

# TRANSLATION AND GENDER: THE STATE OF THE ART IN SPAIN<sup>1</sup>

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## Abstract

All processes experience periods of advance and recession. Now that feminism is relevant in so many spheres of political action around the world, be them local or international, and that translation is more than ever a recognized and valued instrument in political relations, this moment seems a good one to reflect on the state of the art of feminism within the translation world, in which it is already undeniable that politics and language are intertwined. Many are the questions that could be asked: Is feminist translation still an interesting field of study in Spain? Have theory and practice walked at the same pace in this area? Have Spanish translators committed to this cause changed their strategies? Can we still talk about feminist translation as a particular way of translating? Has it succeeded? Has it been subsumed under other seemingly more comprehensive theories? This article deals with the state of the art of feminist translation in Spain.

## Resumen

Todo proceso experimenta periodos de avance e involución. Ahora que el feminismo resulta relevante en tantas esferas de la acción política en el mundo, ya sean locales o internacionales, y que la traducción es, más que nunca, reconocida y valorada como un instrumento en las relaciones políticas, este parece ser un buen momento para reflexionar sobre el estado de la cuestión en torno al feminismo dentro del mundo de la traducción, donde es ya innegable que se entrelazan la política y el lenguaje. Son muchas las preguntas que cabría formularse: ¿sigue siendo la traducción feminista un campo de investigación interesante en España? ¿Han avanzado al mismo ritmo la teoría y la práctica? ¿Han alterado en modo alguno sus estrategias los traductores comprometidos con esta causa? ¿Se puede seguir hablando de la traducción feminista como de una forma particular de traducir? ¿Ha triunfado? ¿Ha quedado subsumida bajo otras teorías en apariencia más abarcadoras? En este artículo se aborda el estado de la traducción feminista en España.

**Keywords:** feminist translation, gender perspective, cultural studies, identities, third wave feminism.

**Palabras clave:** traducción feminista, perspectiva de género, estudios culturales, identidades, feminismo de la tercera ola.

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<sup>1</sup> This article is the English version of “Traducción y género: El estado de la cuestión en España” by Nuria Brufau Alvira. It was not published on the print version of MonTI for reasons of space. The online version of MonTI does not suffer from these limitations, and this is our way of promoting plurilingualism.

## 1. The Seeds and Roots of Feminist Translation in Spain

Since the appearance of the first feminist works within Translation Studies in Europe at the beginning of the nineties (Snell Hornby 2006.102), and ever since the first reflections on the matter were written in Spain, almost at the turn of the century, many different studies have increasingly contributed to the area of feminist translation in our country. Most of them have been like valuable tiles to be added to the incomplete mosaic that tried to present the blurred image of the Canadian phenomenon taking place during the 80s, proof of which was only brought into Europe by Barbara Godard through a conference (Warwick, 1998). In fact, Spanish academia learnt about such phenomenon more via secondary sources than through the direct study of the Canadian translations themselves.

In general, the first studies on the area focused on specific and isolated aspects of it (Nikolaidou and Villalba 1997, Vidal Claramonte 1998a, 1998b, 1999, Godayol 2000, Hurtado Albir 2001:626-630, Moya 2004, 2005, etc.). It was later that some of its formulae, like the rescuing of forgotten female translators or the theorizing from feminist stands, began to be slowly tested here. At present, there are various case studies of translations of texts written by women or by feminists, or of female translators (Bacardí and Godayol 2006, Godayol 1998, 2006, 2007, 2008, 2010, Lluïsa 2010, Reimóndez 2003, Miguélez Carballeira 2005, Melero [ongoing], Castillo García 2003, 2006, 2007, Sales 1998, 2001, 2003, 2006a, Postigo Pinazo 2004, Castro Vázquez 2008b, Martín Ruano 2004b, Gisbert and Santaemilia 2003, Glazer 2005, Fidalgo González 2005, Brufau Alvira 2006, etc.). There are also proposals on how to rewrite making women visible, à la Lotbinière-Harwood (Aierbe 2003, Castro Vázquez 2008a, 2010b, Martín Ruano 2006, Calvo 2003, Brufau Alvira 2005a, 2005b, 2009a), and essays on the consequences of implementing these translation techniques (Martín Ruano 2004b, Castro 2009b, Sales 2001, 2003, 2006a). Gender has already been mainstreamed, in one way or another, in some translations —by Dora Sales, María Reimóndez, Pilar Godayol, África Vidal Claramonte and M. Rosario Martín Ruano, Nuria Brufau Alvira, etc.—, and articles and books have been written on new ways of adopting a feminist perspective parallel to the advancements of feminism and gender studies internationally (Vidal Claramonte 2007a, 2007b, 2008, Martín Ruano 2005a, 2008, Godayol 1999, 2000, 2005, Godayol and Calefatto [eds.] 2008, Sales 1999, 2002, 2006a, 2006b, 2008, Ríos and Palacios 2005, Santaemilia [ed.] 2003, [ed.] 2005, Espasa 2003, Pacheco Costa 2007, Calzada Pérez 2001, Castro Vázquez 2009a, 2010a, Bringas López et al. 2009, Brufau Alvira 2009a, 2009b, 2010a, 2010b, etc.). Just to mention some of the most important areas of study.

