lexical inflexibility of the target language utterances, which offered little potential for direct equivalents – by finding a place for them in different utterances, but during the same interaction. Harry’s dialogue above is now interspersed with colloquialisms, and therefore adequately indexes the oral/aural nature of his speech. It is important to note here, however, that the strategy used in this alternative version cannot be homogenously applied at a macro-textual level. Each linguistic feature is embedded in its immediate context. In the example above Harry uses “ja” as a mitigating device, but in a different exchange, having a conversation with a different person – in other words, a different text defined by its own text-specific ideational
and interpersonal parameters – Harry utters “ja” to fulfil a different pragmatic function:

I told ja. (Rabbit, Run: 133)

Ya se lo he dicho. (“Corre, Conejo”: 162)

In this example Harry uses a non-standard pronunciation of “you” for emphasis. It may be obvious to point out that total cannot be used here, but this example is useful because it illustrates the context-sensitive nature of translating a character’s idiolect. For the target language utterance to achieve the same pragmatic function as the source text utterance, it would have sufficed with italicising the last word: Ya se lo he dicho. This way, the italisation of ja in the source text would be mirrored in the translation.

Throughout “Corre, Conejo”, Harry’s dialogue is invariably translated with standardised forms, resulting in a character who speaks in a more formal register than in the source text. Below are further source and target text pairs, uttered at various points of the story, which are not in keeping with the source text construction of Harry’s language-identity nexus:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Say, should everybody see me? (Rabbit, Run: 51)</th>
<th>¿Es preciso que todo el mundo me vea? (“Corre, Conejo”: 67)</th>
<th>¿Es necesario que me vea todo el mundo?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Nobody wants you to be all bones.. (Rabbit, Run: 70)</td>
<td>Nadie desea que te quedes en los huesos. (“Corre, Conejo”: 88-89)</td>
<td>Nadie quiere que te quedes en los huesos.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The lexical evidence suggests that Harry’s discourse is more apt to the written dimension than the spoken, a consequence of transposing colloquialisms with formalised language when the translator had a less formal option available. Instead of using the word *preciso*, for example, formulating the question with *necesario* or a construction such as ¿*Y si me ve alguien?* (or a syntactical variant thereof) would have been more akin to the narrative’s characterisation of Harry, in the same way that a Harry Angstrom who, in the second example above, opts for *nadie desea* instead of *nadie quiere* also results in a betrayal of his characterisation in the source text. The last example is an utterance that features in the first conversation between Harry and Rev. Eccles, the man entrusted by the Springers to convince Harry to return to his wife. The source text utterance, “and that little thing Janice and I had going, boy, it was really second-rate”, generates meanings that the target text utterance does not. Firstly, it achieves a sense of verisimilitude with the discourse marker “boy”. It also expresses how Harry feels about his marriage: that “thing” they had going, where “thing” is a pejorative term that indexes his disregard for his wife and his marriage. These qualities are not present in the translation, which increases the formality of the utterance by substituting “really” with *irremediablemente*. Such a transformation again results in an utterance unbecoming of an inarticulate man, and although the Spanish version may well index his dissatisfaction with his marriage (*irremediablemente* certainly carries the meaning that the marriage may be beyond repair), the disregard he feels towards it – indexed in the source text by the pejorative “thing” – is not a feature of the target text. The direct equivalent of “thing” in Spanish, *cosa*, may

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>English</th>
<th>Spanish</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>And that little thing Janice and I had going, boy, it was really second-rate. (<em>Rabbit, Run: 107</em>)</td>
<td>Mi matrimonio con Janice era irremediablemente de segunda clase. (“Corre, Conejo”: 131)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Y esa cosa entre Janice y yo, la verdad, dejaba mucho que desear.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
also be used pejoratively, and could feature in this sentence as the syntactical structure supports it: *y esa cosa que tenía con mi mujer, te digo, era de segunda clase.*

6.4.2 Verisimilitude in “El regreso de Conejo”

Although “El regreso de Conejo” has a different translator, the pattern of neutralising Harry’s language is also a feature in this novel. There are two interactions - one involving Harry and Janice’s best friend, Peggy Fosnacht, and the other involving Harry, Skeeter and Jill - that exemplify the translation strategy that belies the spoken (albeit graphically codified) dimension of Harry’s speech in “El regreso de Conejo.” Below are two of Harry’s utterances in conversation with Peggy:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>I can’t I don’t think. (<em>Rabbit Redux</em>: 109)</th>
<th>No creo que pueda. (“El regreso de Conejo”: 90)</th>
<th>No puedo … no creo</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Peggy, it turns out, is trying to woo Harry. She tries to ingratiate herself to him by taking his side in the marital dispute that has seen Harry and Janice separate in this novel – she takes his side despite the fact that she is Janice’s friend: “I think she’s treated you horribly” (*Rabbit Redux*: 109). Peggy is also explicit about how much better a husband Harry is in comparison to her ex-husband Ollie: “You’re so forgiving, Harry! Ollie would have *strangled* me” (*Rabbit Redux*: 109). The reason for Harry’s visit is simply to drop off Nelson. Peggy, however, is trying to make Janice’s loss her gain. Harry suspects her intention and, feeling uncomfortable, runs through the social niceties in order to quickly leave Peggy’s house without losing face. To Peggy’s initial offer for a drink,
Harry responds “I can’t I don’t think”, an utterance that rejects the offer – “I can’t” – but is immediately followed with a mitigation device, “I don’t think”. Without the immediacy that is inherent in the act of speaking, and with time to think about it, Harry might have said something like, “I don’t think I can”, but structuring it in such a way, with the rejection as the head and with no punctuation to separate the clauses, reveals he really does not want the drink, but also wants to avoid hurting Peggy’s feelings. In the Spanish version, though the same message is communicated, this syntactical variation as marker of orality is not present as the sentence is perfectly constructed. The syntactic progression of the source text could have been mirrored with no puedo no debería. Two clauses whose content contradict each other and with no punctuation mark to separate them, would achieve the same effect as the source text utterance. Peggy, however, does not interpret Harry’s utterance as a mitigated rejection. She interprets Harry’s hesitant response as an invitation to insist. Harry eventually agrees to the drink, though in accepting he stresses that he has “gotta go somewhere”. The contraction “gotta” here functions as another marker of orality, which the translation does not reproduce, but could have done so by introducing the preposition para and eliding the last syllable, a colloquial convention that is possible in the target language system. Notwithstanding that an elision from para to pa’ is not structurally equivalent to a contraction, the elisions would successful index orality. Thus this utterance would become, tengo que ir pa otro sitio.

The second exchange involves Harry, Skeeter and Jill. The following utterances occur in the final part of the novel, entitled “Skeeter”. It is so titled because large parts of it are dedicated to conversations, or “sit-ins”, presided over by Skeeter, the most prominent African-American character of the saga, in what amounts to a rerun of slave history told from an African-American perspective:
Harry, who is portrayed as something of a xenophobe is, not surprisingly, unwilling to participate at first. When Jill first proposes the idea of a “structured discussion,” Harry asks, “What’s the discussion about?”, which is a rather unremarkable utterance. In the Spanish version, however, the equivalent question is remarkable for the vocabulary that this supposedly inarticulate man employs: ¿Sobre qué versará la conversación? The use of the verb versar in the context of this discussion results in a Harry that is a word-pedant, when utterances such as, ¿De qué vamos a hablar?, would have indexed verisimilitude more satisfactorily. The second example above is a mistranslation of a slang term that the translator misunderstood. The American English “hit me”, which expresses Harry’s willingness to hear what Skeeter has to say, has been translated with a direct verbal transposition, Golpeadme, a term in Spain that cannot be used in this context as a pragmatic device to channel the conversation. Given that the verb golpear cannot be used in Spanish in the figurative sense that is intended in the source text, a more satisfactory translation here would have been venga va, educarme. The reason the verb educar is chosen here is because it is dialogically relatable to Skeeter’s view of what the “sit-ins” are: an education for Harry.

6.4.3 Verisimilitude in “Conejo es rico”

“Conejo es Rico” (trans. by Zulaika 2002) maintains the strategy of formalising Harry’s language. In the opening scene of the novel, Harry and Charlie Stavros, in an example of a typical phatic exchange between
two male work colleagues, cover everyday topics such as women, the state of the nation’s economy and sport. From this conversation in the source text and target text, the examples below demonstrate how the strategy of using standard Spanish to translate Harry’s idiolect is also a feature in this translation:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source Text</th>
<th>Translation</th>
<th>Translation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>“I don’t blame the oil companies” (<em>Rabbit is Rich</em>: 8)</td>
<td>- No se lo censuro a las compañías. (”Conejo es rico”: 13)</td>
<td>No culpo a las compañías.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“They’re strapped these days like everybody else” (<em>Rabbit is Rich</em>: 8)</td>
<td>- En estos tiempos se ven tan atrapados como todo el mundo. (”Conejo es rico”: 13)</td>
<td>Hoy en día están con la soga al cuello, como todos.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Stop driving. Run,” Rabbit tells him, “I’ve begun this jogging thing and it feels great. I want to lose thirty pounds” (<em>Rabbit is Rich</em>: 10)</td>
<td>- Deja el volante y corre – le responde Conejo. Yo he empezado a hacerlo y me encuentro genial. Quiero perder quince kilos. (”Conejo es rico”: 15)</td>
<td>Deja el volante – le responde Conejo. Yo he empezado esa cosa de correr y me encuentro genial. Quiero perder quince kilos.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Cadillacs. If one of his brothers got a Buick with fins, my father had to have a Cadillac with bigger fins.” (<em>Rabbit is Rich</em>: 11)</td>
<td>- Y los Cadillacs. Si uno de mis hermanos se agenciaba un Buick con alerones, mi padre tenía que tener un Cadillac con alerones más grandes, (”Conejo es rico”: 16)</td>
<td>- Y los Cadillacs. Si uno de mis hermanos se compraba un Buick con alerones, mi padre tenía que hacerse con uno con alerones más grandes.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The first example substitutes the verb “blame” with *censurar*, two terms which may be semantically, but not pragmatically, equivalent, as they belong to different registers. The term *censurar* belongs to a specialised argot, and is certainly not part of the “pre-coded register” of phatic communication. A target language utterance such as *No culpo a las compañías* would have been more in keeping with the register of this conversation, as well as more appropriate to the narrative characterisation of Harry. In the second example, “strapped” has been mistranslated with *atrapados* in an instance of translation that could only be explained by assuming the translator misread “strapped” as “trapped”, and consequently translated the latter with its Spanish synonym, *atrapados*. A construction such as *Hoy en día están con la soga al cuello, como todos*, would have been more appropriate because the idiomatic *con la soga al cuello* is a colloquial expression that is coterminous with the register of a phatic conversation. In the third example, Harry’s use of the noun “thing” has no referential role, and features in his utterance for the sole purpose of signifying the ideational-phatic parameters of the conversation. This particular use of “thing” is similar to the example from *Rabbit, Run*. Zulaika has also avoided finding an appropriate substitute in this instance, as no such pragmatic indexer features in the translation, even though the options of *esta cosa de correr, esto de correr* or *lo de correr*, were turn of phrases available to the translator. Finally, in the fourth example, once again a term that is incompatible with the tenor of the conversation features in Harry’s utterance. *Agenciaba* is a legal term which, inexplicably replaces the source text “got” when *compraba* would have denoted the same action with the added benefit of its compatibility with the phatic tenor of the conversation.

6.4.4 Verisimilitude in “Conejo en Paz”

*Rabbit at Rest*, the final book of the saga, is the only book to share its translator with one of its predecessors. Menéndez, who also translated *Rabbit Redux*, continues to apply a strategy that neutralises Harry’s dialogue. In the following examples, markers of orality are not faithfully
recast in the target language, and in other instances, Harry’s language is unnecessarily shifted towards a standard, rather than the informal, colloquial voice of the source text:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Original Passage</th>
<th>Translation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>“I been thinking about our conversation, about Toyotas being so dull. Give ‘em credit, they're trying to sex the line up” (Rabbit at Rest: 178)</td>
<td>- He estado pensando en nuestra conversación referente a lo aburridos que son los Toyotas – dice Harry. Pero por lo menos reconoce que esta línea quieren maquearla un poco y hacerla más sexy. (“Conejo en paz”: 152)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Don't get greedy” (Rabbit at Rest: 178)</td>
<td>No te vuelvas codicioso. (“Conejo en paz”: 152)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;Why not go over and help Nelson run the lot? Something's going flooey over there&quot; (Rabbit at Rest: 189)</td>
<td>-¿Por qué no vas a ayudar a Nelson en la agencia? –le pregunta Harry-. Allí está ocurriendo algo raro. (“Conejo en paz”: 161)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Both are no-nos for the new me. (Rabbit at Rest: 194)</td>
<td>-Las dos cosas me están vedadas. (“Conejo en paz”: 166)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In the case of the first example, Harry’s source text utterance has two clear indexers of linguistic verisimilitude: the deletion of the auxiliary verb in “I been” and the contraction “give’em”. In order for the translation to recreate this, it should display similar features, or at least one feature that indicates that Harry is using “real” language. Firstly, it could have brought the register down by substituting referente a with
sobre, or simply *de*; and secondly, given that there is very little room for variation, i.e., there is no possibility for contraction or to remove an auxiliary verb, the best option may be to change the syntactical structure of the utterance in order to accommodate an index of verisimilitude: *por lo menos esta línea quieren maquearla un poco y hacerla más sexy*. Although this option does not find an equivalent contraction, it nevertheless achieves a sense of verisimilitude by using a slang term that means “do up” (*maquear*). The second and third examples are yet more instances where the translator has opted for a more formal correlate when a colloquial expression was available. Instead of using *codicioso,* a word that typically would not be uttered by an “inarticulate” man, the utterance could have been constructed with *tacaño* or *roñoso.* Similarly, instead of using *vedadas* the translator could have used its more common correlate, *prohibidas.* Although the translation of the third example is a fine translation, and is not constructed with overly formal language, it nevertheless forgoes the opportunity to introduce a colloquialism to Harry’s idiolect by equating “something’s flooey over there” with *allí algo huele mal.* In this translation, more so than in the others, there are many instances where a misinterpretation of the source language results in sentences that codify a different meaning entirely. Perhaps one of the most overt instances of this is when Nelson goes to visit Harry in the hospital. Nelson brings him a magazine that runs an article about “fighting flab,” which the translator has rendered as *un artículo sobre la blandura en el boxeo,* evincing a lack of knowledge of colloquial expressions in the source culture. Something along the lines of *lucha contra los michelines* would have expressed the same content with a matching metaphor. As this next examples show, such misunderstandings extend to the translation of Harry’s idiolect, where the target utterances mean something different:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>I’m semi retired (<em>Rabbit at Rest</em>: 211)</th>
<th>Estoy casi retirado.</th>
<th>Estoy medio retirado. (“Conejo en paz”: 180)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

From “Rabbit” to *Conejo:* Indexing Self-Identity in Translation
The first example comes from a conversation between Harry and a new employee at the Toyota agency, Elvira. Harry is struggling to assert himself as the boss of the company, and when Elvira asks, “I thought you were retired?”, Harry answers that he is “semi retired”, an expressive speech act that reinforces his position as boss. Harry’s answer in the target text, estoy casi retirado, is a non-confrontational answer to Elvira’s question; in fact, it vindicates Elvira’s indirect claim that Harry no longer has any standing in Toyota. This transgression could have been avoided by translating the sentence literally: estoy semi retirado. The last two examples change the meaning of Harry’s utterances even more drastically. Whereas the source text “caring” in the third example above is Harry’s way of defending Nelson without criticising him, the target language tenso carries a negative connotation that is not present in the source text. By using cariñoso, an equivalent adjective to the source text “caring” the translation would have indexed Harry’s performance as benevolent father. In the last example, Harry is talking to one of Nelson’s friends, who suffers from AIDS. In this exchange, Harry is trying to intimidate him by asking him what it feels like to be so close to death. In his utterance, “barn” is a euphemistic metaphor for death. The translator has misread this. Earlier in the conversation Lylle mentions he is a drug user; it seems Menéndez has taken this information and used it to interpret “barn”, which she translates as trance. Instead, an utterance such as que se siente al estar tan cerca del otro barrio would have recast the function of the source euphemism.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>He was always a very caring boy (Rabbit at Rest: 212)</th>
<th>Siempre fue un chico muy tenso (“Conejo en paz”: 180)</th>
<th>Siempre fue un chico muy cariñoso.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Being so close to, you know, the barn. (Rabbit at Rest: 217)</td>
<td>Estando tan cerca, ya sabes, del trance. (“Conejo en paz”: 185)</td>
<td>Estando tan cerca, ya sabes, del otro barrio.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
6.5 Harry Angstrom: where is the angst?

Vulgar expressions play an important role in Harry’s idiolect as they reflect the emotional kernel that shapes his identity and defines his behaviour throughout the saga. Harry’s use of profane language is a linguistic codification of his anger, an emotional stance that indexes his angst, the one invariant trait that identifies his character through the four novels. As Jackson (1985) argues, “Rabbit remains annoyed and angry, but he does not act”. Harry does indeed display anger throughout the tetralogy, but Jackson fails to acknowledge that Harry physically assaults Janice and Skeeter, two characters that are the source of much of his angst in *Rabbit Redux* - hardly the behaviour of someone who does not act. Aside from such overt triggers of his anger, in every novel there is something in the ennui of everyday life that causes Harry frustration, a motif that, as Ristoff (1988:5) points out, Updike uses to situate Harry in scenes likely to trigger his anger, and how this anger is an expression of his frustration with his surroundings:

Having established this conservative posture of Harry, we understand better the reason why Updike, like a camera man in need of conflict, keeps changing the focus of his camera, forcing us in the process to perceive the decentration, the polyphony that moves the wheel of the social text he portrays. In other words, Updike’s Harry Angstrom is a man who, without understanding its constitutive elements, “speaks” according to the “grammar” of the system. Thus, without a constantly changing environment, the essential ingredient of human life – tension – would be absent from the Rabbit [tetralogy].

Harry, a character consumed by his angst, manifests this tension with swear words. As Boswell (2001:11-13) points out, angst in Harry can sometimes manifest itself as fear, insecurity but most frequently, as anger. Although Harry’s use of swear words is particularly pronounced in *Rabbit Redux*, they are a feature of his idiolect in all four source texts. In *Rabbit, Run*, for example, upon meeting Rev. Eccles for the first time, the
narrator reveals the social motivation behind Harry’s use of swear words in this particular context:

I drove as far as West Virginia. Then I thought the hell with it and came back.”

He must try to stop swearing; he wonders why he’s doing it. To keep them apart maybe; he feels a dangerous tug drawing him toward this man in black.

(Rabbit, Run: 106)

The “man in black,” evidently dressed in clerical clothes, is the aforementioned Rev. Eccles, the man who Rabbit sees as a symbol of the world he is trying to escape. Here then is an example of Harry’s inner conflict, the inner yearning at battle with social convention. To Harry, Rev. Eccles represents social convention, and his language – his use of blasphemous language in this case – is his way of favouring his inner yearning and distancing himself from the social force that impels him to return to his marriage. The target text deals with this particular segment in an equivalent manner:

Fui hasta Virginia Occidental y entonces me dije «Al diablo con ello», y regresé. No debe seguir soltando juramentos. Se pregunta por qué lo hace; quizá para mantener la distancia entre ellos, pues siente un peligroso tirón que le acerca a ese hombre vestido de negro. (“Corre, Conejo”: 130)

As the translator uses a similarly blasphemous term, diablo, it can be said that the semiotic elements are adequately transposed to the target language. The hermeneutic continuum in the target text leads to the same identity as in the source text. The symbol, transposed to the target language, generates the indexer of distance and difference in the blasphemous language that creates the icon “Harry Angstrom”. In the target text, as in the source text, Harry’s language codifies how his inner yearnings are winning the moral battle within him. This, however, is an instance of how Updike’s detailed prose comes to the aid of the
translator. By making explicit the role of blasphemous language as pragmatic indexers in the accompanying metalinguistic cue, the translator follows suit in the target text and directly substitutes Harry’s blasphemous source language utterance with a blasphemous target language utterance. Although initially this may seem to be an unfair assessment of the translator - that is, crediting the original author in what is ultimately a successful instance of translation - it is important to note that in other passages, when Harry uses similarly blasphemous language, the translator does not mirror the source dialogue. Such an instance, for example, was explored in the previous section with relation to the verisimilitude of the utterance “I’ll be damned” (Rabbit, Run: 145), which is replaced in the target text with ¡Quién lo hubiera creído! (“Corre, Conejo”: 176), evincing a strategy that does not observe the role of blasphemy in Harry’s idiolect. In light of this, this section is interested in utterances where Harry’s use of swear words has shifted in the target text in order to explore whether these shifts are frequent enough to cause a shift in this key element of his identity, the kernel of his existence, his angst, which, “inarticulate but full of feeling”, he expresses with swear words (Greiner, 1984:50).

6.5.1 Indexing angst in “El regreso de Conejo”

In the second book of the saga, Rabbit Redux, “Updike’s only angry novel” (Wood 1982:53), much has changed; not least Harry himself. He no longer has the rebellious streak and the impatience of youth that in the first novel caused him, in part, to run away from his wife. His existential angst, however, remains. Though the character - or the parole to continue using Ristoff’s Saussurian analogy - has changed from a non-conformist to a conformist, Rabbit’s immediate environment, US society at large and those close to him - the langue of the analogy - have also changed. Whereas the Eisenhower years that contextualised Rabbit, Run was a relatively tranquil time defined by traditional values (Greiner, 1984:49), the sociocultural situation in the 1970s United States of Rabbit Redux is radically different. Indignation was prevalent over the role of the country
in the Vietnam War and in conflicts generated by the Civil Rights movement. The rise of feminism too was a source of social discord. Thus the national mood was one of non-conformism. This new langue is symbolically represented, and semiotically coded by, the African-American community, Jill the hippie girl who moves in with Rabbit and Janice’s Greek lover, Charlie Stavros. In order to maintain Harry in direct opposition and thus still angst-ridden, Updike reverses Harry’s rebelliousness and instead develops the character as a “staunchly conservative family man” (Boswell 2001:76). It is Harry’s penchant for opposition, as well as the tension between the reality of being insignificant and his belief that he is “special”, which are at the root of his anger:

No wonder Harry is both puzzled by and angry at the implosions that shook the country during the 1960s and that Updike chronicled in Rabbit Redux: race riots, sexual revolution, drug culture. Angstrom feels trapped between the Cold War threat from outside the borders and the ungrateful rebellion within. (Greiner 2010:182)

However, the aim here is not to isolate the source of his anger, but to establish how it is indexed in the language that he uses in the source dialogue in order to explore whether it is semiotically encoded in the target dialogue. A look at the following examples, uttered at various points in the source text, reveal the linguistic feature that predominantly indexes Harry’s angst:

“Well Jesus how much privacy do you think I owe you?” (Rabbit, Redux: 32)
- ¡Caray! ¿Cuánta intimidad crees que debo proporcionarte? (“El regreso de Conejo”: 32)

“Christ, exactly. We'd turn it into another Japan if they'd let us”. (Rabbit Redux: 45)
- Caray, precisamente. Lo habríamos convertido en otro Japón si nos hubiesen dejado. (“El regreso de Conejo”: 42)
“Sure. Now what the **fuck** is really going on?” (*Rabbit Redux*: 20)

- *Por supuesto. Ahora dime qué **cuernos** está pasando realmente.* (“El regreso de Conejo”: 21)

These examples show Harry’s predisposition (in the source text) for the use of swear words. Whenever a subject that makes him uncomfortable is broached, when he loses his patience or when he aims to be hurtful, Harry expresses his anger by uttering a swear word. The terms in themselves (“Christ”, “Jesus”, “fuck”) carry no referential meaning in the utterances above. Their meaning, rather, is connotative, and thus their role in the utterances is strictly pragmatic. Jay and Janschwitz (2008) say that swear words may be merely conversational, but in none of these three contexts can Harry’s swearing be considered “conversational”; they are, rather, face threatening acts deployed to defeat Stavros’ argument. In the first example, Janice spends her first evening at home in a long time (as is later revealed in the novel, her absence is due to her spending time with her lover, Charlie Stavros), therefore an utterance in the target language with a similarly offensive marker of anger and omitting the overly formal *propacionarte*, such as ¿*Joder!* ¿Cuánta intimidad crees que te debo? would generate an equivalent interpersonal dynamic as well as fulfilling the identitarian function of the source language expletive. Although the shift from “Jesus” to *joder* laicises the expletive, the religious connotation is not the base of the indexical value of the sign. What is important is the force that the swear word carries. Therefore, in the hermeneutic continuum, joder indexes the icon that *caray* cannot:
In the second example, Harry is being taken to task for sporting a flag decal on his car, a symbol of patriotism (in Peircean terms, an icon that indexes Harry’s patriotic wont), by Janice’s lover, Charlie Stavros. At this point, the interpersonal relationship between the three speakers is, evidently, troubled; and the socio-physical situation is also fraught with tension, as Harry and Stavros fall on different sides of the Vietnam debate: Harry is for it, Stavros against it. In fact, Harry takes it personally when Stavros aims his vitriol at the nation, something that offends Harry because for him “America is beyond power, it acts as if in a dream, as a face of God”, therefore, “in his mind’s eye, Harry is defending something infinitely tender” (*Rabbit Redux*: 47). In this context, the euphemistic *caray* results in a pragmatic shift that could have been avoided by substituting “Christ” with any term from the offensive lexical inventory of the target language system: *joder, coño, cojones*, to name but three, would have been more appropriate to the context of situation and the semiotic textualisation of Harry’s character. In order to avoid using *joder* to replace two words from the source text (“Christ” and “Jesus”), the continuum here is represented with *coño*, as perhaps one of the most prevalent taboo words in Spain:
In the third source text utterance above, Harry has discovered his wife’s affair and confronts her for verification. In another conversation where Harry demonstrates his anger, the target text utterance that substitutes “fuck” with cuernos fails to index the interpersonal dimension of this invective, where ahora dime qué cojones está pasando, or ahora dime qué coño está pasando, would have been preferable. The examples from the target text are representative of the overall strategy employed by the translator to render this feature.

The translation almost always uses euphemistic language where in the source text there is offensive language. By applying the indexicality principle, it can be said that the shift in language use from offensive to euphemistic creates a different emergent identity for Harry. Part of the reason for this is because, whilst Harry’s use of language does change in the translation, the context of situation does not. The target narrative still portrays Harry as an angry character; when he talks with his father, for example, ve todo rojo (“El regreso de Conejo”: 12), or when Janice or her lover approach him, empieza a enfurecerse (“El regreso de Conejo”: 150). Whereas these contextual elements frame Harry’s use of coarse language in the source text, they frame euphemistic language in the target text, thus creating a character that, instead of being rude and unapologetic, is afraid of causing offence to his father, his wife and his wife’s lover. The target dialogue, in essence, weakens Harry because his use of language is no longer a paradigm of his identity as it is constructed in the narrative.

