

ABOUT THE POSSIBLE TRANSLATOR'S IDENTITIES: SOME "BRIDGES" OF QUESTION

DAS POSSÍVEIS IDENTIDADES DO TRADUTOR: ALGUMAS "PONTES" DE INTERROGAÇÃO



Andressa Franco OLIVEIRA
Mestranda

Universidade Estadual Paulista "Júlio de Mesquita Filho"
Instituto de Biociências, Letras e Ciências Exatas
Programa de Pós-Graduação em Estudos Linguísticos
São José do Rio Preto, São Paulo, Brasil
<http://lattes.cnpq.br/2026973404756120>
<https://orcid.org/0000-0002-5160-9460>
andressafrancooliveira@gmail.com

Maria Angélica DEÂNGELI
Professora doutora

Universidade Estadual Paulista "Júlio de Mesquita Filho"
Instituto de Biociências, Letras e Ciências Exatas
Departamento de Letras Modernas
São José do Rio Preto, São Paulo, Brasil
<http://lattes.cnpq.br/3428288938857306>
<https://orcid.org/0000-0002-5181-1634>
angelica.deangeli@unesp.br

Abstract: The present article aims to analyze contradictory aspects related to the configuration of the translator's identity from a corpus obtained by the answers of the students of the Bachelor's Degree in Languages with Major in Translation course, from São Paulo State University (Unesp), campus of São José do Rio Preto, to a questionnaire that was applied to them in a recent research. Therefore, in order to treat about concepts related to the issue of identity, this study is based on the works of Hall (2000) and Coracini (2007), in which, under different perspectives, the authors approach the subjective changes resulting from the processes of identity transformations. In the specific field of Translation Studies, it is made a reference to the researches of Rodrigues (2012), in which the author sketches an overview, from the ancient times to nowadays, of diverse translation approaches, pointing out the different theoretical conceptions underlying to such approaches and their implications to the translation practice and to the identity constitution of the translator. Also, to discourse about the identity concern in the field of Translation Studies, it is taken as basis the studies of Arrojo (1986) and Darin (2010), in which the authors treat the images attributed to the translator. In relation to the representation concept, the starting points are the writings of Moscovici (2003), Silva (2012) and Hall (2016). From the analytical point of view, part of the corpus elaborated based on the answers to the questionnaires mentioned above was analyzed and some considerations about the course to which this research is linked were made. Finally, it aims to show the contradictory view that emerges from the discourses of the translators in training about their own identities, one time considering themselves as simple meaning "carriers", perception that stands out in the long-discussed image of the translator as bridge; another, demanding their spaces of subjectivity. In the final considerations of this paper, it is approached possible reasons that lead the translator to define themselves in a controversial way and it tends to highlight the heterogeneity as a constitutive element of the identities attributed to the translator.

Key-words: Identity. Translator. Bridge. Subjectivity. Representation.

Resumo: O presente artigo tem por objetivo analisar aspectos contraditórios relacionados à configuração identitária do sujeito tradutor a partir de um corpus obtido pelas respostas dos discentes do curso de Bacharelado em Letras com Habilitação de Tradutor, da Unesp, campus de São José do Rio Preto, a um questionário que lhes foi aplicado durante pesquisa recente. Assim, para tratar de noções relativas à problemática da identidade, este estudo se apoia nos trabalhos de Hall (2000) e Coracini (2007), em que, sob perspectivas diferentes, os autores abordam os deslocamentos subjetivos decorrentes dos processos de transformações identitárias. No campo específico dos Estudos da Tradução, faz-se referência à pesquisa de Rodrigues (2012), em que a autora traça um



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panorama, da antiguidade à contemporaneidade, de diversas abordagens da tradução, apontando as diferentes concepções teóricas subjacentes a tais abordagens e suas implicações tanto para a prática tradutória quanto para a constituição identitária do tradutor. Também para discorrer a respeito da questão identitária no âmbito dos Estudos da Tradução, tomam-se por base os estudos de Arrojo (1986) e Darin (2010), nos quais as autoras tratam das imagens atribuídas ao sujeito tradutor. No que concerne à noção de representação, parte-se dos escritos de Moscovici (2003), Silva (2012) e Hall (2016). Do ponto de vista analítico, parte do corpus elaborado com base nas respostas aos questionários mencionados acima foi analisado e foram feitas algumas considerações a respeito do curso ao qual este trabalho se vincula. Busca-se, por fim, mostrar a visão contraditória que emerge dos discursos de tradutores em formação sobre suas próprias identidades, ora considerando-se como meros transportadores de significados, percepção que se sobressai na imagem, há muito debatida, do tradutor como ponte, ora reivindicando seus espaços de subjetividade. Nas considerações finais deste artigo, abordam-se possíveis razões que levam o tradutor a se definir de maneira controversa e procura-se ressaltar a heterogeneidade como elemento constitutivo das identidades atribuídas ao tradutor.

Palavras-chave: Identidade. Tradutor. Ponte. Subjetividade. Representação.

