

Translating Taboo Language in Joyce's *Ulysses*: A Special Edition in Spanish for Franco and Perón

GUILLERMO SANZ GALLEGO

Ghent University

Guillermo.SanzGallego@UGent.be

In the years following its publication in 1922, James Joyce's *Ulysses* inspired great controversy. It was banned in much of the English-speaking world because of a number of passages considered pornographic. Paradoxically, *Ulysses* was never banned in Spain during the Franco regime, nor was it in Argentina during the regimes of Ramírez and Perón. This contrast is puzzling, given the strong censorship policies in both countries during the first part of the twentieth century. The reason Joyce's work was not banned in the Spanish-speaking world may be found in several crucial differences between the original text in English and its first Spanish translation. A comparison of the passages in English marked as objectionable by the US censor and Salas Subirat's first translation of them into Spanish shows a series of shifts that produce a lack of equivalence and accessibility, as well as fragments of text omitted by the translator.

Keywords: translation studies; censorship; James Joyce; *Ulysses*; taboo language; slang

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La traducción del tabú en el *Ulises* de Joyce: una edición especial en español para Franco y Perón

En los años que siguieron a su publicación en 1922, el *Ulises* de James Joyce provocó gran controversia. Fue censurado en gran parte del mundo anglosajón debido a numerosos pasajes considerados pornográficos. Paradójicamente, la obra nunca fue censurada en España durante el régimen de Franco ni en Argentina durante las dictaduras de Ramírez y Perón. Este contraste resulta contradictorio teniendo en cuenta la estricta censura vigente en ambos países durante la primera mitad del siglo XX. Las razones por las que la obra de Joyce no fue censurada en el mundo hispanohablante pueden encontrarse en una serie de diferencias esenciales entre el texto original en inglés y su primera traducción al español. Tras realizar un análisis comparativo entre los pasajes que las autoridades americanas habían catalogado como censurables en la versión original y la primera traducción al español, pueden observarse alteraciones que producen una falta de equivalencia y accesibilidad en el texto de Salas Subirat, así como, incluso, fragmentos omitidos por el traductor.

Palabras clave: traducción; censura; James Joyce; *Ulises*; tabú; argot

I am James Joyce. I understand that you are to translate *Ulysses*, and I have come from Paris to tell you not to alter a single word.

RICHARD ELLMANN, *James Joyce*.

According to José Salas Subirat, the first translator of *Ulysses* into Spanish, despite its length, Joyce's *Ulysses* is not a difficult work to translate (Arbó 1974: 205). Yet, one may disagree with this statement once one essential detail is taken into consideration, namely the historical frame in which the work was published. One of the main challenges for the translator was the translation of taboo language at a time when both the Spanish and the Argentinian authorities imposed a strong censorship policy. By means of a comparative analysis between the original text and the first Spanish translation, this paper aims to shed light on the level of accessibility of passages that contain taboo language. Also, this study analyses whether the strategies used for the translation of these passages may have influenced the verdict of the authorities. The conclusions and implications of this study may be a useful source of inspiration and reflections for TS scholars interested in the influence of censorship in the translation of texts.

The publication of Joyce's *Ulysses* took time, effort and legal fights of epic proportions. According to Paul Vanderham, it took eleven years for the novel to be published in the United States, after its first appearance in Paris in 1922. As a result, during that period the work remained banned in much of the English-speaking world (1998: 57). In the United States, the obsession with banning *Ulysses* reached a degree of absurdity that ultimately led to the authorities' defeat in their crusade against the book: "*Ulysses* would not be legally available to US and English readers until 1934 and 1936 respectively. . . . By 1931, almost three years before the English version could be circulated, the French translation of *Ulysses* was being 'sold openly' in New York" (84).

While the saga of the process of making *Ulysses* available in the United States was unfolding, a French translation was published. One year later the translation process of the Spanish version of the novel started in Argentina. One of the enigmas surrounding the translation of *Ulysses* into Spanish is that of the translator's identity. Little is known about José Salas Subirat, who according to several sources was born in Buenos Aires in 1900, where he also died in 1975. He was an employee in an insurance agency, and he also published several works of fiction, translations of two biographies of music composers for children, a work on Beethoven, and a posthumous book on insurance in essay format.¹

What we know about the circumstances of the first Spanish translation is also limited. It took eight years to complete, and was finally published in Buenos Aires in 1945. This was an unstable period for Argentina, marked by significant political and economic changes. Salas Subirat started work on the text in 1937 (Ríos 2004), during the final three

¹ *La ruta del miraje* (1924), *La traición del sol* (1941), *Las hélices del humo* (1942); *Bach* (1949), *Beethoven: el sacrificio de un niño* (1949); *A cien años de Beethoven* (1927); *Cómo se rebaten las objeciones al seguro de vida* (1979).

years of General Agustín Pedro Justo's government (1935-1938), in which Argentina experienced considerable economic development. Yet by the time the Spanish translation of *Ulysses* was ready for publication, political instability had increased, due to such events as the outbreak of World War II and General Pedro Ramírez's coup. One consequence of the coup, and the authoritarian regime it led to, was the establishment of censorship in Argentina in 1943.

The situation in Spain was similar in the aftermath of the Spanish Civil War (1936-1939). The outcome of the war was the General Franco regime, and in the first half of the 1940s censorship also became a reality. In fact, the press laws date back to April 1938, exactly one year before the end of the Civil War. These changes in the Argentine and Spanish governments share certain features. At the time Salas Subirat started translating *Ulysses* into Spanish, there was freedom of speech in both countries, although within the year the situation in Spain had altered. When censorship appeared in Argentina in 1943, Salas Subirat had been working on the translation for six years. The publication of the Spanish *Ulises*, however, took two more years.