In accordance with the emergence, positionality, and relationality principles, Harry’s own diatypic variation demonstrates how he exercises linguistic agency to allow other elements of his identity to surface; the following examples illustrate this point:

What are you going to have, if you're so fucking smart? (Rabbit Redux: 39)
¿Qué vas a tomar tú, ya que eres tan puñeteramente lista? (“El regreso de Conejo”: 38)

All I want to know is why my wife is never home to cook the fucking supper for me and the fucking kid. (Rabbit Redux: 20)

Lo único que quiero saber es por qué mi mujer nunca está en casa para cocinar una puñetera cena para mí y el puñetero crío. (“El regreso de Conejo”: 20)

I spend all frigging day in Brewer. (Rabbit Redux: 36)

Me paso todo el puñetero día en Brewer. (“El regreso de Conejo”: 35)

These utterances occur in the same conversation. Harry, his wife Janice, their son Nelson and Janice’s lover, Charlie, are having dinner in a Greek restaurant. At this point of the novel Harry suspects, but has not yet confirmed, that his wife and Charlie are lovers. The conversation between the three is tense, and predictably, Harry’s use of language reflects his frustration with the situation. The first two examples are utterances directed at Janice, in the first instance to insult her intelligence, and in the second to question her skills as a housewife. Unlike the previous examples, in these instances it can be said that the translation has successfully indexed Harry’s anger. The use of “fucking” as an adverb and an adjective – but more importantly, as an indexer of anger – is rendered in Spanish with *puñeteramente* and *puñetero/a*. From a pragmatic perspective, there is scope to consider *puto/a* as the term that is most closely relatable to “fuck” – at least on a cline of coarseness, it is equitable to the offense that is potentially caused by “fuck”. However, the use of *puto/a* would not have allowed for the modulation in the first example because in Spanish, *puto/a* cannot be morphed into an adverb. Thus in the interest of consistency, *puñetero/a* may be considered an effective solution. This notwithstanding, it is this consistency in the target text that ultimately_betray_Harry’s diatypic variation in the source text. The third example is also uttered to Janice, but crucially, a new variable has been added to the context of situation when Harry and Janice’s twelve-year old son, Nelson, enters the conversation. It is at this point
that Harry changes his linguistic behaviour so as not to expose Nelson to inappropriate language. A crucial element of Harry’s identity surfaces here. This crass and unreservedly impolite person, is also, paradoxically, performing the role of conscientious father. This much is made explicit in the narrative when Janice mentions there have been “a lot of rapes” in Brewer and Harry admonishes her to “watch what [she] says in front of the kid” (“El regreso de Conejo”: 36). This new emergent identity for Harry is manifested in the diatypic shift from offensive to euphemistic language, indexed by the use of “frigging”, a euphemism of “fucking” - the word that Harry had been liberally uttering until his son entered the fray. By virtue of translating “fucking” and “frigging” with the same term – *puñetero/a* – this emergent identity is not a feature of Harry’s idiolect in the target text. In fact, where the source text dialogue uses Harry’s language use as a literary device that makes a distinction between (a) Harry’s relationship with Janice and her lover, and (b) his relationship with his son, the target dialogue does not codify this interpersonal distinction. In terms of the social meaning encoded in Harry’s dialogue, at least, the target text Harry icon does not discriminate between the relationships. This is not the only time that Harry exercises his role of fatherhood in such a way either. During an earlier exchange, when Harry and Nelson are alone, the same euphemism appears in Harry’s dialogue, with the same result in the target text:

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Turn the frigging TV down for once in your life (Rabbit Redux: 19)
Baja esa *puñetera* tele por una vez en tu vida (“El regreso de Conejo”: 21)
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While, from a strictly linguistic point of view, the strategy of replacing “fucking” with *puñetero/a* and *puñeteramente* seems like an effective strategy, from a semiotic construction of this character’s identity, it in facts attenuates and constrists what in the source text is a multidimensional identity. This can be appreciated by the discordant source and target continuums:
There is thus a subtle, nuanced distribution of coarse and euphemistic language in the source text; a strategic representation of Harry’s idiolect judiciously constructed by Updike. On the one hand, his anger at his wife and her lover is evident in his use of offensive language, but on the other hand, his anger is masked with euphemisms when his twelve-year-old son is present. In the target text, exactly the reverse is true. Harry uses euphemistic language with the people who are the cause of his anger (as in the first two examples above), but uses swear words in front of his son (as in the last two examples). The result in the target text is a character whose linguistic behaviour is completely different to how he is originally portrayed in the source text. When considering Harry’s use of swear words, as this discussion demonstrates, there are losses at the interpersonal level of language. The language that he uses in the source text captures his feelings towards Janice, Janice’s lover, and Nelson. The growing sense of frustration which in the source text is a linguistic crescendo that reaches its denouement when Harry finds out about his wife’s affair, becomes a rather anodyne progression in the target text where there are no insults and no verbal jousting. These are all losses at the linguistic level. At the semiotic level, the symbols have changed, which results in shift in language use, which in turn, changes the interpersonal dynamic of Harry’s use of language. If the symbols have changed, the indexers of identity have also changed. These, in translation terms, result in a shift in the identitarian plane of Harry’s language use, where this angst-ridden man becomes a meek person who uses...
euphemistic language, giving the overall sense that Harry is a person who is afraid to offend.

6.5.2 Indexing anger in “Conejo en paz”
In the other Rabbit book Menéndez translated, “Conejo en Paz”, she adopts a somewhat more inconsistent strategy with regards to Harry’s use of swear words. Whereas in “El regreso de Conejo” she replaces virtually every swear word in Rabbit’s idiolect with a euphemism or an attenuated term, in “Conejo en paz” she reverses the strategy and allows for utterances such as the following:

“Shit,” he says, in some embarrassment. “I can’t get away with anything any more.” (Rabbit at Rest: 13)

*Mierda* – dice un tanto perturbado. Ya no consigo librarme de nada. (“Conejo en paz”: 19)

“Son of a son of a bitch,” he says, frustration pressing from behind his eyes so hard he thinks he might burst into tears. “On in one, and a fucking three-putt”.

(Rabbit at Rest: 65)

**Hijo de un hijo de puta** – dice, con la frustración presionándolo tan fuerte por detrás de los ojos que piensa que podría echarse a llorar -. Hecho en uno, y un puñetero putt de tres. (“Conejo en paz”: 60)

“Jesus – fifty thousand buys a lot of video games.” (Rabbit at Rest: 83)

- **Joder**... con cincuenta mil se pueden comprar montones de video juegos

(“Conejo en paz”: 75)

In contrast to “El regreso de Conejo,” the translation of swear words in “Conejo en paz” index Harry’s anger more appropriately. In the first example, Harry expresses surprise and embarrassment after his granddaughter Judy discovers he has eaten a chocolate bar. The source text uses “shit” as a discourse marker that stresses this embarrassment, a pragmatic function that is equivalently expressed in the target text with the direct target language correlate, *mierda*. The second example also
represents a successful translation of an indexer of anger. Frustrated by how badly his round of golf is going, Harry vents his frustration, firstly, by using a variation of “son of a bitch”, adding a second “son of a” for emphasis: “son of a son of a bitch.” This repetition is mirrored in the target text by adding a second *hijo de* to the equivalent target language taboo phrase: *hijo de un hijo de puta*. Also in this utterance, Menéndez replaces the marker “fucking” with *puñetero*, thus remaining faithful, in this instance, to the use of this term in her translation of “El regreso de Conejo.” It is in the last example, however, where the inconsistency in Menéndez’s strategy can be most clearly seen. Whereas “Jesus” in “El regreso de Conejo” is translated with the euphemistic *caray*, in this novel it is translated with an equivalent indexer of anger: *joder*. The reason behind this change in strategy is a mystery, especially given that both translations are copyrighted to Menéndez on the same year, 1992. This inconsistency, however, is not only intertextual, but also intratextual, as there are examples in “Conejo en paz” where Harry’s swearing is attenuated:

“Hey *Jesus,*” Harry tells them, “don’t start fighting yet. We aren’t even in the car”. (*Rabbit at Rest:* 92)

*Eh, no empecéis a pelearos todavía – les dice Harry -. Ni siquiera estamos en el coche.* (“Conejo en paz”: 82)

Whereas in an example above, “Jesus” as an indexer of anger is translated successfully with an equivalent indexer in the target language, in this instance it is omitted entirely, a linguistic shift that results in a transgression of the identitarian function of this utterance, i.e., to index Harry as a grandfather who loses his patience easily with his grandchildren. There are more examples of attenuated swear words in “Conejo en paz,” demonstrating that, whilst in some instances Menéndez allows for vulgar expressions, she did not devise a consistent strategy, and less so one that accounts for the identitarian function of swear words:
“For Chrissake, cool it with the channel-changer”. (*Rabbit at Rest*: 79)

**Caray, deja en paz el mando a distancia.** (“Conejo en paz”: 71)

“Where the hell had he been?” (*Rabbit at Rest*: 88)

¿Dónde cuernos había estado? (“Conejo en paz”: 79)

In the first example, Menéndez fails to encode Harry’s feelings towards Roy, Harry’s three-year old son grandson for whom he feels antipathy. This interpersonal dimension is not evident in the example above where “Chrissake” is replaced with *caray*, even though an expression such as *deja el jodido mando en paz* was available to the translator, and would have indexed Harry’s anger and lack of patience. The second example is Harry’s reaction to having heard that Nelson had finally arrived back home after spending the night away. Nelson’s escapades during the initial stages of this novel are a source of tension, which is manifest in Harry’s use of blasphemous language. Had Menéndez translated this utterance as ¿Dónde cojones había estado? then the interpersonal parameters and the identitarian function of Harry’s language would have been successfully represented in the Spanish version.

In both “El regreso de Conejo” and “Conejo en paz”, Menéndez constructs different discursive identities for Harry by not applying a consistent strategy that accounts for the role of anger indexers. In “El regreso de Conejo” – recognised as Updike’s angriest novel (c.f. Wood, 1982), the cumulative effect of replacing vulgar expressions with euphemism indexes a weak version of the Harry Angstrom icon. Even though in the source text Harry uses swear words consistently, in the translations this is not the case because an intratextual inconsistency is created when Harry, twenty years on from “El regreso de Conejo” does start to use swear words – though only in one-off instances. Therefore, rather than consistently indexing Harry’s anger throughout the four
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novels, the prevalence of swear words in Harry’s idiolect in the Spanish version is rather a cline, from less (in “El regreso de Conejo”) to more (in “Conejo en Paz”). This inconsistency is exacerbated when the third book, “Conejo es rico” (trans. Jaime Zulaika, 2002) is taken into consideration.

6.5.3 Indexing anger in “Conejo es rico”

Zulaika’s translation of *Rabbit is Rich* was the last to appear in Spain, roughly ten years after Menéndez’s “El regreso de Conejo” and “Conejo en Paz”. Whereas Menéndez predominantly uses euphemisms to render swear words in “El regreso de Conejo”, and a mixture of euphemisms and swear words in “Conejo en Paz”, Zulaika’s “Conejo es Rico” replaces like for like – a strategy that is successful in relation to creating Harry’s target language-identity nexus that is (pseudo)equivalent to the source text language-identity nexus. In the following examples, Harry’s anger is adequately indexed in the translations:

What the **fuck** are we going to do with the kid? (*Rabbit is Rich*: 70)  
¿Qué **cojones** vamos a hacer con el chico? (“Conejo es rico”: 71)

I wasn’t so **fucking** fortunate as to get to college […] (*Rabbit is Rich*: 70)  
Yo no tuve la **puta** suerte de ir a la universidad […] (“Conejo es rico”: 71)  
Don’t give me a hard time, it’s too **fucking** humid. (*Rabbit is Rich*: 92)  
No empieces a hostigarme, el **puto** tiempo está demasiado húmedo (“Conejo es rico”: 90-91)

People come here looking for Toyotas, they don’t want some **fucking** British sports car. (*Rabbit is Rich*: 165)  
La gente viene aquí a comprar Toyotas, no quiere esos **putos** deportivos ingleses (“Conejo es rico”: 159)

Although Zulaika’s strategy cannot be criticised, by virtue of its intertextual relation with the preceding novels, a contrast emerges in Harry’s linguistic behaviour book on book. The Harry Angstrom of
“Conejo es Rico” uses more expletives in comparison to the attenuated versions of Harry in “El regreso de Conejo” and “Conejo en Paz”. The linguistic behaviour of Harry Angstrom in the source text does not change; in the translations, however, Harry’s linguistic behaviour changes, especially in “El regreso de Conejo”.

6.6 Social Identity: the “America all around Rabbit”

Given that the thesis of this chapter has been almost exclusively shaped by an ontology of Harry’s language use as a reflection of his individual self, it may seem that an exploration of the social elements of language is incompatible with the diatypic purview herein. As the earlier cited Downes (c.f. section 1.2) explains, however, much of a person’s linguistic individuation is shaped by social loci. In other words, there must always be an element of external influences in a person’s unique manner of speaking. Jenkins (1996:4) points out that “all human identities are in some sense – and usually a stronger rather than a weaker sense – social identities”. Therefore, to say that Harry performs his “self” is to say that in some way or other, Harry is also performing his social self:

Many years ago I argued that every identity group has a culture of its own. I also argued then that every individual is a part of perhaps hundreds of different identity groups simultaneously and that one learns, and becomes a part of, all of the cultures with which one identifies. (Singer 1998:xii)

Singer’s statement here allows for the possibility that Harry’s identity, unique as it is, may also be also be a collection “of different identity groups simultaneously”. In this regard, Updike seems to have been acutely aware that his “individualistic” character is, notwithstanding his uniqueness, a social being, one who could reflect the langue even when performing as a parole:

24 Jenkins’ italics.
the character of Harry “Rabbit” Angstrom was for me a way in – a ticket to the America all around me. What I saw through Rabbit’s eyes was more worth telling than what I saw through my own, though the difference was often slight; his life, less defended and logocentric than my own, went places mine could not. (1995:vii)

With this in mind, this section explores the linguistic features in Harry’s idiolect that reflect the “American all around”, a nation textualised in the form of social discourses, which in turn play a considerable part in shaping Harry’s social identity. One such social discourse is basketball. As Miller (2001:38) argues, “much of Harry’s life is dictated by the fleeting sense of accomplishment he experienced as a star of his high school basketball team”. Miller (ibid.) further argues that the discourse of Harry’s fictive life is defined by his constant attempts to “hearken back to the days of his youth when excellence on the court was all that mattered”. The first of these attempts occurs during the opening scene of the novel, when, upon encountering a group of kids playing basketball, Harry manoeuvres himself into one of the makeshift teams:

In the very first scene when, as a mature man, he weighs and contemplates the ball in his hands, he believes that he has recaptured his long lost sense of existential security […]. The alley basketball game into which Rabbit intrudes himself at the beginning of the novel offers him an opportunity to measure his lapsed state against the innocent excitement of his playing days. (Lawson 1974:232–233)

Yet, initially, the age difference between twenty-six year old Harry Angstrom, dressed in a business suit and smoking a cigarette that makes him look “sinister” and the boys wearing Keds sports shoes and dungarees, causes tension. The boys think Harry might be “one of those [strange men] going to offer them cigarettes or money to go out in back of the ice plant with him” (Rabbit, Run: 3-4). Soon, in an outward
manifestation of his desire to digress and liken himself to the boys, “Rabbit takes off his coat”. Wilhelm (1975:87) says that “throughout the novel Updike uses references to clothing as a means of defining the social roles forced upon Rabbit and his reactions to them”. By virtue of removing his suit jacket, Harry rids himself of his “adult uniform” in order to make himself less threatening to the boys:

Rabbit first appears in a standard business suit - his uniform as peripatetic seller of MagiPeel kitchen peelers in the five-and-ten stores of Brewer, Pennsylvania. Soon, however, Rabbit throws off at least a part of this attire. In an attempt to prove that he has not lost his youthful freedom (Wilhelm 1975:88).

In Peircean terms, the suit jacket is a semiotic sign that, when worn, indexes Harry’s identity as a middle-class working man; but off, and in the context of a basketball game with these children, it indexes his rejection of adulthood in favour of the youthful discourse the boys in dungarees represent. This attempt to form a quasi-allegiance with the boys is also reflected in the type of language that he uses. In the following lines he utters the interjection “Hey” three times, a strategic use of a discourse marker to “break the ice” with the boys playing basketball:

It drops into the circle of the rim, whipping the net with a ladylike whisper.
“Hey!” he shouts with pride. […]
“Luck,” one of the kids says.
“Skill,” he answers, and asks, “Hey. O.K. if I play?” […]
He asks, “Hey whose side am I on?” (Rabbit, Run: 4)

In this scene there are agents of similarity and difference, the parameters within which an identity becomes meaningful (Jenkins 1996:3-4). The narrative immediately describes the difference between Harry and the
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boys: mainly, the age gap. After this initial passage, the agents of similarity, manifested in the strategies that Harry deploys to liken himself to the boys, begin to influence how this scene should be read. He takes off his suit jacket and he modifies his language to converge to the youthful discourse the boys represent. The first “hey,” uttered after he sinks a shot, functions as an ice-breaker, a type of linguistic behaviour that indexes solidarity. Up until this point, Harry is a “sinister” presence in the scene. Harry’s friendly manner, his solidarity-establishing use of language, mitigates this tension. The second “hey” indexes that he is “one of them”, just another kid who wants to join in on the game. In a similar vein, when Harry sinks his first shot and one of the kids dismisses it as “luck”, Harry’s one-word rejoinder is emphatic: “skill”. Keen to build a bond with these boys, or at least ingratiate himself to them through their common ground (basketball), Harry uses his skill to impress them, thus emphasising what they have in common.

The same passage in the translation reads differently. When the kid says *una chiripa*, instead of emphasising what he has in common with the boys, Harry answers *experiencia*, which operates as an index of his age, highlighting precisely the association he is trying to reject when he takes off his suit jacket. The implication here is that the boys and Harry cannot be the same because Harry, as he tells them in the target text, is experienced and therefore older. Where the Harry Angstrom of the source text chooses to index what he has in common with these boys, target text Harry chooses to index what is different:
The translation does not feature a pragmatic strategy that functions equivalently to the discourse marker “hey”. Instead, Harry’s language in the target dialogue reinforces that he is older than the kids. Where in the source text Harry first introduces himself to the kids by sinking a shot and shouting “Hey!” with pride, the target text omits this proud interjection. Instead, his first words to the kids are the aforementioned *experiencia*, followed by, ¿Qué, me dejáis jugar?, which could potentially come across as aggressive. This is written language, however, so evaluating an utterance in terms of tone seems unusual if the line is not delivered orally; this in itself highlights why the semiotic imperatives of written dialogue are so important. Updike maximises the potential of written language by adding an important pragmatic function. In the source text, Harry’s question (“Hey. O.K. if I play?”) is mitigated with (a) the discourse marker “hey”, three times repeated, but endowed with a difference index in every the three repetitions; (b) the use of slang (“O.K”); and (c) the use of the pronoun “I” as the theme of the question, i.e. in the source it is “if I play”, whereas in the target text the onus is on the boys letting him play: me dejáis jugar. Had the target text Harry introduced himself with the same “hey” after sinking the shot, had he shouted with pride as he does in the source text, then ¿Qué, me dejáis jugar? would generate a different social meaning, one more in line with the friendly tone of its source text counterpart. Harry’s sinister aura is not abated in the translation because it (a) fails to employ a pragmatic device that functions equivalent to the source marker “hey”, (b) there is no equivalent target slang term used to index solidarity, and (c) the agency of the question “O.K if I play?” is reversed. If the translator had not omitted “hey” in the first instance, and had indexed similarity by rendering Harry’s answer “skill” and his use of slang, Harry’s social identity would have been adequately reflected, as in the following alternative passage:

[...] la pelota pasa por el aro y agita la red produciendo una especie de susurro femenino.
- ¡Eh! – grita Conejo con orgullo.

- Chiripa -, dice uno de los niños.

- De chiripa nada, a eso se le llama habilidad -, contesta, y pregunta – ¿Qué, echamos una pachanga?

[...] –Eh, ¿Con quién voy?

This alternative version, without changing drastically the semantic blueprint of the scene, accounts for Harry’s linguistic accommodation by replacing “hey” with eh, and by opting for a construction such as ¿Qué, echamos una pachanga? instead of ¿Qué, me dejáis jugar? The former places the onus on “we” instead of “you” and also replaces the slang “O.K” with the functional equivalent pachanga, a slang term for partida, which originated in Latin American but is used in Spain. In this instance the translator could have used a construction such as ¿Puedo jugar?, which would have mirrored the subject-agent of the original, but not Harry’s use of slang as a solidarity-establishing device. By virtue of not accounting for this socio-pragmatic dimension of Harry’s use of language, the translation fails to capture the digressive element of Harry’s identity in this opening scene. The target language dialogue indexes a mature Harry icon-sign through the use of indexers in his utterances, and it also fails to index his rejection of his working persona when, instead of taking off his business suit jacket, Conejo se quita la chaqueta [...] de su traje de calle, a modulation from “business” to “street” that is a betrayal of an element which Wilhelm highlights as crucial to the semiotic complexion of the entire scene.

Perhaps one of the linguistic features that is most representative of the common strategy employed by the three translators is the use of standardised target forms to render non-standard spelling of “what” and “who” in wh- utterances, a feature of Harry’s speech throughout the four books. This subtle use of his language differentiates between a relaxed

25 http://lema.rae.es/drae/?val=pachanga
Harry Angstrom that speaks in informal settings, and a staid Harry Angstrom that speaks in more formal settings; two different identities that emerge depending on the immediate context of situation. The non-standard pronunciation of the modal wh- verbs in interrogative utterances, graphically represented by Updike with unorthodox spellings, index orality, but they also index accommodation because Harry does not use this linguistic device all of the time; he only does so when the interpersonal and ideational parameters of the interaction are propitious. In light of this, it can be said that when Harry asks a question with this variation, he modifies his language to converge to the speaker and the context. The first instance of this occurs in *Rabbit, Run* when Janice and Harry are on the point of arguing. Harry tries to defuse the situation by adopting a jocular tenor:

*Whaddeya afraid of? Whoedaya think’s gonna come in that door? Errol Flynn?*  
(*Rabbit, Run: 7*)

*¿Dé qué tienes miedo? ¿Quién crees que va a entrar por esa puerta? Errol Flynn?* (“Corre, Conejo”: 14)

The standard “what are you” and “who do you” contracted to “whaddeya” and “whoedaya,” as well as the vernacular form “gonna” for “going to”, all work together in a semiotic continuum to index Harry’s well-meaning intention. He is, in other words, manipulating language to chide Janice in a friendly way, where a standard use of language could potentially be interpreted as berating her for leaving the door unlocked. This particular instance, however, is accompanied by metalinguistic information that makes explicit the pragmatic element of Harry’s use of language; something that aids the translator to somewhat mitigate against the potential loss of indexers - albeit outside dialogue, but a compensation strategy nevertheless. However, there are instances when Updike does not make the pragmatic element explicit, therefore leaving it up to the translators to do so. As can be seen by the examples below,
utterances that in the source text contain this type of variation have been rendered with standard Spanish in the translation, with no strategy of compensation to avoid the loss; immediately below the target text utterances, are alternative versions that go some way towards accounting for Harry’s source text linguistic accommodation:

Source text: Whadja do all day? (Rabbit Redux: 16)
Target text: ¿Qué has hecho durante todo el día? (“El regreso de Conejo”: 19)
Alternative: ¿Y qué has hecho hoy, entonces?

There is no equivalent marker of linguistic accommodation in the Tusquets Editores translation. Having said this, however, it is difficult to see where the translator could have mirrored this technique. “What” offers a potential for orthographical variation that Qué does not. In this first example of Harry accommodating his language, he is speaking with his twelve year old son. Menéndez – staying true to her strategy of neutralising (and by extension, attenuating) Harry’s idiolect – has rendered the sentence with no vernacular variation, therefore Harry’s target text idiolect does not reflect his desire to be “mutually identified” with his fellow interlocutor (Downes 1998:277). The possibility exists of representing the social meaning generated in the source text by “whadja” with a discourse marker, a pragmatic device that channels conversations and indicates that the speaker is a willing listener. Conectores pragmáticos, as Briz (1993:147) calls them, such as bueno, pues and entonces would fulfil this function in the Spanish text. In the alternate version offered above, the marker entonces is used because (a) it indexes the spoken dimension of Harry’s speech as a marker of orality and (b) it indexes Harry’s willingness to engage Nelson in conversation. However, this strategy does not incorporate an indexer of accommodation. Another option available to Menéndez was to use a strategy of explicitation, where she could have extrapolated the pragmatic elements of the
utterance from the source text, and expressed them explicitly in an accompanying metalinguistic cue – much like Updike does himself in the example from *Rabbit, Run* cited earlier. With this in mind, the alternative could be supplemented with a metalinguistic cue that expresses explicitly in Spanish what the original English variation expresses implicitly:

*Pero dada su estatura, la semejanza con una chica resulta espantosamente excesiva. En tono simpático Conejo le pregunta - ¿Y qué has hecho hoy, entonces?*

The explicitation here is not overly invasive and it makes metalinguistically explicit in the translation what is left implicit in the original. This addition, in conjunction with the discourse marker *entonces*, would fulfil all of the pragmatic functions of Harry’s source text utterance. Nelson is once again involved in the example of this variation from *Rabbit is Rich*:

*Source text:  Whaddid you think of her anyway? The girlfriend. (Rabbit is Rich: 79)*

*Target text:  ¿Qué te ha parecido la chica? La novia (“Conejo es rico”: 79)*

*Alternative:  Bueno, ¿entonces qué os ha parecido la chica? La novia.*

Now aged twenty-two, Nelson has returned home from college and brought a girl home. Thus ensues a discussion about where the girl should sleep. Janice thinks she should sleep with Nelson in his room but Ma Springer, Janice’s mother and rightful owner of the family home, is opposed to the idea. It is straight after the scene in which the family meet her that Harry utters the example above: “Whaddid you think of her anyway? The girlfriend,” which Zulaika has rendered as *¿Qué te ha parecido la chica? La novia.* Firsly, Zulaika has interpreted this question as directed at Janice and Janice alone; this is not the case. Ma Springer is
also involved in the conversation – in fact, Harry engages more on this topic with Ma than with Janice, therefore the question is directed at both women. As it is Harry’s opening gambit after Nelson and his friend leave, his unorthodox pronunciation of the modal verb reflects his role in the conversation as a pacifying intermediary between the two Springer women. In short, he is modifying his language to fit the ideational and interpersonal parameters of the interaction. As in the example above, a couplet strategy is necessary to fulfil all the source text functions by adding a discourse marker to the utterance, and supplementing it with a pragmatically explicit metalinguistic cue:

- Las apariencias engañan –dice con pesimismo Mamá Springer.
- Vamos, ya está bien – añade Harry *benévolamente*, y para apaciguar el tema les pregunta - ¿Bueno, entonces qué os ha parecido la chica? La novia.

The metalinguistic cue added in this version adds the adjective *benévolamente*, a technique that Updike uses in Ma Springer’s preceding utterance and that the translator has mirrored with the prepositional phrase *con pesimismo*. It also makes explicit Harry’s role as peacemaker with *para apaciguar el tema*, and finally, in Harry’s utterance itself, this version adds two discourse markers, *bueno* and *entonces* to index orality and to supplement the explicitation in the metalinguistic cue. In both the examples discussed here, it may be argued that too many liberties have been taken with the text, even though efforts are made to keep the invasion to a minimum and when possible, to adhere as closely as possible to Updike’s own style. What is clear is that in the alternative, Harry’s use of language generates meaning beyond the narrow semantic capacity of the Tusquests Editores version, a strategy that results in the undesirable effect of annulling important index signs. As Newmark (1995:48) points out, “a semantic translation is normally inferior to its original, as there is both cognitive and pragmatic loss”. To this statement, is could be added that beyond the cognitive and pragmatic, there is also a
semiotic loss regarding the textualisation of Harry’s identity, a loss which, as this analysis demonstrates, could have been avoided. What Updike has done in the original, taking one instance of variation and repeating it in the four novels to show how Rabbit accommodates his language in different contexts, cannot be mirrored in the target text because there is no such variation in the target language that could be deployed in the same contexts. Therefore, there will be a loss insofar as the cumulative effect of the wh- variation cannot be repeated; this loss, however, could have been mitigated had the translator sought individual solutions for each utterance, therefore reflecting the pragmatic element of the wh- variation.

6.7 Different indexers, different icons

As the analysis demonstrates, the decisions made by the various translators of the “Rabbit” novels create a hermeneutic continuum that does not generate a target icon that is commensurate with the source icon. In this study of elements of Harry’s language that especially reflect his sense of self, the strategy of neutralising his language use with standard target forms recast his idiolect without the appropriate markers of his identity. The semiotic signs that indexed (a) verisimilitude, (b) anger and (c) social identity, were, for the most part, ignored and not replaced with equivalent indexers in the target texts. With regards to verisimilitude, although the focus was on establishing whether Harry uses everyday Spanish in the same way he uses everyday language in the English original, the knock-on effect of not replacing markers of orality resulted in losses in the interpersonal and identitarian functions of language. That no discernible strategy was devised in order to create a distinction between the fictive discourse of the narrative and the oral discourse of dialogue results in a Harry Angstrom that, in the Spanish, is monotonous to the point of sounding like an automaton, and in others like an overly formalised version of the source text version. By making Harry’s speech more formal than in the original, the translators have failed to represent the context-dependent variation of his language use, and by over-
formalising his speech, the translators have created a character that, unlike in the source text, is articulate, often expressing himself with specialised jargon and in prolix utterances. This can be seen from the first translation to the last, and at no point did any of the three translators try and apply a strategy that would differentiate between the type of language that builds the narrative, and the type of language that builds dialogue.

