

From Translations to Traducciones: Challenges and Strategies

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Abstract: *When researching how hedge schools were represented in literary sources, I realized Brian Friel's depiction in Translations had become the most iconic. Even though he is regarded as a major Irish playwright, whose work has been translated into several languages, hardly any of his plays could be found in Spanish. Therefore, bringing together my interests in Irish and translation studies, I took the opportunity to render this seminal play into the Spanish language with the purpose of making Friel more widely available.*

When contemplating the work ahead, I was not unaware of the challenges posed by the linguistically complex nature of Translations, shown in its very title. However, soon other less obvious difficulties emerged, like the translation of some Irish cultural elements. Last but not least, some features of orality, related to the intrinsic nature of drama translation, were also challenging. While addressing these issues, I aimed at giving readership the impression that the text had originally been written in Spanish.

Keywords: *Brian Friel; Translations; Traducciones; Literary Translation.*

Why translating this play?

This work was born because of my personal interest in translation and, above all, in this play that captured my imagination since I first saw it onstage over twenty years ago. Like Friel himself, ‘I think I am a sort of peasant at heart. [...] and I’m much more at ease in a rural setting’ (Murray 14). Therefore, I felt a special connection with the Baile Beag community and their misadventures to the extent of choosing the hedge school system of education as the topic for my PhD.

In my thesis, apart from researching the origins and development of these schools, I devoted a section to a short anthology of their representation in literature and the arts (Fernández-Suárez 2006: 255-367). Among numerous depictions of hedge schoolmasters and their schools only Friel had taken them to the stage. A few years later, when discussing possible outlets for Irish studies in Spain – AEDEI had been founded some years before-, the translation of Irish authors was mentioned. I realised that, being an independent scholar, a translation work suited me perfectly as it is usually more of a solitary job.

I adopted a hands-on approach starting with a rough draft of the translation while researching all the different fields concerned with the task, such as academic papers on this play, translations into other languages, Friel’s works in Spain, the specific peculiarities of drama translation, etc.

The play in the Spanish theatre scene

Translations made Friel a subject of academic study while becoming a regular play of the repertoire of theatre companies worldwide. It has been recognized as a masterpiece and as such it has been acknowledged as the most significant Irish play of the second half of the twentieth century (Boltwood 151). I wondered how it had fared in Spain.

I found that the staging of Friel's plays has been quite erratic. In the late 1980s we find an adaptation of *Translations* in the Basque Country in two versions, one totally in Spanish –translated by one of the actresses, Teresa Calo Fontán -and the other in Basque for Gaelic and Spanish for English. They were directed by Pere Planella and based in an unpublished translation into Catalan dating from 1984 by Josep M. Balanyà. The title was *Agur, Eire, Agur (Goodbye, Eire, Goodbye)* and it was. This particular play was chosen because the company considered its theme was meaningful within the Basque context of the time: the historical reality and the conditions of Euskadi were identified with those of The Troubles in Northern Ireland (Gaviña Costero 364). Thus, it became a truly political play and could not be staged anywhere else outside the Basque region.

Only in the twenty first century will Friel's plays be produced more often on the Spanish theatre stage. Curiously, the same plays, namely *Dancing at Lughnasa*, *Molly Sweeney*, *Faith Healer* (under the title *Francis Hardy*), *Afterplay* and *The Yalta Game*, turned up repeatedly from time to time in different regions and in different languages.

As for *Translations*, it did not seem to receive any attention until the Abbey Theatre brought it to Barcelona in 2001, in English with Catalan subtitles. More recently, in 2013-14, it was staged again in Catalan around Catalonia. The translation for this latest production was made by Joan Sellent in 2013 but was not published (Alsina Keith & Giugliano 184). Therefore, there were no translations in Spanish available in the market, so I resolved to embark on this task and offer Spanish readers the chance other major languages already enjoyed: the play can be found in French, German, Portuguese, Italian, etc.

Challenges and strategies

I was not really aware of all the challenges I would face during the translation process although, just by looking at the title, I knew the matter of languages would be an issue.