A long way has been walked since the first steps, which, as I have stated in other occasions (Brufau Alvira 2009b, 2010b), despite their service in introducing feminist translation into Translation Studies here, focused on such isolated studies that they might have unwillingly contributed to offering a de-contextualized version of the original theories, as if these Canadian proposals were always and in all cases applicable, culturally un-translated. This may as well explain the insistence on seeing feminist translation as a cloned version of the Anglo-North American original. Hence, the cautions and criticisms against them (Vidal Claramonte 1998, 1999, Godayol 2000 or Moya 2004, 2005, amongst others). In such circumstances, it is not only

a satisfaction but also a sign of hope to see that both pioneer authors and more recent researchers interested in this area move forward quite solidly along new paths opened today. In so doing, they are also opening up routes for those who might want to follow. The number of publications continues to grow and the academia is increasingly receptive and familiarized with gender issues, as well as interested in them.

However, it is good to remember that these first reflections have been the seeds, roots and trunk of what is now the tree of feminist translation in our country. In order to prove so, suffice it to refer to two of the first articles on the topic written by Vidal Claramonte in 1995 and 1998. In the first one, the author announced that the arrival of feminism to Translation Studies was just the beginning of what was to come, and already noted the tendency to relate feminist and postcolonial studies in other writings on the matter. In the second of these articles, Vidal Claramonte pointed at one of the challenges that appeared increasingly obvious in translation theory and that is not alien to the feminist movement itself either: the dichotomy between the feminist component and the defense of cultural identities. As a translator, Vidal Claramonte reflected on the ethical consequences of such dilemma. As I will later present in more detail, it is possible to think that this close relationship between women's and peoples' claims has been difficult for feminism in that it has allowed for its concealment under the more exotic and colorful covers of multiculturalism.

It is not for no reason that cultural identity is not new either for feminism or translation. For instance, and although it is rarely put this way, feminist translation theories were one of the means and more successful nationalist campaigns launched during the eighties in Quebec. Quebec being a context where cultural encounters between the Anglophone and Francophone communities were difficult to imagine. This idea, which I further explore elsewhere (Brufau Alvira 2009b, 2010b) was already noted in 1997, in the famous and brilliant article authored by Nikolaidou and López Villalba. It paid attention to the context in which feminist translation had appeared and worked for the first time. The relevance of this aspect becomes obvious if we remember that, although nationalism was vital for the momentum experienced by feminist translation in Canada, criticism coming from the different minorities within the women's movement keeping the feminist spirit alive through writings and rewritings definitively introduced the notion of difference within the different. This was so because of the atmosphere of fragmentation and restructuring of the feminist movement in general. This new possibility — of differences within the different— produced an unstoppable wave of changes that continue today, even within feminist translation, and particularly in our country.

The review *Tessera*, which was launched in the seventies, was the epitome of Canadian feminist writing and translation. It underwent a profound transformation in its content over the years, especially during the eighties, as awareness spread of the variety of women-subjects there were and which did not really identify with the model of "woman" presented originally. At the beginning the review was open to changes upon some claims from native and Afro-Canadian women collectives (Godard 1994:262). And as new voices rose against the reductionist dichotomy defended by cultural feminism, some anecdotes were recollected. For example, at the conference *Women and Words/Les femmes et les mots* (1983), accusations were made against the organizers because they had consciously chosen women from each collectivity to appear in the official snapshot. This would not have been a problem if reality had not differed so much from the picture in terms of equality. Five years later, at the III International Feminist Book Fair, a native author named Lee Maracle, who happened to be the spokeswoman of the group of indigenous fiction writers, asked Anne Cameron, a white novelist, to stop including stereotyped colored people in her novels, because it was clear that she was doing it out of commercial interest rather than an intercultural effort. As expected, soon these questions began to be more central. So much so that the following conference was entitled: *Telling It: Women and Language Across Cultures* and it was attended by participants from different cultural minorities (Asian-Canadian, white lesbians, heterosexual white, etc.) (Martín Lucas 2000:174-175).

In other words, the theoretical internal homogeneity assumed by both cultural and radical feminism, which was reproduced in translation circles in Canada, was soon questioned by those

groups which differed from the established model. It was then when many women decided to organize themselves independently and join only those of similar identities. Hence, the many feminist groups with specific characteristics that appeared. The sense of belonging brought with it security and strength. And it also avoided them the choice amongst the big groups by which they did not feel really represented. Since then, publications multiplied that incorporated studies and collaborations of “other” women’s groups, while cultural trends and the notion of translation as a bridge became established. For instance, there are already important examples of Chicana fiction novels and academic writing based on the idea of frontier.