Swear words as the linguistic feature that predominantly express Harry’s anger, symptomatic of the angst that defines him throughout, were rendered inconsistently by the two translators of the last three books. In “El regreso de Conejo”, one of “Updike’s angriest novels”, the translation does not account for the offensive overtones of Harry’s utterances, oftentimes replacing them with euphemisms, and at times omitting the offending lexeme altogether. Inexplicably, when the source text Harry does mitigate his use of language by using a euphemism (“frigging”) in front of his twelve-year old son, the translator recasts this term with the equivalent of the word that replaces the expletive version (“fucking”), thus resulting in a transgression of Harry’s performance of his role as a father, a loss at an interpersonal level (as an indexer of his relationship with Nelson,) and at an identitarian level (as an indexer of his fatherly consciousness.) Zulaika’s translation of the novel that records Harry in his middle-age, “Conejo es rico,” shows a marked improvement. His strategy is effective because it translates Harry’s use of swear words with similar swear words in the target language. Therefore, in those instances, despite the linguistic shift, there is no loss of representation at the interpersonal or identitarian levels of Harry’s language use. In the hermeneutic continuum, the Harry Angstrom icon, as indexed by his use of profane language, is mirrored adequately in “Conejo es rico”. Despite the success of this strategy, when the Harry Angstrom portrayed in “Conejo es rico” is viewed in terms of the entire saga, it enters into an intertextual relationship with Menéndez’s translations and reveals an intertextual discord in the representation of Harry’s character. Whereas
the hermeneutic continuum of Harry’s use of language in the source text reveals a character that remains constant, in the translations, the Spanish Harry of “El regreso de Conejo” rarely uses a swear word, the Harry of “Conejo es rico” uses swear words gratuitously, but the Harry Angstrom of “Conejo en Paz” is once again a linguistically attenuated character.

With regards to the translation of indexers of social identity, another crucial element of Harry’s characterisation, his constant attempts to digress to his glory days, are also misrepresented. This can be clearly seen in the opening scene of the saga, where Harry’s use of language is a means to codifying similarity to ingratiate himself to the boys who are ten years his junior; yet the translation does precisely the opposite, instead of similarity, as the example that established the semiotic difference between Harry’s use of the term “skill” in the source text versus his use of the word *experiencia* in the target text reveals, the Spanish version of Harry Angstrom uses his language to re-assert difference, that is, to highlight he is older than the boys he so wished he could be like again. The losses and the shifts of representation highlighted in this part of the analysis were avoidable, as the alternative version offered evinces. The case of the orthographical variation of wh-clauses, however, is a loss that was inevitable in some cases. Throughout the saga, Harry uses a vernacular pronunciation (codified in the text through orthographical variation) to index similarity with cultural subgroups and social discourses. Most often, these vernacular forms are uttered at men to build a certain solidarity with other men; other times he uses this vernacular form with Janice. In all of these cases, the translation failed to replace the source markers of linguistic accommodation with a target marker of accommodation. As the alternatives offered in the analysis demonstrate, there were compensation strategies available to the translator, but for the most part, this feature of Harry’s language use was difficult to recreate in Spanish.
Chapter 7
The Transposition of African-American Identity: Indexing a Speech Community in Translation

7.0 Introduction

Language use, as the preceding chapter discussed, has the potential to index individual identity; however, it also has the potential to index speakers’ affiliation to discrete social groups, or what in sociolinguistics is called a *speech community*. The assortment of linguistic norms that link individuals together in a speech community, and concomitantly associate individuals with different sociocultural discourses, is here termed *sociolect*. Whereas the previous chapter analysed the translation issues around diatypic variation as the linguistic component of the language-identity nexus, this chapter focuses instead on dialectal variety, which subsumes African-American Vernacular English (AAVE), a sociolect spoken by three characters in *Rabbit Redux*. If a sociolect is the type of language variety that relates to a community, then sociolectal variation functions on an identitarian plane that links a group of individual speakers under a common collective identity.

As with idiolect in the previous section, finding a workable definition of “sociolect” is a difficult task. The first section is therefore devoted to exploring the different definitions put forward in previous research, with the ultimate aim of establishing a workable definition for the present project. Following this, the ontology of AAVE is discussed, with special attention given to its sociocultural condition and how it operates in the context of the fictive environment in the “Rabbit” novels. After these preliminary discussions, the analysis then sets out to answer the following research questions:
- How do the linguistic shifts presupposed by the translation process affect the representation of the African-American speech community in the target dialogue?
- What is the nature of these shifts and how do they affect the representation of the African-American community in the target text?
- Do these shifts result in a loss at the level of the language-identity nexus for the three characters?
- Could semiotic shifts have been avoided with a strategy that caters specifically for the language-identity nexus of the three African-American characters?

The source text-oriented part of the analysis establishes the linguistic markers of AAVE in the original, and through the application of the hermeneutic continuum, the target-oriented section explores whether the target dialogue is coded with the necessary index signs for the African-American icons to be commensurate with the source text icons. In other words, the aim here is to characterise the linguistic shifts incurred by the translation strategy adopted to transpose AAVE, and to explore whether there is a concomitant semiotic shift in the transposition of the community’s language-identity nexus. There is a slight change in the methodological approach with regards to the applied section in this chapter. Whereas in the previous chapter the alternatives were offered concurrently with the description, in this section the alternatives are explored in a section that stands separate to the textual analysis of the Tusquets Editores translations. The reason for this is that representing AAVE using the Castilian Spanish linguistic system – or, at a more fundamental level, recreating a common way of speaking between the three African-American characters – is more complex, and therefore requires a section that is solely focused on it. It is here where the discussion proposes two strategies that observe the principles of the language-identity nexus, and therefore index the identity of the African-
American characters so that the source language-identity nexus of the source text obtains in the target texts.

7.1 Towards a workable definition of “sociolect”

The Hallidayan conceptualisation of dialectal variety uses the term “dialect” to refer to language variations that subsume both geographical provenance and social class. A “sociolect” or “social dialect” is a type of variation that links individuals together within a social space, or as Hudson (1980:43) defines inversely, a linguistic variation that is based on “non-regional differences”. Dialect in its traditional guise is of little relevance to the present study, as instances of regional dialects are scarce in the “Rabbit” books, and such instances of variation are explicitly expressed in the narrative rather than implicitly marked in dialogue. However, AAVE, which is a sociolect based on the shared ethnicity of its speakers, features heavily in *Rabbit Redux*. Its thematic significance is such that it constitutes an important translation issue with regards to the iconography of the characters that speak it, because, as Spolsky (1998:57) points out, language carries a socially symbolic element that is crucial to the sociocultural identification of people:

> Because language is inherently involved in socialization, the social group whose language you speak is an important identity group for you. There are other markers of […] identity, such as food or clothing or religion. But language has a special role, in part because it organises thought and in part because it establishes social relations.

Here Spolsky foregrounds one of the basic tenets of sociolinguistic studies, and in doing so, puts forward two important ideas: (1) language serves a social, as well as a communicative, function; and (2) sociolects fulfil an identitarian function. With regards to the first point, the

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26 This is a specific reference to the Pennsylvania Dutch spoken by Harry’s granddaughter, Judy. However, there is no marked linguistic feature in the graphic representation of Judy’s speech that could cause a potential issue in translation, therefore it is not included in this study.
communicative and the social are two linguistic spheres that represent two different language phenomena, yet they are inextricably linked as it is only during the act of communication that the social function of language is evinced. Thus a sociolect “links individuals with the community of its users” in such a way that language becomes a mechanism that differentiates and delimits social groups (Lewandowski 2010:62). With regards to the second point, foregrounding the social aspects of language inevitably leads Spolsky to the conclusion that, although there are many other ways of marking identity, language “has a special role” as it not only organises individuals’ thought processes, but also establishes the parameters of a social space; as Gregory and Carroll (1978:18) point out:

As time and physical dimensions are reflected in language, so too is social “space”. The organisation of people into different groups is realized in the differentiation of language into social dialects […]. The acquisition of a given social dialect depends on one’s membership in a class which may be determined by birth, education, profession, wealth, race or religion. Social status, depending upon the society in question, can be achieved or ascribed, revealing horizontal or vertical dimensions.

Gregory and Carroll believe that “social space” pre-exists language and that language is only a way of indexing said space. In this process of signification, however, the social overtakes the regional to the point where a sociolect may be a means to concealing speakers’ regional origins (Holmes 2001:131). Along a similar line of thinking, Wolfram and Schilling-Estes (2006:167) say that “the social implications of socially and ethnically based differences in language are much graver than differentiation along regional lines”. The suggestion here is that a social space – especially one motivated by social or ethnic origins – may become a point of conflict, as each marked sociolect will carry with it a set of ideological implications, thus positioning the “space” occupied by the “group” as the primary object of sociolinguistic studies.
Towards a definition of “speech community”

The term “sociolect” implies building networks through language, or “speech networks” whose aggregates can then be described as a speech community. As Patrick (2004) points out, although it is “ignored surprisingly often”, the speech community remains a “core concept in empirical linguistics”. Yet there is remarkably little agreement on what constitutes a speech community. According to Hudson (1980:25), Lyons offers the “simplest” definition when he says that a speech community is “all the people who use a given language (or dialect)”. This is a definition which, simple as it may be, is a misleading idealisation that fails to make clear whether the speech community is a social or a linguistic construct. Romaine (2000:1), for example, is more sententious when she says that speech communities are “fundamentally social, and not linguistic constructs”. As the next few paragraphs discuss in detail, a characterisation of the nature of a speech community rests on a careful balancing of these complementary ontological poles: the social versus the linguistic.

Of the theories that weigh heavily on the linguistic side of things, Chomsky’s (1965:3) competence/performance approach is probably the most often quoted. His “ideal speaker-listener” in a “completely homogenous speech community” conceptualisation, though celebrated for bringing linguistic studies into the “scope of formalization”, has nevertheless been criticised for its reductionism (Halliday 1978:37-38). A more socially-inclined definition is offered by Hymes (1974:75), who postulates communicative competence as “the ability to participate in [...] society as not only a speaking, but also communicating member”. Hymes’ ethnographic approach contextualises the speaker in social parameters, and by extension implies a certain unviability in the Chomskyan school of thought, whence the idea of competence, presuming to encompass the totality of syntactical permutations (or at least the kernel of every possible expression), excludes the social

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27 John Lyons (1970:326)
variables that are paramount to speech production. Labov’s (1972:120) definition of speech community does not regard language as the defining feature. Instead, his definition focuses on linguistic norms, a set of abstractions which are uniformly spoken by members of the speech community: “the speech community is not defined by any marked agreement in the use of language elements, so much as by participation in a set of shared norms”. Hockett (1958:8) also demonstrates a preference for the communicative aspect of a community, but in his view the social function of language as the binding force of the network should be highlighted; he says that “each language defines a speech community: the whole set of people who communicate with each other directly or indirectly, via the common language”. Thus the view emerges that the speech community, often glossed over and at times ignored in sociolinguistics (c.f. Patrick 2004), is nevertheless something of a common denominator in modern linguistics, irrespective of whether research is carried out under an empirical or theoretical rubric.

Not only is there little agreement on how to define a speech community, but there is also a high level of scepticism regarding its validity. Its detractors criticise *speech community* as “a general label that might be applied to any aggregate of people” (Halliday 1978:154). Such criticisms notwithstanding, research that involves an exploration of the speech community will normally seek a set of stable parameters to make the concept more workable. This sought-after stability is reflected in Lewandowski’s (2010:61) definition of sociolect:

[...] The main prerequisite for a sociolect is the existence of a social group whose members maintain strong bonds (professional, social or cultural) established through frequent contacts with each other. If a sociolect is to evolve, the group of its users must be stable, have an established tradition, and display a sense of differentness from other groups.

Ultimately the idea of a speech community is a construct that approximates, rather than defines concretely, the link between language
and a community of speakers; it is, in Hudson’s (1980:44) words, a “ready way of referring to phenomena”. This view, though seemingly an underhanded rejection of the concept as a theoretical tool, in fact sheds light on its value for the study of literary sociolects, and as will be discussed in the following section, in the study of the translation shifts that may occur as a result of an intercultural and interlingual transposition of linguistically-indexed collective identities.

**7.2 Dialectal variation: fictive speech communities**
Thus far the discussion of sociolects and empirical speech communities has been foregrounded in this section; the next methodological step, therefore, is to recalibrate the notion of a speech community to its fictive transfiguration. As Patrick (ibid.) points out, *speech community* is often ignored or rejected as a valid concept; however, at least in its fictive reincarnation, the African-American speech community is not only an existential certainty, but warrants due consideration of its role in the overall complexion of the “Rabbit” saga, making it a central issue with regards to the translation of the novel. Unlike Harry, who indexes his self-identity in the source text by manipulating Standard American English (SAE), the African-American characters of the “Rabbit” books index their cultural identity by communicating with a language system that functions independently of SAE. Whereas translating Harry’s idiolect is an instance of transposing the uniqueness of his *parole*, translating AAVE is an instance of translating the *langue* of a marginalised minority, one that operates against the hegemonic *langue* – SAE – of the mainstream Anglo-Saxon community. This “superimposition of languages”, as Berman (2000:296) explains it, “is threatened by translation”. Therefore the challenge for the translator is not so much to do with manipulating Standard Peninsular Spanish (SPS) in a pseudo-equivalent way, but with finding a system that could function independently from SPS so that the cultural “otherness” of the characters that speak it is adequately indexed in the target text.
The discussion on fictive dialogue in Section I revealed the ontological conflict that defines it: whether its characterisation should be defined in terms of the oral/aural qualities it mimics, or whether it should be defined by the graphic medium through which it is presented. A resolution to this conflict has not been found – there may not be a resolution to find at all, for that matter – but Krapp’s (1926) eye dialect, terminologically speaking, seems to strike a compromising note. There is no clearer instance of an eye dialect in the “Rabbit” books than AAVE. This may well be the case in a more general sense also, given the longstanding tradition of representing African-American discourse in American literature; some of the most celebrated proponents of which, Harriet Beecher-Stowe’s *Uncle Tom’s Cabin* (1852) or the works of Mark Twain – to name two well-known examples – rely heavily on eye dialect in dialogue to indirectly characterise African-American characters. As Walpole (1974:191) says, “in the common miracle of transcribing conversation, eye dialect can be linguistically illogical, socially offensive, and yet dramatically indispensable”. If a fictive transcription of sociolect is indispensable, a translation that cannot – or simply chooses not to – transpose dialectal variation will result in an impoverished version of the original.

The specific aim of this section is to characterise the fictive tenets of AAVE in the “Rabbit” books. This is a necessary first step in order to inform a discussion on the translation strategy or strategies that may aid in the re-creation of a target dialogue that avoids, or at least mitigates against, a potentially impoverished translation. Walpole (1974:195) perhaps offers the most detailed account of the reader-text dynamic of an eye dialect. On the one hand, she argues that the reader, as much as the writer, recreates specific pronunciation patterns when she says that:

> The reader's inner ear is in truth the best supplier of dialect. By "inner ear" I refer to acoustic image, the memories of conversations, speech patterns, and dialect variations which the prepared and sensitive reader brings to the printed page. As he reads dialogue, he transmutes orthography into recollected sound.
What he "hears" within his mind as he reads will be silent, yet it will nonetheless echo his own imagined version of each character's voice. No two readers' fictional dialects will be similar in segmental and supra-segmental phonemic features; nor is any reader's conception likely to correspond exactly with the author's mentalized creation. Notwithstanding, each reader will feel satisfied with the silent theater of his own mind, for the voices which his inner ear produces will adequately approximate the voices of the fictitious characters, provided only that the author has supplied sufficient clues.

Such a statement supports the generally held view that dialectal variation is "beyond the limits of translation" (c.f. House 1973). If the effectiveness of an eye dialect is dependent on the preconceived frames that readers can conjure and bring to bear on their interpretation of the orthographical variation in dialogue, then it seems likely that target readers, especially those far removed from the source culture, will not be able to interpret the variations as a lect pertaining to a specific speech community, bound as it is by source-cultural frames. There is, however, another way of looking at the issue; one that gives hope to the translator if the transcription of eye dialect is viewed from the author’s (and therefore, the translator’s) perspective. Walpole suggests that dialects are only interpretable if the “author has supplied sufficient clues”. At the risk of seeming perfunctory, it could be said that the task for translators is not dissimilar insofar as their task too is to supply sufficient clues in the form of signposts to guide the reader in the direction of the meaning in the original. Walpole (1974:193) further argues:

Though [the author] may [be] a hasty writer and a careless dialectician, his dialogue has an authentic twang and a natural swing, and his use of eye dialect is typical of most good authors. For eye dialect is intrinsically neither consistent nor fair-handed. It is not consistent because it is impossible to show all speech variations by using the standard alphabet and an apostrophe. Hence, only a few selected words are misspelled just enough to indicate ignorance and locality while the remainder of the "dialect" dialogue is properly spelled.
If writers are not expected to be entirely faithful in their transcription of dialogue, translators may be afforded this leeway also. The author of the original spells correctly the majority of the speaker’s dialect, a dialect which is sufficiently indexed by selecting a “few words” and misspelling them “just enough”. In a similar vein, the translator may also select a few salient words or linguistic idiosyncrasies in the target language and vary them subtly but in a noticeable way in order to signal that a character is using a vernacular:

Luckily, few readers attempt to judge the accuracy of the dialogue which they read, and no reader demands complete authenticity. In fact, readers have been so well conditioned to the conventions of dialogue that accurate conversational transcripts would dismay them (Walpole 1974:191)

If readers do not “attempt to judge accuracy”, then translators could exploit this in such a way that they create parallel (if not equivalent) variational patterns. These patterns would have to be artificial, given that using existing variations, which inevitably and implicitly carry ideological associations that relate to specific cultural groups, would result in the transmission of a target-specific ideology that would inhibit the semiotic retextualisation of a source cultural speech community (Sidiropoulou 2004:21). It is this precept upon which the suggestions that will be offered after the comparative analysis will be made. That is, where Menéndez’s strategy is found to be lacking with regards to the representation of an African-American cultural identity, this analysis will put forward alternative versions that are artificial, but that fulfil the crucial sociolectal-identitarian language function.

Viewed from a semiotic perspective, the AAVE of the “Rabbit” books is a sociolect that is built intratextually. A speech community is indexed when two or more characters are observed to use the same variation within the text. It is this literary technique that Updike uses to index an African-American identity in his novel. He crafts the dialogue of his
three African-American characters in such a way that they use the same “language”. To do this, Updike has taken foremost features of AAVE (these will be discussed in detail in the analysis) and repeated them in three different characters. Therefore, to create an equivalent “language” for the African-American characters, the translator should take instances of variations in the target language and repeat them in the same characters, thereby illustrating a sensitivity to the shared elements of the microcosmic speech community in the source text. Herein lies a crucial difference between translating an idiolect and translating a sociolect. Whereas recasting Harry’s idiolect in Spanish calls for strategies that observe the context-dependent nature of his language-identity nexus, translating AAVE is not constrained in this way. That is, the translator could repeat features of a sociolect in any conversation, so long as it is the same character and the variation can be repeated in the speech of the other African-American characters. Of course it would be desirable to recreate the variations in the same conversations, but if that is not possible, supplanting a variational feature in a different conversation would nevertheless generate a target hermeneutic continuum whose omega point encodes a cultural identity for the characters.

This strategy of recreating variation only outlines the first step. The second step – and perhaps more important – is choosing variational patterns that could fulfil the semiotic functions of the source markers of sociolect. As was pointed out earlier, selecting existent Spanish vernaculars is fraught with risks of ideological cross-textualisation, i.e., recreating the speech of African-American characters so that they speak, for example, Mexican Spanish, will carry with it the ideological and cultural imperatives of the target vernacular, and as a result, will not index the cultural identity of the characters as African-Americans. The argument that will be made in the analysis is that this indexical function of eye dialect can only be fulfilled with a couplet strategy. This, however, will be discussed after the analysis that follows, which looks firstly at the specific cultural ideologies that are associated with an African-American
identity in order to highlight the thematic significance of AAVE to the overall textual complexion of the novel. Following this, the analysis will explore the representation of AAVE in Menéndez’s translation of “El regreso de Conejo” in order to establish whether the identity of the African-American characters has been intratextually indexed and whether their sociolect also carries the thematic weight of the original.

7.3 Context of culture: African-American ideology in Rabbit Redux

The “Rabbit” books are “overwhelmingly white”, except for *Rabbit Redux*, which is considered the most daring and the most socially charged novel of the four (Clausen 1992:47). Set at the end of the 1960s, the depiction of the African-American community is inextricably linked to the Civil Rights movement, and in a more subtle but no less prescient way, to the racial overtones of the WASP community that defined this particular period of US history. For Ristoff (1988:94) “Updike’s exploration of this facet of the black movement becomes especially relevant because it represents, ideologically at least, the greatest internal threat to the establishment ever”. In contemporaneous terms, Updike’s depiction of the African-American community coincides with a time in history when “the patterns of communication between Blacks and other Americans reflected the social distance between them” (Whatley 1981:92). This culturally-enacted social distance finds a corresponding homology in the difference between the SAE of the White Anglo-Saxon community and the vernacular of the African-American community.

The thematic significance of having two opposing vernaculars play out a cultural conflict in dialogue should not be underestimated. AAVE is manifested in the indexical interpretant that links language to society and vice versa when the index functions as the interface between an individual’s language use and the context surrounding the interaction. In the following exchange, the linguistic difference, and thus the cultural difference of the speakers (Jill and Rabbit, who are middle class white Americans, and Babe, who is portrayed as lower-middle class, and who
belongs to the African-American community) is encoded by two distinctive linguistic systems:

Jill says to Rabbit seriously, "You should talk to Skeeter about it. He says it was a fabulous trip. He loved it."

[...] 

Rabbit goes on, feeling himself get rabid, "I guess I don't much believe in college kids or the Viet Cong. I don't think they have any answers. I think they're minorities trying to bring down everything that halfway works. Halfway isn't all the way but it's better than no way."

[...] 

Babe says, hugging the stubbornly limp girl, "I just likes Jilly's spunk, she's less afraid what to do with her life than fat old smelly you, sittin' there lickin' yourself like an old cigar end."

These dialogue lines, though not in direct correspondence with each other, all form part of the same conversation, where a cohort of African-Americans hustle Harry into taking Jill, a seventeen year old white runaway girl, into his home. This short segment is of interest not for the action it narrates, but for the marked difference between the speech of the white characters, Harry and Jill, and Babe, an African-American musician. It is a good illustration of how SAE and AAVE can feature in parallel utterances within the same interaction as independent, but mutually intelligible, communicative systems. In this microcosm of how language codifies cultural difference, Harry and Jill speak in SAE. Their use of language contrasts heavily with Babe’s use of language, which exhibits some of the typical features of AAVE. She, for example, shows a proclivity for the phonological variant /in/ instead of the standard /iŋ/ progressive form (“sittin’”, “lickin’”) and for non-standard conjugation of the present tense (“I just likes”). The disparity in the speech of these characters indicates that this exchange produces meaning that goes beyond a communicative function, and into the realm of semiotics. For Jill and Harry, standard English is the social force that binds them
together, but for Babe, AAVE is a linguistic system that sets her apart from the white Anglo-Saxon establishment; it is at once a way of setting herself apart from the cultural mainstream and a mechanism for establishing solidarity by marking herself out as a member of a culturally marginalised community. As Wolfram and Schilling-Estes (2006:41) explain, “features of African American English […] may be associated with ethnic solidarity at the same time as they are socially stigmatized by the mainstream culture”. If AAVE is a mechanism of solidarity, her usage of the vernacular exercises a symbolic alliance with other speakers of AAVE. The vernacular is thus a means towards establishing a bond with fellow members of the community: “In American English, the various social meanings associated with ethnic and regional varieties may force speakers to choose between ‘fitting in’ and ‘talking correctly’” (Wolfram and Schilling-Estes, ibid.:41). Wolfram and Schilling-Estes equate “talking correctly” with SAE (their use of quotation marks indicates that this equation, however, is a fallacy). Thus Babe, in her dialogue, is “choosing” to “fit in” by representing her cultural identity through language. In the following quotation, Wolfram and Schilling-Estes (ibid.:42) further argue how identities may be recursively inferred from the social ideologies that are attached to a stereotype:

Group affiliations are not only symbolic meanings associated with language differences; there may also be strong associations with character attributes. For example, when listeners hear a Southern [American English] accent, not only do they identify the speaker as being from a Southern dialect region, but they may also unconsciously assign a set of character attributes to the speaker.

A vernacular as socially conflictive as AAVE will undoubtedly “carry strong associations with character attributes”. This is not only true of a reader, but also for the other characters in the novel. As can be seen in the following segment from Rabbit Redux, the third-person narrative that functions as an indirect retelling of Harry’s stream-of-consciousness
makes explicit the type of cultural frames that Harry associates with African-Americanism:

They are a strange race. Not only their skins but the way they're put together, loose-jointed like lions, strange about the head, as if their thoughts are a different shape and come out twisted even when they mean no menace. It's as if, all these Afro hair bushes and gold earrings and hoopy noise on buses, seeds of some tropical plant sneaked in by the birds were taking over the garden. His garden. Rabbit knows it's his garden and that's why he's put a flag decal on the back window of the Falcon even though Janice says it's corny and fascist. (Rabbit Redux: 13)

The overall tenor of Harry’s thoughts here is xenophobic towards African-Americans. They are a “strange race” who do not belong in “his garden”. Harry, however, is not the only character to express his racism openly. His father, Earl Angstrom, despite defining himself as “no nigger-hater”, and despite expressing his willingness to “work with ‘em” and “if needs be, live next to ‘em”, nevertheless betrays his faux liberalism when he says that “they’ll let you down […] They don’t have any feeling of obligation. I’m not blaming a soul but that’s the fact, they’ll let you down and laugh about it afterwards. They’re not like white men and there’s no use saying they are” (Rabbit Redux: 237); and when the narrative progresses to the point when one of the African-American characters moves into the Angstrom home, two neighbours confront Harry to express their shock and disappointment at seeing “the black fella” playing “basketball out front” and ask Harry to “move the black out” (Rabbit Redux: 290).

AAVE fits into this racial context as the language of an oppressed minority; it is the language of a group of people that are an “involuntary minority” because they have been made a part of US society against their will, first through colonization, and later through a period of slavery (Ogbu 1999:153). The character that carries this discourse most forthrightly is Skeeter, a Black Power advocate and Vietnam veteran
whose political views clash with Harry’s apparent conservatism. De Bellis (2000:413) says that Skeeter is Harry’s “shadow self”, a view that is corroborated by Ristoff (1988:95) who, along similar lines, says that “Skeeter’s marginality certainly accounts for Updike’s need to have him constantly remind the reader that Harry is the white American establishment… they are exactly antithetical”. Despite their violent relationship (in one of the later passages, Harry assaults Skeeter), “both are curious about the other as “Other”” (de Bellis ibid.). In fact, Skeeter is the artifice of Harry’s social redemption. What in Harry is, at the beginning of the novel, unapologetic racism, turns to the appeased prejudice that is realised in the latter stages of the novel. For one, Harry allows Skeeter to live with him, which is indicative of the breakdown of the social conventions and racial barriers that would traditionally make this situation impossible; and while living together, Skeeter and Harry engage in drug-induced dialogues that retell the history of slavery and white supremacy. These “structured discussions”, designed to “educate” Harry, bring the two characters socially closer (Rabbit Redux: 228). Both Harry and Skeeter have sex with Jill and in their sharing of Jill, according to de Bellis (ibid.), Harry and Skeeter “symbolically communicate sexually with each other”. This is most obvious in one perturbing and symbolic-laden scene, when the three partake in intercourse in a re-enactment of a slave-owner’s rape of his “property”. This “psychodrama”, as de Bellis (ibid.) calls it, is given a metaphorical twist when Harry and Skeeter exchange their traditional roles, with Harry assuming the role of the slave and Skeeter the role of the slave-owner, a reversal of roles which is indicative of Harry’s shedding of his social prejudices towards African-Americans (de Bellis ibid.). The symbolic value of the relationship is finally crystallised when Skeeter bestows the ultimate compliment on Harry: “he [Harry] makes a pretty good nigger” (Rabbit Redux: 247). It is not, however, until the scene after the Angstrom house has burned down that Harry’s redemption is complete. Rather than turn Skeeter into the police as the culprit (and ultimately as the murderer of Jill, who dies in the fire), Harry gives Skeeter thirty dollars and helps him escape, thus freeing himself from the
prejudice that would have unjustly blamed Skeeter for a fire that was set – the reader is led to believe – by the same neighbours that had confronted Harry and had asked him “to move the black out”.