Languages

Friel is one of the Northern Irish writers that grew up in a state where the speaking of Irish was a political act (Kiberd 616) and he wrote the play during the most turbulent period of Irish history since Partition. He belonged to a generation of intellectuals who worked in order to find an imaginative solution to The Troubles. They set up Field Day with the ambition of reconstructing reality (Peacock 29), and *Translations* was the first play in which Friel put their ideals into practice.

At first sight, *Translations* seems a simple play with a conventional three-act structure and naturalistic dialogue. Friel wanted to focus on the death of the Irish language and the acceptance of English, and the profound effect that this change would have on the people, as we can see in his diary entries:

1st June 1979: ...the play has to do with language and only language. And if it becomes overwhelmed by that political element, it is lost. (Murray 75)

6th of July 1979: The play must concern itself only with the exploration of the dark and private places of individual souls. (*ibidem* 77)

In order to immerse the audience in the nineteenth-century historical and cultural climate Friel resorts to language but incorporating his preoccupation with form: “*Translations* is rooted in the varying nuances inherent in the same language on different tongues” (*ibidem* 82). How can he make this innovation work? He was aware that Irish identity was inextricably bound to the languages of Ireland -Gaelic, English, and Irish English, the new English unique to the island, the solution Irish people found to the demise of their native tongue (Worthen 24). Therefore, he resorted to using Standard English and Hiberno-English as if they were two completely different languages, mirroring two antagonistic cultures. He also adds specific characteristics of his native Ulster English in order to create the impression of a completely different language onstage.

Through differences in diction, syntax, and colloquial expression, HE helps the illusion that the characters are speaking their native tongue; it also contributes to the otherness of an alien culture showed by the British soldiers on hearing it. Finally, it gives the audience a feel of the confusion and frustration the natives must have felt when the cultural shift took place.

Here lies the challenge not only for the audience, but also for the translator, who has to keep this trick in a third language. Actually, we can say that the play is not only 'about' translation but it 'is' a translation, as the audience is demanded a polyglot tolerance while engaged in a translation game when they hear quotations from Homer in Greek or when the characters use some Latin to communicate (Peacock 121).

What could I do to transfer all these meanings into the Spanish translation? I certainly wanted to achieve a translation without resorting to any marked regional dialects. Looking closer into the matter, I noticed that the types of English used by Friel were generally associated to different registers. The Standard English used by the soldiers often indicates a more formal register, especially in the case of Captain Lancey, while HE marks a more informal, colloquial way of speaking. Therefore, on a lexical-semantic level, I chose Standard Spanish for the British soldiers, neutral at times but with more formal expressions when needed, while opting for a more colloquial Spanish that would give some local colour to the peasants' language.

Another issue regarding register was distinguishing well the two degrees of politeness/formality conveyed by the personal pronoun “You” in Spanish. Considering the plot takes place in the nineteenth century, I opted for “*usted*” not only when the speaker was addressing someone they were meeting for the first time (the soldiers when they arrive at the school) or someone with authority (the students to the teacher) but also when Manus and Owen were speaking to their father; in the rest of the conversations I used “*tú*”: dialogues between Owen and Yolland, as they are friendly colleagues; Yolland and Maire when they get intimate; Jimmy and Hugh as they are peers, etc. I wondered whether the schoolmaster could have treated his pupils with the more respectful “*usted*”. Probably that was the case, but it would have been confusing hearing Hugh addressing Jimmy Jack formally during lessons but informally in other private conversations.

From a socio-linguistic point of view, Friel portrays and colours his characters from the beginning through the language each of them speaks. This is a way of compensating for not really using English and Irish as two distinct languages. For instance, Captain Lancey speaks in an impersonal manner, brief and to the point, which fits his description in the stage directions: “He is uneasy with people –especially civilians, especially these foreign civilians” (29).³

Lancey: Lieutenant Yolland is missing. We are searching for him. If we don't find him, or if we receive no information as to where he is to be found, I will pursue the following course of action [...] If that doesn't bear results, commencing forty-eight hours from now we will embark on a series of evictions and levelling of every abode in the following selected areas [...] (61).