The censorship norms in Spain and Argentina were not exactly the same, although both countries exercised censorship prior to publication. As one can observe in the forms that had to be completed by censors during the Franco regime, censorship focused on four issues in Spain: dogma, morality, religion, and politics. However, at the time, dogma and morality were subject to religious approval. As Alted Vigil points out, censorship was based on criteria that represented the new State: Catholic dogma and morality (1984: 70). Unlike Spain, Argentina had freedom of worship and during the 1930s and 1940s the authorities were concerned with purity of language, political ideology, and moral virtues (Guy 1995: 184). According to Donna J. Guy, "censorship was justified by the principles of the anti-white slavery organization, the International Abolitionist Federation, which supported the 'fight against profligacy and pornography'" (183). Guy adds that the members of this organization throughout the world "urged municipalities to monitor all 'public spectacles', prohibit cafés with female singers, and fight alcoholism" (184). Censorship in Argentina after the 1930s was motivated by conservatives, who "were more willing to force the Argentine public to conform to moral virtues" (184). Whereas Catholicism was a central concern for the Spanish authorities, Argentinian censors were not interested in dogma, but in a very specific problem in their society at the time: prostitution. Bordellos were banned in Argentina from 1936 until 1954, a period which coincides with the translation process of *Ulysses*. General Ramírez published a series of decrees on December 31, 1943, which stated that "signed copies of commentary and news wired abroad were to be deposited with the Undersecretariat within four hours of transmission", and newspaper publishers were compelled "to submit fifteen copies of each edition to the Undersecretariat" (Cane 2011: 113).

Despite the general banning of *Ulysses* in the liberal English-speaking world, Joyce's work was not banned in the Spanish-speaking world during an epoch when Argentina and Spain were characterised by strong military regimes that had established severe press laws

and censorship. Alberto Lázaro's account of the *Ulysses* file in the Spanish censor's archive is extremely revealing in this regard:

It is a puzzling file which raises several important questions. It contains a request from the bookseller D. Joaquín de Oteyza García in Madrid to import only 100 copies (100 pesetas apiece) of José Salas Subirat's translation of *Ulysses* (published in Buenos Aires in 1945). Unfortunately the censor's report is missing. Was it accidentally mislaid or intentionally destroyed? I cannot tell. But on the application form, somebody had written "Suspendido" (literally "suspended") and a date, 12 June 1946. It is difficult to guess what really happened to Oteyza's request. The term I have generally found to be used to ban the importation of books was "denegado" (rejected). One may suppose then that the process of the book evaluation was just being temporarily interrupted. Perhaps the censorship office needed more time to study the book in detail. Perhaps the bookseller himself did not want to go on with the transaction and asked to "suspend" his request. However, I have seen some other censorship files concerning, for instance, the printing of George Orwell's *Homage to Catalonia* in the 1960s which also have the word "suspendido," and it clearly meant that the book was being banned. . . . Nevertheless, in 1947, eight months after the above-mentioned file was "suspended," there was a piece of news in the journal *Ínsula* which makes us believe that the book had finally come to Spain and passed the filter of the Spanish censors. The reporter is José Luis Cano. . . . If José Luis Cano covered the news of the book's arrival in Spain so openly and clearly, it was probably because the censorship board had made no objections to the novel. Let us not forget that the journal was also scrutinised by the censorship office. (2001: 44-45)

Lázaro's research proves that *Ulysses* was not banned in Spain. The reception of the novel elsewhere in the Spanish-speaking world likewise shows greater tolerance. In this sense, Borges' feel for Joyce's work is extremely revealing. In 'Borges' Writings on Joyce: From a Mythical Translation to a Polemical Defence of Censorship', Andrés Pérez Simón analyses a number of articles in which Borges dealt with Joyce's masterpiece. Pérez Simón remarks that "Borges' attention to *Ulysses* shifted from an early admiration to a publicly declared state of scepticism about Joyce's achievements" (2001-2002: 135). He firstly alludes to two of Borges' essays, 'Narrative Art and Magic' (1932) and 'A Defense of *Bouvard et Pécuchet*' (1954), in which Borges acclaims Joyce, and *Ulysses* in particular. Pérez Simón then also refers to an interview in 1985, a few months before Borges' death where his view appears to be radically different, and according to Pérez Simón, "Molly Bloom's interior monologue, with its abundance of coarse words, disgusted the old Borges" (2001-2002: 134). A logical question in light of Pérez Simón's study concerns Borges' change of heart. Why did Borges' view of *Ulysses* change? Did Borges have access to the second Spanish translation of *Ulysses*, José María Valverde's version published in 1976? We should mention that Valverde's translation was published one year after Franco's death, and ten years after a more permissive new press law was established in Spain, the 'Ley de Prensa e Imprenta'. The historical circumstances that framed both

translations of *Ulysses* seem to have influenced both the process of translating and the final product.

Salas Subirat's translation of *Ulysses* was circulating freely, in Spain as well as in Argentina, two years after its publication in Buenos Aires in 1945. This situation stands in stark contrast to the difficulties the original version faced. The fact that *Ulysses* was banned in the United States for eleven years, and in the United Kingdom for nearly fifteen, whereas the Spanish translation was immediately published, seems contradictory. Indeed, such a paradox raises two questions:

- 1) Does Salas Subirat's version differ from Joyce's original?
- 2) Is the Salas Subirat translation as easily understood by readers in Spain as it is by readers in Argentina?