The value of Harry and Skeeter’s relationship as a metaphor rests upon their representative qualities, each of their own communities. Ristoff (1988:93-94) believes that “Updike’s choice of a character like Skeeter as a symbol of the black resistance against racial and social discrimination [in the United States] is emblematic of the movement during the second half of the decade”. This “emblematic” character, a foil for Harry’s redemption, is a symbol of the social conflict that is played out not only in the semantic field of the narrative, but in the antagonism that is semiotically encoded in AAVE, or more specifically, in the difference between the languages spoken by Skeeter and Harry. “Everywhere Skeeter looks”, according to Boswell (2001:109), “he sees the subtle, dividing language of race, a tendency Rabbit’s brooding white presence in this black sanctum has only exacerbated”. Whereas Skeeter sees language as a subtle divider of race, as a way of differentiating himself (and his community) from the mainstream white American discourse, Harry sees it as an attack on his “garden”. When Harry enters Jimbo’s Lounge, a bar known for its African-American clientele, he sees “language dying all around him” as “fear travels up and down his skin” (Rabbit Redux: 114). For Harry, AAVE is an index to fear. These statements made by Harry and Skeeter are also indicators of a high degree of linguistic subordination, i.e., when Harry and Skeeter engage in dialogue, both parties do so under the auspices of an unequal power relationship, with Skeeter as the subordinated party. This social contradistinction, as Wolfram and Schilling-Estes (2006:1) say, is “unavoidable” given that:

Assessments of a complex set of social characteristics and personality traits based on language differences are as inevitable as the kind of judgements we make when we find out where people live, what their occupations are, where they went to school, and who their friends are. In fact […] language
The socially conflictive relationship between Harry and Skeeter is predicated on Skeeter’s position as - to quote Harry’s father - an “inferior” being. This is an inferiority that Updike presents as culturally conventionalised, and one that is manifest in their linguistic differences. However, this conventional antagonism breaks down when Skeeter moves in with Harry. The improved state of their relationship is also reflected in Harry’s shifting attitude towards Skeeter’s use of language when he notes that “[Skeeter’s] voice changes” and that “he has many voices, and none of them exactly his” (*Rabbit Redux*: 206). Skeeter also uses AAVE to create conflict. This can be most clearly seen during the scene in which Harry, Skeeter and Jill take Jill’s Porsche to a mechanic. Skeeter provokes the mechanic by inflecting his speech to accentuate his African-American heritage. When Skeeter is no longer within earshot, the mechanic asks Harry if “he knows what he’s doing”, because, he adds, “they’ll knife you in the back every time”. Skeeter, marginalised from mainstream society, is left to combat this racial and social prejudice with the only social mechanism that is available to him, his language, whose features he exaggerates disproportionately to aggravate the palpable racial tension of this scene: “Yo’ sho’ meets a lot ob nice folks hevin’ en acci-dent lahk ‘dis, a lot ob naas folks way up no’th heah” (*Rabbit Redux*: 271), he says to the mechanic, to once again impose that “subtle, dividing language of race” to a situation in which he is forced to be the “Other” in his own culture.

### 7.4 AAVE: a speech community dissolved

Peterson (2004:432) believes that “sociolinguistic representations in literature reveal the hegemonic relationship between standard English spellings and the vernaculars that have distinctive linguistic systems but must conform to the standard orthography”. Indeed, Peterson’s claim is corroborated when a language variety is graphically encoded in any novel. However, this issue, viewed from a translation perspective,
reveals not a difference between the dialect and the standard, but a similarity between the hegemonic language and the derived vernacular. A dialect, as Peterson points out, is able to conform to standard orthography, but this affinity, based as it is on linguistic kinship, is very difficult to reconstruct – or even recreate – in the target language:

Unfortunately, a vernacular clings tightly to its soil and completely resists any direct translating into another vernacular. Translation can occur only between “cultivated” languages. An exoticization that turns the foreign from abroad into the foreign at home winds up merely ridiculing the original. (Berman 2000: 294)

In instances when sociolects are encoded with orthographical variations, as is the case with AAVE in *Rabbit Redux*, the “effects” are even more difficult to retain because what the dialectal issues in translation reveal – and more importantly, are encumbered by – is the incompatibility of the source language variation with the target language system. This inevitably leads to obstacles that inhibit the codification of social meaning in the target text, and especially so in the translation of fictive dialogue, where interlingual incongruities can distort the semiotic intricacies of the source dialogue when transposed to the target text. The descriptivist hypothesis this section puts forward is that interlingual incongruities cause a shift in the representation of the African-American community, when sociolectal features in the speech of African-American characters is a type of semiosis that forges the link between the speaker of AAVE and the African-American community:

In the United States many blacks speak both Black English (which has its own distinctive vocabulary, grammar, and pronunciation) and standard English: the first for the sake of solidarity and the second for socioeconomic power in the broader social context. (Nida 1996:28)

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28 Italics in the original.
This Nida quotation summarily puts forward the two main ideas that have been discussed thus far, and which will be applied in the analysis that follows. Firstly, he says that solidarity, as an added dimension of language use, is a means towards group identification. Nida’s second insight establishes the precept that the distinction between SAE and AAVE as two separate language systems is based on AAVE’s unique grammar and phonology. This section explores how sociolects function as an instrument of solidarity in the source text. The type of meaning explored here, therefore, is not denotative or connotative, but rather semiotic in the sense that using a particular sociolect “means” building a network of speakers that “speak alike” (Halliday 1978:154).

This section of the analysis follows Peterson (2004:435) in his view that the individual instances of variation that together formalise a sociolect may “appear simple”, but ultimately each instance “veils cultural and linguistic nuances” that are key to the identification of the cultural identity of the characters. In order to present the discussion in a more cogent fashion, the linguistic variables analysed here are divided into two categories. Firstly, the analysis will look at the lexico-grammatical features that are markers of AAVE in the source text. These include the absence of copula and auxiliary verbs, double negatives, and non-standard conjugation of the present tense. Secondly, the analysis will look at the orthographical codification of the phonological patterns that function as textual markers of AAVE. Although the phonological variants that are distinctively African-American are more difficult to categorise, it can be said that these include, among others, the unstressed progressive form (from /iŋ/ to /in/), consonant cluster reduction, the deletion of unstressed initial or medial syllables (“cause” instead of “because”), and the stressing of initial or medial syllables. The analysis that follows may be described as a systematic breakdown of the more salient features, which together formalise the normative linguistic pattern through which AAVE is textually constructed, and concomitantly, through which the speech community network is semiotically and
intratextually indexed. Failure to reproduce this pattern in the target dialogue, or failure to compensate for any losses incurred by the translation process, will result in the dissolution of the speech community and the attenuation of the language-identity nexus of the African-American characters.

7.4.1 Lexico-grammatical aspects

In this two-part analysis that is divided into grammatical and phonological aspects, this first section is devoted to contrasting source text and target text segments of dialogue in order to characterise the lexico-grammatical shifts that occur in the translation of AAVE-specific variables. The first type of variation analysed here is the absence of the copula verb, which is one of the more salient features of AAVE. This variation norm dictates that speakers of the vernacular have a tendency to make the syntactical transition from the subject to a noun phrase or prepositional phrase without the aid of a linking verb. Although it may not be the only language system that exhibits this type of variation, it has become such a distinguishing feature that it is often used in the media to satirise and create stereotypes of African-Americans (Lanehart 1999:216). The first time an African-American character displays this norm is when Skeeter says, “the reason they so mean […]”. An African-American speech community is intratextually indexed when the other two African-American characters, Babe and Buchanan, also omit the copula:

Skeeter: The reason they [ø] so mean (Rabbit Redux: 117)
Buchanan: Her daddy [ø] dead (Rabbit Redux: 128)
Babe: That’s why he [ø] so rude. (Rabbit Redux: 127)

Skeeter, Babe, and Buchanan make the transition from the subject to the predicate without the linking verb. At this point, and because this is the earliest norm repeated in the speech of these three characters – and
because no other character in the novel exhibits this feature – an intratextual speech community is indexed. The dialogue of Skeeter, Babe and Buchanan thus enters into a paradigmatic relationship with the passages that extensively describe their ethnic commonality. In other words, the identity described in the narrative coheres with the identity indexed in dialogue.

In “El regreso de Conejo”, the common ethnic origin of Skeeter, Babe and Buchanan is adequately described in the equivalent narrative passages; that is, by virtue of following the semantic blueprint of the source text, the Spanish text also describes the common ethnic origin of the characters. However, the paradigmatic relationship and the semiotic coherence between narrative and dialogue, which is a feature of the source text, is severed in the target text. Whereas Rabbit Redux characterises Skeeter, Babe and Buchanan both in the descriptive passages and in dialogue, the target text characterises them in the descriptive passages, but not, as the examples below illustrate, in dialogue:

Skeeter: Son tan malvados porque […] (“El regreso de Conejo”: 99)
Buchanan: Su padre murió (“El regreso de Conejo”: 103)
Babe: Por eso es tan grosero. (“El regreso de Conejo”: 103)

In the Spanish text, the speech of these three characters is rendered in standard Spanish, which is the “same” language spoken by the white characters. In the first example, the systemic incongruence arises when the source text Skeeter uses the copula “are” in absentia and the target text Skeeter uses *son* explicitly, a linguistic shift that goes from the original’s vernacular to the target standard form. Such a shift is inevitable given that there is no equivalent vernacular form in Spanish that allows for the deletion of the copula. However, there is no compensation strategy either. Although the subject pronoun *ellos* is elided in the target utterance, it cannot be considered a departure from standard Spanish
because the subject pronoun is implicit in the form of the verb, and is therefore often omitted. If Skeeter’s line is syntactically similar to the original version, the translation of Buchanan’s utterance undergoes a syntactical modulation. The source text line is a noun phrase and an adjectival predicate that encodes the main information of the sentence with the adjective “dead”. In the target text the main information of the sentence (the death of Jill’s father) is expressed with the intransitive verb *murió*; this syntactical discrepancy essentially thwarts any possibility of deleting the copula, given that one has not been used in the target utterance. Interestingly, Babe’s source text line only elides the copula in the wh-clause. In the target text, Babe’s line is reduced to a single clause in which a copula verb does feature. The failure to recreate this speech norm – albeit a completely understandable one given that American English and Peninsular Spanish are two completely separate language systems and cannot, therefore, be manipulated in equivalent ways – annuls the indexical value of the symbol, i.e., there is no element in the target text that indexes the African-American community that is indexed in the source text. A syntactical analysis of these three utterances, unlike the utterances in the source text, does not yield symbols that can be viewed as indexers of an African-American cultural identity.

The lack of correspondence with regards to this variation occurs every time the copula is deleted in the source text, as the following examples illustrate:

| Skeeter: | Whose black ass you hustling, hers or yours? (*Rabbit Redux*: 120) | ¿Qué culo negro estás lamiendo, el de ella o el tuyo? (“El regreso de Conejo”: 101) |
The Transposition of African-American Identity: Indexing a Speech Community in Translation

Although this list is not exhaustive, it demonstrates that the strategy of transposing AAVE with SPS is applied consistently. From a target language perspective, there is no linguistic marker that is repeated in the language use of the three speakers, with the result that – viewed singularly in terms of this norm – a speech community is not indexed.

Of the same ontic category as the absence of the copula, the absence of the auxiliary verb is also a prominent feature of AAVE. The tendency to elide this category of verbs is, according to Green (2002: 40), another of the most recognisable features of AAVE. Below are four instances of omission of the auxiliary verb:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Buchanan:</th>
<th>Babe:</th>
<th>Skeeter:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>You going to go off half-cooked</td>
<td>Sometime you going to lean too</td>
<td>Whitey here [ö] got so much</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Rabbit Redux: 123)</td>
<td>hard [...] (Rabbit Redux: 123)</td>
<td>science. (Rabbit Redux: 122)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Good, man; she [ö] got to live, right? (Rabbit Redux: 125)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>She's doing it because I [ö] been screwing her all afternoon (Rabbit Redux: 208)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The perfective marker is absent in the examples above. In the first three examples, the verb “to get” in its perfective form is missing the auxiliary. In the last example, where Skeeter uses the verb “to be”, the perfective marker is also missing. Interestingly, although the lines above all contain an instance of auxiliary deletion, the last example exhibits an
anomaly. In the initial clause Skeeter does not elide the auxiliary “be”, thus suggesting that Updike’s systematic representation of AAVE fails to allow for the deletion of an auxiliary that is not “have”. As with the deletion of the copula, the deletion of the auxiliary is a symbol in *absentia* that yields an index to the shared identity of the AAVE speakers. A look at the (pseudo)equivalent lines in the translation once again shows that the norm, which is crucial for the identification of the characters as members of the same speech community, is not present:

Babe: [...] ahora está limpia. (“El regreso de Conejo”: 102)
Skeeter: Aquí el blanco tiene tanta ciencia. (“El regreso de Conejo”: 103)
Skeeter: Bueno, hombre, de algo tiene que vivir, eh? (“El regreso de Conejo”: 106)
Skeeter: Ella lo hace porque la he estado jodiendo toda la tarde. (“El regreso de Conejo”: 174)

As can be seen from these examples, the incongruity of the source language system and the target language system once again inhibits the translation of the variable. Only the last example uses a Spanish auxiliary verb (*la he estado jodiendo*); whereas the systemic norms of AAVE permit the deletion of the auxiliary, there is no vernacular flexibility in SPS in this regard. Without a strategy of compensation in place, the target text fails to encode the pertinent African-American ideologies. Even at this early stage of analysis, the cumulative effect of using SPS to render AAVE-specific variables can be appreciated. In the translation, the speech of the African-American characters tends towards uniformity and seems rather more unnatural.\(^29\) Foremost amongst the consequences of Menéndez’s use of standard Spanish, as is beginning to emerge, is the failure to construct an intratextual speech community. If the African-American and the white characters use the same vernacular, their

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\(^{29}\) Valero Garcés (2012) points out that translations published in Spain tend to use formal equivalence, and a result of which is “unnatural – even incorrect – sentences or phrases in the target language.”
language becomes indistinguishable and, therefore, in terms of the target language-identity nexus, their respective identities are attenuated.

Another marker of AAVE in the speech of these three characters relates to the conjugation of present tense forms. On the one hand, these three characters share a paradigmatic levelling norm, where one form of the verb is used invariably. In the example below, instead of saying “It doesn’t”, Buchanan levels it to “it don’t”. Similarly, Skeeter uses the singular form “is heartbreakers” to observe the rule of AAVE instead of conforming to the SAE rule of subject agreement. Babe’s utterance displays a further present tense marker of AAVE, as she elides the “-s” that marks the third person singular (“he/she walks” would thus become “he/she walk”), or conversely, adds “-s” to the second person singular (“you walk” would thus become “you walks”):

Buchanan: It don't mean the whole world is coming to some bad end. 
(\textit{Rabbit Redux}: 103)
Skeeter: All these Charlies is heartbreakers. \textit{(Rabbit Redux}: 117)
Babe: I just likes Jilly's spunk. \textit{(Rabbit Redux}: 131)

Although the types of variation in the utterances above are not consistent, they may all be subsumed as a variation that relates to expressing present time in AAVE. Below are the (pseudo)equivalent lines in the target text:

Buchanan: No significa que todo el mundo esté acabado. (“El regreso de Conejo”: 88)
Skeeter: Todos estos Charlies te parten el corazón. (“El regreso de Conejo”: 99)
Babe: a mí me gustan las agallas de Jilly. (“El regreso de Conejo”: 111)
As can be seen from these target text examples, and remaining true to the pattern that is emerging throughout this study, the dialogue of the African-American characters loses its nuanced cultural identity. Menéndez’s use of unmarked language leaves no traces of the linguistic variables that mark the speech of African-Americans as unconventional, with standard peninsular Spanish used in their stead. Similar to the absence of the copula verb, there are enough instances of non-standard present forms to establish a normative pattern in the translation of this particular variable; the list below, by no means exhaustive, demonstrates that the shift from the vernacular of the source text to the formalised standard of the target text is a regular occurrence throughout the narrative:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Translation</th>
<th>Source</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Buchanan</td>
<td>It don't mean the whole world is coming to some bad end. (<em>Rabbit Redux</em>: 103)</td>
<td>No significa que todo el mundo esté acabado. (“El regreso de Conejo”: 88)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Skeeter</td>
<td>They has so much religion. (<em>Rabbit Redux</em>: 117)</td>
<td>Están repletos de religión. (“El regreso de Conejo”: 99)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Babe</td>
<td>They passes it off. (<em>Rabbit Redux</em>: 119)</td>
<td>Tienen que pasar a otras manos. (“El regreso de Conejo”: 101)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Skeeter</td>
<td>That the law don't go pointing its finger at. (<em>Rabbit Redux</em>: 121)</td>
<td>A lo que la ley no señale con el dedo. (“El regreso de Conejo”: 103)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Babe</td>
<td>Now you loves little Jill. (<em>Rabbit Redux</em>: 121)</td>
<td>Entonces tú amas a la pequeña Jill. (“El regreso de Conejo”: 103)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
They’re like little babies.

*Babe* *(Rabbit Redux: 119)*

En ese sentido son como bebés *(“El regreso de Conejo”: 101)*

This strategy, however, not only results in the omission of linguistic variations, but it also makes the overall register of the speech of these characters more formal. This can be seen in Skeeter’s put down of the white man that “has so much religion”, where the translation replaces “much” with *repleto* increasing the overall register of the utterance. Something similar occurs with Babe’s utterance, “they’s like little babies”, where the translation adds the adverbial *en ese sentido*, thus effectively attenuating the force of the insult. Therefore, not only do Skeeter, Babe and Buchanan speak the same language as the white characters in the target text, they also speak in a similar register, therefore further approximating their language, a direct reversal of Updike’s technique to distance the communities linguistically.

The African-American characters of the source texts also use double negation as a marker of their common ethnic origin. As Labov points out *(1972:234)*, double negatives are so ubiquitous in informal speech that they may be considered a universal variable of non-standard varieties of English. Though it is certainly a staple of AAVE, double negatives are not used exclusively by African-Americans, which allows room to ponder its validity as a variable that characterises the African-American speech community. Herein is a crucial difference between empirical speech and fictive dialogue. Close reading of the source text reveals that no other character in the novel uses double negatives – or, for that matter, in the entire saga. If only African-American characters use double negatives, then the logical conclusion is that Updike uses this variable to characterise them as a community. Below are examples of Buchanan and Skeeter using double negatives in the source text. Babe’s momentary role
in *Rabbit Redux* allows for many AAVE markers to feature in her dialogue; however, her speech does not produce a single instance of negative concord. Buchanan, though his role in the novel is more prominent than Babe’s, only uses a double negative once (this is in the example below). Skeeter, on the other hand, does produce many double negatives. This is most likely due to the fact that he features more than Babe and Buchanan (Skeeter, in fact, has an entire section named after him). The second and third examples are selections of double negatives in Skeeter’s speech that have been deemed representative of the variant across his sociolect:

Buchanan: I ain’t no Tom, girl. (*Rabbit Redux*: 131)
Skeeter: Ain’t no Jesus, right? (*Rabbit Redux*: 210)
Skeeter: There won’t be nobody else soon, right? (*Rabbit Redux*: 294)

In these three utterances there are two agents of negation. In the first example, Buchanan’s use of “ain’t” (itself a marker of non-standard English) is immediately followed by the negative adverbial “no”. In Standard English, Buchanan’s utterance is ungrammatical. Yet Buchanan is not trying to achieve grammatical accuracy. He adds a second negative to underscore his aversion to being called a “Tom”. In the second example Skeeter uses a double negative that is close in form to Buchanan’s. In the third example, Skeeter’s sentence concords negatively the contracted form of “will not” (“won’t”) and the negative qualifier “nobody”. Viewed in terms of the hermeneutic continuum, double negatives are symbols that index a shared language, and thus, a shared cultural identity. Boswell (2001:110) points out a further stylistic element to this variable when he says that “the confusing double negatives reflect Skeeter’s general reversal of conventional values”. Although Boswell refers specifically to Skeeter, given the representative function of a character that symbolises the African-American struggle,

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30 Buchanan’s offence stems from the popular use of the term “uncle Tom”, which has taken on a pejorative meaning intended to denounce African-Americans that collude or sympathise with Caucasians. The insult is a parody of the main character of Beecher Stowe’s famous novel *Uncle Tom’s Cabin*, which depicts a slave named Tom who is, above all, loyal to his master.
Boswell’s statement can be extended to Buchanan, the other member of the speech community who exhibits this variation. Below are the (pseudo)equivalent lines from the target text:

Buchanan:  
Yo no soy eso, niña. (“El regreso de Conejo”: 111)

Skeeter:  
Jesús no existe. (“El regreso de Conejo”: 175)

Skeeter:  
Pronto no quedará nadie más, eh? (“El regreso de Conejo”: 242)

The double negative norm has not been reproduced in either of these instances. A comparative look at the double negation phenomena in Spanish and English, however, reveals that double negatives do not function equivalently in their respective systems. In English grammar, a double negative, such as those in the examples from the source texts, is in prescriptive terms deemed ungrammatical. Thus when speakers of AAVE use double negatives, they are tapping into its pragmatic function, i.e., they use a double negative concord to emphasise the negative element of an utterance; therefore it would be more accurate to describe the second agent of negation as an intensifier, rather than simply a negative adverb or noun. In Spanish, double negatives are not ungrammatical. This intersystemic incongruence can be seen clearly in the third example, where in the source text, Skeeter says “there won’t be nobody else” and in the target text he says no quedará nadie más. Whereas the double negative in the source line is a departure from Standard English, in the target text the double negative in the sequence that transitions from no quedará to the indeterminate pronoun nadie is standard Spanish. Therefore it logically follows that the symbol-sign of the target text is not symbolic of a vernacular, and thus fails to index Skeeter’s cultural identity as a speaker of AAVE, and as an African-American.

It is not surprising that Menéndez cannot replicate these grammatical norms; however, this loss cannot be explained as easily as isolating an intersystemic incongruence between SPS and SAE. The issue at heart is
that there is no target vernacular system that could be employed in the dialogue of the African-American characters. In the source text, the interplay between SAE and AAVE creates the following hermeneutic continuum for the African-American characters:

Concomitant to this axiomatic observation is that unless alternatives are sought, in the form of a strategy of compensation, then the dialogue of these characters will lose its indexical function. With regards to lexico-grammatical variables, at least, no alternatives are sought, and therefore, the hermeneutic continuum in the target text fails to codify a language-identity nexus for the three characters:

However, to arrive at a conclusion on whether or not the speech community has been indexed, it is not sufficient to study lexico-grammatical norms. To reach a definitive answer, the other sphere of language use, the phonological variants specific to AAVE, will have to be explored in order to ascertain whether the target dialogue of the African-American characters exhibits features that make their language distinct from the standard Spanish of the white characters.
7.4.2 Phonological aspects

This second section contrasts the phonological variants of the source text that function as markers of AAVE with their equivalent target text segments. Thomas (2007:450) says that “phonological and phonetic variables characterize AAVE just as much as morphosyntactic ones”. In order to represent the phonological make-up of AAVE, Updike manipulates the orthography of SAE. Viewed from a Peircean perspective, the symbols that generate indexers of African-American identity are orthographical variations that codify AAVE-specific pronunciation patterns. Though the indexers here belong to a different ontic category, their function remains the same: to construct an intratextual speech community by way of repeating the same non-standard orthography in the speech of the three African-American characters. The issues that encumber the translation of the AAVE-specific lexico-grammatical variants also inhibit a successful transposition of the phonological variants in the target text. Needless to say, AAVE and Spanish are not phonologically compatible; therefore, an exact mapping of AAVE pronunciation to Spanish text is impossible. As with the lexico-grammatical features, however, the translator does not compensate for the losses that are necessarily incurred by this intersystemic incongruence. As this part of the analysis will demonstrate, when the African-American characters elide the “g” in words ending in –ing, when they use non-standard stress patterns or when they add a vowel to consonant cluster, the translation makes no attempt to signpost the vernacular.

The most prominent phonological feature of AAVE in the source text relates to the unstressed progressive form, where the participle ending in “-ing” is pronounced /-in/. Labov (1972:238) calls this “one of the most general sociolinguistic markers in English”. This variable is somewhat similar to the instances of negative concord discussed previously inasmuch as it is not specific to AAVE, but in the “Rabbit” books it is
only used by the African-American characters. In strictly phonological terms, this variable is a modulation from the Standard English pronunciation that realises the final “ing” as a velar to the non-standard realisation of the word-final “ing” as the alveolar. In order to represent this feature as particular to African-Americans, Updike has simply dropped the “g” in the spelling of the progressive form and replaced it with a diacritic mark. This can be seen in the following three examples, which demonstrate not only the method behind Updike’s depiction, but also the concurrence of the variable in order to intratextually construct an African-American speech community:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Character</th>
<th>Dialogue</th>
<th>Source</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Buchanan</td>
<td>How’re they treatin’ you, Harry? (Rabbit Redux: 101)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Skeeter</td>
<td>All those years talkin’ about happy Rastus chompin’ on watermelon. (Rabbit Redux: 241)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Babe</td>
<td>I don’t mind your hangin’ around the place (Rabbit Redux: 130)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In each of these cases Updike replaces the conventional “ing” ending with “–in’”, where the final “g” is omitted and an apostrophe is used in its stead to mark the unstressed pronunciation peculiar to AAVE.31 Peterson (2004:433) says that “when speech is represented in literature through misspellings and the use of apostrophes and other diacritical marks”, such as the case of the /in/ variant in AAVE, “the vernacular is always visually incorrect”. Peterson does not make clear what he means by “incorrect”; presumably, his statement relates to the lack of consensus in relation to the phoneme to grapheme transcription of AAVE. That is to say, Peterson is referring to the lack of congruence between SAE graphemes and AAVE phonemes. To add weight to this argument, a number of studies on the transcription of AAVE across various novels (Mark Twain’s Huckleberry Finn and Harriet Beecher-Stowe’s Uncle Tom’s Cabin are ubiquitous in these studies) reveal that different authors

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31 Although the “–in’” variant is not specific to AAVE, in the “Rabbit” books, no other character pronounces /ing/ in such a way; therefore the conclusion must be reached that Updike uses it to depict AAVE.
are highly inconsistent in the spelling modulations used to represent the vernacular (c.f. Walpole, 1974; Carkeet, 1979; Preston, 1982; Fine, 1983). Peterson may also be using the word “incorrect” to draw attention to the graphological codification of socially stigmatised identities. The word “incorrect”, viewed from this perspective, refers to the linguistic subordination AAVE is subject to vis-à-vis SAE. That is to say that, because AAVE is “as systematic and rule-governed as Standard English”, the transcription of AAVE in the SAE spelling system will always be visually and ideologically “incorrect” (Peterson, ibid.), despite the fact that “the phonetic inventories of AAVE and SAE are essentially the same” (Pollock and Meredith 2001:48). Thus viewed, Updike’s codification of the progressive form as “-in’” becomes a symbolic sign whose indexical qualities rest upon the linguistic subordination and social stigmatisation alluded to by Peterson. The (pseudo)equivalent dialogue lines appear in the target text as follows:

Buchanan: ¿Qué tal te tratan, Harry? (“El regreso de Conejo”: 87)
Skeeter: Se pasaron montones de años hablando de lo feliz que era el negrito mordiendo una sandía. (“El regreso de Conejo”: 200)
Babe: A mí no me importa que haraganees. (“El regreso de Conejo”: 112)

That the source text (ing) variant is not present in the target text is an expected outcome. A close analysis of the target text lines further reveals that a grammatical modulation occurs in two of the three dialogue lines. In Buchanan’s utterance, what in the source text is a present participle (albeit represented as an AAVE variation) is transposed to the target text as a present indicative. The aspectual function of the verb remains equivalent in that it refers to a general span of time, as does the informal tenor of the question. A grammatical modulation also occurs in Babe’s speech, where the phrasal verb “hangin’ around” is transposed to the target text as a present subjunctive. In this instance, the aspectual function of the verb can be said to also function equivalently. Taking the three examples above, in the source text, the graphic symbol “n’”, used to
represent the phoneme /in/, is an index of the African-American community; in the target text, on the other hand, there is no non-standard variable that could be considered a semiotic indicator of a speech community. Thus, there is no phonological variable that occurs in the speech of the three characters, which therefore leads to the conclusion - viewed singularly in terms of this norm - that the speech community is not constructed intratextually in the target text.

Another salient phonological feature of AAVE represented in the novel is the non-standard stress patterns of syllables. This prosodic quality is coded with the use of hyphens strategically placed between certain syllables. Green (2002: 124) says that that prosodic features may be the defining feature of AAVE, as “features of intonation […] set African American speakers apart from other speakers”.