With regard to Spain, these advances on the Canadian phenomenon were known thanks mainly to secondary sources. Other works were also read in our country, like the already mentioned by Snell-Hornby, or others by Gentzler (1993), with a final reflection on bicultural and postcolonial experiences. Similarly, two books were published in 1996 and 1997 *Gender in Translation. Culture and Identity and the Politics of Transmission and Translation and Gender. Translating in the “Era of Feminism”* respectively. These were particularly referred to in literature on the topic in our country. Both Simon (1996) and von Flotow (1997) devoted part of their reflections to the interaction of gender, culture and translation. It cannot be forgotten that at the same time scientific literature on cultural issues through the study of postcolonial studies had gathered momentum, especially after the cultural turn (1990) in Translation Studies, alongside with the globalization process up to the present times. Some authors with similar concerns, like Gayatri Chakravorti Spivak, were well known. Spivak in particular had already published many of her deepest reflections about poscolonialism, gender and translation in the eighties.

Based on these ideas, a book appeared in the year 2000 written by Godayol. In it, the author explored the border space between languages and between gender and culture based on the experience of the Canadian phenomenon. The essay examined the underlying failures of the theoretical tenets of the Canadian proposals from a critical perspective over feminist translation theories —more than from the translator’s point of view.

Si les traductores canadenques entenen el fet de ser bilingües, dones, feministes i lesbianes com a premisses intrínseques, i s’imaginen grups culturals homogenis, es pot generar una perpetuació fatalista de la seva política en traducció. (Godayol 2000:107)

In this sense, it is relevant that despite the fact that neither Godayol’s nor Vidal Claramonte’s works include direct references to the implosion of the second wave Anglo American feminist movement due to identity clashes, both theorists point out the same flaws through an argumentation that is as intuitive as confirming of what was to come.

In any case, these perspectives based on the ideas of gender as discourse belong to the second general paradigm as presented by von Flotow (1999) when she explained the evolution of feminism within Translation Studies. Since then, this second paradigm has evolved into two branches: the first is related to sexual identity queries, of lesser impact in our country yet despite their potential (Santemilia, Bow, Lorenzo, etc.), and the second one is closer to cultural, ethnic or racial studies, of a much stronger influence in Spain. As a token, some of the last PhD Theses on the field (Brufau Alvira 2009b, Castro Vázquez 2010a) registered in TESEO, the national documentary unit on doctoral theses, or the many articles whose authors, as it will be shown later on, are difficult to classify having been traditionally attached to today’s postcolonial translation rather than to feminist translation, as is the case of África Vidal Claramonte, Pilar Godayol, Dora Sales or M<sup>a</sup> Rosario Martín Ruano, to name some of the most important ones.

However, there are other studies on feminist translation that have nothing to do with cultural identity explorations and that could be included in what von Flotow calls the first paradigm. This focuses more on the study of works translated by women, the representation of female writers through their translated works —usually on a questionable way—, female translators’ invisibility, etc. Most articles belong to this first paradigm, which could be said to be more

influenced by second wave feminism in as much as it defended women's visibility as a group. Amongst others, any of the ones in which female authors analyze translations of feminist works, or the final proposals presented in Hurtado Albir's reflection on gender studies within Translation Studies, as she calls them (Hurtado Albir 2001:626-630), i.e. recovering women's role in translation and discovering the characteristics associated to each gender through corpora studies. Also, many authors work within both paradigms.

Nevertheless, both trends were represented in the first international conference on the matter. Organized by José Santaemilia, it was held in 2002. In it, there were contributions from the different research trends on translation and what was already known as "gender" in our country. Significantly enough, as Santaemilia states in the conference minutes, the connection between these two fields of study was not in Spain but a "realidad incipiente. Incipiente aunque prometedora" (Santaemilia 2003: viii). And, no matter the fact that, as von Flotow (2005:40) affirms, an increasing number of conferences on the topic have been celebrated since then (México, 2002; Gargano, 2003; Istanbul, 2003), in addition to some others in Spain, like the *Congrés Internacional sobre Gènere i Traducció* (Vic, 2005) and some recent ones (Swansea, Cosenza o Naples), it is significant that the first one was held in Spain.