The answers to these two questions will shed light on the influence of a specific geopolitical situation on the translation of taboo language in a work of literature. The first question concerns whether the Spanish text conveys a different message in comparison to the original passages marked as objectionable by the US authorities. The second question entails variations in the Spanish spoken in Europe and Latin-America. Many scholars have already analysed the translation strategies used by Salas Subirat. Focusing on style, María Luisa Venegas Lagüéns explains how Salas Subirat's version "domesticates the source text and tends to insert too many explanations" (2006: 143). In fact, several previous authors had highlighted the fact that Salas Subirat's domesticated text was less accessible for readers from Spain because of the use of a local Argentinian variety of Spanish. One such critic is Gaya Nuño, who remarked that the regionalisms found in Salas Subirat's version interfered with the comprehension of a text that was intended for a varied readership from either Mexico or Spain (qtd. in Santa Cecilia 1997: 150).

In order to provide a thorough and convincing answer to the two questions above, a comparison of the English and Spanish versions of *Ulysses* has been carried out focusing specifically —but not exclusively— on the passages marked as objectionable by the US authorities. In addressing the first question we must consider, as does Jacob, the notion of 'equivalence' in studies that deal with translation of obscenity. He points out that "[e]quivalent effect' stipulates that a good translation should produce the same effects on its audience as those produced by the original text on *its* readers. 'Equivalent effect' refers to lexical and stylistic levels, and, while admirable in intent, it raises difficult questions: Who were the original readers? What was the text's effect on them? (2006: 104).

One should also take into consideration the notion of 'equivalence' as it appears in the definition of dynamic-equivalence translation provided by Nida, i.e., "the closest natural equivalent to the source-language message" (1964: 166). The canonical nature of *Ulysses* must also be considered, because for such works —the Bible, for instance— Nida emphasises that "an easy and natural style in translating, despite the extreme difficulties of producing it —especially when translating an original of high quality— is

nevertheless essential to producing in the ultimate receptors a response similar to that of the original receptors” (163). Similarly, Azevedo points out that “insofar as readers are concerned, a translation constitutes the real text, and is expected to offer them a close-enough target-language equivalent of the source text”. Yet, he adds that “even under the best of circumstances, however, that equivalence is approximate” (2007: 125). Indeed many scholars have challenged the notion of ‘equivalence’ in TS lately. However, despite the controversy surrounding it, the concept is still an essential element in assessing translations nowadays, and several scholars have also developed further interesting theories on this issue recently. Nord defines equivalence as a possible aim in Skopostheorie, “a relationship of equal communicative value or function between a source and a target text or, on lower ranks, between words, phrases, sentences, syntactic structures etc. of a source and a target language” (1997: 138). Rabadán adds a crucial element in her definition of ‘equivalencia translébrica’, namely that it is subject to socio-historic rules (1991: 291). Baker, in her manifesto on ‘equivalence’, analyses different types, such as equivalence at word level, above word level, grammatical equivalence, textual equivalence, and pragmatic equivalence (1992). With regard to the first type — at word level— and focusing on taboo language, María Sánchez gives an example, the term *bastardo*, to emphasise that “the translator will need extreme care when having to deal with it”, because “in English, the word ‘bastard’ is generally regarded as having quite strong connotations, but its Spanish equivalent, *bastardo*, is not normally used as an insult and simply refers to a person born outside marriage. Therefore, something that has strong connotations of the same type for Spanish speakers will have to be found, the answer being usually *hijo de puta*” (2009: 80). Sánchez adds that evoked meaning does not only apply to register variation, but also to dialect variation. In this regard, the obscure form of expression resulting from Salas Subirat’s use of regionalisms from Argentina may have had an effect on the verdict in the Spanish censorship file. The Spanish censors might have not banned the text because it was not as explicit or accessible as if it had been written by a native speaker from Spain.

One of the main challenges for the translation of passages that contain slang and taboo language has to do with register. According to Halliday, “a register can be defined as the configuration of semantic resources that the member of a culture typically associates with a situation type. It is the meaning potential that is accessible in a given social context” (1978: 111). As regards accessibility, Bell states that

accessibility shows the assumptions the sender has made about the knowledge he or she shares with the receiver; assumptions about the universe of discourse The more the writer assumes is shared, the less needs to be made explicit in the surface structure of the text and the more inaccessible the text becomes to the reader who lacks the assumed shared knowledge. . . . [I]naccessibility may depend not so much on the words but on the concepts which they realize in the text, concepts which may be presented together with a novel method of argumentation. (1991: 188)

A text's accessibility is strongly influenced by and related to what Bell calls "user-based (dialect) variation", which implies that "the individual's speech . . . would carry indications of age (temporal dialect), of geographical origin (regional dialect) and social class membership (social dialect)" (184). Bell's postulates indicate that a message formulated in a dialect variation may have consequences for the level of accessibility. Accordingly, issues such as the translation of slang, which strongly depends on this matter, will be less clear for those readers who, despite sharing the same language as the author of the translation, are users of a different dialect variation.

Yet, in the translation of a work such as *Ulysses*, and, in particular, of the passages that were marked by the US authorities, Venuti's application of Lecercle's 'remainder' theory to translation must also be taken into account. According to Venuti,

[t]he remainder consists of such variations as regional and social dialects, slogans and clichés, technical terminologies and slang, archaisms and neologisms, literary figures like metaphors and puns, stylistic innovations, and foreign loan words. In varying the standard dialect, the remainder complicates the communication of a univocal signified by calling attention to the linguistic, cultural, and social conditions of any communicative act, to the fact that the standard dialect is merely one among a wide variety of possible forms. In a translation, the remainder consists of linguistic forms and textual effects that simultaneously vary both the current standard dialect of the translating language and the formal and semantic dimensions of the foreign text. The variations that comprise the remainder complicate the establishment of a lexicographical equivalence with the foreign text because they work only in the translating language and culture and reflect the linguistic, cultural, and social conditions of the receptors. (2002: 219)

The publication of the first Spanish *Ulysses* coincided with the final years of what Guillermo L. Guitarte calls the divergence period of the Spanish language (1991: 72), which started with the independence of most Latin-American countries in the nineteenth century, and finished in 1951 with the *Asociación de Academias de la Lengua Española* (81). During this period an increasing separation between Spain and the colonies took place politically, culturally, and linguistically, and the Latin-American countries each developed their own distinguishing linguistic features, which produced the different variations of Spanish. When the first Spanish translation of *Ulysses* was published, regional meanings of Spanish were obscure because the distance between the linguistic variations in Spain and Latin America was notable at that stage. All of which suggests that verification of whether the remainder within Salas Subirat's translation affects the accessibility of the text to a specific readership is needed.