As can be seen in the examples below, Updike maximises the use of hyphens to make a distinction in the rhythm of speech between the white and the African-American characters:

Buchanan: Works right beside his daddy at Ver-i-ty press. (Rabbit Redux: 116)
Babe: I’m nowhere near spaced enough to pee-form. (Rabbit Redux: 119)
Skeeter: There’s a fact for your eddi-cayshun. (Rabbit Redux: 231)

This type of orthographical variation is designed to create an aural effect that mimics a pattern of pronunciation exclusive to the African-American characters. In some cases, the hyphen, as an artificial feature of the word’s phonology, affects how the word is spelled. This can be seen in the example where Skeeter says “education”, unconventionally spelt as

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32 Green makes this claim in light of research carried out by Labov (1968) and Wolfram and Fasold (1974), all of whom disagree on certain aspects, but agree that prosody “appears to be one of the main reasons why some standard-speaking blacks may be identified ethnically” (Wolfram and Fasold ibid.: 147)
“eddi-cayshun” the particular aural quality of Skeeter’s speech. Along similar lines, Babe’s pronunciation of the word “perform” elongates the initial syllable. This feature is represented with a hyphen, but also with a double “e” to represent the phoneme [i:]. The (pseudo)equivalent lines appear in the target text as follows:

Buchanan: Trabaja con su padre en Verity Press. (“El regreso de Conejo”: 98)
Babe: No estoy bastante cerca para ponerlo en forma con lo que tengo. (“El regreso de Conejo”: 101)
Skeeter: Ahí tienes un dato concreto para tu educación. (“El regreso de Conejo”: 192)

The target dialogue does not reflect the source dialogue in this regard. However, from an anecdotal standpoint (and as will be explained in more detail in the section that follows), this is the feature that could have been most easily recast in the target language by replicating the use of the hyphen. Admittedly, this would still fail to achieve the aural quality of, for example, Babe’s allophonic [i:]; this would, in part, be due to the systematic differences in the phoneme to grapheme relationship between English and Spanish, where in English the five vowel graphemes represent nineteen different vowel sounds, and in Spanish the five vowel graphemes represent five phonemes – this based on the standard varieties of the languages. Had the target text replicated the source text use of hyphens, at the very least, there would have been an orthographical variation to signal the existence of a speech community, irrespective of whether the aural qualities are accessible or not to the target readership. As can be seen from the following list, this pattern of phonological neutralisation becomes the overriding strategy for this particular norm:
Another phonological feature, though not as prevalent as the previous two analysed here, is the position-dependant addition or reduction in consonant clusters. This is represented through different orthographical devices by Updike, where sometimes a consonant is added in the penultimate or final syllable of the word (e.g., “something” becomes “sumpting”), and other times a dash represents the shift in emphasis and an epenthetic vowel is added (e.g., “athlete” becomes “ath-e-lete”):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Buchanan</th>
<th>If it weren't for po-lie spies. (Rabbit Redux: 127)</th>
<th>Si no fuese por los espías de la poli. (“El regreso de Conejo”: 107)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Buchan</td>
<td>Je-rome asked me to express an especial gratitude. (Rabbit Redux: 219)</td>
<td>Jerome me pidió que transmitiera su enorme gratitud. (“El regreso de Conejo”: 183)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Skeeter</td>
<td>Your type slavery was uniquely and e-special bad. (Rabbit Redux: 239)</td>
<td>Tu estilo de esclavitud era singular y especialmente malo. (“El regreso de Conejo”: 198)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Skeeter</td>
<td>Ee-magine. (Rabbit Redux: 248)</td>
<td>Imagina. (“El regreso de Conejo”: 205)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Skeeter</td>
<td>Lib-er-als. (Rabbit Redux: 263)</td>
<td>Liberal. (“El regreso de Conejo”: 218)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Buchanan: Maybe sumptin’ […] (Rabbit Redux: 103)
Babe: That mouth’s gonta hurt you. (Rabbit Redux: 120)
In phonological terms it is not particularly advantageous to isolate instances of cluster reduction without accounting for its immediate syntactic context; as Green (2002: 107-109) points out, cluster reduction in a word is highly dependent on the subsequent or preceding word, especially in word-initial and final positions. As a characterisation device, however, the examples below show that certain words are misspelled “just enough” (to quote Walpole once again) to symbolically codify cluster reduction, and, crucially, to index the existence of a speech community:

Buchanan: Quizá algo. (“El regreso de Conejo”: 88)
Babe: Si te muerdes la lengua te vas a envenenar. (“El regreso de Conejo”: 101)

As this analysis demonstrates, the translation systematically breaks down the intratextual community. With every variable that is translated with a standard form and not compensated for elsewhere in the dialogue, the cultural identity of the African-American characters is attenuated. However, when the sociolect is viewed as a whole in the target text – instead of a system that is a sum of its parts, the only logical conclusion is that the consequences of the formalisation that has occurred in the Spanish text is far more severe than a simple attenuation. There are no symbols, and therefore no indexers to the common ethnic origin of the speakers whatsoever in the translation; the identity of the characters, viewed singularly from the perspective of fictive dialogue, is not simply attenuated, but annulled completely.

As the introductory paragraph to this section suggests, the Spanish reader will, no doubt, realise that these three characters are African-American in the descriptive passages that make explicit their common origin. Descriptive passages, however, are not part of the language-identity nexus on which this thesis is focused. If this analysis highlights how Menéndez has disassembled, variable by variable, the African-American
community, the next section explores the translation strategies that could reassemble it.

7.5 Indexing the African-American community in the Spanish texts

The translation issue analysed in the previous section stems from the fact that the dialogue of *Rabbit Redux* is written through two different language systems. Had the entire novel been written in SAE, or equally, had the entire novel been in AAVE, there would have been no such sociolinguistic or semiotic loss as there would have been no need to codify linguistic (and by extension, cultural) difference. But in the textual environment of *Rabbit Redux*, SAE and AAVE appear side by side. They both gain culturally-specific values because they appear in parallel utterances in a linguistic interplay that ultimately codifies the cultural difference of their respective speakers. With due deference to the problems that Menéndez faced with regards to the transposition of AAVE in Spanish, there can be little argument that, in this regard, the Tusquets Editores text is an impoverished version:

[…en la mayoría de las novelas en que encontramos este dialecto, es decir, textos en los que el Black English aparece en compañía del Standard English, perderíamos todas las connotaciones sociales y culturales que conlleva el empleo del dialecto de los negros, como, por ejemplo, las confusiones, la frustración y la impotencia que surgen entre una y otra comunidad de hablantes por las numerosas diferencias sintácticas existentes entre sus normas. Pero, además, en una traducción que asimilara a las dos variantes por igual, se perdería algo mucho más importante: el valor que tiene para un negro el empleo de dicho dialecto como método de diferenciación de los blancos, y de simultánea identificación con los miembros de su propia raza. (Martínez-Bartolomé 1990:100)

The argument here is that the attenuation of the African-American identity of these characters could have been avoided – or at least, mitigated – by employing two strategies in tandem. These strategies
entail: (a) creating an artificial, and therefore ideologically neutral, set of variations that construct an intratextual speech community, and (b) alerting the reader to this pseudo-sociolect in footnotes, thus making explicit the indexical interpretant that ascribes a cultural identity to its speakers. With regards to the former, a pseudo-sociolect would allow the reader to infer that the three characters share a specific vernacular that, crucially, is not shared by the white characters. By creating an artificial language, the dialogue of the African-American and the white characters will “look” different. A footnote would then accompany this artificial vernacular to clarify that these variables, repeated in the three characters, are cast as functional equivalents of AAVE in the target text. The footnote would also need to make explicit the reason why it is so important to recreate this linguistic difference. In essence, the artificial language would fulfil in the target text the sociolinguistic function of AAVE in the source text, and the footnote would then make explicit the social meaning and ideologies that are left implicit in the source text.

### 7.6 Constructing an ideologically neutral speech community
AAVE-specific variations are not compatible with the Spanish language system. As discussed earlier, there is no opportunity to recreate norms such as the omission of the copula or the auxiliary verb. Phonological features such as dropping the word-final “g” are also difficult to translate. The translator could have elided the “d” in past participles that end in -ado, but this linguistic idiosyncrasy is used pragmatically by Harry Angstrom (as discussed in the previous chapter) and therefore precludes its use as an index to the identity of a cultural group. Nor could Menéndez recreate the use of double negatives in Spanish, as these do not represent a departure from the standard. From a purely variational standpoint, therefore, a direct translation of AAVE variables with quasi-equivalent variables in standard Spanish is impossible. The next, obvious, option for the translator to consider is whether there is an existing target language sociolect that could operate equivalently to AAVE. From a semiotic perspective, and as Wolfram (quoted in 2.2)
explains, every variation comes with its own specific set of ideological associations. If an existing set of Spanish variations is used to represent AAVE, readers will “unconsciously assign a set of character attributes to the speaker” (Wolfram, quoted in section 2.3), but those associations would not be singularly relatable to an African-American ideology. In short, there is no existing Spanish language vernacular system that could be used to index an African-American identity; or at least not one that would avoid indexing unwanted cultural associations. Therefore, as this section argues, variations that could potentially index African-Americanism must be artificially created.

A strategy that creates an artificial sociolect to index a speech community is a departure from the conventionalised strategy of translating AAVE with standard Spanish, as Menéndez has done, and which is also in evidence in the Spanish translation of Mark Twain’s “Las aventuras de Huckleberry Finn” in Argentina (trans. by Graciela Montes, 2008). In Montes’ translation, however, there is an accompanying note to justify the lack of variation in the target dialogue:

No he intentado imitar, en español, la rica variedad dialectal a la que alude el autor; llevaría a resultados grotescos. Me esforcé, sí, por reflejar del mejor modo posible el matiz social mediante un giro o una palabra más sabrosa.
(Montes, 2008:7)

Perhaps the reason why Montes felt it necessary to add this clarification is because Mark Twain prefaces the novel (the preface appears in the translation also) with his own note to explain the dialectal range in his novel. If this was the reason, however, it is one that the Anaya version, published in Spain (trans. by Doris Rolfe and Antonio Ferres, 2009), ignores, as it does not explain the use of AAVE in the original with a footnote, nor does it attempt to reconstruct the sociolect in dialogue. According to Tomassini (2002:14–15), “en casi todas las que hemos consultado [translations of Huckleberry Finn into Spanish], el habla de
los personajes carece de matices diferenciales, y para su transposición se apela uniformemente a un español de registro coloquial estándar (preferentemente peninsular)”. Other contemporaneous translations have taken regional specific variables and used them to represent the social aspects of the speech of African-American characters. This can be seen, for example, in Álvaro Abella’s translation of Kathryn Stockett’s *The Help* (2009; trans: “Criadas y Señoras” 2012), where the African-American characters overuse the preterite (a variable associated with lects in Northern Spain, as well as some select Hispanophone communities in Latin America) and elide the last “r” in words like *calor* (a phonological variant often associated with regional dialects in Southern Spain). Although this strategy is “successful” insofar as the language of the characters is “low” in prestige terms, it nevertheless suffers from the cross-fertilisation of northern and southern discourses, as it signifies “low” prestige with a rather arbitrary assortment of existent variables. 33 The argument here is that doing nothing – as Menéndez, Rolfe and Ferres do with “El regreso de Conejo” and “Las aventuras de Huckleberry Finn” respectively – is not acceptable. Neither is providing a solitary footnote, as Graciela Montes does in her version, enough to enrich the translation with the cultural, historical and political overtones of AAVE. Although Montes alerts the reader to what is missing from her translation, the sociolect is nevertheless absent, which therefore results in an impoverished version of the original. The section that follows will also make use of footnotes, but these will not explain why there is no variation in the target dialogue, as it is preferable to footnote a strategy that explains how sociolectal features have been transferred to the target text, rather than to use a footnote to explain why no attempt was made. Montes’ reason for not recreating AAVE, in her own words, stems from her belief that such a translation would seem grotesque; however, if the markers are minimal, subtly distributed in the dialogue of the characters and conform to the vernacular flexibility offered by the Spanish language system, the results, as this analysis hopes to show, need not be grotesque.

33 The use of the term “low” here is a reflection of the translator’s practice in equating AAVE with regional Spanish variations. It is not, however, a true reflection of the social status of AAVE (or any vernacular, for that matter).
7.6.1 Lexico-grammatical variations

Viewed from a historical point of view, the lack of consensus on how AAVE should be translated frees contemporary translators from any perceived prescriptivist shackles. It could be argued that without an established tradition, there is room for creativity. The aim of this section is to tap into such a creative source so that the Spanish translation of the “Rabbit” books could do justice to the African-American community in the target culture. In order to do this, this section postulates the creation of an “artificial” lect, a pseudo-sociolect that creates variations which are fictitious in the sense that they do not reflect empirical variations. To create this “artificial” lect, standard Spanish will be used as the point of departure. The benefit of this is that the translation may homologically mirror the relationship between SAE and AAVE. Although AAVE is considered a system in its own right, its kinship with SAE is indisputable. Standard Spanish may provide the same sort of foundation for the artificial sociolect described heretofore, thus creating a relationship with the pseudo-sociolect that is similar to the source text’s relationship between the SAE and AAVE. This may imply a certain carte blanche element to the practice of synthetically inserting non-conventionalised variations into the speech of the three African-American characters; however, because the variations must occur within their limited dialogue, it also puts a constraint on the type of variations that may be sought, as they must be applicable to the utterances spoken by all three characters. Therefore, although standard Spanish provides the point of departure, the artificial variations must be looked for not in the totality of its linguistic system, but in the totality of the dialogue of the three African-American characters.

Babe is the African-American character with the briefest speaking part; not surprisingly, therefore, she holds the key to finding the adequate variables. She only appears in one scene, and at that, she does not speak very much. She does, however, speak enough for Updike to repeat the
AAVE norms that were explored above in her dialogue. If the translation is to achieve the same, it must find a place for the artificial variables in Babe’s speech first, and then accommodate them to Buchanan and Skeeter’s dialogue, who have greater speaking parts and therefore offer the translator a larger canvas, as it were. It is important to point out that the aim here is not to endow the variations with social meaning yet, this is what the footnote will achieve. The aim here is to index a speech community by scrutinising the totality of the utterances of the African-American characters, and finding the potential for systemic flexibility in their language, so as to create a collection of graphic symbols that codify a superficial sociolinguistic difference. The first artificial variation that could begin to index a speech community relates to the verb *tener*, which could then be manipulated by the translator to produce a non-standard usage of the verb. In the Tusquets Editores translation, Babe uses *tener* six times:

Tiene las manos que corresponde.

No tienes por qué beber esa meada.

[…] no tienen entrañas para encajarlo.

[…] tiene que pasar a otras manos.

¿Qué tienes pensado, Buch?

[…] tiene menos miedo de hacer algo con su vida.

In order to create an artificial norm, the “i” in the diphthong could be removed. This would, then, put forward a norm, six times repeated, which would read in Babe as follows:

**Tene** las manos que corresponde.

No **tenes** por qué beber esa meada.

[…] no **tene** entrañas para encajarlo.
The next step would be to appropriately recreate this norm in the speech of Skeeter and Buchanan. In Skeeter’s dialogue, the elision of the “i” in *tienes* could be recreated in the following utterances:

No como la de esos diablos negros que lo tenes aserrado […]
No como la de esos diablos negros que lo tiene aserrado […]

Aquí el blanco tiene tanta ciencia encima que ni siquiera necesita jugar a la lotería clandestina […]
Aquí el blanco tiene tanta ciencia encima que ni siquiera necesita jugar a la lotería clandestina […]

Bueno, hombre, de algo tiene que vivir […]
Bueno, hombre, de algo tiene que vivir […]

Babe es una señora. Lo tiene fácil para hacer amistades […]
Babe es una señora. Lo tiene fácil para hacer amistades […]

In relation to Buchanan, this norm could be appropriated in the following utterances:

¿No tienes compañía?
¿No tenes compañía?

Nunca digas eso, tienes que estar agradecido por tener un padre que se preocupa por ti. No sabes la suerte que tienes […]
Nunca digas eso, tenes que estar agradecido por tener un padre que se preocupa por ti. No sabes la suerte que tenes […]

[...] tenes que pasar a otras manos.
¿Qué tenes pensado, Buch?
[...] tenes menos miedo de hacer algo con su vida.
Even with this single instance of a variation, and despite the fact that it is artificial, already a speech community is indexed in the Spanish text. This can be seen more clearly in the table below, where the speech of Babe, Buchanan and Skeeter appear side by side, graphically modified with a non-standard use of the verb *tener*. The synthetic variation in bold demonstrates the repetition that is needed across the three speakers in order to create a speech community:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Babe</th>
<th>Skeeter</th>
<th>Buchanan</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Tene</strong> las manos que corresponde.</td>
<td>No como la de esos diablos negros que lo <strong>tene</strong> aserrado […]</td>
<td>Nunca digas eso, <strong>tenes</strong> que estar agradecido.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No <strong>tene</strong> por qué beber esa meada.</td>
<td>Aquí el blanco <strong>tene</strong> tanta ciencia encima que ni siquiera necesita jugar a la lotería clandestina […]</td>
<td>Pareces envejecido con la pinta que <strong>tenes</strong> ahora […]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>[…] no <strong>tene</strong> entrañas para encajarlo.</td>
<td>Bueno, hombre, de algo <strong>tene</strong> que vivir […]</td>
<td>De acuerdo. <strong>Tenes</strong> razón, Harry.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
By virtue of recreating this norm in these three characters, therefore, a speech community is indexed; that is, the speech community becomes an existential certainty when the non-standard use of the verb tener is repeated in the three characters. The second artificial norm that could be created in Babe’s dialogue relates to está. In this case, the first syllable could be elided in the utterances where Babe uses this verb:

Esta puntita está muerta
Esta puntita tá muerta

Tú no te acerques a ella, ahora tá limpia. Y no tá hecha polvo, sólo cansada por la confusión mental, por luchar contra sus signos.
Tú no te acerques a ella, ahora está limpia. Y no tá hecha polvo, sólo cansada por la confusión mental, por luchar contra sus signos.

Se hundirá hasta el fondo, está en sus signos
Se hundirá hasta el fondo, tá en sus signos

As with the variation of tener, for a speech community to be indexed by the deletion of the first syllable in está, the norm needs to be repeated in the speech of Buchanan and Skeeter. In Buchan’s dialogue, this variable could be introduced in the following utterances:

¿Dónde está tu papá?
¿Dónde tá tu papá?

Mujer, por la forma en que lo estás haciendo, serás incapaz de distinguir las teclas blancas de las negras.
Mujer, por la forma en que lo tá haciendo, serás incapaz de distinguir las teclas blancas de las negras.

La noche todavía está en mantillas.
La noche todavía tá en mantillas.
In Skeeter’s dialogue, the non-standard use of *está* could be appropriated in the following utterances:

Dios está allí palmeándoles el culo grasoso.
Dios *tú* allí palmeándoles el culo grasoso.

Dios está del lado de ellos.
Dios *tú* del lado de ellos.

La burocracia está harta de aplicarlas.
La burocracia *tú* harta de aplicarlas.

In both Buchanan and Skeeter’s case, the examples above do not represent every instance where the variation could be inserted. These examples are the first three utterances in each of their speaking parts that illustrate how their speech could be varied by the pseudo-sociolect postulated here. Evidently, for the variation to be consistent applied, and therefore most effective, the norm should be repeated as many times as the dialogue of these characters allows. Importantly, there is also an added benefit to this variable in that it gives the translator the opportunity to observe one of the variation principles. A variant form does not conform to the term, but to the linguistic phenomenon in itself. Dropping the first syllable of *está*, therefore, may not be enough to qualify this as a variable, albeit artificial. There is also a need to modify its tense correlates, such as changing Buchanan’s use of *estamos* to *tamos*, as in example A below; similarly, when Skeeter uses *estás*, the translation should change this to *tás*, as in example B; and also, when Skeeter says *están*, this too, if the “rule” is observed, should be modified to *tán*, as in example C:

A. […] y no estamos en condiciones de protegerla.
   […] y no **tamos** en condiciones de protegerla.
B. ¿Qué culo estás lamiendo, el de ella o el tuyo?
   ¿Qué culo tás lamiendo, el de ella o el tuyo?

C. […] están repletos de religion […]
   […] tán repletos de religion […]

Two non-standard and ideologically neutral variables are now in place, the African-American characters of the novel now share the non-standard use of the verbs tener and estar. These graphic variations index solidarity between three characters who share a common ethnic origin. Equally important, the graphic symbols also code cultural difference between this speech community and those characters outside the community. To complete the pseudo-sociolect, this analysis will move on to discuss the artificial phonological variants that could be repeated in the speech of the African-American characters.

2.6.2 Artificial phonological variations

Perhaps the most straightforward phonological variant that can be transposed to this artificial vernacular is the use of dashes that encode variations on the suprasegmental plane of speech production. The descriptive analysis established that Updike uses dashes in the source text to recreate the non-standard punctuation of syllables, a feature of AAVE that can be directly transferred into Spanish, thus mimicking the prosodic nature of the speech of Babe, Buchanan and Skeeter. In the source text, Updike modifies Babe’s speech with a dash in the following utterance, immediately below is the alternative utterance modified by the pseudo-sociolect:

I’m nowhere near spaced enough to **pee-form**.

No estoy lo suficientemente colocada como para **too-car**.
There are two changes to note here. Firstly, Menéndez translates Babe’s original utterance as *yo no estoy lo bastante cerca para ponerlo en forma con lo que tengo*, which results in unnecessary deviation from the source text. The alternative version, therefore, is produced with the aim of approximating Babe’s Spanish utterance as close as possible to the source text version. Importantly, “perform”, the word which Babe’s pronounces unconventionally, now has a direct correlate in the Spanish version, *tocar*, which can also be punctuated with a dash between the two syllables, and the phoneme [o] can be elongated in an equivalent way to the [e] allophone in “pee-form”. This is the only instance of non-standard punctuation of syllables in Babe’s speech; Buchanan uses this norm much more:

```
He works right beside his daddy at Ver-i-ty Press.

He is an ath-e-lete of renown.

Jer-o-me asked me to express an especial gratitude.
```

As with Babe, the translation can directly recreate the use of dashes in the words that function equivalently in the target utterances:

```
Trabaja con su padre en Ve-ri-ty Press.

Es un renombrado de-por-tis-ta.

Je-ro-me me pidió que te transmitiera su enorme gratitud.
```

Skeeter also uses this variable extensively; however, as some of the examples below demonstrate, the dashes in Skeeter’s language are accompanied with further orthographical variations:
There’s a fact for your eddi-cayshun.

Your style of slavery was e-specially bad.

You wanna know how a Ne-gro feels?

Ee-magine being in a glass box.

The dashes in Babe and Buchanan’s dialogue are relatively straightforward to transfer to the Spanish text. In the first example especially, it could be argued that the unusual spelling of “education” could add further complications. However, this does not need to be the case. What is important here is to index an intratextual community; the aim is not to recreate the specific sound patterns of AAVE, but to recreate Babe and Buchanan’s use of dashes in Skeeter’s speech. With this in mind, Skeeter’s dialogue could be represented in the following manner (the alternative version, modified with the pseudo-sociolect appears directly below Menéndez’s versions):

Ahí tienes un dato concreto para tu educación.
Atención al dato para tu edu-ca-ci-ón.

Tu estilo de esclavitud era singular y especialmente malo.
Vuestra esclavitud fue única y es-pe-cial-men-te mala.

¿Quieres saber lo que siente un negro?
¿Quieres saber lo que siente un ne-gro?

Imagina que te encuentras en una caja de cristal.
Í-ma-gi-na-te dentro de una caja de cristal.

Four non-standard and ideologically neutral variables are now in place. The African-American characters of the novel, as per the alternatives
offered here, now share lexico-grammatical norms that dictate a non-standard use of the verbs *tener* and *estar*, and a phonological norm that dictates a non-standard pattern of pronunciation. These variations function as indexers of solidarity, in the sense that the three speakers “speak alike”, but crucially, also speak differently to the white Anglo-Saxon characters. This dynamic may be plotted in the hermeneutic continuum in the following way:

The dialogue of Skeeter, Buchanan and Babe now have symbols that function as indexers of solidarity and difference. It is important to note that the linguistic variables sought here as substitutes for the source text features of AAVE should not be taken as an attempt to homogenise every instance of AAVE in Spanish. Rather, the variations are specific to *Rabbit Redux* and its fictive transfiguration of an African-American speech community. As it happens, this is not so different from representations of AAVE in American literature, as many scholars point out the lack of consistency and the high degree of variability in the textual strategies that different writers use to represent the speech of African-American characters. For example, Carkeet (1979) points out that Mark Twain is highly inconsistent even within a single text, as is the case of *Huck Finn*. What remains is to endow this artificial vernacular with the cultural ideologies that reflect the cultural conflict that in the source text is played out in the difference between AAVE and SAE in the source text. This, as the next section will argue, can be achieved through the use of footnotes.
7.6.3 Footnotes

The use of footnotes is a topic in Translation Studies that generates controversy as to its legitimacy as a strategy. Eco (2001:50), for example, believes that footnotes “are a sign of weakness on the part of the translator”. Be that as it may, Menéndez explains particular terms in both “El regreso de Conejo” and “Conejo en Paz” in the form of notas del traductor. She, for example, finds that when the text refers to el holandés de Pennsylvania, the following footnote is needed:

*Pennsylvania Dutch*: Dialecto del alemán mezclado con palabras en inglés que se habla en algunas zonas de Pennsylvania. (“Conejo en paz”: 28)

Similarly, when Skeeter calls Harry “Chuck”, here too Menéndez feels the need to clarify the meaning of “Chuck” with the following footnote:

*Chuck*: Además de ser el diminutivo de Charles o Charlie, nombre con el que se le llamaba a los soldados norteamericanos durante la Guerra de Vietnam, significa aproximadamente «cacho de carne blanca», que corresponde a la paletilla de ternera. (“El regreso de Conejo”: 171)

At various points in “Conejo en Paz”, Menéndez also uses footnotes to explain what had been originally in Spanish in the source text (30), Updike’s metaphoric use of snowbirds in the story (34), the term “baby-boomer” (40) and a joke based on a play of words between the Jewish Passover and “pass over” (57). Whether or not it is a “sign of weakness” is debatable, but what these examples demonstrate is that Menéndez was willing to clear up potential ambiguities with the use of extratextual strategies. Menéndez’s use of footnotes, however, does not seem to adhere to a set guideline; some ambiguities are clarified (for example, Skeeter’s use of the moniker “Chuck”) and some are not (for example, Skeeter’s use of the moniker “Charlie”). This notwithstanding, the examples above illustrate that dialectal issues (Pennsylvania Dutch) and
some terms are considered important enough to warrant a footnote. For reasons not entirely clear, AAVE – which is far more prominent than Pennsylvania Dutch, and far more important to the characterisation of Skeeter than his use of “Chuck” – is not afforded this luxury. Yet a footnote that explains the artificial variables outlined above would be in keeping with Menéndez’s translation method. The footnote – or footnotes, as more than one will be needed – will also need to explain the strategy suggested in the preceding section.

In order to use this strategy of footnotes in a way that it does not invade the text unduly, or inhibits reading, they need to be kept to a minimum. However, an initial nota del traductor, not dissimilar to Montes’ explanatory note at the beginning of her translation of “Las aventuras de Huckleberry Flynn”, would explain the textual dynamics of AAVE in the source text:

El diálogo del texto original representa el habla de los personajes Skeeter, Buchanan y Babe con peculiaridades gramaticales y fonológicas pertinentes a la lengua vernácula afroamericana. Estos rasgos lingüísticos, al ser incompatibles con el castellano, no han podido figurar en este texto; sin embargo, el traductor ha fabricado rasgos artificiales con el simple propósito de recrear una forma de hablar común en estos tres personajes, así reflejando en primer lugar la solidaridad afroamericana del texto original, y en segundo lugar, la diferencia cultural entre estos personajes y los personajes blancos.

This footnote avoids terms such as “speech community” or “sociolect” in order to not burden the reader with theoretical concepts that are not vital to the story. This information, nevertheless, is explicit in the clarification that Babe, Skeeter and Buchanan share a peculiar way of speaking. This footnote would be placed before the story begins, but further clarifying notes would also be needed the first time artificial variations (i.e., the three variations outlined in the preceding sections) feature in the target text. The first time the non-standard form of tener would feature in the
novel is in Buchanan’s utterance, *tenes que estar agradecido por tener un padre que se preocupa por ti*; and the second lexico-grammatical variable of the pseudo-sociolect proposed also occurs in Buchanan’s speech first, when he asks Harry, ¿Dónde tá tu papá?. Because both these variables occur in virtually consecutive utterances, the clarification of both these variables may be conflated into a single footnote, thus minimising unwanted interferences in the text. This footnote would thus read as follows:

*Nota del trad.:* La elisión de la vocal «i» en el diptongo perteneciente a la tercera persona del verbo tener, y la elisión de la primera sílaba del verbo «tener» son variables artificiales que se han efectuado aquí, y se repetirán tanto en el habla de Buchanan como en la de Skeeter y Babe, para reflejar los rasgos lingüísticos que comparten exclusivamente estos tres personajes.

One last footnote is needed to clarify the phonological variable that uses dashes to index a non-standard syllable stress pattern. Once again, this variable occurs for the first time in the text in Buchanan’s speech when he says, *trabaja con su padre en Ve-ri-ty Press*. The accompanying footnote would read as follows:

*Nota del trad.:* El guion se usa aquí como un marcador diacrítico en el habla de Buchanan. Esta variable ficticia se reflejará en el habla de Babe y Skeeter para representar la peculiaridad lingüística que comparten los personajes Afroamericanos.