The conference minutes edited by Santaemilia (2003), *Género, lenguaje y traducción*, included theoretical articles on female translators, on techniques, and on the first and most recent encounters between these two disciplines, as well as the challenges related to their implementation in other places, etc. They also contained more recent case studies, and thus could be said to conform a faithful window of the results of the many branches born out of the mixture of gender, language and translation. In the section specifically devoted to feminist translation, articles about the translation of works by Mary Wollstonecraft, Rosalía de Castro, Judith Hermann or Rosario Ferré can be found, while in the section about feminist literary translation, there are essays on the French versions of Virginia Woolf's titles, or the translations of Shashi Deshpande's novels into Galician or Jeanne Hyvard's ones into English. Similarly, general reflections can be found about gender and translation from many different perspectives: didactics-related (Dillman 2003) o research-related (Calvo 2003, Saldanha 2003 and Stoll 2003).

Two years later, in 2005, Santaemilia edited a more compact selection dealing exclusively with translation: *Gender, Sex and Translation. The Manipulation of Identities*. To my view, this new compilation epitomizes not only the increasing and solid interest of the Spanish academia in the field, but also that their research results and essay conclusions more than reach international standards; they even set them. Experts like Pilar Godayol or Martín Ruano enhance the compilation with their contributions, in which feminist theory tenets are questioned and revised alongside world socio-cultural transformations in an attempt to make cultural claims compatible with women's empowerment via a particular form of translation that should be based on what Martín Ruano masterfully names a "flexible ethics of location" (Martín Ruano 2005a:37).

This idea appears somehow as the reaction against criticisms of these theories, which have always been presented as inflexible, because they seem to systematically defend the brand new role of female translators as co-authors, as stated by Virgilio Moya (2004, 2005) and in line with the dangers detected by Vidal Claramonte (1998, 1999).

As it can be seen, the most important thing is that since the first news about the Canadian feminist theories arrived in Europe, the interest of translation theory and practice in this field has increased in our country. Spanish researchers have not only followed up on all international publications on the topic and their evolution, but have also produced important debates which are independently developing the two most important branches within the field of gender and translation: that of feminist translation as non-sexist rewriting, of a more linguistic character, and the one related to cultural identities, more easily relatable to translation theories and more connected to cultural specificities within feminism.

In this sense, it is worth noting some of the reflections inspiring the different routes towards equality today.

## 2. Feminist Translation Today

The tree I referred to metaphorically in the first section continues to bear fruits today. Accordingly, since it is nurtured by the earth where it was planted, its sap cannot but contain all the nutrients of the women's movement when this is active. On the one hand, 21st century feminism, which is mirrored by contemporary feminist translation theory and practice, is closely related to cultural and identity issues in an almost political battle to transport the political claims of women and/or minorities. On the other hand, it tries to incorporate the linguistic techniques resulting from the connection between language and power as studied in the last decades of the past century. In this sense, feminist translation does not focus exclusively on words, but also on discourses, ideologies and identities texts can normalize, legitimize or build.

### 2.1. Strategic Thinking: the Linguistic-Discursive Front

In Spain, most feminist writing tips are the heritage of the Anglo North American ones. Both "linguistic sexism" —which includes sexist popular sayings and wits (Calero 1990: 190)— and "androcentric language" —which implies the use of masculine forms in generic ways or semantic plays between genders (García Messeguer [1994] 1996) and the correspondence between social and grammatical genders— are inspired in the guidelines that appeared in the United States especially during the eighties and nineties.

These guidelines could be divided and classified into four paradigms (Crawford 1995) which nevertheless fall into second wave radical and cultural feminisms: the deficit paradigm, the oldest one, assumes that feminine talk fails to incorporate some of the masculine resources that allow men to manage in the public sphere (Lakoff 1975); the difference paradigm, which is based on the idea that standard language limits women's discourses to express their world and thus suggests alternative women's languages, as shown in Elgin (1988), Daly (1978) or Daly and Caputi (1987); the domination paradigm, which resulted in non-sexist writing tips versus what it identifies as He-Man language, with representatives like Miller and Swift (1981), Spender (1980), Penelope (1990) or, a bit later, Mills (1995, 2003). And last, the discourse paradigm, which is more worried about the creation of meanings, and pragmatic plus other components of communication and messages, as defended in Mills' work (1997) *Discourse*.

Amongst these paradigms, the most comprehensive, easily applicable and more visible one is the domination paradigm. It might be for that reason that it tends to be the chosen one in non-sexist writing campaigns launched by institutions, gender-sensitive organizations, civic associations or academic works in Spain, as is the case in Suardiaz ([1973] 2002), Arias Barredo (1995), Catalá González and García Pascual (1995), Calero Fernández (1999), Fuertes Olivera (1992), Lledó Cunill (1992, 1966, 1999), Careaga (2002) or García Messeguer ([1994] 1996), just to name a few. Actually, except for some examples, like the works by Lozano Domingo (1995) or by López García and Morant ([1991] 2005), of a more sociolinguistic fashion, or like some articles by Gregorio Godeo (2003) and Burgos and Aliaga (2002), incorporating a critical discourse perspective, the majority of research studies have tried to purge patriarchal language. In effect, just as Spender stated:

Having learnt the language of a patriarchal society we have also learnt to classify and manage the world in accordance with patriarchal order and to preclude many possibilities for alternative ways of making sense of the world (...) Such lessons, however, can be unlearned. (Spender [1980] 1991:3)

It is obvious that, in languages with at least two grammatical genders, this approach, based on a criticism of the total maleness of language, usually faces hard and polemic challenges. Similarly, translating into these languages from others of implicit grammatical gender appears

as a hard task. To such an extent that even translation between sister languages can pose difficulties. To overcome the most obvious obstacles, like dealing with nouns that change their meaning depending on their grammatical gender (costurero-costurera, químico-química, etc.), generic nouns (consulte con su abogado, diligencia del buen padre de familia, etc.) or the plurals of groups that refer to both sexes (mi tío y mi tía son encantadores) (Burgos y Aliaga 2002:60), it seems that the most appropriate translation technique is what Lotbinière-Harwood suggested and applied in her own translations: re-sexualizing language; in other words, speaking in the feminine, one of the mottos of the Spanish Women's Institute. Generally speaking, despite the problems associated with (1) the lack of consistence in meanings or words with different grammatical genders, (2) the lack of inclusive nouns, i.e. referring to both sexes or (3) the typical complaint by detractors about the breaking of the norm of "language economy", following the guidelines defended by NOMBRA —a non-sexist writing group— is effective as it manages to avoid criticism from detractors.

Many non-sexist writing guidelines have been published by the Government through its General Secretary of Equality or by the young and ephemeral Ministry of Equality through the Women's Institute, for instance, the series "En femenino y en masculino" (Alario et al. 2003), or Caja de Ahorros El Monte (VV.AA. 2006). There are also plenty published by local authorities, as is the case in the city of Málaga (Medina Guerra 2002), by supra-national organizations, like UNESCO (VV.AA. 1999), by regional authorities, like the Junta de Castilla y León (VV.AA. 2003), or the Basque Women's Institute (Emakunde) (Rincón 1988), as well as by NGOs and civic associations like Federación de Mujeres Progresistas (Laviña and Mejía 2000, Laviña 2002, Castrejana and Laviña 2002a, 2002b; Laviña and López 2004, Vicente and Laviña 2005, Laviña 2001, etc.). And, notwithstanding a certain lack of regularity in the techniques suggested (Brufau Alvira 2005a), and even the arbitrary and unwise implementation of the tips (Brufau Alvira 2010a, 2010b), many texts are written according to these or similar guidelines, like the internal recommendations issued by the European Parliament to be applied to official documents. The European guidelines recommend the use of generic nouns, or impersonal expressions to avoid having to choose a specific grammatical gender.

Of course, all these recommendations affect translation directly, whether feminist or not, as it is shown in some recent articles on the translation into languages of explicit grammatical gender (Martín Ruano 2006, Brufau Alvira 2005a, 2005b, 2009a, Calvo 2003, Castro Vázquez 2010b, Kremer 1997, Nissen 2002, amongst others), or in connection with other official languages in Spain like Basque (Aierbe 2003) or Galician (Castro Vázquez 2008a, 2010b).

Similarly, there are cases of inconsistency in the implementation of such norms when translating, as shown in the Spanish and English versions of the Guía de buenas prácticas published within the framework of the IV Programa de Acción Comunitario para la Igualdad de Oportunidades entre Hombres y Mujeres, under the umbrella of the Project "La igualdad de Oportunidades entre Hombres y Mujeres en el Ámbito Laboral" (1997-1998) of which the Women's Institute was responsible.

(1) Prevention and sensitisation in society, among professionals and particularly among children, teachers and parents, contributes to a society which is increasingly based on a foundation of equality (12).

La prevención y sensibilización de la sociedad, profesionales y, en especial niños y niñas, profesores y profesoras y padres y madres, contribuyen a que la sociedad se constituya cada vez más sobre la base de la igualdad (12).

(2) Educating male and female students and teachers on conflict resolution techniques, emotional expression and intergroup communications (13).

Impartir información para niños, niñas y educadores en técnicas de solución de conflictos, expresión de la emoción y comunicación intergrupar (13).

It can be deducted that the existence of support material on the matter together with a bit of consistency and attention when implementing the recommendations could guarantee that, at

least in general, a gender perspective is applicable in translation, at least in what regards avoiding sexist and androcentric language.

Nevertheless, all that glitters is not gold. Based on the idea that “[e]ven when a translator is not a political activist, the translator’s agency is notable and powerful because of inherent ethical and ideological vectors of textual choices (...)” (Tymoczko 2007:216), two consequences follow: first, that no translation decision is innocent or harmless, and second, that there is room for political action in translation. These premises complicate the apparently innocuous use of inclusive language in target texts, and may even undermine a feminist agenda.