Indeed, *Ulysses* contains a considerable amount of slang and taboo language. As such, a comparative study between source text and target text may be extremely revealing in discerning whether the translator made use of strategies that imply self-censorship. According to Santaemilia, "self-censorships may include all the imaginable forms of

elimination, distortion, downgrading, misadjustment, infidelity, and so on” (2008: 224). He also mentions some of the strategies applied by translators in passages that contain taboo language: “partial translation, minimisation or omission of sex-related terms” (225).

A focus on the translation of passages containing taboo or slang items is essential to assess whether Salas Subirat’s translation is firstly, ‘equivalent’ to the source text in English, and secondly, ‘accessible’ to readers coming from Spanish speaking countries besides his native Argentina that have other regional dialects. These questions are especially germane to the study of passages of *Ulysses* marked as objectionable by the US censor. Back-translation will be used here in order to check whether the translator’s version is accurate and convincing, as well as comprehensible for all Spanish readers.

One of the first passages marked by the US authorities as obscene or objectionable which merits looking at in translation appears in ‘Calypso’: “the grey sunken cunt of the world” (*U* 4.227). Salas Subirat translates this as “la hundida concha gris del mundo” (Salas Subirat 1945: 91). “Cunt” in the original is rendered as “concha”, which is a correct option in Argentina in this context, but less equivalent in terms of register in the rest of the Spanish-speaking world, in which it means simply “shell” and has no taboo connotation, ‘Concha’ in fact being a typical female first name in Spain. The censor from Spain would thus have never considered making any objection to this expression. This word can be found again in the use of the related term ‘conchuda’ in the translation of a character in ‘Circe’, “CUNTY KATE” (*U* 15.4633), as “CATITA LA CONCHUDA” (Salas Subirat 1945: 550). The term ‘concha’ is applied in Argentina with the same meaning and register as ‘cunt’, and it is also found as the translation of *fucking*: “PRIVATE CARR (Loosening his belt, shouts.) I’ll wring the neck of any fucking bastard says a word against my bleeding fucking king” (*U* 15.4643-4645), translated as “[v]oy a retorcerle el pescuezo a cualquier conchudo bastardo que diga una palabra contra mi puñetero conchudo rey” (Salas Subirat 1945: 550). Salas Subirat’s Spanish version does not even provide a translation of the term ‘cunt’ in another passage in ‘Circe’ marked by the US authorities: “you’re not game, in fact. (*Her sowcunt barks*)” (*U* 15.3489). This is rendered as “quieres decir que estás fuera de juego en realidad. (*Su cuerpo de marrana ladra*)” (Salas Subirat 1945: 527). The translation strategy applied to this passage, in which the reference to taboo language is omitted, strongly suggests self-censorship on the translator’s part.

This strategy of not translating the English terms that the US censor objected to at all is also used in other passages, such as: “I know what boys feel with that down on their cheek doing that frigging drawing out the thing by the hour question and answer would you do this that and the other with the coalman yes with a bishop yes I would” (*U* 18.87-90). In Spanish this is the tame “yo sé lo que sienten los muchachos con esa pelusa en las mejillas, siempre a punto para andar con el chiche pregunta y respuesta harías esto y aquello y lo de más allá con el carbonero sí con un obispo sí” (Salas Subirat 1945: 687). Vanderham points out that the term ‘frigging’ was underlined by Assistant US Attorney Sam Coleman (1998: 202). Although the expression ‘andar con el chiche’ could be considered as an implicit

reference to masturbating in Latin America, it is vague and certainly not considered taboo. Accordingly, the reader's interpretations may also be ambiguous.

In the same vein, Molly saying, "he commenced kissing me on the choir stairs after I sang Gounods Ave Maria what are we waiting for O my heart kiss me straight on the brow and part which is my brown part he was pretty hot" (*U* 18.273-276), is translated as "comenzó a besarme en las escaleras del coro después que canté el Ave María de Gounod qué estábamos esperando oh mi corazón bésame bien en la cara y parte cuál es mi parte cara él era bastante ardiente" (Salas Subirat 1945: 692). Notice how there is no reference to Molly's "brown part" in the Spanish version. The interpretation of this expression and the reasons for the US authorities' objections become clear a bit further on: "he can stick his tongue 7 miles up my hole as hes there my brown part" (*U* 18.1522-1523).