Thus the twofold criteria to successfully transpose AAVE to the Spanish text would now be in place. On the hand, the intratextual markers that index membership to a community are interspersed in the dialogue of Skeeter, Buchanan and Babe are functional equivalents that reflect the language-identity nexus of the original. With the information supplemented by the footnotes, the hermeneutic continuum above, which indexed a shared language, may now be actualised as a continuum that indexes the specific cultural identity of its speakers:
Skeeter, Babe and Buchanan now speak alike, and concomitantly, speak differently to the white Anglo-Saxon characters. However efficient the pseudo-sociolect is at reflecting the textual condition of the speech community, it nevertheless needs footnotes to clarify the artificial variables as part of a strategy that strives to reconstitute the intratextual speech community; without the clarification, the potential would be there for the reader to interpret this variation as a mistake on the translator’s part. With both these strategies in place, the dialogue of the African-American characters generates a hermeneutic continuum that indexes their semiotically-codified identity.

7.7 Different indexers, different icons
This chapter set out firstly to analyse and describe how Menéndez’s translation of “El regreso de Conejo” represents AAVE. The aim was to establish whether the source text’s language-identity nexus, which subsumes three African-American characters under an intratextual speech community, is equivalently recast in the translation. Secondly, this chapter then set out to explore the translation strategies that would have resulted in a more faithful transposition of the language-identity nexus. In preparation for the analysis that was to follow, this chapter also established the thematic significance of AAVE in the source text. As Ogbu (1999:148) says, “it is not only the differences in dialects per se that counts. What also seems to count is the cultural meaning of those dialect differences”; in the context of AAVE, this is a sociolect that is historically, culturally and politically charged. This is especially so in the 1960s, the time in which the novel is set. AAVE is a way for African-
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Americans to forge a bond, and, crucially, to create a community that separated them from the hegemonic white supremacy discourse.

The descriptive analysis established the dogmatic approach taken by Menéndez. Due to intersystemic incongruences, every marker of AAVE in dialogue, and therefore every indexer to the iconic codification of African-American identity, is lost in the translation. This, however, should not be taken as a criticism, but rather as a loss that was inevitable. A further, more condemnable, consequence of Menéndez’s strategy relates to her use of overly formal language in the speech of the African-American characters. Specifically, the language of these characters is reconstructed with standard Spanish. This occurred invariably whenever a lexico-grammatical or a phonological variable featured in the original. Furthermore, there is no strategy of compensation that accounts for the loss of the source text indexers. That is, in the translation, there is no attempt to modify the dialogue of the characters, nor does Menéndez clarify her strategy with a footnote – though she was otherwise willing to footnote terms and devices of far less consequence in the fictive universe of the “Rabbit” books than AAVE. Ultimately, the descriptive analysis illustrated how the intratextual speech community of the source text is dissolved completely in the Spanish text. In this regard, there can be little argument that the attenuation of indexers in dialogue, therefore, resulted in an impoverished text. The difference and the cultural meaning that Ogbu finds crucial are non-existent, thus making the African-American characters, and the rich portrayal of the African-American community in the source text, a tepid affair in the target text.

The analysis was also focused on the target language resources that could codify an African-American identity in the speech of the three African-American characters. In other words, the discussion here centred on the translation strategies that could “fill” the lacunae created by Menéndez’s indiscriminate use of standard Spanish. With this in mind, the aim was to re-textualise the language-identity nexus that would, in turn, reconstitute the speech community in the target text. To do this, a translation method
– a set of strategies – that could achieve two functions was devised. This method includes (1) a strategy that could construct an ideologically neutral intratextual speech community and (2) a strategy that could index the source cultural associations that would ultimately ascribe a linguistic identity to the African-American characters. Only then would the target dialogue of these characters be endowed with the thematic significance of the source text dialogue, based as it is on the different and conflicting ways of speaking between the white characters and the African-American community. In order to fulfil the first function, the strategy of constructing a pseudo-sociolect was proposed. The main benefit of creating an artificial lect is that it would not be burdened with unwanted cultural associations. By virtue of its artificiality, the pseudo-sociolect is neutral and therefore, in purely semiotic terms, able to create an intratextual speech community. This speech community was reconstituted with three artificial variables, a non-standard use of the verb tener, a non-standard use of the verb estar and the use of dashes to graphically encode non-standard suprasegmental patterns. With regards to the second function, it was proposed that three footnotes could fulfil the semiotic function of indexing a specific African-American community. That is, the first strategy, although it successfully creates a speech community, does not index a culturally specific one. This lacuna is therefore appropriately filled by the use of three footnotes. The first note, placed at the beginning of the story, would alert the reader to the strategy without using technical vocabulary. The second and third note would clarify the artificial variables wherever they occurred for the first time in the text.

As was flagged in the analysis, the alternatives offered here cannot be applied homogenously in the translation of every literary sociolect. Although the couplet strategy fulfils the indexical purposes that were found lacking in the professional translation, it is nevertheless important to preface the alternatives as tailored specifically to the portrayal of AAVE in *Rabbit Redux*. As the next chapter demonstrates, in the case of sociolects that are based on gender, an entirely different approach is
needed if the translation is to observe the indexical properties of the language-identity nexus of Janice Angstrom.
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Chapter 8

Janice Angstrom: Indexing a Gender Sociolect in Translation

8.0 Introduction

The previous chapter explored how the Tusquets Editores translations deal with a sociolect that subsumes a group of characters on the basis of a shared ethnic background. Here the focus is on how the translators of the “Rabbit” books deal with the issue of a sociolect that reflects a character’s gender; specifically, how Janice Angstrom uses language to index her womanhood. This chapter follows the now familiar pattern of beginning with a theoretical exploration that delimits the terms and concepts used in the analysis. Therein, the gender paradigm will be discussed, first, from a Translation Studies perspective, and second, through a sociolinguistic perspective. Though on the surface it may seem as if gender is a concept that is common to both disciplines, the reality is that translation and sociolinguistic scholarship view it in subtly different and nuanced ways. Typical Translation Studies scholarship draws parallels between gender and translation, and describes how some feminist translators “re-write” texts to reverse a patriarchal bias. Neither of these avenues provides enough theoretical tenets to explore the translation issues involved in Janice’s language-identity nexus. The theoretical scope is therefore widened to include a sociolinguistic episteme of how language can function in context when the key speaker variable is gender. In this section, discourse, as a concept that contextualises a text (Litosseliti and Sunderland 2002:8–9), is proposed as the theoretical tool for the comparison of Janice’s source and target gender sociolects. With this interdisciplinary theoretical foundation in place, the analysis proceeds to answer the following research questions:
- What is the fictive nature of Janice’s gender sociolect in the source text?
- Have the translations accounted for this type of language variation?
- What, if any, are the losses in relation to Janice’s language-identity nexus?
- What strategies, if any, could have transposed Janice’s linguistic identity into Spanish?

The focus is on establishing the incongruences in the language-identity nexus forged in Janice’s source and target texts dialogues. The source-oriented part will establish the semiotic dynamics of Janice’s gender identity in dialogue. The target-oriented part of the analysis will then establish whether the translators of the “Rabbit” books recast Janice’s dialogue with strategies that observe the crucial language-identity nexus. Throughout, translation strategies that would – or could – have created a target gender sociolect that is commensurable with the source gender sociolect will be offered as alternatives to the strategies used by the Tusquets Editores translators.

8.1 Translation and Gender

Unlike Harry’s idiolect and AAVE, in this case there is a branch of Translation Studies that dedicates itself to the subject of gender. According to Simon (1996:1), this branch of translation research aims “to identify and critique the tangle of concepts which relegates both women and translation to the bottom of the social and literary ladder”. Chamberlain (1988) says that women and translation are not coupled for convenience, nor is their conflation serendipitous. Her claim is that the politics of “gender difference has been played out […] in the metaphors describing translation” (Simon, ibid:2), where the translation is often seen as female and the original as male in a sort of textual communion
that stands as a single entity, i.e., as the same book, with the same meanings written into it (c.f., Chamberlain 1992; Simon 1996; von Flotow 1997). The analogous implication of this binary relationship is that the translated text is subordinate to the original in much the same way that some feminists view women as subjugated by men. The feminist purview of Translation Studies also extends to the development and application of an approach that not only translates, but also re-writes a text to reverse patriarchal and phallocentric biases. If, as Venuti (1995:vii) argues, no translation exists in a vacuum and translators inevitably leave their ideological thumbprints on their texts, why, then, should feminist translators not sway this axiomatic phenomenon towards a feminist ideology?

In a manner of speaking, the modus operandi of translators that subscribe to a feminist ethos is to find fidelity in betrayal – an approach which reframes Jakobson’s aphorism, “equivalence in difference”: betrayal of the patriarchal bias of an original, but fidelity to the greater good of ridding the text of misogynistic discourses. As Godard (1990:90), one of the foremost contemporary feminist translators, explains:

Like parody, feminist translation is difference despite similarity. As feminist theory tries to show, difference is a key factor in thought processes and in critical activity. The feminist translator affirming her critical difference, her delight in interminable re-reading and re-writing, flaunts the signs of her manipulation of the text. Womanhandling the text in translation means replacing the modest, self-effacing translator. The translator becomes an active participant in the creation of meaning.  

As such, the ubiquitous debate on equivalence is reformulated in such a way as to allow women translators to take a piece of literature, a “man-made” artefact, and translate (“womanhandle”) it in more feminist-

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34 Italics in the original.
friendly terms, or, in more extreme cases, to further a feminist agenda (von Flotow 1997:43). A well-known example of this code in practice is Suzanne Jill Levine’s translation of Cabrera Infante’s “La Habana para un infante difunto” (1979). Tasked with translating a novel which “mocks” and “manipulates” women, Levine (re)creates a text that reverses the ideology of the original entirely. Where there is mockery of a woman in the source text, this is transformed into mockery of a man in the translation. Such transformations suggest that Levine subscribes to a “fidelity in betrayal” ethos which dictates that patriarchal devices in the source text should be removed and replaced with matriarchal devices in the translation. Translation viewed thus becomes a process whereby the subjugation of women is vicariously reversed in the product offered to the target culture.

Within the parameters of this feminist code, the notion of identity – of characters’ identities – becomes problematic. The aim of this thesis is to remain as faithful as possible, within reason, to the original codification of characters’ identity. An ethos of fidelity in betrayal stands antithetic to the approach here, because, if devices and discourses are ideologically reversed, so, too, are the characters that enact them. In the paradigm of gender and translation, identity – i.e., a gender identity, is mostly applicable to how women translators exercise their feminist agency during the translation process in order to create a product which no longer supports patriarchy. Both Simon (Gender in Translation, 1996) and von Flotow’s (Translation and Gender, 1997) respective treatises focus almost entirely on how feminist ideology works through translators and through the text, but do not touch on how characters’ gender identities can be textually (re)constituted in the target text by maximising faithfulness and curtailing betrayal. Von Flotow comes closest; she does,

35 It should be noted that Levine and Infante worked together on the translation, with the latter believing that translation is “a more advanced stage of writing” (von Flotow 1997:36)
Janice Angstrom: Indexing a Gender Sociolect in Translation

for example, put forward a number of sociolinguistic tenets of language and gender in her own work when she says:

The [...] focus on the effects of “patriarchal” language – the language forged and used by institutions in society largely ruled by men – led to an outpouring of scholarly analyses and literary texts. Some of the many questions that scholars posed and sought to answer centred around language use: How do women use language? Is their use different from men’s? Do women carry out different communicative roles from those of men? Other questions focused on how gender was reflected in language: How are women and men represented in conventional language? How is women’s and men’s consciousness moulded through language? How is gender difference constructed and reinforced in language? (1997:8)

Von Flotow uses this passage to offer a historical view of gender and language, with the aim of contextualising how, ultimately, women translators may use language to render a feminist ideology. She does not make reference to whether fictional female characters use gender-asserting language, despite her belief that “when gender serves as a lens for the micro-analysis of individual translations, the focus is on the minute details of language that (may) reflect the gendered aspects of a text, or seek to conceal them” (1998:124).

Operating within this feminist tradition, translators approach a text to rewrite it; yet, as commendable as it is to right what is wrong, re-writing a text in translation also cloaks a cultural malaise, allowing it to go undetected by a target readership. The Spanish translations of the “Rabbit” books, however, do not lend themselves to analyses from such politicised perspectives. Janice Angstrom’s gender has been the subject of extensive debates in Updikean scholarship, but there is no evidence in the target texts to suggest that either of the three translators sought to “rewrite” Janice in any way, in dialogue or otherwise. This analysis, therefore, does not follow the feminist tradition in Translation Studies,
but rather attempts to add to its body of scholarship by placing the onus on the gender identity of one of its characters, instead of the gender agency of the translator. As necessary and politically, culturally and ideologically relevant as the studies on women as translators are, it is also important to incorporate into these studies the process through which characters, as semiotic texts, become “gendered”. As the focus in this thesis is on the translation of dialogue – dialogue as a literary device that forges a language-identity nexus for the characters – the analytical focus here is on Janice’s dialogue, and how her use of language indexes her womanhood. However, given that translation theory does not offer enough of a foundation for such an analysis, there is a need to explore how the question of gender has been dealt with in Sociolinguistics; by doing this, not only will the analysis be supplemented with theories that pertain specifically to speech production, it will also help disentangle the term “gender” from the web of definitions which sometimes obscures the concept it labels, with the ultimate aim of instating a definition that is workable for this analysis.

8.2 Language and Gender
There is no *sui generis* language and gender taxonomy. That is, unlike other sociolects - AAVE, for example – gender sociolects are not defined by a set of self-contained variables. This notwithstanding, it seems certain that men and women use language in different ways (Wolfram and Schilling-Estes 2006:234). The manner in which speech differs between the two sexes is thus the dialectic upon which the gender and language paradigm has been founded. This section gives a historical and critical account of the developments made in the gender and language paradigm and describes contrasting positions. The aim is not to subscribe to a particular methodology, but to foreground the analysis with a comprehensive epistemology. Given that the focus in this chapter is on Janice Angstrom, the literature reviewed below focuses exclusively on women and language, a branch of the more expansive study of language
and gender – though given the feminist primacy in this subfield of Sociolinguistics, the two may, at times, be viewed as the same practice.

The “conceptual breakthrough” for Gender Studies came in the early 1970s when a distinction was made between “sex” and “gender” (Talbot 2010:7). Once it became ontologically clear that “sex is biologically founded” and “gender, by contrast, is socially constructed” (Talbot ibid.), sociolinguists duly adopted “gender” as a situational variable. Though there were early incursions into the topic that preceded this breakthrough – of which, Otto Jesperson (1922) is probably the earliest – it was not until Lakoff’s foundational essay, *Language and Women’s Place* (1973), that studies moved away from a binary essentialist debate and began looking at gender itself as a site of struggle, one where nothing is predetermined, and where language should, or could, play a crucial role in the construction of a person’s gender identity.

In hindsight, given its lack of a formal framework, Lakoff’s essay may be viewed as a rather inauspicious beginning to the language and gender paradigm because her “findings”, as Lakoff admits herself, were based on introspection (Lakoff 1973:47). It is worth noting that Lakoff defended the lack of empirical data on the basis that new avenues of research are the product of introspection, and given that her work represents something of a beginning, her aim was not to offer an all-encompassing theory of women’s use of language, but to open up the debate and to “[indicate] directions for further research” (Lakoff 1973:47). In this respect, there is no doubting her success. Lakoff’s early work postulated that women’s language is characterised, in the main, by a lexicon specific to activities normally associated with women, precise colour terms, affective adjectives, overly polite forms, hedges, liberal use of intensifiers, tag questions, rising intonation, hypercorrection and emphatic stress (Lakoff, 1973). Lakoff’s work is also important because, although on the one hand it gave women a voice in the study of language,
on the other, her overall argument suggests that women’s language is somewhat deficient to men’s language – a view which has been criticised by some of the feminist scholars that came after her:

In this early speculative book, Lakoff accounted for gender differences in language use in terms of women’s deficiencies: how women’s language doesn’t match up to men’s. In doing so, she was unintentionally rearticulating existing prejudices about women’s talk. (Talbot 2010:38)

Nowadays, Lakoff’s essay is viewed not only as the beginning of the language and gender paradigm, but to a certain extent, as the first proponent of the *deficit* approach (Litosseliti and Sunderland 2002:3). Her work did not unify the paradigm in the same direction, but rather divided it into four distinct approaches. The aforementioned deficit approach was followed by the emergence of the *dominance, difference* and *dynamic* (or *social constructionist*) approaches. The deficit approach (c.f. Jesperson 1922; Trudgill 1972; Lakoff 1973) views women’s language as inferior to men’s. However, this should not be interpreted as an anti-feminist stance, but rather as a necessary point of departure for a discipline that had traditionally operated on the premise that men were the standard-bearers. As a rejoinder to the deficit approach, the difference approach developed a framework that considered women’s language not as deficient, but as simply different (c.f. Tannen 1990; Holmes 1995). The very notion of difference, however, is problematic. There is no general consensus on whether a distinction based on biological or cultural difference can be made (Eckert and McConnell-Ginet 2003:10); if it is viewed as cultural, then a paradox arises. Women were traditionally viewed as socially inferior (c.f. Tannen 1990; Coates 1990; von Flotow 1997), therefore, variation in women’s speech viewed from this position leads to a discussion of power relations. This debate transmutes easily into the dominance approach, which proffers the view that female speech registers are a reflection of the balance of power between men and women, where power is contingent on the
metaphorisation of language as symbolic social capital (Thorne and Henley 1975; Dale Spender 1980). Finally, the dynamic approach views the performance of gender through language from a constructivist position (Fishman 1983; West and Zimmerman 1983; Eckert & McConnell-Ginet 2003). At any point in history, a woman is born into a specific time and place, and this spatio-temporal condition bestows upon women certain roles and expectations. Within the confines of this space, the dynamic approach sees women as exercising an indeterminate amount of linguistic agency in order to actively reflect their gender identity.

Because this thesis focuses on scripted dialogue rather than empirically collected data, some of the tenets of the four approaches are not heuristically applicable to Janice’s fictionalised gender sociolect. However, as Livia (1998:146) suggests, there are certain advantages to exploring gender and language in “pre-planned scripts” that create the illusion of immediacy:

[Literary texts] demonstrate the utility of looking at constructed dialogue precisely because such pre-planned scripts allow us to see what pragmatic roles have been internalized and what expectations speakers have of patterns of speech appropriate for each sex.

It is curious that “sex” should be the ontological device to speak about gender in literature. It is, perhaps, a way of identifying the very nature of “gender” in aesthetics as something that is, at heart and inevitably, essentialist, in the sense that it is constructed out of pre-conceived discourses that assign a gender value to a speaker, as opposed to the spontaneous speech of a person to perform their extemporaneous gender identity. Evidently, Updike created Janice to resemble a real woman, a thinking being acting on her own free-will, but it is an inescapable fact that her performance as such is illusionary, as it is her very performance
which has been constructed. To understand its constructed nature, and how it can be reconstructed in translation, the next section will argue for an approach that, informed by the findings of the four approaches, is based on the concept of discourse.

8.3 Gender identity and discourse

The language and gender landscape has transformed completely since Jesperson’s time. The catalyst of change, the distinction made between sex and gender coupled with Labov’s influential work in Sociolinguistics, created an academic climate in which old suppositions could be rendered fallacious, and new forms of enquiry could be pursued with specifically tailored theoretical frameworks. However, the progress made comes with the caveat that the ideas extrapolated from studying language and gender are mostly relatable to language as an abstract system, as a cultural artefact through which social interaction is mediated, and not so relatable to the parole that performs specific identities within a system (Litosseliti & Sunderland 2002:1-2). How, exactly, an individual’s gender identity fits into the parameters of the four approaches is difficult to know. Identity, already a slippery notion, can be located in language in varying ways – as the four approaches demonstrate. In fact, the distinction made between gender and sex challenged the essentialist conceptualisation of identity. Identity is no longer considered a fixed category, but “multiple, fluid and never complete” (Litosseliti & Sunderland 2002:7), thus obscuring further what could be rigorously labelled as an “identity”. The one axiom that language and gender scholars seem to have grounded in this respect, is that identity, even a gender identity, is a highly contextualised phenomenon:

[…] Speakers are not entirely locked into particular subject positions based on gender or other dimensions of social inequality; as social actors move between different communities of practice in their daily lives different dimensions of
identity come to the fore, including identities based on activities rather than categories. (Bucholtz and Hall 2004:369)

Bucholtz and Hall suggest that exploring identity through the prism of language exclusively, and without accounting for context, will result in establishing a language-identity nexus that is flawed and incomplete. In order to avoid this pitfall, this analysis follows Litosseliti and Sunderland (2002) in that, in order to study gender identities, especially semiotically and textually constructed ones, discourse must play a part. In the semiotic chain of signification that this thesis follows – language is a graphic symbol that indexes an icon –, a “gendered” icon is shaped by the gender-identity discourses that are indexed by the symbol. An example of this semiosis can be seen in Trudgill’s (2000 [1974]) argument that women tend to use more standard forms, a finding from which he deduces that women are more status-conscious than men. For Trudgill, the use of standard language by women is a symbol that indexes a status discourse, something for which he has been taken to task for by some feminist scholars:

[Trudgill] makes an interesting suggestion that women’s greater use of Standard forms compared with men stems from the fact that they are rated on their appearance while men are not. Women certainly need to spend more time on their appearance, and they are judged on the basis of it to an extent that men are not. Trudgill does not mean visual appearance, however, but something rather more nebulous, and the basic distinction between “doing” and “appearing” that his suggestion rests on is a difficult one to sustain in any case. (Talbot 2010:24)

The deficit approach, with which Trudgill is associated, prompted the other three approaches on the basis that women were linguistically

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36 The concept “communities of practice” refers to a self-contained group of people who share an interest in a particular domain or areas. The concept was first postulated by Wenger and Lave (1991), and adopted to sociolinguistic studies by Eckert. Eckert and McConell-Ginet (1992: 464), define it as “an aggregate of people who come together around a mutual engagement in an endeavour”.

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“inferior” because they traditionally occupied the lower rungs of the social ladder. Whilst it is true that Trudgill’s argument is based on an outdated presupposition, his work is nevertheless important because it does not merely state that women use more standard forms than men, but also, commendably, attempts to explain why this might be the case. Whether or not women are more status-conscious than men, or more preoccupied with their appearance, is not the point entirely. The point is that because women use more formal language, Trudgill thought it reasonable to make the inference that women are more aware of the potential of language as symbolic capital, as a way to project their social status.

As this brief review illustrates, the various approaches to the language and gender paradigm fail to formalise a universally applicable theoretical framework. The deficit approach, with its implied derogatory view of women, is outmoded and clearly not ethically viable. Similarly, the difference and dominance approaches rely on the fixed binary opposition of male vs. female, and are far too engorged in cultural determinism to be applicable to an analysis of textually-constructed identities. For this reason, discourse analysis provides a methodological tool that is compatible with the type of transient identities that are the subject of this thesis:

A discourse approach to gender aims to accommodate ideas of individual agency, and gender (identity) as multiple, fluctuating, and shaped in part by language. This (in some ways post-structuralist) understanding crucially represents gender as a variable, but equally crucially, as both social and individual. (Litosseliti and Sunderland 2002:6)

It is these discourses that define the type of gender identity that may be indexed by Janice’s use of language. That is, given that there is no linguistic feature that is exclusively the domain of women, the onus is
now placed on how Janice performs difference and dominance discourses through language. Whereas the identitarian function of AAVE is to construct an ethnic identity intratextually, a gender sociolect, such as Janice’s, shapes the speaker’s identity through social discourses that are manifested in the surface linguistic features of dialogue. In this regard, therefore, Janice’s gender identity is intertextually constructed. By virtue of describing her identity as constructed, it would seem as though this analysis subscribes to a social constructivist position. This is only partially true insofar as Janice’s language is constructed with a social element in the ideational plane of her language use. However, the difference and dominance approaches feature in the analysis, but not as approaches in and of themselves, but as the very discourses that are linguistically summoned by Janice’s dialogue and that function along the identitarian plane of her language use.

Given the interlingual and intercultural imperatives of transposing Janice’s gender identity in the target language and for the target culture, the question is whether discourses of dominance and difference apply in an Iberian Spanish situational context. As Moreno Fernández (1998:38) points out, much of the scholarly work on gender sociolects in Spain is informed by the ground-breaking research carried out in the English-speaking world. As the work of Lakoff and Labov (as, perhaps, the two flagship studies of the area) provide the foundations for Hispanophonic studies, their work too is hindered by the same imponderables:

¿De dónde nace esa tendencia femenina a seguir los modelos de prestigio? ¿Por qué en muchas culturas se espera que la mujer ajuste su conducta sociolingüística a un canon o unos referentes de prestigio? ¿Por qué los usos lingüísticos que se consideran característicos de las mujeres o de los hombres tienen que ver directamente con el seguimiento o el abandono de una norma? La mayor parte de las respuestas que se han dado a estas cuestiones tienen que ver con una interpretación sociocultural del sexo, es decir, están relacionadas con lo que en la bibliografía anglosajona se llama gender “género”, que a su vez en nada coincide con el concepto de «género» como categoría gramatical.
El género sociocultural se opone al sexo en tanto en cuanto el sexo es una categoría biológica que viene dada prácticamente desde el momento de la concepción del nuevo ser, mientras el género es una dimensión sociocultural que el individuo adquiere al ser socializado (Moreno Fernández 1998:38).

Moreno Fernández not only cites Labov, but also Trudgill, to establish the role that prestige plays in how Spanish women speak. The implication of these iterations is that the principles established in an Anglophone context may be applied to an Iberian Spanish context, as Spanish women, too, seem to be more aware than men of the prestigious weight certain lects carry:

Una de las conclusiones más frecuentes en los estudios sobre variación lingüística en los que se considera la importancia del factor sexo es que, en igualdad de condiciones sociales y comunicativas, el hombre emplea más a menudo que la mujer las formas vernáculas, estigmatizadas o no estándares. Complementariamente, se dice que el habla femenina, además de más «correcta», es también más «conservadora» que la masculina. El motivo de esta ecuación es sencillo: generalmente las formas lingüísticas más tradicionales se consideran al mismo tiempo como más prestigiosas. (Arroyo 2005:171)

Thus it seems that standard prestige forms may be viewed as a common denominator between the language use of middle-class women in the US and Spain. Such a propitious circumstance answers one of the issues with regards to the transposition of Janice’s language: whether to reconstitute it with source norms or target norms. Given that both American English and Castilian Spanish share this gender norm, Janice may, too, use prestige forms in the Spanish translation to reflect her gender. However, as the analysis will discuss, reconstructing Janice’s gender sociolect guided by the register blueprint of the original is not enough to semiotically codify her gender, contextualised as it is and performed in a specific cultural context.
8.4 Janice Angstrom: a discursive gender identity

The benefit of taking an approach that centres on how Janice’s gender involves dominance and difference discourses is that it allows for an exploration of Janice’s linguistic identity on a par with her development in the novel, “from what Rabbit calls a ‘dumb mutt’ who tricked him into marriage by becoming pregnant to a working woman who grows in independence” (de Bellis 2000:22–23). In the view of de Bellis (ibid.), Janice’s upward trajectory is a metonymic representation of the changes in lifestyles for “ordinary middle-class women from 1960 to 1990” because she “rises from insignificance to authority”. Such a “positive” evaluation of Janice, however, is in marked contrast with the type of criticisms that followed Updike through his entire career:

His representation of American normativity in terms – exclusively, according to detractors – of middle-class white masculinity and apparent denigration of everyone else in terms of racialized, ethnic, and/or gendered otherness has provoked controversy since the start of his career (Olster 2006:8)

As this section discusses, Updike’s characterisation of women “provoked steady attacks from critics who find his women stereotypical and outmoded” (de Bellis 2000:168–169). However, by employing Bucholtz and Hall’s identity principles, this analysis aligns itself with the view that Janice’s trajectory throughout the saga is indeed positive. As the positionality principle dictates, identities fluctuate in relation to the subject’s position in hierarchies. In this sense, Janice is very much “subordinate to her husband” in Rabbit, Run (de Bellis 2000:23), both thematically and hierarchically. However, in each book, Janice’s character changes substantially, and the changes are always progressive and never regressive. Her identity develops in part because of her own empowerment, and in part because of the shifting moods in the United States with regards to gender issues. Her agency and her cultural milieu
are interlinked, so that any change in Janice’s identity is borne out of a relationship of causality between the social and the individual, precisely the type of phenomenon that augured the rise of feminism during the eras that Janice’s character is defined anew in the novels (Verduin 2004:71).