At present, the series of gender policies launched by the Government and implemented in the many public institutions and spaces make it impossible not to imagine more a political burden than a feminist one in certain pro-equality linguistic measures, as texts—and their authors— seem to be linked to certain ideologies which might be or not the ones truly underlying them. Thus, following inclusive language recommendations does not only imply linguistic challenges but also social ones in a highly politicized context. A text, be it an original or a translation, which has been written using inclusive language can be approved or rejected by readers due to the direct link to a specific political ideology, in addition to being classified according to what the general public thinks of feminism in that particular moment. Moreover, it is assumed that any such reformulations are examples of manipulation—in the connoted sense of the word—as shown in the case of the translation into Galician of the fiction novel by the British author Mark Haddon *The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time* (2003).

The translation, undertaken by an openly feminist translator, María Reimóndez, was rejected by the publishing house, as it considered it to be “feminist”. And it was so, according to them, because of the translation decisions taken in connection with the grammatical gender of translated nouns corresponding to words of implicit gender in English. In the document, which I had the chance to examine thanks to the collaboration of the translator, I just found: “a picture of a surfer” (Haddon 2003:37), which had been translated as a feminine word in order to alter the expectations of readers: “e un debuxo dunha surfeira” (Haddon [2003] s/f:35). In this case, the surfer appeared on a T-shirt, so this micro-decision seemed irrelevant for the storyline of the novel, while it could be important to contribute to the transformation of the collection of gender-related mental images. In the Spanish version, the translator had opted for a more natural choice: “el dibujo de un windsurfista” (Haddon [2003] 2004:45), i.e. a male surfer. Also, a paragraph appears in which the word “police” is translated differently by the two translators: “[e]ntonces llegó la policía. A mí me gustan los policías. (...) Había una policía y un policía. La mujer policía (...). El policía...” (Haddon [2003] 2004:16) vs. “[I]ogo chegou a policía. A mín gústame a policía. (...) Eran unha muller policía e un home policía. A muller policía tiá un buraquiño... (...) O policía...” (Haddon [2003] s/f:9). And, although it is true that their decisions differ also in connection with the rat—a male rat— Toby, these choices are not directly related to feminist ideas.

In line with these reflections, it might be wise to think of those clients who ask translators to apply a gender perspective, which usually means using double endings (feminine and masculine versions of a word), slash-separated alternatives, inclusive nouns, etc. This is the case of certain NGOs, like Ayuda en Acción, whose staff, based on a consistent gender-sensitive policy, ask for this type of translations for their documents connected to gender-sensitive projects. This way, just a quick look at the text allows readers to confirm an anti-patriarchal spirit in documents that, being pro-equality in content, should be so in form too.

Now, what does re-writing in a non sexist and non androcentric way mean for readers that are neither knowledgeable nor aligned with certain linguistic trends which they might not even understand or just directly despise? Is translation channeling or hindering a message the result of which might be directly affecting women’s situation? And vice versa? What is the feminist reaction before texts written in an androcentric fashion? Do such texts look suspicious or legitimate to them? Does this inclusive writing imply the same in the original than in its translation? And what if the context changes?



Under such circumstances, it is not hard to see that the use of inclusive language seems to position authors and translators politically, whether willingly or not. Similarly, depending on the client, it might be advisable to consider the consequences of writing using inclusive language. At this stage, the dilemma lies in whether to use it systematically in order to transform our society and culture via linguistic and discursive means à la Foucault, or to deactivate automatisms and consider in each case the advantages and disadvantages the choice might have for our feminist agenda (if not for our business life).

As I see it, today, in Spain, a systematic implementation of non-sexist writing in any of our official languages does not guarantee the success of our feminist project. And which is worse, it might even undermine it in certain circumstances due to the strength of stereotypes. For instance, if English texts produced in highly sexist contexts were translated into Spanish using the above mentioned techniques, would such translations offer a faithful representation of the real scenario? The present situation asks for deeper reflections that go beyond the limits of the particular texts to consider the whole communicative process from a gender perspective. It should also be based on a notion of feminism that transcends our borders. What is it that I want to communicate, to whom, what for, where am I, what has happened before, what is expected from this text, in which contexts, what was the intention of the original text and its author, why is it being translated...? And it is then when it is convenient to question ourselves about whether the implementation of non-sexist writing recommendations is of equivalent consequences. Do they imply the same in different languages? Are they equally valued/stigmatized? Do our clients know what it “means” to follow them? Will the text be more effective if they are used? For all these reasons, no matter what it might seem, the state of the art with regard to what would normally fall into the field of linguistics is now as sensitive as ever. It might be why, just as it happens to the advances in other study areas, a discursive perspective should be taken into consideration, thinking about the broad meaning of the message we want to send. If only for this, it is necessary to know about feminism too.