Another fragment of interest appears in a conversation about the erection *post mortem*: "[t]he poor bugger's tool that's being hanged . . . He told me when they cut him down after the drop it was standing up in their faces like a poker" (*U* 12.457-462). This is translated as "[l]a herramienta del pobre diablo que acaba de ser colgado . . . Me dijo que cuando iban a cortar la soga después del colgamiento para bajarlo, tenía el asunto parado, delante de la cara de ellos como un atizador" (Salas Subirat 1945: 329). The choice of three terms affects the message in Spanish. 'Herramienta' is the correct translation of 'tool', but it may confuse the reader. It is not an equivalent of the English term, because, pragmatically, it is not used with the same frequency as in English in the same euphemistic sense. In fact, when one looks up this word in a dictionary of *lunfardo*, the Argentine slang dialect, the only meaning that appears is 'gun' (Dis 1975: 138). The meaning of the whole sentence is even more puzzling for the Spanish reader in the next sentence with a reference to "tenía el asunto parado". An Argentine reader would understand that the hangman's lover was standing up in front of everyone (Dis 1975: 13). However, by means of back-translation one can observe how a reader from Spain would interpret it as 'the matter being stopped'. The formulation of this passage, marked as objectionable by Asst US Attorney Sam Coleman (Vanderham 1998: 175), is then difficult to understand in the Spanish version.

There are other occasions too in which the Spanish version is inaccessible for speakers of Spanish in general, such as in the following fragment from 'Penelope': "Ill change that lace on my black dress to show off my bubs" (*U* 18.900). This appears in Spanish as "cambiaría ese encaje de mi vestido negro para exhibir mis combas" (Salas Subirat 1945: 709). There is not a single dictionary of Spanish or any of its American variations that contains the meaning of the word 'comba', either in the singular or in the plural, as 'breasts'. Another example can be found in the translation of the reference to Paul De Kock in 'Sirens' (*U* 11.500), which appears as Paul De Koch in the Spanish version (Salas Subirat 1945: 294). The Spanish reader with notions of English will definitely miss the pun of the author's name.

An even more interesting example is found with the verb 'to come'. This verb appears repeatedly in passages marked as objectionable where it refers to 'ejaculation'. However, all such references are translated into Spanish as 'venir', which implies a movement toward

the speaker, but lacks the sexual interpretation.² In the Spanish version of *Ulysses*, such a situation occurs for the first time in ‘Nausicaa’, after Bloom’s masturbation in Sandycove: “[t]ook its time in coming like herself, slow but sure” (*U* 13.1016). This is translated as “[s]e tomó su tiempo para venir, como ella, lenta pero segura” (Salas Subirat 1945: 396).³ One can actually speak about a pattern within Salas Subirat’s translation, because each time the verb ‘to come’ appears, in explicit or implied reference to ‘ejaculation’, in a sentence included in the list of objectionable passages of *Ulysses*, the first Spanish translation includes the verb ‘venir’, which lacks any sexual interpretation. This can be noticed again in ‘Circe’, where: “[s]uppose you got up the wrong side of the bed or came too quick with your best girl” (*U* 15.1970-1971) becomes in Spanish “[t]e debes haber levantado con el pie izquierdo o debes de haberte apurado demasiado con tu novia” (Salas Subirat 1945: 493).⁴ Here, ‘apurar’ is in fact a verb that combines the meaning of ‘to come’ —as moving toward the speaker— together with a reference to the fast performance of the action implied by the word ‘quick’.

A similar example can be found in ‘Penelope’: “I wished he was here or somebody to let myself go with and come again like that I feel all fire inside me” (*U* 18.584-585). This is expressed by the Spanish translator as “quisiera que él estuviera aquí o alguien con quien dejarme ir y volver otra vez así me siento poseída por un fuego interior” (Salas Subirat 1945: 701). The Spanish version is, again, different from the original because it ignores the sense of the verb marked as objectionable by the American censor. Salas Subirat opts for the other meaning (‘motion’) and, by combining it with the adverb ‘again’, he decides to form ‘volver’, which in English means ‘to return’. In terms of equivalence then, the Spanish text can be seen to differ considerably from the original.

A bit further on, the same verb reappears: “when he made me spend the 2nd time tickling me behind with his finger I was coming for about 5 minutes with my legs round

² Of all the dictionaries consulted, there is only one, *Diccionario de hispanoamericanismos no recogidos por la Real Academia*, which includes an allusion to such a meaning. However, the source specifies that it is only applied in Cuba, Costa Rica, and Colombia for both ‘venida’ as a substantive, and ‘venirse’ as a reflexive verb. In addition, the example that has been selected comes from the novel *Tres tristes tigres* by Guillermo Cabrera Infante. Significantly, in the first paragraph of the Introduction to this same dictionary, the author, Renaud Richard, makes use of Guillermo Cabrera Infante’s novel as an example to remark that many contemporary Latin-American texts pose problems of comprehension in terms of vocabulary. Richard explains that a text may acquire one or another specific meaning depending precisely on the regional meaning of a term. Finally, one must not forget that Cabrera Infante’s *Tres tristes tigres* was published in 1983, which may be the reason why such a meaning of the verb ‘venir’ does not even appear in other older dictionaries of Cuban Spanish, such as *Diccionario de cubanismos*, and *Los cubanismos en el Diccionario de la Real Academia Española*.

³ One must bear in mind that the only occasion in which the verb can have the same interpretation as in English in this context requires a reflexive pronoun, which is not present. Simultaneously, this Spanish version of *Ulysses* was translated by an Argentine who may have aimed to address either Argentine readers or the Spanish-speaking world in general. Consequently, the reference to an ‘ejaculation’, restricted to Cuba, Costa Rica, and Colombia, seems to be improbable.