Whereas Harry is the hedonist in search of freedom in *Rabbit, Run*, Janice becomes the romantic quester in *Rabbit Redux*. She takes on a lover, Charlie Stavros, and abandons Harry. Thus a new identity emerges, one in which she tries to differentiate between the “dumb mutt” she was perceived as in the first book, and the new woman looking for a “valid identity”. Inspired by the cultural mood of the 1960s, a time in which the liberation of women was at the forefront of American consciousness, Janice’s affair is symbolic enough for its tacit rejection of her marriage to Harry. Far removed in spirit from the girl that got pregnant and had to marry Harry in a shotgun wedding, Janice begins a romantic liaison through her own free will:

Janice, on the other hand, is full of vigour, sexual and otherwise. Armed with her […] own paycheck, she has acquired enough self-sufficiency to make Rabbit wonder, “Does she need me at all?” This new self-sufficiency has in turn made her increasingly more resentful of Rabbit’s neglect. The tables have turned, for now it is she who does not receive from her spouse the needed confirmation of her “specialness”. […] Her affair, meanwhile, is Updike’s attempt to open up his own angst-ridden vision along gender lines. (Boswell 2001:91)

If her communion to Harry in marriage was forced upon her, the sexual communion to Charlie Stavros makes her an active agent and it liberates her. The affair “allowed Janice to grow in a way that their [Rabbit and Janice’s] marriage will not permit. It has also given her the opportunity to recover her dignity and even the score” (Boswell, 2001:93). Viewed in terms of the saga in its entirety, Janice’s affair with Stavros is the beginning of a journey that charts the development of Janice as
representative of her gender in the second half of the twentieth century, from an indifferent housewife to a woman who is willing “to assert herself in a male world without losing her femininity” (de Bellis, 2000:24). In the harrowing scene in which Janice finally admits her affair to her husband, Harry physically assaults Janice. Yet in some ways, it is the making of her: “the truth must push through, it was too big, too constant: though she was terrified and would scream, it was something she must have, her confession like a baby. She felt so proud” (Rabbit Redux: 64). In answer to her pride, Harry insults her “and hits her not in the face but in the shoulder, like a man trying to knock open a stuck door” (ibid.). The truth of the affair is finally out, paving the way for Janice to find herself, as it were, at a time in history when the role of women in society was changing. From her empowered position, she fights back in a way that the Janice of Rabbit, Run could never do: “She hits him back […] and Janice cries, ‘I do, I do sleep with Charlie’” (ibid.), a confession delivered with an aggression that bespeaks of a crucial development in her character. Although Janice and Stavros end their affair and she returns to Harry, her return does not signify a regression, but rather the continuation of her struggle to find a valid identity.

In Rabbit is Rich, her thematic and hierarchical position changes again. Although Harry dominates the narrative, Janice takes up a central position for the first time in the saga. Her new, emergent identity is one defined by her improved economic status. This new identity also operates on the positionality principle insofar as Janice’s money now positions her above Harry in the hierarchy of the family: “If Rabbit is rich, it is only because Janice is rich […]. Hence Janice is the source of his wealth, while his fidelity to her is the ‘price’ he pays for his position” (Boswell 2001:141). Both Boswell and Ristoff acknowledge that money is a central theme in Rabbit is Rich, but both concentrate on how affluence changes Harry and mostly overlook its effect on Janice. This is hardly a criticism of their respective exegetes. Boswell allows his argument to be
led by the narrative, therefore his focus is almost entirely on the protagonist, while Ristoff’s innovative scene-centred approach takes his argument, inevitably, away from the individual and towards the social. There are, however, clues in Harry’s behaviour towards Janice that demonstrate she has changed – but this change, in Harry’s misogynistic eyes, is nevertheless oriented towards a patriarchal discourse: “He [Stavros] has never married, and that says something flattering, to Janice and therefore to Harry, the way it’s worked out. A man fucks your wife, it puts a new value on her, within limits” (Rabbit is Rich: 12); and, even though there is no doubt that Harry benefits economically from their marriage, he nevertheless observes that: “If Janice had run off with Charlie like she wanted to she’d be nothing but a nursemaid now. As is, she plays tennis three, four times a week and has never looked sharper” (Rabbit is Rich: 10). The search for a valid identity that had begun in Rabbit Redux comes to an end in Rabbit at Rest – but unlike for Harry, the “end” for Janice is not death, but a new beginning in life as a “working girl”. When Nelson, who has been in charge of Springer Motors since Harry’s retirement, lapses into drug abuse and embezzles thousands of dollars from the family business, it is Janice, not Harry, who takes control of the situation. Even more tellingly, in the family crisis that ensues, it is Janice’s equanimity, militating against Harry’s temperament, which resolves the situation with Nelson. Ultimately, Janice’s development is a progression in her characterisation that can be viewed, as de Bellis (2000:23) recommends, in linear fashion:

[In Rabbit at Rest] Updike offered a more self-reliant Janice Angstrom than the first books of [Rabbit Angstrom] revealed. Her rise to power as a real estate sales representative permits her to extricate Springer Motors from bankruptcy and support her through drug rehabilitation and her husband through angioplasty. She has also selected two lovers, saved one from death, and saved her marriage through strength of will. Yet Janice is a middle-class woman whose development seems less important to Updike’s feminist critics that the depiction of professional women.
Some feminist scholars take exception to the manner in which Updike portrays women. A lot of the criticism, as would be expected given the notoriety of the “Rabbit” books, is focused on Janice. According to Allen, Updike creates "dull, bovine” female characters (1976:97). To a certain extent, her opinion, which predates the novels in which Janice’s character is fully fleshed-out, is based on passages that portray Janice as common:

Waiting at home is the archetypal Updike wife, Janice Springer Angstrom – vulnerable, sexual, good-natured, and stupid. She makes a striking image, this housewife of 1960, mesmerized in front of the T.V., drinking and old-fashioned and watching the Mouseketeers (Allen 1976:144).

Women who did not wait at home, who had jobs (never mind careers), were the exception rather than the norm in the 1950s. Even though the portrayal of Janice is unflattering, it is nevertheless based on a contemporaneous reality. Gordon (1991:18) offers an even more biased account of Janice’s portrayal; she says that the death of infant Rebecca June, who drowns when an inebriated Janice tries to give her a bath, is entirely Rabbit’s fault:

On the most obvious level, it is Janice who kills the baby and not Rabbit – indeed the death can be read as proof of the murderous carelessness of a mother in relation to a child. But the death of the baby occurs after one of Rabbit’s runs. Rabbit walks out on Janice while she is still pregnant, returns to her for the birth of the child. But he can’t stay long. He takes off again after Janice, still feeling the effects of her episiotomy, refuses to have anal sex. Depressed and hopeless because of her husband’s second leavetaking, Janice gets drunk and allows her baby to drown in the bathtub. This death can be read any number of ways that are conducive to negative mythologizing about women […] But it is at least possible to say that a responsible father does not leave his children in the hands of a woman who is clearly depressed.
Gordon condemns Harry’s actions whilst absolving Janice of any blame. Yet this seems short-sighted, firstly, because Updike’s intention was to provide the domestic alternative to Jack Kerouac’s *On the Road*; in other words, his intention was to show the inglorious consequences of such “leavetakings”:

The moral dilemma that Updike is framing is, in part, that the women get hurt; women are desired and feared; and women are, centrally, the representatives of society in the constraints of marriage, the entanglements of which the protagonist seeks to cut through (Wilson 1998:92).

Secondly, Gordon makes no attempt to account for Ma Springer’s – Janice’s mother – opinion on the death of the baby. The matriarch of the family, in fact, blames Janice (*Rabbit, Run*: 262). And when the tables are turned in *Rabbit Redux* and it is Janice who leaves, Harry, as the deserted party is not afforded the same compassion. According to Gordon (1991:18), “Rabbit has been (temporarily) abandoned by Janice”. The adverb in parenthesis and the passive voice are indicative of the leniency Gordon affords Janice, a position in stark contrast to her condemnation of Harry, though both characters commit the same sin. Gordon does not provide an account of Janice in *Rabbit is Rich*, which portrays a more confident, assertive version of Janice Angstrom. However, Brown (2001) does provide such an account, but rather than view Janice’s upward trajectory as a marker of a more woman-friendly Updike, she suggests that the author was merely following the times, and that the representation of an emancipated Janice is merely a by-product of the decade in which the novel is set:

Although Updike does portray Janice sympathetically, it is hard to give him the same amount of credit as [Sinclair] Lewis [for his portrayal of Mrs Babbit]. Updike wrote his novel *Rabbit is Rich* almost sixty years later. At this time, women were not only voting but regularly running for political office and vying for high-ranking business positions. (Brown 2001:62)
Such feminist criticisms of Updike and the “Rabbit” books seem to take a “damned-if-he-does and damned-if-doesn’t” approach. That is, when Updike portrays Janice in less than flattering terms, it is because he is a misogynist; on the other hand, when Updike portrays Janice in a more positive light, critics such as Brown view this as a concomitant of the shifting tides of gender representation, and fail to credit the author. As the analysis that follows demonstrates, Janice’s use of language reflects her upward trajectory. Far from being the disempowered woman some critics cast her as, Janice is almost triumphant in the way she manages to redefine herself, decade on decade, to assert herself in a patriarchal society.

8.5 Indexing difference: the search for a “valid identity”

Given that Updike “charts [Janice’s] personal development as a woman and as representative of ordinary middle-class women from 1960 to 1990” (de Bellis 2000:23), it is no surprise to see a much more liberal Janice Angstrom in Rabbit Redux, the novel that chronicles the lives of middle-class Americans living in the 1960s. As Janice herself says, she is “searching for a valid identity” (Rabbit Redux: 104). As the previous section highlighted, this new identity, or rather the search for a new identity, is thematically linked to her affair with Charlie Stavros, whom she meets at work – this in itself is a sign of the times the novel chronicles. This section focuses on the elements of her speech that index this change in her character.

Janice uses slang in Rabbit Redux as a means towards indexing the liberal discourse of the 1960s. Her use of the words “dig” and “zilch” are particularly significant as symbols that index her search for a valid identity – or, rather, where this valid identity may be located. The first
time Harry and Janice interact in the novel, Harry begins to hear a voice not quite Janice’s:

“Oh I know”, she sings on, “I hate it too, it’s just that with Mildred out so much we’ve had to go into her books, and her system is really zilch.” Zilch: he hears another voice in hers. (Rabbit Redux: 20)

“Zilch” is the crucial word here. It is the first piece of evidence that Janice may no longer be the Janice that Harry deserted ten years ago. What Harry is wondering is where and why Janice appropriated this word. The Oxford English Dictionary says the word originated in the 1960s: a new word for a newly empowered woman.37 Had it been ten years earlier, it would have been Harry incorporating the new word to his lexicon, not Janice the “dumb mutt” who spent her days watching The Mouseketeers. By Harry’s own admission, he is now the one “laying down to die, fighting off sleep before supper” (Rabbit Redux: 103-104), and Janice is the one “full of vigour, sexual and otherwise” (Boswell 1991:91). The word itself is exotic enough for Harry to notice it as out of place in Janice’s lexicon, as the diagrammatic continuum below illustrates:

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If the word is exotic and unusual enough for Harry to notice it out of place in Janice’s speech, then the question of where she heard it becomes crucial. Later in the story, the Angstroms are in a Greek restaurant having a meal when Charlie Stavros walks in the door and joins them. The time to settle the bill comes, and when Harry is getting ready to pay, “Stavros repeats that masterful small gesture of palm outward, ‘you owe me zilch. On me’.” (Rabbit Redux: 51). Harry’s interior monologue is cryptic yet unambiguous in its assertion that “there can be no argument”: Charlie will pay for the dinner, there can be no argument; and Charlie is Janice’s lover, of this there can be no argument either, a revelation that had remained hidden under the linguistic clue, “zilch”. At this point it becomes clear to both the reader and Harry that Stavros is the other “voice” in Janice. This additional indexical property of the symbol is illustrated below:

In order to index Charlie and Janice’s affair in Janice’s speech, the target dialogue must (a) choose a term that is unusual enough to justify Harry’s noticing it, and (b) use the same word in Charlie’s dialogue. Failure to cover both these indexical properties would result in a grave attenuation of an important element of Janice’s gender sociolect. In the Tusquets Editores text, Janice’s utterance appears as the following:

–Ya lo sé –canta ella–, no me gusta nada, pero con tantas ausencias de Mildred hemos tenido que metermos con sus libros, y la verdad, es que su
The etymological origin of “zilch” is unknown. What is known is that it was first recorded in the 1960s and is not considered formal language (c.f. footnote 39). It is also important to note that, although its origin is unclear, it is an exotic term and not a derivation of an American English word. In purely pragmatic terms, there is a shift in the register of the word that Janice uses in the target text, from the source language colloquial, informal and slang word, to the target language formal word, *nulo*. This term, however, is certainly not uncommon enough to mirror the source text peculiarity of “zilch”, and it is not uncommon enough to justify Harry hearing *otra voz en la de ella*. Therefore the first instance of “zilch”, translated as *nulo*, is not entirely satisfactory – as can be appreciated by viewing it as a semiotic process along the hermeneutic continuum:

That the symbols cannot be equivalent is taken as a given. However, by virtue of replacing “zilch” with *nulo*, Menéndez annuls the possibility of finding equivalence at the level of the index. Without equivalence at this level, the continuum leads to a different omega point. Viewed thus, *nulo* fails to achieve the first indexical property of the sign. The second indexical element of the term that the target text should cover is
contingent on repeating it in Stavros’ utterance; this utterance, however, appears as follows:

Stavros repite el ademán magistral de la palma hacia fuera.
- No debéis nada. Invito yo. (“El regreso de Conejo”; 47)

In the source text, Harry finally deduces the affair when he hears Charlie repeat the word that he had noticed out of place in Janice’s lexicon. This is where the target text fails to redeem the use of *nulo* - whether or not *nulo* is an appropriate translation of “zilch” almost becomes irrelevant, as the decision on the part of the translator to not iterate it in Stravos’ dialogue rids the text of this all-important linguistic clue. Without it, the affair is not revealed to Harry – or, rather, his thought process, “there can be no argument”, only refers to the immediate conversation between the two men, and not to the revelation of the affair. It is an omission that affects Janice’s icon in the sense that her search for a valid identity, rooted in her affair with Charlie, can no longer be appreciated through her language as restoring her sense of womanhood – it is Charlie, after all, that saves her from her dulled marriage, and accordingly, Janice has appropriated the language of their affair to reflect her new invigorated self. Without a satisfactory translation of “zilch”, her target language voice becomes powerless, it attenuates her characterisation, and it fails to do justice to Updike’s clever use of the word.

As the descriptive analysis of Menéndez’s translation highlights, the challenge for the translator with regards to “zilch” is to find a similarly exotic target language term that is informal and that could be repeated in both Janice and Stavros’ utterances. The terms *kaput* in Spanish means “finished”. It is a word that is not recognised by the *Real Academia*, which in itself attests to its exoticism. The translator could replace *nulo* with this term:
Hemos tenido que meternos en los libros de Mildred. Su sistema está kaput.

Thus the target language now contains the indexical properties of the source language “zilch”, and, crucially, it can be repeated in Stavros’ utterance to vicariously recast Janice’s “new voice” in the target language. However, as it stands in the Tusquets Editores text, the structure No debéis nada. Invito yo does not permit an easy insertion of kaput. A modulation is needed, not only of Stavros’ utterance, but of a large thread of the conversation, in order to insert the term with coherence. In the source text, the extended conversation between Harry and Stavros goes as follows:

[Harry says] “Janice, do you have money? Charlie, you tell her how much we owe.”

Stavros repeats that masterful small gesture of palm outward, “you owe me zilch. On me.” There can be no argument. (Rabbit Redux: 51)

As the exchange stands, there is no opportunity for Stavros to “finish” (i.e. “to kaput”) anything. The translation would need to rethread the conversation in order to give Stavros this opportunity, and thus, the opportunity to repeat the all-important word:


Stavros repite ese gesto magistral de palma abierta y dice:

-Invito yo.

-Insistimos, Charlie, no vamos a dejar que pagues todo.

-Se acabó la conversación. Kaput. No me debéis nada.

No queda nada por discutir.
Evidently, a number of shifts have occurred in this alternative version, at every level. Yet these shifts help to avoid the undesirable one that the Tusquets Editores text does not manage to avoid. By restructuring the conversation, which merely entails having Harry insist once more to pay for the dinner, Charlie is given a platform to say that the conversation is finished, it is *kaput*. Furthermore, Harry’s added insistence maintains an important coherence with the ambiguous “there can be no argument”, which in the alternative has been reformulated as *No queda nada por discutir*, which, remaining faithful to the impersonal style of the source text sentence, is more adequately ambiguous than the Tusquets Editores personal transposition, *Harry no puede discutir*. As the continuum below shows, the target text now contains the two indexical properties of the symbol “zilch”:

Janice’s use of “zilch” is the most overt clue to her affair with Stavros, but it is not the only one. Janice also appropriates the slang word “dig” from Stavros vocabulary. She says:

“Women don’t dig science” (*Rabbit Redux*: 36)
The slang term “dig” is another symbol that indexes the newly empowered Janice. However, as the dialogue in the dinner scene reveals, this is a word that she has borrowed from Charlie, who says:

“I’m beginning to dig him” (“El regreso de Conejo”: 46).

Much in the same way as Updike’s use of “zilch”, the slang word “dig” becomes a second clue to the affair. Like “zilch”, the clue is contingent on “dig” as an unusual term, one that is unusual enough for it to seem unlikely to feature in Janice’s dialogue. Had Janice said, “Women don’t understand science”, and subsequently, had Stavros said, “I’m beginning to understand him”, the symbol “understand” would possess none of the indexical qualities of “dig”. Yet this is how the translation has transposed these utterances:

Janice: Las mujeres no entendemos de ciencia. (“El regreso de Conejo”: 35)

Charlie: Estoy empezando a entenderlo (“El regreso de Conejo”: 43)

The viability of “dig” as a synonym of “understand” notwithstanding, entender is a term too unremarkable to index the affair, even though it is repeated in both Janice’s and Charlie’s dialogue. On this evidence, it seems as if the translator resolved the problem posed by the slang word “dig” by finding a near-synonym, albeit in a different register. The fact that Janice and Charlie repeat the same word can in no way be considered a successful transposition of Updike’s literary technique, especially considering the failure to repeat an equivalent of “zilch” in Janice and Stavros’ dialogue. A source language slang term is crucial for this clue to be satisfactorily recast in the translation. A word like rollo could be used in this instance. In Janice’s utterance it would feature thus:
A las mujeres no nos va el rollo de la ciencia.

Crucially, the word *rollo* can be repeated in Stavros’ utterance:

Empiezo a entender su *rollo*.

Though *rollo* is employed in these alternative versions with two different meanings, both instances are nevertheless pragmatically equivalent, and, crucially, attach the thematic significance of “dig” to it pseudo-equivalent Spanish term, *rollo*.

Updike makes continuous references in this novel to how Janice speaks with a different voice: “He [Charlie Stavros] has given her not only her body, but her voice” (*Rabbit Redux*: 53). As the novel progresses, Janice’s role is reduced to a few phone calls, but these only serve to reinforce the idea that Charlie “makes [her] think everything anew” (*Rabbit Redux*: 53). How the Tusquets Editores deal with the terms “zilch” and “dig”, firstly, shifting their colloquial tenor to a more formal one, and secondly, failing to repeat the word *nulo* in both Janice and Stavros’ utterances, leaves unanswered the question of whose voice Janice speaks through. If language enacts an identity, Janice’s appropriation of Stavros’ language is a way for her to express her liberation, one brought about by a sexual communion sought of her own free will. She speaks with Stavros’ voice, as Harry rightly deduces, but it is a voice that, for Janice, pronounces and foregrounds a new, “valid identity” for herself. Of course there is an outstanding issue yet to be resolved – and one which, perhaps, cannot be resolved. While it is true that Janice’s character is more liberated in *Rabbit Redux* than in *Rabbit, Run*, her appropriation of Charlie’s words to index her liberation suggests
that language nevertheless functions as a sort of straitjacket. The artifice of her liberation is Charlie, a man, and she reflects her liberation using Charlie’s (a man’s) language, making her claim for a “valid identity” somewhat vacuous. However, “zilch” and “dig” are not words exclusive to Charlie or men. It could also be noted that this vocabulary is appropriated by both parties to index their common secret, in which case, Janice’s liberation would no longer be indexed by a man’s language, but by the language of the affair, as a secret gender-neutral code both lovers share. Although it is Charlie with whom she has an affair, Charlie may be the least important detail, as it is the fact of the affair, the agency she exercises to carry out the affair, which is liberating. Evidently, if Janice is using Charlie’s language to develop her gender sociolect, then Allen and Gordon’s criticism of Updike may be justified, as her “liberated” character’s sense of freedom is a fallacy, as she depends on men to extricate her from a subjugated position. Viewed in this way, her appropriation of Stavros’ vocabulary becomes an index to the perpetuation of patriarchy. On the other hand, if her appropriation of “zilch” and “dig” is a way for her to develop a type of secret language with her secret lover, this immediately empowers her with the type of linguistic agency she could never have achieved with her husband. Ultimately, neither interpretation precludes these exotic terms from indexing what is different about Janice’s identity in *Rabbit Redux*. Without a satisfactory transposition of these terms, the translated icon does not index this all-important affair and the discourse of difference on which it is based.

### 8.6 Business-woman efficiency: Indexing dominance

Janice’s progress throughout the saga can be viewed in linear fashion. This is somewhat reflected in the exponential increase of her influence on the plot. In *Rabbit, Run*, her speaking parts are restricted to a scene at the beginning and two scenes at the end of the novel. Even though she gains a more prominent role in *Rabbit Redux*, she is nevertheless absent for large parts of the story. Janice only features throughout for the first time
in *Rabbit is Rich*. It is here, then, where her speech takes on a new dimension and begins to be constructed with prestige forms, which, as this section argues, is a type of linguistic strategy that indexes a discourse of dominance along gender lines.\(^{38}\) This is also the case in *Rabbit at Rest*, the book in which Janice acquires “a business-woman efficiency” and takes control of the family affairs in the midst of Harry’s demise and Nelson’s drug addiction. The translations of these novels, “Conejo es Rico” and “Conejo en Paz”, are analysed here through the prism of the hermeneutic continuum in order to ascertain whether the identitarian elements of Janice’s language-identity nexus are codified in the translations. Depending on the results yielded by this comparative phase of the analysis, alternative target language utterances may be offered as alternatives to the Tusquets Editores translations.

Updike constructs Janice’s language with a sociolect that is prestigious – in fact, the most prestigious sociolect in the United States on principle, Standard American English (SAE) (Wolfram and Schilling-Estes 2006:16). For Janice, who stands as a metonymic representation of “the distance women have traveled in [the ‘Rabbit’ books]”, SAE is the social capital that reflects her upward trajectory. Not unrelated to this identitarian function, Janice also uses prestigious forms to exert power in her interpersonal relationships with Harry and her mother, Bessie. These functions of her language use are better understood in relation to the greatest change in Janice’s social status: she becomes rich, a fact that is inextricable from the language-identity nexus that reflects her gender. As Arroyo (2005:159) says, it is necessary to “combinar el sexo con otros factores extralingüísticos para alcanzar una imagen más realista de la diferencias generolectales”. The link between prestige forms and gender is not absolute, however. As Wolfram and Schilling-Estes state below,

\(^{38}\) It should be noted that although “dominance” in gender studies typically applies to the means through which men dominate women, the reverse is true in relation to Harry and Janice, as it is Janice who begins to “dominate” Harry.
there are deeper issues at stake if the link is to obtain in Janice’s dialogue:

Instead of beginning with the question “How do men and women talk differently?” or “What gender differences will I find?”, we should probably ask more complex questions such as “What sorts of language features do people use to present themselves as women vs. men, or as particular kinds of women or men?”, “What if any difference does gender make in this particular situation?”, or even, “Why does gender make such a difference?” (Wolfram and Schilling-Estes 2006:235)

Gender identities are not located in linguistic features, but in the social and emotional stances language expresses (Ochs 1991:336). For this reason, when analysing Janice’s gender sociolect, the question does not relate to the linguistic features that mark her sense of womanhood, but to the social discourse Janice invokes in her language because she is a woman. As the research reviewed above suggests, women perform their gender in a cultural context that is defined by phallocentric and patriarchal discourses that seek, consciously or unconsciously, to subjugate them. Janice responds to these prejudiced conditions by expressing herself with prestigious language. The aim for the translations, therefore, is to mirror this element of the language-identity nexus by encoding Janice’s dialogue with equivalent prestige forms. A successful strategy, however, is contingent on avoiding shifts at the micro and macro-levels of her language use.

8.6.1 Micro-level shifts
At the beginning of Rabbit is Rich, Harry arrives from work to find Janice and her mother quarrelling over a postcard sent by Nelson (who has been away at college and is spending the summer in Colorado). In the postcard Nelson informs the family that he has invited along a female friend, Melanie, to visit Brewer with him. The nature of the relationship
between the girl and Nelson is not known, but nevertheless, Bessie is offended by the suggestion that Melanie will be sleeping in Nelson’s room, “under a roof Janice’s father slaved all his days to keep over [their] heads” (*Rabbit is Rich*: 42). Liberated by her affair with Stavros in the 1960s, Janice is in favour of Nelson and Melanie sharing a room. Harry, however, takes Bessie’s side. In similar circumstances in earlier novels, Janice would have backed down, but in her middle-age, “Janice stands up to him” (*Rabbit is Rich*: 42), and, moreover, speaks to Bessie “in a voice tightened to match her Mother’s”. Such conversations in *Rabbit is Rich* between mother and daughter carry the subtext of a hierarchical conflict: Bessie’s grip on the family is loosening, whereas Janice is trying to assert herself and ultimately usurp her mother as matriarch of the family. As Harry observes, “Janice is firm, younger, in control” when she pits herself against her mother (*Rabbit is Rich*: 44). In this novel, for the most part, the translation is successful in recasting Janice’s formal source language with similarly formal target language. There are, however, a few important discretionary shifts that cause a change in the positionality principle of Janice’s indexed identity. When Bessie accuses Janice of being immature and selfish, “What will the neighbours think?” she asks, Janice answers the following in the source text:

“I don’t care even if they care, which I dare say they won’t”. (*Rabbit is Rich*: 44)

In this voice she has “tightened to match her mother’s”, Janice expresses herself with prestige forms (e.g., “I dare say”). As Harry astutely observes, it is language contrived to match Bessie Springer’s stern tone. In the hermeneutic continuum, this sign-action could be plotted in the following way:
The omega point generates an icon that encapsulates the traits that define Janice in her middle-age: she is unwavering in front of anyone, even her mother. In the translation, however, Janice’s language suggests that she is as immature as Bessie accuses her of being:

“Me importaría un bledo aunque les importase, cosa que dudo mucho”. (“El regreso de Conejo”: 47)

This is not an utterance that Janice has “tightened” to match her mother’s voice. In fact, the target language turn-of-phrase, un bledo, is characteristic of younger, possibly even childish, girls. It is certainly not the tone that Janice adopts in the source text, and it is a word that does not reflect dominance. In a conversation between a middle-aged woman and an elderly woman, un bledo creates the wrong type of association. Thus:
The alternative version offered here uses formal language in Janice’s dialogue to match the tenor of Bessie’s and to refute the claim that she is immature:

-Dudo mucho que les importe, y aunque así fuera, a mí no me causaría ningún reparo.

In this alternative, the language component of the nexus is formalised as standard language, which reflects an identity that is equivalent to the one in the source text. Something similar occurs when Harry is needling Janice with questions about Nelson’s future. Harry wants his son to finish his college education, whereas Janice is happy to have him return to Brewer to find a job. In the midst of this discussion, Harry intimates that he wants to have Charlie (the same Charlie with whom Janice had an affair) to the house for dinner. The conversation ends with Janice setting a date for the dinner with the following utterance:

“I’ll ask him for next week,” she says, “if that’ll make you less bitchy”.

(Rabbit is Rich: 93)

The use of “bitchy” is derogatory, and it subverts the typical male/female dynamic as it is an insult typically reserved by women. Janice uses the term as a put-down in the face of Harry’s constant protestations:

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 SYMBOL
 Bitchy
 INDEX
 Insult
 ICON
 Subversion of male vs. female role
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With this insult then, Janice is letting Harry know that he is being irrational, and that, moreover, she is not ready to entertain his childish vicissitudes. In the translation, however, Janice’s target language utterance does not carry the same indexical value:

-Le diré que venga la semana que viene –dice-. Si eso sirve para que dejes de chinchar. (“Conejo es rico”: 91)

Chinchar fails to encapsulate the subversive strategy of the source utterance, and, nevertheless, is not an adjective equivalent to “bitchy”. Much like un bledo, the terms belongs to a register of a younger person and not a middle-age woman trying to “assert her independence” (de Bellis 2000:22). In order for the target utterance to mirror the original, the utterance must feature a target language term that would typically be reserved for the description of women. Such a word, however, has proven difficult to find. Therefore the appropriate strategy here is explicitation:

Le diré que venga la semana que viene –dice-. A ver si así dejas de provocar como una niña.