*Lancey: El Teniente Yolland ha desaparecido. Lo estamos buscando. **Caso de que no lo encontremos, o caso de que no recibamos información sobre su paradero, tomaré las siguientes medidas. [...] Si ello no conlleva resultados, transcurridas cuarenta y ocho horas desde este momento, emprenderemos una serie de desahucios y derribo de todas y cada una de las viviendas en las zonas designadas a continuación [...] (181-182).***

However, it is Hugh's speech the most interesting for a translator because of its uniqueness, as it cannot be categorized as Standard English or HE. He is a polyglot who teaches Greek and Latin through Irish. As a true representative of hedge-schoolmasters, he uses a bookish, pedantic manner of speaking peppered with Latinate words, defined by Oliver Goldsmith in his famous poem “The Deserted Village” as “words of learned length, and thundering sound” (Joyce 78). This happens both when he addresses Captain Lancey in English:

Perhaps modest refreshment? A little sampling of our aqua vitae? (30).

¿Un modesto refrigerio, quizás? ¿Una degustación de nuestra aqua vitae? (120).

Or when he addresses his students with his vesperal salutations / “*saludos vespertinos*” (105) or describes Lancey as “suitably verecund”/ “*apropiadamente verecundo*” (108) for not knowing any Classical languages or explains what happened during a wake:

There I was, appropriately dispositioned to proffer my condolences to the bereaved mother... and about to enter the *domus lugubris* (64).

*Allí estaba yo, apropiadamente dispuesto a proferir mis condolencias a la afligida madre... y a punto de entrar en la **domus lugubris** (187).*

We can see that the translation here follows nearly word by word the English version. The drawback in this occasion is that Spanish vocabulary is per se more polysyllabic than English and most of our words have a Latin etymology so that pompous and ridiculous effect is somehow lost. However, in spite of our Latin background, sometimes I could not maintain Friel's Latin choice of words in the etymological game Hugh plays with his pupils because those precise words do not exist in Spanish:

On my perambulations today – *perambulare* (24) / *Hoy durante mi deambular –deambulare* (108).

We have been diverted –*diverto* – *divertere*- (26) / *Han desviado nuestra atención –devio –deviare* (111).

In the first example, both verbs are compounds of “*ambulare*” – “to walk” but Friel’s choice means “to make the round, to tour” while mine means “to go for a walk”. In the second one, “*diverto*” means “separate, divert, digress” but “*devio*” “detour, stray, depart”.

Another marked feature of Hugh’s speech is his response to everything – “indeed”, a translation of “*mossa*”, a sort of assertive particle used at the opening of a sentence in Irish (Joyce 297). There are over ten examples and I have tried to be consistent in their translation using “*exacto*”, as it certainly marks his characterisation. However, there is one instance in which this word was not appropriate, so I had to opt for “*seguro*”, instead:

Manus: You’re hungry then (28). / *Entonces tendrás hambre* (115).

Hugh: Indeed –get him food –get him a drink / *Seguro – tráele algo de comer – tráele una copa.*

Finally, those dialogues in which he becomes a philosopher conveying Steiner’s ideas also contribute to make him sound grandiloquent:

We like to think we endure around truths immemorially posited (42).

Nos gusta pensar que sobrevivimos gracias a verdades postuladas desde tiempo inmemorial (144).

Cultures

Apart from these language downsides, considering I was translating to a third language, my main concern was how to “relocate” the text to facilitate its understanding to prospective Spanish readers. I soon realised that I would be facing new dilemmas on every page. With every choice of words I made, some relevant meaning seemed to get lost, which made me aware of the fact that my translation might not be self-sufficient. Moreover, my purpose was to do a philological translation, critical and with notes for a didactic use. Therefore, using appendixes seemed a good option. Indeed, Friel himself had organized his endnotes in an appendix for the Latin and Greek phrases with their translations into English. So following his example, Appendix I is related to Classical culture (Friel 2016: 197-204).

Apart from the phrases in Latin, I added other cultural concepts that the new generations might be less familiarized with, such as Classical authors and mythology. On top of that, I wanted to highlight the intertextual references Friel subtly makes with the quotations he chose from ancient Greek and Roman authors as all of them contribute to the plot. For instance, the headline Hugh sets for homework is an ironic allusion to the loss of identity, language and culture when Baile Beag becomes Ballybeg:

Tacitus’ “It’s easier to stamp out learning than to recall it” (20).