⁴ According to Paul Vanderham, the words “came too quick with your best girl” were underlined by Assistant US Attorney Sam Coleman (1998: 235).

him I had to hug him after" (*U* 18.585-587). This is translated as "cuando me hizo gozar la segunda vez cosquilleándome atrás con el dedo estuve como 5 minutos rodeándolo con las piernas gozando luego tuve que estrecharlo" (Salas Subirat 1945: 701). The Spanish version lacks the references to Molly's orgasm. According to the *Diccionario de la lengua española de la Real Academia Española*, which is the only source consulted that contains the term,⁵ 'gozar' can be understood as an equivalent of the English verb 'to enjoy'. There is a meaning of the verb that implies 'a carnal encounter with a woman', but the verb in this sense is transitive, unlike the use found in Salas Subirat's text.⁶ It should be noted as well that the original alludes explicitly to the duration of Molly's orgasm, whereas the translation conveys the idea that Molly spent five minutes with her legs round him, and that she enjoyed the situation.

Similarly, one finds in the same episode: "of course she cant feel anything deep yet I never came properly till I was what 22 or so it went into the wrong place always" (*U* 18.1049-1050). In Spanish this is "por cierto que no puede sentir nada profundamente todavía yo nunca me puse bien hasta que tuve cuánto 22 ó algo nunca se llegaba a nada" (Salas Subirat 1945: 713). Again, the explicitness of the English version when Molly refers to her first orgasm is not present in the Spanish text. According to the *Diccionario de la lengua española de la Real Academia Española*, 'ponerse bien' can either mean 'to dress up' or 'to heal'. Some alternative meanings of the verb in Latin America included in the *Diccionario de hispanoamericanismos no recogidos por la Real Academia* suggest 'getting drunk' (as 'ponérsela') or 'to pay attention' ('poner asunto') but in those cases the verb is either combined with a different element ('la' instead of 'bien'), or not used pronominally ('poner asunto' instead of 'ponerse bien') (Richard 1997). Again, the Spanish version does not convey the same message as the English original.

There are other sections in which the verb 'to come' contains a reference to 'ejaculation' in English that seems to have been lost in the translation into Spanish. A good example is "he must have come 3 or 4 times" (*U* 18.182), which in Spanish has been expressed as "él ha de haberlo hecho 3 ó 4 veces" (Salas Subirat 1945: 689). The Spanish text includes the verb 'hacer', which has a broad meaning, as 'to do' or 'to make'. The pronoun 'lo' ('it') refers to an antecedent, which in this case must be sought in the former sentence, and can be identified as the adverbial clause "cuando encendía la lámpara" ('when he switched on the lamp'). The Spanish text lacks the clear reference to the ejaculation in the original, and it is also difficult to understand, due to the inaccurate relation of pronoun and antecedent.

One can observe that the references to ejaculation in *Ulysses* are frequently censored by the US authorities, even if they are not as explicit as the ones already mentioned. For instance, in 'Nausicaa': "[d]rained all the manhood out of me" (*U* 13.1101-1102). This appears in Spanish as "me ha dejado vacío" (Salas Subirat 1945: 398). The use of the verb 'to drain' in English conveys another explicit allusion to Bloom's ejaculation. Yet,

⁵ The other dictionaries of American Spanish do not provide other meanings of the term.

⁶ The translator may have been influenced by the English verb 'to come', which is intransitive.

in the Spanish translation this reference can only be interpreted by Argentine readers.⁷ It is also significant that the definition of the term provided by the *Nuevo diccionario de argentinismos* includes a note that explains that this verb is the equivalent of ‘correrse’ in Spain.⁸ This is the only source which contains the term with this sense. Although Spanish readers in general may understand the meaning of the sentence as the Argentines do, the reference to ejaculation is not explicit and would probably be interpreted as a metaphor of sorts. Also, due to what Bell calls “regional dialect” (1991: 184), Bloom’s characterisation would differ in these two countries: readers coming from Argentina noticing how Bloom makes use of a colloquial expression, whereas for readers from Spain, he appears to be a witty character who makes use of an ironic metaphor to refer implicitly to his action.

There are more passages in which a difference of meaning can be observed due to the variations of Spanish, such as the sentence from ‘Penelope’ “how did we finish it off yes O yes I pulled him off into my handkerchief” (U 18.809). This is translated as “cómo terminamos sí oh sí yo lo saqué dentro de mi pañuelo” (Salas Subirat 1945: 706). The use of the verb ‘terminar’ is taboo in Argentina and, like the original, refers to an orgasm. However, the term is not taboo in Spain, and it simply means ‘to finish’, without sexual connotation. In a similar way, the sentence “Ill let him know if that’s what he wanted that his wife is fucked yes and damn well fucked too” (U 18.1512) appears in the Spanish version as “se lo haré saber si eso es lo que él quiere que le trinquen a la mujer y requetebién trincada” (Salas Subirat 1945: 725). This translation is also controversial depending on the reader’s country of origin: the verb ‘trincar’ is taboo in Argentina and is a perfect equivalent of the verb used in the English version, but it is not exactly the same in Spain, where it means ‘to grab with force’ and, unlike in Argentina, the register is not taboo. This example confirms the idea mentioned at the beginning of this study, namely, that the translator was aware that the Argentinian censors were not as concerned with taboo language as they were with other aspects, such as references to prostitution.

A final example of the lack of equivalence of the Spanish text in terms of register in Argentina and Spain is found in the next sentence, also from ‘Penelope’: “Ill put on my best shift and drawers let him have a good eyeful out of that to make his micky stand for him” (U 18.1508-1510). This is rendered as “me pondré la camisa y los calzones mejores para que se le llene bien el ojo que se le pare el pito” (Salas Subirat 1945: 725). The term ‘pito’ is an equivalent translation of the original in both Argentina and Spain, according to, respectively, the dictionary of *argentinismos*, and the Real Academia Española. However, the verb ‘parar’ has dissimilar connotations: it is taboo in Argentina and refers to having an erection, but it is not taboo in Spain, where the meaning is radically different, and it only means ‘to stop’.