Although the explicitation does not express the same sentiment as “bitchy”, the crucial subversion of gender is in place with the comparative como una niña, which allows for a target continuum that generates an equivalent icon to the source continuum:
Micro-level shifts that create discordant target text icons are also in evidence in the translation of *Rabbit at Rest*. The following example, taken from a conversation involving Janice, Harry and Nelson’s wife, demonstrates the perils of translating dialogue literally:

“[…] and that was considered a very adequate good time.” (*Rabbit at Rest*: 83)

- […] y eso se consideraba pasar un buen momento muy adecuado. (“Conejo en paz”: 74)

“Very adequate” and “good time” translated literally results in an unusual collocation in the target utterance, one that sounds forced and mechanical, rather than spontaneous and natural. The alternative below proposes an utterance with a more typical collocation with a similarly prestigious target form:

“[…] and that was considered a very adequate good time.” (*Rabbit at Rest*: 83)

- Y con eso uno se lo pasaba divinamente.

There is a significant shift in how the source utterance and the alternative construct the predicate. The two adverbial phrases in the source utterance are reduced to a single adverb that modifies the verb *pasaba*. Nevertheless, the sentiment remains but, crucially, the alternative uses an adverb that would not be expected to feature in Harry’s dialogue.
8.6.2 Macro-level shifts

Thus far this analysis has established that in certain instances, the translators of the last two books do not always cater for Janice’s language-identity nexus. These atomistic instances, however, are part of a grander pattern which is based on the difference between Janice’s use of SAE and Harry’s use of vernacular language. Janice’s language does not occur in a vacuum – it occurs in, as Brumme (2012:20) says, the “variational space” that dialogue creates, of which Harry must be a crucial part if Janice’s prestige forms are to be endowed with the discourse of dominance that give her performance of her gender a semiotic value. Dimitrova (1997) points out that in many instances, “translation shifts move away from the variety to neutral language”. As Chapter 1 and 2 demonstrate, this is largely the case with the Tusquets Editores translations. Furthermore, Brumme (2012:16) says that dialogue “[sirve para] contrastar el lenguaje de los personajes según la pertenencia a cierta clase social” in what amounts to a careful orchestration of fictive voices running through the novel. The semiotic implication is that idiolects, sociolects and gender sociolects are dependent on each other to gain value in the fictive universe of the novel. The questions here thus becomes: is Janice’s language transcribed with appropriate markers of class, contingent as they are on her performance of her gender through language? And, moreover, how does the translation of Harry’s idiolect affect the orchestration of Janice’s fictive voice? In order to analyse how Janice’s language operates opposite Harry’s, excerpts from “Conejo es rico” and “Conejo en paz” are compared as source and target text pairs in order to establish whether the translations recast the formal vs. informal interplay of Janice’s and Harry’s conversations.

In “Conejo es Rico”, the micro-level shifts that cause incongruence of the source and target icons are reprieved by the translator’s largely successful strategy with regards to Harry’s idiolect. In the excerpt below, Harry and Janice argue about Nelson. The vernacular markers in Harry’s

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39 Quoted in Leppihalme (2000)
part, and Janice’s prestige markers are successfully transposed to the target text:

-¿Qué cojones vamos a hacer con el chico?
-¿Qué quieres decir?
-¿Va a buscar trabajo o qué?
-¿Qué quiere decir?
-¿Va a buscar trabajo o qué?

"What the fuck are we going to do about the kid?" he asks her.
"How do you mean?"
"I mean is he going to get a job or what?"
"He doesn’t act like it." […] "I wasn’t so fucking fortunate as to get to college and the guys that didn’t goof off in Colorado hang gliding and God knows what until their father’s money ran out.”
"You don’t know what they did. Anyway times are different. Now you be nice to Nelson. After the things you put him through—.”

("Conejo es rico: 71

The translation successfully transfers Harry’s swear words (“fuck” = *cojones* and “fucking” = *puta*), and therefore successfully codifies one of the crucial differences between Harry and Janice’s language use. There is a shift in how Janice delivers the last utterance of this example, where the discourse marker “well” is substituted with *pero*, which sets up her answer to Harry’s question as a counter-argument, rather than the exposition of fact that is expressed by the discourse marker “well”. There is a shift also in the patronising tone of “now you be nice to Nelson”, which in the target text results in a more neutral *Ahora tienes que portarte bien con Nelson*. As Wolfram and Schilling-Estes (2006:237) suggest, gender sociolects are constructed in relation to gender opposites, in a linguistic interplay that runs analogous to man vs. woman distinction. In “Conejo es rico”, this interplay is codified successfully.
In *Rabbit at Rest* there is no marked difference in Janice’s language use in relation to *Rabbit is Rich*. Though she has aged by ten years, her language has remained somewhat static insofar as she still expresses herself, mostly, with formal - and overly formal - language. When Janice’s source text and target text utterances are compared, it would, on first impression, seem as if “Conejo en Paz” also codifies Janice’s gender sociolect in a satisfactory manner. Whereas “Conejo es rico” is mostly successful in giving a relational value to Janice’s gender sociolect by transposing Harry’s vernacular forms in the target language, this is not the case in the last novel of the saga. As Chapter 1 discusses, “Conejo en paz” is one of the translations that does not recast Harry’s target idiolect with equivalent vernacular forms. As a result, an overly formal sounding Harry cannot stand as Janice’s linguistic opposite, and the interplay between their particular uses of language in the target text, the conflict between formal vs. formal, is no longer analogous to the man vs. woman contradistinction that is at play in the original. As the examples below show, Janice’s language is often recast in a formal register appropriate to her performance of a status-conscious middle-aged woman:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>English</th>
<th>Spanish</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>You go to bed, hon. You look beat. I’m too jazzed up by the coffee to sleep. (<em>Rabbit at Rest</em>: 85)</td>
<td>Acuéstate, cariño. Pareces fatigado. A mí me ha desvelado el café. Pru y yo nos quedaremos en la cocina. (“Conejo en Paz”: 77)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I wondered at the time if we shouldn’t have waited to go over but you said you were starving. (<em>Rabbit at Rest</em>: 89)</td>
<td>En su momento me pregunté si no tendríamos que haber esperado un poco más antes de salir pero tú dijiste que estabas famélico. (“Conejo en paz”: 79)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Harry, don’t pump the children (<em>Rabbit at Rest</em>: 102)</td>
<td>Harry, no sonsaque los niños (“Conejo en paz”: 90)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Evidently, the translator elaborates Janice’s target language with formal vocabulary. Instead of *cansado*, for example, she says that Harry seems *fatigado*. In the second example, “starving” is replaced with a word that belongs to a formal register, *famélico*, instead of the more common variants, *tenías mucha hambre* or *estabas hambriento*. The formal register is maintained in the third example with *sonsacar*, despite Janice
using what could be considered a vernacular form ("to pump"). Although there are shifts at the level of register, from a macro-level perspective, increasing Janice’s register would be an effective strategy if Harry’s language is constructed with informal markers; this, however, is not the case:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SOURCE TEXT</th>
<th>TARGET TEXT</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Are you having trouble moving the used? Don’t get greedy. <em>(Rabbit at Rest: 178)</em></td>
<td>¿Tienes dificultades para mover los usados? No te vuelvas codicioso. <em>(“Conejo en Paz”:152)</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Both are no-nos for the new me. <em>(Rabbit at Rest: 194)</em></td>
<td>Las dos cosas me están vedadas. <em>(“Conejo en Paz”:166)</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>You must be crazy. <em>(Rabbit at Rest: 262)</em></td>
<td>Tienes que estar desvariando. <em>(“Conejo en Paz”:222)</em></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

These examples, which also feature in Chapter 1, demonstrate how Harry’s target idiolect is discordant with his source idiolect. In relation to Janice’s gender sociolect, the interplay of formal vs. informal, as analogous to man vs. woman conflict that is implicit in any dominance discourse, is effectively neutralised. The transposition of Harry’s colloquial language into a more formal register has the undesirable effect of approximating his use of language to Janice’s, instead of differentiate it. Both characters now display the type of target vocabulary that is uniquely Janice’s in the source text.
Janice’s utterance is equivalently rendered in the target text, but it is not equivalently delivered. Furthermore, the target text segment of this interaction fails to transpose Harry’s use of a swear word. Instead, he uses the euphemism rábanos. Thus Janice’s formal register is no longer counterposed with Harry’s informal (as marked by the use of a swear word) register. Something similar occurs in the following conversation. Janice finally goes to bed after spending the night waiting for Nelson’s return. After she rejects Harry’s advances, the couple begin to argue:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SOURCE TEXT</th>
<th>TARGET TEXT</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>“What time ‘dyou come to bed?”</td>
<td>-¿Qué? Déjame en paz.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“I didn’t dare look. One.”</td>
<td>-¿A qué hora te acostaste?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Where had Nelson been? What was his explanation?” […]</td>
<td>-No me atreví a mirar. La una.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Harry, touch me once more and I’ll kill you.” […]</td>
<td>-¿Dónde había estado Nelson? ¿Qué explicación dio? […]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Where the hell had he been?” he asks. (Rabbit at Rest: 88)</td>
<td>-¿Dónde cuernos había estado? – pregunta.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(“Conejo en paz”: 78)</td>
<td>(&quot;Conejo en paz&quot;: 78)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Certainly, Janice’s rejection of Harry’s sexual advances carries the discourse of dominance which is such a prevalent feature of the last two books, but in the source text it is also codified in their language use. Firstly, “dreamboat” is translated as “are you dreaming”. Harry’s flirtation, therefore, is not a feature of the source text. Secondly, and more importantly with regards to the value of Janice’s gender sociolect, the marker of informal speech, “’dyou”, has no equivalent in the target text. Chapter 1 put forward that the most effective way to render such colloquialisms in Spanish is through a metalinguistic cue that would
explicitly express what the colloquialism expresses implicitly, that is, as in the following alternative:

_Coqueteando, Harry le pregunta:_

- ¿A qué hora te _acostastes_?

The metalinguistic cue is also accompanied with a marker of orality, the incorrectly conjugated _acostastes_, which is a common transgression of prescriptive rules in spoken Spanish. With these changes, Janice’s use of standard language gains the indexical properties that are a feature of the source text, as, in this variational space created in dialogue, her use of language is now different to Harry’s.

### 8.7 Different indexers, different icons

The nature of Janice’s gender sociolect is far more difficult to establish than Harry’s idiolect or AAVE. With regards to Harry, his non-standard language is relatively easy to isolate, as Updike represents it with non-standard orthography; with AAVE, the features that define this sociolect are so markedly different than SAE that its defining features are also easier to isolate. Janice, however, speaks in mostly standard forms. One of the few times her language varies from this has been explored here. Her use of “zilch” and “dig” is not only a departure from the way she speaks elsewhere in the saga, but the two words are crucial signs that index her affair and her new empowered sense of self. The contrastive analysis of the same target utterances found that the translator failed to find a term in Spanish that is equally exotic in Janice’s dialogue, and, furthermore, failed to repeat the same word in Stavros’ dialogue. In relation to the translation of “dig”, the translator does repeat the word in Janice and Stavros’ dialogue; however, by virtue of using variations of _entender_ to substitute “dig”, the target word is too neutral to be noticed out of place in either Janice’s or Stavros’ language. Research in the
language and gender paradigm suggests that women tend to use formal language, thus, as expected, this is the case with Janice in both the source text and the target text. However, a comparison between “Conejo es Rico” and “Conejo en Paz” revealed that in translation, Janice’s language only becomes an effective indexical sign in relation to Harry’s informal language. Therefore, given the largely successful transposition of Harry’s idiolect in “Conejo es Rico”, Janice’s formal target language indexes her gender; but by contrast, the shift from informal to formal in Harry’s idiolect in “Conejo en Paz”, Janice’s language is deprived of its linguistic antithesis, and, therefore, her dialogue loses its value as a characterisation device, with the overall result of an attenuation of her gender identity.

In the examples offered throughout as alternatives to the published translations, elements vary; at times it may be a word, others an entire sentence, but these variants are all at the level of the symbol. In other words, changes at a semiotic level where shifts are an axiomatic condition. What remains invariant is the final sign in the hermeneutic continuum, Janice’s icon. In “El regreso de Conejo” Janice’s valid identity, the new voice that Harry recognises in her cannot be perceived as Stavros’ voice in the published translation. The alternatives proposed here maintain the register of the words – that is, choosing judiciously the Spanish terms that substitute the terms picked by Updike equally judiciously – Janice’s lover is revealed as the origin of her “liberation”. Somewhat paradoxically, the translation of the hermeneutic continuum that leads to the icon of the sterner, more business savvy Janice is contingent on the conclusions reached in Chapter 1. By adopting the alternatives suggested in that section (i.e., alternatives which preserved the colloquial tenor of Harry’s utterances) Janice would index the discourse of dominance that reflects how she has triumphed over a patriarchal society.
Chapter 9
Conclusion

9.0 Introduction
As semiotic objects that reside outside the semantic field of the narrative, the identity of the characters – or, rather, how identities are constructed by authors and translators – can be difficult to isolate. Although fictive dialogue is a topic that is beginning to gain some traction in translation research, as a paradigm in the field it is still at an embryonic stage. The recent and excellent work by Brumme (2012) and Brumme and Espunya (2012), for example, provides the necessary foundations for studies that focus on dialogue; however, as far as this research has been able to ascertain, there is no precedent for a study that explores the semiotic recodification of character identities through language use in dialogue.

This study set out to explore how the linguistic shifts presupposed by the translation process may cause a shift in the representation of characters’ linguistic identities. The inherent link between language and identity immediately opens up dialogue as a site where the readers (and analysts) can perceive first-hand how characters perform their identity. The original author carefully constructs language in dialogue to orchestrate the many voices running through a novel – each voice is thus constructed with its particular linguistic idiosyncrasies. In the world of the “Rabbit”
books, Harry uses language in a way that is specific to himself; the African-American characters share a vernacular language that sets them apart as a community; and Janice Angstrom performs her gender through language. If the Spanish translations of the “Rabbit” books are to offer the same characters as products in the target culture, then the multiplicity of voices in the original, each with its own particular quirks to set it apart from the rest, must be reflected with a similarly varied array of voices in the target text. By and large, the translators of the Tusquets Editores texts fail to encapsulate the idiosyncrasies of the three lects studied here. As well as documenting these insights, these concluding remarks are also an exercise in mapping the journey that has taken this study through various disciplines and their theories, a journey which has yielded a model that may be used in future research. With this in mind, the contributions this thesis can lay claim to fall into two categories: the theoretical and the practical.

9.1 The hermeneutic continuum: a replicable model

In the rich landscape of Peircean studies, sign-action is always viewed as cyclical – the sign, whether it is an index, an icon or a symbol, generates meaning in a type of oscillation between representamens, objects and interpretants. The model put forward in this thesis takes these three sign aspects and aligns them in a linear fashion. The point of departure, written language, is represented by the symbol; the symbol’s ideational plane of language is encoded by the index, which necessarily points towards a third sign aspect, the icon, which codifies identities abstracted out of language. This hermeneutic continuum implies that interpretation is a process, one which enables the formalisation of abstractions (language) and intangible entities (identity) as objects that may be analysed rigorously through a theory of signs.

The continuum is of interest from a translation theory perspective because it postulates that equivalence is not a linguistic phenomenon, but
Conclusion

a semiotic one. Furthermore, equivalence is not something achievable to an exact degree, but rather an imperfect symmetry between the meaning encoded in the source text and its mirrored meaning encoded in the target text. There is symmetry between the original and its translation because both texts, ultimately, narrate the same story. This symmetry, such as it is, is imperfect because there is a subtle difference between the literary and linguistic devices used by the original author and the translator to encode the same meaning. In translation, language changes, but semiosis does not – or ought not, at least in theory. Thus, equivalence is a semiosis that binds the source text and the target text with a mutual communicative aim.

The often-used bridge metaphor to explain how a translated text offers readers a path back to the original is not compatible with the reformulation of equivalence in semiotic terms. Rather than “connect” the source text and the target text with an invisible transcultural bridge, the hermeneutic continuum implies that an original and its translation point towards the same meaning (a common omega point – where equivalence is struck to a degree), but crucially, each text treads a different path to reach the “same” destination. In this path-metaphor, the steps treaded are theoretically represented by the three stages of the continuum. Firstly, the source text and the target text are encoded with different symbols (i.e., in a different language), their points of departures, the alpha point of the continua, are entirely different and therefore, there is zero equivalence at this point. The second stage, the mediating point that is manifested in the indexical signs, directs the interpretation process of the source language and the target language in linear fashion, as two process that will intersect and end at the final stage of the continuum, the omega point, where language crystallises as an icon in the reader’s mind and where the imperfect symmetry that is equivalence is finally struck.
In the practice of studying something as ontologically unstable as identity, putting a semiotic value on language allowed for an analysis that could isolate aspects of identities that are reflect by language. Because the model is theoretically malleable and therefore universally applicable, the continuum was used on the source and target texts in order to calibrate how linguistic shifts result in a semiotic shift. The benefit of using such an approach is that it removed the concept of equivalence from a rigid linguistic perspective, which was an entirely necessary first step before the analysis could move on to ask whether the characters (as non-linguistic entities inhabiting a fictive universe) were the same in the original texts and their Spanish translations.

9.2 Locating and relocating identity in dialogue

The aim of this thesis was two-fold: (1) to establish whether the characters in the source text and target texts have different linguistic identities, and (2) to put forward translation strategies that could avoid unwanted semiotic shifts in the reconstitution of characters’ linguistic identities. In other words, the first part of the analysis compared characters as source and target products, and the second part discussed the nuances of the translation process in order to recodify characters’ linguistic identities. As was stated in the introduction, because of the nature of linguistic variation, each chapter of the analysis is prefaced with its own set of research questions that were tailored specifically to the thematic unit explored therein. In Chapter 6, the objective was to establish whether Harry’s source text idiolect and target text idiolect reflected two different types of linguistic behaviour, whether the translation process created a different linguistic identity for the character; in Chapter 7, the objective was to establish whether the translation of AAVE reflected the African-American speech community in the target text; and in Chapter 8, the objective was to analyse whether the translations reflected Janice Angstrom’s gender sociolect. The result of these analyses found that the Tusquets Editores translators failed in some way or other to codify the linguistic identities of the characters – that
nature of these losses, however, vary depending on the type of linguistic variation. Accordingly, each chapter put forward strategies that mitigate against such losses.

It is important to note that there is a certain limitation to this theoretical approach. The translations of John Updike’s Rabbit books were not commissioned in a theoretical environment, they were the result of three translators contracted to a publishing house and working within culturally-specific editorial constraints. Even though the alternatives offered here may seem like underhanded criticisms, these alternatives were provided under no such constraints, and are therefore the product of a creative latitude that was probably not afforded to the translators. Whether or not a publishing house in Spain would agree to the changes recommended here is a question that will necessarily go unanswered. The aim of this thesis was to establish whether the translation of a language-identity nexus is theoretically possible in the first instance, that is, whether it could be translated as opposed to, whether it would be publishable. The latter question is certainly a research avenue that could be pursued in the future, and one which will benefit greatly from the findings in this thesis.

Chapter 6 looked at how the translation of Harry’s idiolect changes his linguistic behaviour in the target language. The analysis found that Harry’s source language idiolect is styled with a pragmatic dimension that indexes his identity in three ways: (1) his use of colloquial expressions and markers of orality indexes linguistic verisimilitude – that is, a fictive transfiguration of “real”, spontaneously occurring speech. Pointedly, because Harry uses colloquial language his overall speech may be described as informal; (2) his use of swear words across the four books is thematically linked to the kernel of his identity, his angst. The identitarian plane of this dimension of his language use depicts a character who is unapologetic, rude and socially abrasive. The analysis of the source texts found that, although Harry’s use of swear word is
copious, there are certain contexts in which he modifies his language. In *Rabbit Redux*, when his twelve-year old son is present, Harry ceases to use swear words and instead uses euphemistic language, a reflection of his identity as a father; and (3) his willingness to modify his language in order to accommodate to the immediate context of his conversations; for example, when he tries to liken himself to the boys playing basketball in *Rabbit, Run*, Harry expresses his knowledge of the sport whilst demonstrating his skill at playing it. This part of the analysis found that some of the informal markers of orality isolated in the first part of the analysis also carried the pragmatic function of accommodation. With regards to (1), three of the four translations (“Conejo es rico” is the exception) style Harry’s idiolect with formal Spanish. Furthermore, there are no markers of orality that mirror the verisimilitude of the source text. “Corre, Conejo”, “El regreso de Conejo” and “Conejo en paz” depict a character who has an ample vocabulary, an ease of expression and a clarity of thought that are not a feature of the source text. Once these shifts were highlighted in the target text, alternatives were offered in order to codify Harry’s idiolect with a hermeneutic continuum that would generate the source icon. The analysis isolated instances in which colloquial expressions and slang words could be introduced to Harry’s target idiolect. With regards to markers of orality, the analysis proposed to take some markers of orality in Spanish, for example, dropping the “d” in participle endings –ado or using the infinitive of a verb as an imperative, in order to index linguistic verisimilitude. With regards to (2), the translator of “El regreso de Conejo” replaces Harry’s swear words in his idiolect with euphemisms. In the source text, where Harry is unapologetic and socially abrasive, in the target text the same version of the character is meek, polite and certainly not angry or anxious enough to justify his angst. Moreover, because the translator replaces swear words with euphemisms, the source euphemisms that reflect Harry’s identity as father are also translated with euphemisms – but without the swear words, his linguistic performance of conscientious father is lost. In order to recode his target idiolect with these two features of his identity, the analysis proposed alternative translations that mapped swear words onto
his target idiolect, but crucially, mirrored the source diatypic variation by using target euphemisms when Nelson is around, thus generating a hermeneutic continuum that indexes his angst and his fatherhood. Lastly, with regards to (3), the analysis found that the pragmatic element of accommodation was not taken into consideration when constructing Harry’s target idiolect. In the scene where Harry’s source idiolect expresses a likeness with the boys playing basketball by highlighting their common ground (i.e., basketball), in the target text, Harry’s language emphasises what is different between him and the boys (i.e., the age-gap). The analysis proposed as an alternative to rethread the conversation with target vocabulary that demonstrates Harry’s knowledge of the sport. With regards to the markers of orality that index accommodation, the alternatives proposed centred on a couplet strategy: first, constructing Harry’s utterance with markers of orality, and second, stating the pragmatic intention of the utterance in a metalinguistic cue as a form of explicitation. If the target text is viewed – as Toury believes it should – as a “fact of the target culture”, the analysis carried out here demonstrates that the “fact” of the source culture and the “fact” of the target culture are different, because the linguistic shifts in Harry’s dialogue create a language-identity nexus that is different to the source dialogue – the target dialogue, in essence, reflects a different speaker. In order to provide alternatives that fulfil the interpersonal and identitarian aspects of Harry’s speech, the analysis adopted an approach that focuses on pragmatics, which allowed for a codification of a hermeneutic continuum that would have resulted in a Harry Angstrom icon that is commensurate with the source portrayal of the character.

Chapter 7 found that Updike constructs an African-American speech community with some of the foremost features of AAVE as a means towards semiotically indexing a cultural identity for the three African-American characters in *Rabbit Redux*. It is important not to underestimate the value of this literary technique, which juxtaposes SAE to AAVE in dialogue that is a metonymic manifestation of the cultural conflict
Conclusion

between mainstream white discourses and marginalised African-American discourses. From a source-oriented perspective, the analysis found that Skeeter, Buchanan and Babe use AAVE as a social tool to build a sense of solidarity based on their ethnic origin, and, equally important, to index how they differ from the white community. The descriptive analysis found that the translator of “El regreso de Conejo” disassembled the African-American speech community variable by variable. Not only do the African-American characters of the translation fail to share a common language – a grave transgression of the semiotic imperatives of the source dialogue – but the register of the speech of Skeeter especially tends to a formality that approximates his language use to that of the white characters. Indexing this speech community was the biggest challenge in this thesis. Sociolects that are as self-contained as AAVE are famously difficult to recreate in a target language. However, through a process of applying the five identity principles and the hermeneutic continuum, the chapter proposed two strategies that allowed for a target language identity-nexus that is commensurate with the source text nexus. Firstly, a set of variables were “fabricated” to create a pseudo-sociolect, a type of fictitiously constructed vernacular that is void of cultural associations. This ideological purity, however, could not be allowed to remain. Footnotes, the second of the strategies used to index African-American identity, index the collective identity of the African-American characters by making explicit the source cultural imperatives which are left implicit in the source text.

Lastly, Chapter 8 looked at sociolect as a reflection of a speaker’s gender, specifically, Janice Angstrom’s gender. Such a sociolect, however, is difficult to objectively establish without falling into the subjectivist trap of basing the analysis on anecdotal evidence. The literature reviewed revealed that in both the English-speaking and Spanish-speaking world, women of Janice’s social class tend to use formal language to reflect the status that is sometimes culturally denied to them. In this regard, given the prevalence of using standard Spanish to
translate the “Rabbit” books, Janice’s language-identity nexus is almost transposed successfully by default. However, in semiotic terms, a parole only gains value in a system; if Janice’s use of formal language is to index her gender, her formalised register must find contrast in the informal speech of her social opposite: Harry. Unfortunately, the prevalence of SPS in the translations means that Harry’s idiolect was translated with formal Spanish also, rendering Janice’s use of formal Spanish virtually meaningless vis-à-vis indexing her identity. The only alternatives that could be offered to recast Janice’s standard language is to ensure Harry’s idiolect is recast informally, thus successfully transposing the crucial contradistinction, the foil for Janice’s loaded use of standard language. Perhaps more tenuously related to sociolect, but nevertheless crucial to her performance of gender in language is the vocabulary Janice adopts from her lover’s language in *Rabbit Redux*. Feeling trapped in here role as passive housewife, Janice has an affair in order to break free from the shackles imposed by her marriage. Her liberation changes the way she speaks – Harry (and the reader) notice that Janice is now using exotic words such as “zilch” and “dig”. These two words are particularly important because (a) they index a new identity for Janice, and (b) they are, in fact, words Janice has learned from her lover (thereby adding substance to the affair as a way for her to develop beyond the culturally prescribed role of a mother and a wife). The translation fails in both respects, because (a) it translates the exotic terms with commonly used words in Spanish, and (b) it fails to repeat the words in her lover’s dialogue. In these instances, the translator seems to have treated dialogue as a discourse that is indiscriminate from the aesthetic discourse in the narrative; dialogue as a discourse that the author constructs rather than a discourse that removes the author as proxy and gives voice to a character, a voice through which they can perform their identity. If dialogue had been viewed by the translator as the character’s use of language rather than the author’s, then the repetition of the terms would not have been missed. This, in turn, would have allowed for strategies such as the ones provided as alternatives in order to encode Janice’s gender sociolect with indexers to her liberation.
Every chapter found that the characters speak in standard language in the translations; but how appropriate is it to equate standard language to a translation strategy that is considered to be a type of neutralisation? After all, a standard vernacular is a vernacular nevertheless, and it does not preclude indexical properties. This, however, is why the source text and the target text were analysed side by side. The essential, over-arching, question asked in this thesis is whether the two texts, the originals and their translations, create linguistically different characters. In the source text there is an orchestration of character voices: Harry speaks in a particular way, Janice in a way appropriate for her gender and the African-American community speak with a different language altogether. In the Tusquets Editores texts, these characters speak with the “same” language. In Section I, Eco was quoted as saying that characters never change. However unfair it may be to take a statement made in a monolingual sense and extrapolate it to a translation context, the claim was nevertheless made. No doubt either that Eco, who has not only written extensively on translation, but also on translation as a semiotic phenomenon, is patently aware of the interlingual and intercultural imperatives of reconstituting characters in target cultures. This study on the translation of fictive dialogue, however, found that characters may indeed change, lest translators observe the principles of the language-identity nexus and create identity-specific hermeneutic continuums that replicate the semiotic value of the source dialogue.
Appendix

Ana Estevan
To
Me
6 Jul 2010

Apreciado Owen:
Lamentablemente, no podremos ayudarle. Los criterios de una traducción, como usted comprenderá, los elabora, en primer lugar, el propio traductor. Y cuando ha transcurrido algún tiempo desde que se traduce y luego se publica, lo que queda es la propia traducción: ésta es la que refleja los criterios y las decisiones tomadas por el traductor antes de iniciar la traducción y en el curso de su trabajo.
Con respecto a la traductora del libro, Iris Menéndez, falleció ya hace unos años.
Sentimos, pues, no poder ayudarle.
Reciba un saludo muy cordial,

Ana Estevan

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Source Texts


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