## *2.2. Future Paths of Feminist Translation*

With regard to the influence of feminist history over feminist translation theories, following the trail well defined by Martín Ruano (2004b) in an excellent article entitled “Lenguaje, (conciencia de) género y traducción: modelos establecidos, nuevas realidades” might be very useful. In it, the author analyzes the parallelism between both fields of study, as also shown in a very interesting article by Olga Castro Vázquez (2009a), or in the Doctoral Theses written by Castro Vázquez (2010a) and Brufau Alvira (2009b), both of which work in the context of third wave feminism. As I have stated in a more detailed way, world feminism is firmly advancing towards a transnational collaboration (Grewal and Kaplan 1994) that includes claims by women from all places, contexts and situations, that looks for convergences, that allows for methodological loans without imposing them. Intra-feminist collaboration depends on translation to succeed in its efforts to gain equality. It needs to undergo what I have coined a “translation turn in feminism” (Brufau Alvira 2009b). This translation should break up or dismantle the stereotypes that might be hindering potential inter-feminist agreements or rendering them impossible.

As Lambert affirmed a long time ago, “las actividades de traducción tienden a tomar sus reglas y valores, si no su propia existencia, del entorno político dominante” (Lambert [1995]1999:260). At present, inequalities caused by the globalization of markets has led to a fight for the defense of identities and the rights of collectives and cultural minorities wherever they might be, especially in the international arena. All human groups want to delimit and protect what they consider culturally defining traits in a global context where the idea of belonging implies recognition, respect and enjoyment of a life and a voice in political terms. As it is well known, translation has not only witnessed but also participated in such evolution as it tries to act as a meeting point between cultures. Many published works as well as many research teams and projects support this idea, particularly fashionable in Spain. Here, very serious and

critical reflections in translation terms can be found within the old postcolonial branch of Translation Studies that is now more often referred to as the intercultural branch (Carbonell i Cortés, Vidal Claramonte, Mayoral, Martín Ruano, Sales or Valero amongst others). Also in this line, the efforts of the intercultural programme FITISPOS, led by Carmen Valero, or the CRIT group, directed by Dora Sales, are well known. And these are just two of the most relevant examples of the fights for forging intercultural embraces mediated by translation.

The combination of these two concerns, gender and culture, together with the well and globally established idea in Translation Studies of translation as a transformative instrument, offer rich and interesting research and work possibilities. As Ashcroft, Griffiths and Tiffin stated long ago, there is a clear parallelism between the textualization of postcolonial and feminist claims (Ashcroft, Griffiths and Tiffin 1989:7). And this is so to such an extent that both disciplines have ended up mixed in the theoretical works of Spivak, Sales or Godayol, or in the Chicana literature novels, for example.

In this sense, Spain is not in a bad position. On the contrary, it can be seen as a strong centre of theoretical and practical production. In fact, as already mentioned, most of our feminist translation theoreticians, just like the feminist movement, share the goal of making both claims compatible in the fight for equality. For example, one of the most interesting articles by Dora Sales, a lecturer at the University Jaume I in Castellón, explores the feminist notion of *affidamento* as a translation technique. This article was written within the framework of two research projects on intercultural mediation: *Repertorio informatizado crítico-bibliográfico sobre comunicación y mediación intercultural (GV04A-717)* and *Creación de una base de datos bibliográfica para la mediación intercultural: Documentación sobre inmigración y traducción e interpretación (P1 1A2004-10)*. In addition to this, Sales has translated many hybrid Indian novels and has adopted a clear and open gender perspective. Similarly, the translators and translation theoreticians África Vidal Claramonte and M<sup>a</sup> Rosario Martín Ruano, from the University of Salamanca, have participated in projects connected to gender—*La perspectiva de género en la enseñanza de la traducción: aplicaciones didácticas (SA071A05 2005-2008)*—, as well as in projects dealing with ideological conflicts. Also, they have both published reflections on translation and culture. Pilar Godayol equally adopts a multicultural perspective when working on gender issues in translation. She is an expert on what is known as border-literature, Chicana literature, and she belongs, together with Teresa Julio, to the research team *Estudios de Género: traducción, literatura, historia y comunicación (GETLIHC)* from the University of Vic. This research project includes, epitomizing the combination of concerns, the recovery of female Catalan translators, amongst other things (Bacardí and Godayol 2006). Gema Soledad Castillo García, from the University of Alcalá de Henares, is a specialist on the translation of works by Rosario Ferré. In her studies, she also adopts an intercultural perspective, while she has published several articles on translation and feminism. María Reimóndez translates Indian literature from an intercultural feminist approach. Olga Castro, from the University of Vigo, has recently defended her PhD Thesis: *Traducción, xénero, nación: cara a unha teoría e práctica da traducción feminista (2010a)*, as I did two years ago at the University of Salamanca with mine: *Traducción y género: propuestas para nuevas éticas de la traducción en la era del feminismo transnacional (Brufau Alvira 2009b)*. In my PhD dissertation, I defended a type of feminist translation which I coined, based on a loan from feminist terminology, “feminist intersectional translation”, as it considers the intersection of all identity and potentially discriminatory axes when reflecting on the social consequences of a particular translation. Based on these ideas, it is possible to defend that contrary to other more inflexible feminist models, intersectional translation (Brufau Alvira 2009b) allows for the implementation of completely opposite techniques in order to contribute to the goal of equality when the many factors intermingling in each translation call for it. This never undermines the consistency of the translation pro-equality agenda. There is an increasing number of PhD studies that align with this multiple sensitivity. And the upcoming conferences: University of Málaga (December 2010) and University of Vic (June 2011) also adopt this multiple perspective.