“*Es más fácil borrar el saber que recordarlo*” (98).

Or his lamentation on finding out he will be displaced from his position as schoolmaster by a bacon-curer, following Ovidius' line: "*Barbarus hic ego sum quia non intelligor ulli*"

"I am a barbarian in this place because I am not understood by anyone" (64).

"Soy extranjero en este lugar porque nadie me entiende" (188).

Friel uses the classical languages to emphasize how cultured some of the Irish population was compared to the English, a kind of homage he pays to the historically important role Irish scholars performed in the Dark Ages in the transmission of Classical culture (Peacock 123-124).

Appendix II (Friel 2016: 205-219) was meant to bridge the gap in Gaelic culture. Friel does not only emphasize the cultural shift with his language trick but also with the traditional Irish background he chooses for the action: the hedge school and a typical day in it. At first, however, he was convinced that the play would be a financial loss because "here is a play set in 1833, set in a hedge-school –you have to explain the terminology to people outside the island, indeed to people inside the island too" (Murray 108). I cannot but agree with him and confess the term "hedge school" was one of the pitfalls that tormented me all throughout the translation stage because it was hard to find a satisfying name in Spanish.

The hedge school played a crucial role in the history of Irish education. It received this name from the Penal Law times when the Catholic population were not allowed to be educated but they found hidden places outdoors –under the sunny side of a hedge- where the master met their pupils for classes (Fernández Suárez 2006:119). In spite of their many flaws, they educated the lower classes on a national scale, they were supported by the peasants without interference from the government and, although with a majority of Catholic students, they catered for different denominations in a time of a religiously-divided society (*ibidem*, 372). Therefore, "hedge school" is a concept deeply rooted in the Irish collective unconscious, full of expressive and evocative power –thanks mainly to the success of *Translations*, which certainly helped to canonize it.

In Spanish, the literal translation "*escuela del seto*" was out of the question but there were several different options taken from other names the hedge school received in English. Unfortunately, none of them was perfect: a hedge school was not necessarily a rural school, which seems to be the most common choice in the translations I had looked up (Catalan, Portuguese and Italian); logically, the new school would also be "rural" as it would be in the same setting; *escuela privada* (private school) or *escuela de pago* (pay school) are perceived in Spanish as elitist, which is a far cry from the reality.

It was a difficult choice. In the introduction I opted for a descriptive name: "*escuela nativa independiente*" (independent native school) to highlight its key characteristic –the fact that it was supported by the local community and that they had to pay for their lessons. In the play I have chosen the shorter "*escuela independiente*" and turns of phrase like "*una escuela de este tipo*" / "this type of school" or "*una escuela como ésta*" / "a school like this" in those lines in which it is compared to its rival, "la nueva escuela nacional" / the new state-run national school, an off-stage presence but acting as a looming threat that will eventually displace hedge schools. It is in these extracts in which these cultural terms are highly ideologically charged: hedge schools representing the Gaelic culture and way of life -a form

of rebellion against English colonial rule- and the National School evoking the substitution of the Irish language for English.

Another drawback was dealing with some personal names, especially those that resemble specific words in English, like Doalty, which reminds us of “dolt”/ “bobalicón”, causing a comical effect; or Yolland that sounds similar to “your land” / “tu tierra”, or Lancey that seems related to “lance”/ “lanza”, and which so effectively help in the description of these characters. I am aware that something is lost by not fully understanding these “hidden” meanings.

The same applies to place names. *Dinnseanchas* was a significant part of Irish culture, a legendary guide to the landscape that tried to explain how and why features came to be named. Therefore, Gaelic place names contained some significance as we can see in *Bun na hAbhann*, which means “River’s Mouth”/ “*Desembocadura del Río*” or *Druim Dubh*, which is “Black Ridge”/ “*Cresta Negra*” However, with the Anglicizing of Gaelic names, Irish culture and traditions are uprooted: the first example becomes Burnfoot, which sounds similar to “*Pie quemado*” (130-131) while the second one is replaced by Drimduff (135-136), in which the first part is meaningless but the second is informal for “*chungo, malo*” / “useless, worthless”. These new names are trivial, even comical, which devalues and mocks the Gaelic culture.

