

Spanish as the language of translation in Spain and Latin America: Shakespeare's retranslations as a case in point.

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Of all the classical authors, the works of William Shakespeare are amongst those that have been most frequently retranslated into Spanish; they therefore present unequalled opportunities for examining the concept of retranslation. Some of his work, such as the *Sonnets*, have around ninety Spanish translated versions, among which we find translations in prose (Astrana), in rhymed verse, in hendecasyllables (Santano, Ehrenhaus), alexandrines (García Calvo, Ospina), blank hendecasyllables (Rivera Taravillo, Mujica Láinez), or in free verse (Gomez Gil), and also censored (Salvador de Madariaga), or partial (Mujica Láinez) versions. The same can be seen with the retranslations, for example, of *Macbeth*: there are versions in rhymed verse (García de Villalta, García Calvo), blank or free verse (Pujante, Shakespeare Institute, Carugati), or prose (Valverde, Astrana).

As can be seen from the authors cited, these translations come from both Spain and the Spanish-speaking Americas. In the case of Shakespeare, it is much easier to write an international history of translations of his work into Spanish, given the high degree of interaction between the translations and between translators of both traditions. We can cite as examples of this dynamic the extraordinary popularity of the translations of Astrana in America and their subsequent reception, the presence of Spanish-American translators in the editing and translating of Shakespeare in Spain (José Arnaldo Márquez, Andrés Ehrenhaus), that of Spanish translators in editing and translating of Shakespeare in Latin America (León Felipe, Luis Cernuda, Álvaro Custodio, Alejandro Casona), or the coexistence of translators on both sides of the Atlantic in recent projects such as the "Shakespeare for Writers" collection or the "Complete works" edited by Andreu Jaume for Penguin / Random House.

As Cecilia Alvstad and Alexandra Assís Rosa (2015) point out, the reception of translations into linguistic varieties of the same language is problematic (“...the process of translating a piece and remaining sensitive to the wide range of linguistic variation that exists within the same language can be challenging”). According to these two authors, “a translation produced in the same language but in a different variety... may not classify as a retranslation if the criterion of space and linguistic variety is considered strictly as constitutive” (2015: 13). However, according to these researchers it is also possible to adopt the opposite approach: to consider that all translations into the same language, although each differing slightly from the other, enjoy the same status, which undoubtedly calls for the study of current power relations established within a single language and the ideological implications of each translation across the rich diversity within the Spanish language.

In the specific case of Argentina, a country that enjoys a long tradition in the translation of Shakespeare that goes back to the 19th century, with translators such as Mariano de Vedia y Mitre or Miguel Cané, we cannot speak of retranslations into the national linguistic variety or “ríoplatense”, until well into the second half of the twentieth century. Up to then, the translation language used had been a neutral Castilian, very similar to the peninsular variety, that sometimes included “archaic” elements in an attempt to acclimatize it linguistically to the Castilian of Shakespeare’s times. This literary Castilian, which of course leaves out one of the most characteristic elements of the ríoplatense variety — the “voseo”— and uses features unique to the Spanish peninsular, such as the pronoun “vosotros” and its conjugation, has continued, and continues to be used by current Argentine translators of Shakespeare, such as Rolando Costa Picazo or Pablo Ingberg, who justify its use on chronological grounds. We can say that, until the mid-twentieth century, the tendency to translate Shakespeare into Castilian “peninsular” was a “doxa” (Bourdieu) difficult to question in the Argentinian literary field.

In this paper, I will briefly examine three cases of retranslations of Shakespeare into the ríoplatense variety of Spanish: the retranslation of *Hamlet* by the poet, journalist and critic of art and literature, Rafael Squirru, the retranslation of the *Sonnets* of the professor and translator Miguel Ángel Montezanti (*Solo vos sos vos*) and finally the very recent one of *El mercader de Venecia* by the writer and translator Carlos Gamberro.

Rafael Squirru's *Hamlet* was published in 1976, the year in which the Argentinian constitutional president, Isabel Perón, was deposed by a military coup. As far as we know, Squirru introduces the “voseo” for the first time in a printed edition of Shakespeare. This is a limited edition published by Dean Weight of 812 illustrated copies with magnificent surrealist drawings by the well-known artist Juan Carlos Liberti. The small number of copies printed for this first edition has turned it into a collector's item today, almost fifty years later. Although Squirru himself apparently expressed his intention that his text was destined for the stage (Eloisa Squirru 2018: 103), the circumstances surrounding its publication seem to indicate that it is a retranslation aimed at a very specific audience: in other words, that it never tried to compete with those destined for a readership as broad and as general as that of his contemporaries, such as, for example, Guillermo Whitelow's translation of *Macbeth* (1976), with a prologue by Jorge Luis Borges. This translation of *Macbeth* was written in a neutral Castilian that is most closely associated with peninsular Spanish. In this sense, Squirru himself recognizes in the prologue his debt to the translation of Astrana, whose language seems "anachronistic" but whose text qualifies as "a valuable reference document."

It should also be noted that the only other translation of Shakespeare by Squirru, more than twenty years later, *La tempestad*, (Buenos Aires: Biblioteca Nacional, 1997), also illustrated by Juan Carlos Liberti, does not use the “voseo” although it does have some characteristics of Latin American Spanish, such as the elimination of the peninsular "vosotros" and its conjugation. Squirru does not explain this change of practice in his translation.