Sometimes one can observe that the objectionable passages have been marked by the US authorities not only because a reference was explicitly pornographic or taboo, but

⁷ According to the *Nuevo diccionario de argentinismos*, ‘vaciar’ means ‘to ejaculate’ in Argentina.

⁸ The corresponding entry reads: “vaciar *v* ~*se coloq!* Eyacular el hombre [E: correrse]” (604).

because of erotic suggestions. Such is the case with the following sentence from 'Nausicaa': "[c]lings to everything she takes off" (U 13.1021). This is translated as "[s]e aferra a todo lo que ella ha llevado" (Salas Subirat 1945: 396). The translator has here made use of 'modulation', a common resource in Translation Studies. Hatim and Munday define it as "a variation of the form of the message, obtained by a change in the point of view" (2004: 150), and Pym nuances that the adjustments carried out in 'modulations' "are made for different discursive conventions" (2010: 14). In the example above one observes how Salas Subirat has, in fact, expressed the same idea as the original, but from an alternative perspective, in this case by putting the idea into words as "everything she has worn". The problem this time is the total lack of eroticism in the translation. The original text contains a veiled erotic allusion to a woman undressing ("everything she takes off"), which can be related to the scene in 'Nausicaa', and to Gerty's movements in particular. However, Salas Subirat's modulation removes the eroticism by substituting an active verb, "to take off", in the present simple, by a passive, 'to wear', in a past tense.

Apart from the objectionable passages included in the Appendix to Vanderham's *James Joyce and Censorship*, there are other occasions in which the meaning of the original is lost or altered in translation. One of the most notable shifts is the conversion of almost all the instances of 'whores' in the English text into 'prostitutitas' —equivalent to 'prostitutes' in English— in the Spanish translation. The contrast between these passages in English and their Spanish versions is noticeable: out of 43 instances, there are only three passages (in 'Cyclops', 'Circe', and 'Penelope') in which the word 'whore' has been translated as 'puta', the most corresponding term in Spanish: "The curse of a goodfornothing God light sideways on the bloody thicklugged sons of whores' gets!" (U 12.1198-1199) translated as "[l]a maldición de un inservible Dios los ilumine de costado a esos puñeteros hijos de puta" (348); "trying to make a whore of me" (U 18.96-97) as "tratando de convertirme en una puta" (687); and "I'm only a shilling whore" (U 15.4385) as "no soy más que una puta de un chelín" (545).⁹ Although the English terms 'whore' and 'prostitute' are synonyms, there is

⁹ The following instances are all translated as 'prostituta/s': "Whores in Turkish graveyards" (U 6.757); "a whore of Babylon" (U 9.338-340); "an age of exhausted whoredom" (U 9.810); "Rosalie, the coalquay whore" (U 9.1090-1091); (the coalquay whore) (U 9.1186-1188); "O, the whore of the lane! A frowsy whore" (U 11.1250-1252); "Why that high class whore" (U 13.900); "murdered his goods with whores" (U 14.274-276); "a certain whore of an eye pleasing exterior" (U 14.448-449); "if they met with this whore Bird-in-the-Hand" (U 14.457); "an old whoremaster that kept seven trulls in his house" (U 14.620); "Cheap whores" (U 15.596); "THE WHORES" (U 15.599); "Zoe Higgins, a young whore" (U 15.1279); "Give a bleeding whore a chance" (U 15.1980); "where two sister whores are seated" (U 15.2021); "Kitty Ricketts, a bony pallid whore" (U 15.2050); "Florry Talbot, a blond feeble goose fat whore" (U 15.2073); "THE THREE WHORES" (U 15.2212); "Bloom surveys uncertainly the three whores" (U 15.2406); "A son of a whore" (U 15.2575); "a whore's shoulders" (U 15.2588); "in talk with the whores" (U 15.2705); "a massive whore mistress enters" (U 15.2742); "Points to his whores" (U 15.2973); "the girl, the woman, the whore, the other" (U 15.3047); "Smiles yellowly at the whores" (U 15.3830); "Lynch and the whores reply" (U 15.3903); "the whores at the door. . . . The two whores rush to the halldoors" (U 15.4252-4254); "The whores point. . . . all the whores clustered talk. . . . Bella from within the hall uses on her whores" (U 15.4313-4321); "Whores screech" (U 15.4664); "the amours of whores and chummies" (U 16.1041); "that English whore" (U 16.1352); "a whore always shoplifting anything she could" (U 18.657-659);

a difference in use and register which is absolutely consistent with the register difference between ‘puta’ and ‘prostituta’ in Spanish.¹⁰ The constant substitution of a derogatory term for one that is more neutral forms a pattern in Salas Subirat’s translation. This would seem to be evidence of intentional censorship in this case, most probably, self-censorship of the translator. One observes the translator’s concern to soften explicit references to prostitution —in this case, by means of a change of register— in order to avoid further problems with the Argentinian censors. As said above, allusions to prostitution were one of the main concerns for the Argentinian authorities at the time.