I decided translating the Gaelic names was beyond the scope of my work. However, I determined to acknowledge this distinctive feature in the play with a section in Appendix II on Gaelic personal and place names. As for the new names in English, I felt that keeping English as the theme of the play but changing the medium (the Spanish language) would help maintain the original setting. Again, this was a middle way, a compromise.

Regarding Appendix III (Friel 2016: 221-228), George Steiner’s philosophical ideas were major intellectual inputs for the play so it seemed crucial to give the readership some hints about the intertextual connections between the play and Steiner’s works - *After Babel. Aspects of Language and Translation* (1975) and *In Bluebeard’s Castle* (1971), following Pine who had shown the parallels between both authors (359-363).

Orality⁴

The double nature of drama (written to be performed) as well as its peculiar structure (dialogue versus prose) implies that orality will make its presence felt in translation decisions (Hurtado Albir 66-67). The problems posed for the translator are not only the prosodic and paralinguistic features of speech, conversational mechanisms, etc., but also those arising from the use of social or geographical dialects that serve for the depiction of characters, in our case, the HE of the peasants’ speech. Apart from a different lexis and accent from Standard English it also differs in grammar and syntax. In general, the most marked features of orality are found in Bridget’s and Doalty’s utterances but in translation some of their singularity gets lost. As a perfect correspondence cannot always be achieved, the challenge is to find the best solution even by compensating on different levels. I will just focus on a few examples.

On the phonetic-prosodic level, we find occurrences of relaxed phonetic articulation, examples of assimilations like “yella (yellow) meal”, weakenings like “aul” (old) and elision of sounds such as “d’you”, “g’way” but most often than not in the translation we can only reflect them in the lexical choice of a more colloquial language:

Doalty: Nellie Ruadh’s aul fella’s looking for you (18).

El viejo de Nellie Ruadh te anda buscando (95).

Bridget: D'you hear the whistles of this aul slate? (20).

¿Oís cómo raya esta pizarra vieja? (98).

Doalty: Cripes, he'll make yella meal out of me... (22).

Caramba, me va a hacer papilla... (103).

Only in one instance have I found a possible translation into Spanish that features a similar characteristic to the one found in the text: the mispronunciation made by Maire when she renders the one sentence she knows in English, albeit with a small change as in Spanish she mispronounces a consonant. I chose the distinction between “mayo” (maypole) and “mallo” (a farming tool) although nowadays not many Spanish speakers could pronounce them differently:

“In Norfolk we besport ourselves around the maypoll” (15).

“En Norfolk nos divertimos bailando alrededor del mallo” (89).

On the morphological level, we find a redundant use of pronouns, associated with emphatic and emotional language as shown by the exclamation marks that usually accompany these examples. In Spanish, however, grammatical subjects are not compulsory as they are marked morphologically (Briz 1996: 56) so the emphasis has to rest on the interjection itself supported by the choice of vocabulary:

Doalty: Will you shut up, you aul eejit you! (17).

¡Quieres callarte, viejo idiota! (93).

Bridget: You clown you! (19) / *¡Pero qué payaso eres!* (96).

Doalty: You hoors you! Get out of my corn, you hoors you! (57).

¡Cabrones! Fuera de mi maizal ¡malditos cabrones! (176).

On the syntactic level, in HE specific elements are emphasized through fronting devices. The two most common methods are clefting and topicalization (Hickey 266ff). In clefting, the highlighted part of the utterance is placed at the front of the sentence introduced by a dummy subject “it” as in

Maire: It's £56 a year you're throwing away (70).

Lo que estás echando por la borda son 56 libras al año (100).

Topicalization (via fronting) is every other type of focusing, apart from clefting, as in:

Maire: The best harvest in living memory, they say (62).

La mayor cosecha que se recuerda, eso dicen (88).