The professor and translator Miguel Ángel Montezanti is the author of the second retranslation. It is a retranslation into “ríoplatense” of the *Sonnets* of Shakespeare entitled *Solo vos sos vos* (2011), which is actually his second retranslation of the *Sonnets*, because in 1987 he had already published the first, (*Sonetos*), translated, again, into a neutral Spanish or, as he himself says, made according to the “most orthodox canons”, in hendecasyllables and Alexandrians. Montezanti thus becomes a special and unusual case of translator, retranslating the same work twice into two different linguistic varieties of the same language. In the case of *Solo vos sos vos*, unlike its previous

version, Montezanti uses the “voseo” and its conjugation, although it is not the only element of the rioplatense variety that is included, nor is it the most important. Among other procedures used are the deliberate use of monosyllables, pleonastic pronouns, ethical datives, diminutives and a large number of colloquial terms and phrases. These features, as he mentions, are part of a global strategy, that of “parodying” Shakespeare’s text, as has been done in other languages: “The concept of parody and self-parody applied to the *Sonnets* offers the strongest sustenance for the translation experiment that I propose” (p.10). This fact can explain why Montezanti did not use the “rioplatense” variety again in his later translations of Shakespeare, such as the dramatic poem *The Rape of Lucrezia* (Mar del Plata: Euden 2012), in the prologue of which the translator points out the following:

"I have made an experimental translation of the *Sonnets* into rioplatense Spanish. The present translation can be interpreted as a distancing from that path and, consequently, a “reoffending” of my first translation of the *Sonnets*. I can argue that the translation should be understood as a process: if the humorous nuances of the *Sonnets* could induce a parodic treatment -I refer to my second translation-, the absolute absence of such nuances in *Lucrecia* does not authorize it, at least at this stage of the reception of Shakespeare’s text. The *Sonnets* have a lot of comedy. *Lucrecia* is a pure tragedy (p 41)”.

The reception given to *Solo vos sos vos*, which Montezanti himself describes as “deviant” or “heterodox” (see “De Homero a Pavese”), has been complex. In Argentina, along with clearly favorable opinions such as those of Dubatti (2011) or Gil (2012), other reviews were clearly negative, such as that of the critic Leandro Wolfson (2012, 108), who pointed out at the time:

“In this version, with a kaleidoscope and a lot of phrases made in our colloquial language, I did not feel at any time accompanied by Shakespeare. More or less the same thing happens to me when I listen to a version of Beethoven’s *Novena* in a rhythm of tango or jazz. Although it gives rise to a splendid creation, with its own values”.

As we have already mentioned, in one of his last comments on *Solo vos sos vos*, Montezanti himself justifies this retranslation by appealing to the parodic character of the text, but there is another reason: his assertion that many translators of the *Sonnets* keep changing things in their translations when they are republished in a sort of endless or continuous retranslation. He also acknowledges that his translation goes beyond “what is expected” (*From Homer to Pavese*, p. 100), which is nothing more than

translating into cultured or literary Castilian, and that for this reason *Solo vos sos vos* “deviates from the norm”.

Another interesting comment by Montezanti about *Solo vos sos vos* is that he admits openly that “there are sonnets of such lyrical intensity that it does not seem possible to lower the level of the language to the colloquial expression”, which is why sonnets such as 7, 33 or 73 do not differ too much from his previous translations.

The third retranslation in this study is that of *The Merchant of Venice* by Carlos Gamero in 2016. As in his previous translation of Shakespeare, *Hamlet* (2015), Gamero writes a preliminary study of the work where he briefly comments on certain characteristics of his translations, including the inclusion of *usted* and *ustedes* with their respective conjugations even though they were not used in the Spanish of the time, “because ‘vosotros’ is indigestible pronounced in any theatre of Spanish America, and the Spanish have their own translations, and very good, so they will not go reading or using this one for the stage”(page 46).

This statement describes a choice halfway between the Argentinization (or Americanization) of the language used by Squirru and, above all, by Montezanti in his *Solo vos sos vos*, and the secular tradition of translating Shakespeare into neutral Spanish resembling peninsular Spanish. Gamero discards the “voseo”, purely *rioplatense*, without explanations, but explains his rejection of “vosotros” by arguing that it is not used in any Hispano-American country, which in any case extends his potential readership throughout the Spanish-speaking world.

CONCLUSIONS

The diverse range of retranslations that exist within the same language seems to be taking on an importance that it had not enjoyed previously, at least not within the Spanish-speaking world. Recent examples of classics translated in varying degrees into Spanish-Latin American have expanded beyond the translations of Shakespeare already cited, and include the “Mexican” versions of the same author by Mexican professor and translator Alfredo Michel Modenessi, as well as the recent retranslations of Dante's *Divine Comedy* by Jorge Aulicino or James Joyce's *Ulysses* by Marcelo Zabaloy, in

Argentina. These examples point to ideological or political motivations of a nationalist nature, perhaps a symbolic reaction to the traditional translations made in Spain into Castilian Spanish. But they are also inspired in proposals such as Roberto Fernández Retamar's insistence on a "Latin American reading" of European literature (2000) or in Fernando Ortiz's concept of "transculturation" (transit from one culture to another). However, the decision to retranslate Shakespeare into an Argentinian translation language is not, as can be seen, problem-free. In Argentina, translators hesitate between retranslating into one or another linguistic variety (as in the case of Montezanti or Squirru) and sometimes appeal to strictly literary reasons to justify their decisions (Montezanti's "parody" or Ingberg's deliberate archaic language), while more recent retranslations, such as those of Gamarro, aim to create a neutral and untraceable linguistic variety of Spanish without daring to make full use of the Latin-American varieties, in this case, *rioplatense*. This hesitation seems to derive from the extended belief that the Spanish of the translations must show the smallest possible local marks as well as from the distrust in the capacity of the *rioplatense* variety to become the translation language of an author such as Shakespeare.