A comparison of the original version of *Ulysses* in English and its first translation in Spanish reveals significant differences between the two texts in terms of both equivalence and accessibility. One observes that passages marked by the US authorities as objectionable are frequently translated into Spanish in ways that do not maintain the meaning or register of the original. Such is the case with the substantives ‘cunt’ and ‘whore’. The translation of ‘cunt’ remains obscure for the Spanish reader, due to language variations between the regional versions of Spanish spoken in Argentina and in Spain, and the reference of ‘whore’ has, in most instances, been neutralised by using a term with a different register. Similarly, the verb ‘to come’ has been systematically neutralised in the translation, appearing in Spanish as if it referred to a movement toward the speaker in contexts where it is in fact used as a synonym for an orgasm. The use of these strategies is recurrent in the translation of other passages for which the authorities’ objections were comparable. The comparison of both texts shows that some of the objectionable expressions were not even translated into Spanish in a number of instances. Accordingly, the first Spanish text does not reach the semantic equivalence that is today expected of the translation of a work that has become a point of reference in twentieth-century literature. This comparative study also proves that both texts significantly differ in ways that make the Spanish version more acceptable to the eyes of a censor, indeed confirming Lefevere’s idea that “for readers who cannot check the translation against the original, the translation, quite simply, is the original” (1992: 109-10). In terms of accessibility the first Spanish translation also at times adds to the ambiguity of the original. In fact, the second Spanish censor’s report on *Ulysses*, dated 1962 and quoted by Lázaro, considers Salas Subirat’s translation ambiguous or even sometimes unintelligible. The censor wrote: “With truly incomprehensible fragments, James Joyce’s *Ulysses* has pages regarded as already classic by literary critics, within the new lines of expression characteristic of our century. . . . Therefore I consider that IT MAY BE PUBLISHED.”¹¹

¹⁰ In *A Dictionary of Slang and Unconventional English*, the entry ‘whore’ reads: “**whore** is, in mid-C.19-20, considered a vulgarism; *harlot* is considered preferable, but in C.20, archaic; *prostitute*, however, is now quite polite” (1336). Accordingly, the term ‘puta’ is considered vulgar and offensive in the *Diccionario de uso del español* (896), in the *Diccionario de expresiones malsonantes del español* (237), and in the *Diccionario de argot* (256). These Spanish sources refer to ‘prostituta’ as a general and polite synonym. Notice as well that neither the *Diccionario de expresiones malsonantes del español* nor the *Diccionario de argot* include the term ‘prostituta’. Therefore, the term should not be understood as derogatory.

¹¹ “Con fragmentos verdaderamente incomprensibles, el ‘Ulises’ de James Joyce tiene páginas consideradas por la crítica literaria como antológicas, dentro de las nuevas líneas de expresión propias de nuestro siglo. . . . Por todo

Would the second Spanish censor's report on *Ulysses* have been as 'flattering' —as Alberto Lázaro states— if instead of Salas Subirat's translation, any of the more recent texts by translators from Spain —such as that of Valverde, or Tortosa and Venegas— had been considered? What did the censor from Spain actually mean by "incomprehensible fragments"? Did he refer to cultural references such as those analysed in Gifford and Seidman's annotations (1974)? Did he allude to the Argentine variation of Spanish instead, or rather to some passages that, as seen above, were formulated with what Paul Grice calls "obscurity of expression" (1975)? An accurate answer should definitely take into consideration all these difficulties.

This paper has shown how differences in register can influence readership: obscure translations can have the same effect as deleting a passage. However, they should not necessarily be understood as mistranslations, but rather as a means of restricting the understanding of the audience addressed through the use of regionalisms. The use of such a regional dialect has an effect on the reader, and in this particular translation, one observes how Bloom's characterisation differs slightly from the original text, depending on the reader's country of origin. Such contrasts are also evident in different editions of a work of literature. Could Salas Subirat's translation, therefore, be regarded as an edition of Joyce's *Ulysses*? The two initial questions of this paper may be helpful to solve this conundrum. In terms of equivalence, Salas Subirat's edition does, in the passages the US authorities considered objectionable, differ from Joyce's original version. Similarly, Salas Subirat's translation does not maintain the same level of accessibility for all Spanish speakers in that his text is not as comprehensible for readers from Spain —such as Franco's censorship board— as it is for readers from Argentina. The most logical conclusion that can be reached after analysing all the differences between the English and Spanish texts is that the first Spanish translation of *Ulysses* seems to be what one might call an alternative edition of Joyce's masterpiece in another language.

One should not object to Salas Subirat's translation because of the lack of equivalence with the original version in a series of passages, or because the reader's interpretation of the text is influenced by 'regional dialect'. These quirks are precisely what, together with its historic context, make this translation unique and may have been the reason why, despite being a banned book in the English-speaking world, *Ulysses* was never banned either under the Franco regime or under the Argentine military governments of first General Ramírez, and later Perón. The register of a series of passages —marked as offensive by the US authorities— was indeed adapted, but there were no substantial changes in the content of the story. There are excerpts with neutralisations, and omissions, which suggest the translator's self-censorship. But if the scope of the translation was focused on avoiding censorship and making Joyce's work available to the Spanish readers, then Salas Subirat's work can be considered a real success. Accordingly, those passages which

ello considero que PUEDE PUBLICARSE" (File 1219 – 62, Box 13,815). The translation of the text from this file into English was made by Alberto Lázaro (2001: 45-46).

lack correspondence with the original, or which contain ambiguities, should be afforded a considerable degree of indulgence. Without them who knows how long the Spanish-speaking world would have had to wait to read Joyce's masterpiece.

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Received 27 November 2012

Revised version received 15 October 2013

Guillermo Sanz Gallego earned his joint PhD from the University of Seville (Spain) and the University of Antwerp (Belgium) in 2011. He lectures in the Department of Translation at Ghent University, Belgium, where he is also Head of the International Postgraduate Programme Dutch & Translation. He has published essays and reviews in journals — *Genetic Joyce Studies*, *Papers on Joyce*, the *Journal of Modern Literature*, and the *James Joyce Literary Supplement*— as well as collaborated in books — *JoyceSbilya*— on his main fields of study, which are Joyce, translation studies, music, and genetic studies.

Address: Department of Translation. Ghent University. Groot-Brittanniëlaan 45. B-9000 Gent, Belgium. Tel.: +32 (9) 224 97 00. Fax: +32 (9) 224 97 01.