In this case, as the order of clause elements in Spanish is far more flexible than in English this effect is somehow lost in my translation.

As for cohesive devices, the discourse marker “sure” is often used to emphasize the

inevitability of the situation (Hickey 375). In *Translations* it is omnipresent in clause initial position so it would have sound very repetitive translating it with the same word(s). Therefore, I opted for a variety of markers: “seguro”, “claro”, “desde luego”, “la verdad es que”, “por supuesto”, etc., as exemplified in:

Jimmy: Sure you know I have only Irish like yourself (16).
Bien sabes que solo sé irlandés como tú (89).

Doalty: Sure the bugger’s hardly fit to walk (23).
Seguro que al capullo le cuesta trabajo caminar (105).

Maire: Sure it’s better you have it than that black calf (59).
Desde luego, mejor que la tengáis vosotros que no ese ternero negro (178).

Finally, on the lexical and semantic level, HE speakers make ample use of sacred names and pious phrases mixed with their ordinary conversation (Joyce 194ff.). These religious expressions, although still existing in Spanish, are perceived as old-fashioned and restricted to older generations, especially those in a rural environment, which gives the translation a quaint tone that fits the play. In this case I have chosen numerous Spanish equivalents depending on the situation: “God!” - “¡Dios Santo!”, “Be God!” - “¡Por Dios!”, “Be Jasus!” - “¡válgame Dios!”, “Sweet God!” - “¡Dios mío!”, “For God’s sake!” - “¡Por amor de Dios!”, “Mother of God!” - “¡Virgen María!”, etc.

Swear words are also a common occurrence. Luckily, again there is a wide variety of terms in Spanish. The challenge was finding the correct amount of intensity to translate the English word “bloody”, depending on the context it appeared:

Manus: It’s a bloody military operation, Owen! (32).
¡Es una jodida operación militar! (126).

Yolland: And bloody marvellous stuff it is, too [...] Bloody, bloody, bloody marvellous! (49).
Y además es una bebida cojonuda [...] Es cojonuda, cojonuda, cojonuda! (158).

Manus: Bloody, bloody, bloody hell! (54).
¡Joder!, ¡Joder!, ¡Maldita sea! (168).

Doalty: Bloody, bloody fool! (61)
¡Maldito, maldito imbécil! (180).

Another offensive word like “bastard” is somehow toned down in

Owen: I was afraid some of you bastards would laugh (33).
Temía que algún cabrón de vosotros se fuese a reír (126).

But it sounds stronger in

Manus: “You are a bastard, Yolland.” (55)
“Yolland, eres un hijo de puta.” (170)

As for Doalty, he repeatedly uses the mild swear word “Cripes” (Christ), which I have generally translated with a similar old-fashioned, euphemistic interjection *Caramba* (*Carajo*). However, in Act III there is an occasion in which he shows his over excitement with the situation uttering it three times. I felt I had to show the in crescendo degree of emotion by changing the word:

Doalty: Cripes, they are crawling all over the place! Cripes, there’s millions of them Cripes, they’re levelling the whole land! (59).

¡Caray! Poco a poco avanzan por todas partes. ¡Atiza! Hay millones de ellos. ¡Toma! Arrasan todo el terreno a su paso. (177)

Finally, there were some Irish terms whose appropriate translation eluded me so I adapted them through different translation techniques (Hurtado Albir 269): with amplification in the case of “poteen” as “orujo casero” (homemade spirit), although it doesn’t carry the illicit connotations it has in Irish; adapting the concept like in “soda bread” and replacing it for “*pan negro*” (brown bread); generalizing by using a broader meaning like in “*completamente sobrio*” for “as sober as a judge”, “*Registro de la Propiedad*” for “List of Freeholders” or “*una noche por las Ánimas*” for “a night at Hallowe’en”; or “*una danza nuestra/ otra danza*” for “Hornpipe”/ “Reel”, respectively, etc.

There also features that promote lexical creativity as with some colloquial expressions like “Till rabbits grow an extra lug” (22)/ “*hasta que las ranas críen pelo*” (102), where I opted for a well known idiom in Spanish; or “as full as a pig” (17) that became “*borracho como una cuba*” (92); or “He has been on the batter since this morning” (17) and “*Lleva dándole a la botella desde por la mañana*” (92).