As a consequence, it could be affirmed that the other branch of feminist translation that continues to grow solidly is that of searching for internal and external gender equality. This one looks especially promising, necessary as it is nowadays.

Despite all, in an attempt to benefit from the opportunity of critically reflecting over the future paths and destinations of feminist translation, it could also be defended that such studies are usually related either to already defined study fields, like Chicana literature for example (Godayol, Castillo García, Vidal Claramonte, López Ponz, etc.), or to conferences or edited books that include the word “intercultural” in their titles (or not even so). Or even worse, in the last conference held by AIETI (Vigo 2009: Traducir en la frontera), the area of gender was not even mentioned, despite its clear links. So, it is convenient to question what force, legitimacy or value is given to feminist translation in the academic arena in Spain. Would not it be possible to claim for it all the efforts that I have just presented and that run parallel, as is usually the case, to the advances of the feminist movement worldwide? Why has feminist translation needed to disguise itself under the protection of cultural perspectives to become relevant? Mary Snell-Hornby (2006:101), a firm and neutral observer of the evolution of translation at the international level, noted already not so recently that while feminist translation theories had been first ignored by European academia and then circumscribed to circles interested in gender issues, postcolonial theories, on the contrary and despite being based on similar theoretical bases, had developed and grown to become the queen of all translation parties.

It is equally interesting that while intercultural translation has evolved clearly since its origins thanks to a self criticism that has not weakened its strength, but quite the opposite, feminist translation, equally subject to internal criticism and also to external questioning, has been relegated as a mere theoretical experiment, and an excessive one, despite its commonalities with intercultural translation technique-wise and its transformative updating process. Is it not true that the translations of hybrid Chicana, Indian or indigenous novels are manipulated? Why are intra-textual explanations, glossaries, mediating reformulations, non-stereotyping word selections, inter-language uses, etc. legitimate as professional necessary actions to obtain mediating quality target texts, while vonflowtian highjackings, notes and prefaces to present the texts, non-sexist or visibly sexist word selections, etc. are seen, in stark contrast, as ego and ethnocentric abuses on the part of Canadian translators? Aren't these actions based on similar tenets? Why is Venuti's visibility seen as a conquest for translators, or is intervention admired in the name of cultural understanding while translator's comments as defended by feminist translators are seen as abusive and their womandhandling appears as an offense even when in most cases both original and translations pursued the same goals?

In effect, it would seem that cultural claims affect all and are important to all, while gender claims interest feminists only, even though we all have a nationality, socio-cultural affinities, and a sex, which might be better or worse considered, attacked or ill-treated depending on the contexts. The notion of translation as cultural mediation is proudly brandished. It is understood as a legitimate political project towards the respect of identities, as a dismantling action of political cultural and minority inequalities, as a destructor of stereotypes shadowing human encounters. But isn't it equally admirable to understand translation as a mediation tool between the genders and within each of them? Can't it be seen as a political project towards the respect of identities, gender identities included and transformed by other categories like race, religion, age, ability, context, economic status, etc.? Is it not a way of dismantling political inequalities inside the feminist movement, and between men and women in all spheres of human life? Isn't it also contributing to erasing stereotypes that can shadow the development of a free and dignified life for both men and women?

### 3. Towards the future

These reflections, the one concerning linguistic approaches and the one connected to cultural perspectives, are mere proving examples of how the tree of feminist translation is alive and

keeps growing in Spain. The works referenced appear as nutritious sap able to feed new branches that might at least consider some of the questions here posed.

The momentum of transnational, institutional or civic feminism helps in the advancement to discover new formulae allowing for a better contribution of translation to the project of equality. As José Santaemilia rightly assured, “alguna cosa se está moviendo en una de las interdisciplinas —la de género y traducción— con más potencial transgresor y con más implicaciones ideológicas de entre los estudios humanísticos” (Santaemilia 2010: xviii). Alive as it is, despite all, translating feminism, feminist translation, should be encouraged to continue looking around for perfection and to keep growing.

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