Final stage

Once I had most of the play in Spanish, I started working in the critical edition, which meant a thorough and laborious research task as demanding as the translation itself. This was due to the ever-growing amount of academic research on this play. It was impossible to summarize all the different approaches so I focused on explaining how Friel had planned the play and the historical background to his writing process as well as to the plot. My personal contribution to *Traducciones* is an analysis from the hedge school perspective (Friel 2016: 61-66), the one I know best.

The process of translation plus the critical edition took me several years as I could only devote it my holiday time. Although originally a handicap, I would realize later that it gave me the opportunity to stand back, reflect on what I had done and retake the task with renewed energy. At this stage, I was also wondering about the title of the play. It is obvious that *Translations* is a household name in English drama heavily loaded with connotations. However, it is not meaningful enough in Spanish. To my relief I discovered that my concerns had troubled other translators. As commented before, the Basque stage production was called *Agur, Eire, Agur* and when it was recently staged in Barcelona one of the reviewers stated that *Translations* as a title sounded really dull and did not give this compelling story due consideration.⁵ I also found out that the French translation was, in fact, entitled *La Dernière Classe* (*The Last Lesson*).⁶

My option was not so radical as to change Friel's title; however, an appropriate title is of vital importance in influencing the readership's response, even more in this particular case because the play would serve as an introduction of the playwright's work to new prospective readers. Therefore, I was considering adding a subtitle, something that could catch the readers' attention while maintaining Friel's statement of intent. My option would have been *Traducciones. Babel en Baile Beag/Ballybeg*, evocative and somehow enigmatic. It also contains alliteration with a prebabelian universal sound so I thought it would have been ideal. Unfortunately, for copyright reasons, permission to alter the title was not granted.

Last but not least, there was the issue of finding a publisher for the book. None of the companies I contacted showed any interest until I met Denis Rafter, an Irish actor, stage director and acting teacher who has lived in Spain for many years. He put me in touch with ADE the Spanish Association for Stage Directors, who eventually published the book. Denis also helped me revise my draft. Having trained in the Abbey Theatre and being an Irish speaker, he was the perfect person to check my work. As a translator, Friel wondered how possible translation is and agreed that the notion of being faithful to the spirit of the original text is a complex one (Seven Notes for a Festival Programme, Murray 179). Nevertheless, in our consensual revision we tried to respect Friel's style, his fine Irish humor and his poetic sensitivity with the aim of making readers feel that what they are reading is not actually a translation.

All things considered, in spite of the challenges, risks and tensions, I can say that this translation has given me the opportunity of exploring and diving into multiple new facets of Irish culture. It has as well been a voyage of discovery on a personal level. I have made the text my own by putting my heart and soul in *Traducciones*, so apart from a reproduction, to a certain extent it is also a creation. However, this does not give me any sense of ownership, rather a sense of serving as the connection between the different cultures in the book and my own culture. As a classic, Friel's play can hold a message to any reader and I encourage you to discover the meaning it has for you. I really do hope that the merits of the play have not been lost in translation!

Notes

- 1 Some changes in the depiction of Friel's characters were changed –Manus is not lame, Sarah communicates playing the accordion, Hugh's book is not mentioned, etc. (Gaviña 362-364)
- 2 For a discussion on the terminology see Hickey 3ff. He considers Irish English a more neutral term than Anglo-Irish (used by Joyce, among other authors) and parallel to labels like Canadian English or Australian English. I have opted for Hiberno-English because it is the most common name in academic circles. Henceforward, I will use the acronym HE to refer to it.
- 3 All page references to the play in English are to the Faber & Faber edition 1981; all the page references in Spanish are to the ADE edition 2016.
- 4 I follow Briz on his classification of orality features according to the traditional structuralist language levels: phonetic-prosodic, morphological, syntactic and lexical-semantic.
- 5 Ordoñez, Marcos. "El viento que arrasó la cebada". *El País*, 15 Febrero 2014.
- 6 Published by L'avant scène theatre n°756, 1984.

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