In the last few decades, the discourses on identity phenomena have been legitimized both in the scientific field and in the sphere of common sense. The identity claims have become an ongoing trend in contemporary societies, and these often have an increasingly authoritarian character and are indifferent to the meaning of such claims. However, despite the scenario that is not prone to listening to these manifestations, the identities do not cease to be said, although, many times, of the margins to which they were relegated.

In the discussions that guide this work, the identity issues are addressed based on discourses of translation students when asked about their own views and beliefs about what it means to be a translator.

The question of what it means to be a translator is directly related to the different translation theoretical approaches developed over time. From the first scientific works to the most recent researches, it is noticed that different identities were and continue to be attributed to the translator subject in accordance with, at a given time and for very different reasons, each thought considered as the "ideal of translation". Thus, the identity of the translation professional, as the one of all subjects, has undergone and still undergoes constant transformations resulting, among others, from social representations (re)produced in different historical moments about the mentioned occupation and also about the subject that practices it. To deal specifically with two identities, which we consider to be contradictory in their principles, we start from two divergent theoretical perspectives.

Researchers and scholars, inserted in a postmodern perspective of thought, consider the translator as a subject endowed with subjectivity and pervaded by ideologies. Although these conceptions have acquired considerable space in the field of Translation Studies, it is possible to notice that in many discourses there is still a "traditionalist" view on the identity of this

professional, which is defended and reproduced both in common sense and in academia. According to these more traditionalist concepts, the translator is defined as a subject endowed with reason, focused, unified; capable therefore of being completely "faithful" to both the original work and its author.

In addition to both perspectives taking different positions regarding the translator's identity constitution, in a recent research developed by us, we noticed a certain contradiction of some translators in training concerning their own identities. In reply to the question "What does it mean to be a translator, for you?", elaborated by us, some volunteers of this study revealed to have an oscillating point of view about their identity. In their discourses, part of the participants defends arguments, one time corroborating a thought that gives place and voice to the translator's subjectivity, another time pointing out the effacement of their identities.

Thus, in this work we deal with such paradox(es) that are made explicit in the discourses of translators in training and that reveal the complexity of the identity that is present in their imaginary. For this purpose, at first, we present some theoretical issues related to the concept of identity in its intersection with notions about translation and the role of the translator subject. Then, we briefly run through the questionnaires applied in recent research and the course of Bachelor's Degree in Languages with Major in Translation, from São Paulo State University (Unesp), campus of São José do Rio Preto, where we conducted our research. To compose our analysis, we used some discourses fragments of translators in training about what it means to be a translator. Based on the surveys made and on the theoretical contribution listed, we seek to problematize the discourses that are elaborated around the identity constitution of these subjects.

3

Identity issues and/in translation

The debates around the identity problem apparently run through simple domains that are related, for instance, to the several identities one person can have in different moments of their lives, such as the identity of son, student, teacher, translator, researcher, etc., also involving issues related to the gender and race identity, themes of much relevance in the current scenario. Regarding the discussions undertaken in the field of science, the question of identity acquires a complex character, since it includes notions of a political-cultural nature, such as: the notion of representation, the impact of power relations, the question about alterity and subjectivity, among others.

Thus, discoursing about identity is entering rather tortuous paths, and their exits are never given beforehand. One of the theorists that examined extensively the questions of identity, whose work interests us greatly in the context of this reflection, is Stuart Hall. In *A identidade cultural na pós-modernidade*¹ (2000), Hall deals with the question of identity as a phenomenon widely discussed in social theory. According to the author, the old identities that for so long considered the man as a fully centred and unified being went into decline, causing the so-called "identity crisis" in the subject. The changes in the structures of societies would be largely responsible for the transformations in the identities of each one because, unable to define an identity that characterizes oneself completely, the subject would experience an "identity crisis".

As Hall points out, the notion of subject has undergone transformations that have stirred up the way people see and are seen. According to the author, it is possible to point out three different perspectives in the treatment given to the question from the theoretical point of view: the conception of the Enlightenment subject, sociological subject and post-modern subject. According to Hall, the Enlightenment subject is characterized as an endowed with reason, fully centred, and unified being, supporting the belief that his identity would remain fixed throughout his life. On the other hand, the sociological subject emerges from the increasing complexity of the modern world and from the perception that the subject is not self-sufficient, but is made (and undone) from their varied relations with society. According to this view, the subject would have his "inner essence" modified by their interaction with different communities. Finally, the conception of post-modern subject reveals the impossibility of the subject to experience a fixed and permanent identity throughout their existence, because subject and identity, stirred up by psychic and cultural events of various factors, are always unstable and susceptible to change.

Thus, according to Hall, it can be said that the subject went through three important phases, from Cartesian subject to post-modern subject, in which distinct characteristics were attributed to them (centralization/decentralization; fixity/instability; constancy/transformation) according to specific historical and social circumstances.

If we consider the diverse identity changes that have occurred with the translator subject over time, it will be possible to note that the transformations pointed out by Hall are also noticeable in the specific scope of the translator's subjectivity.

In the work *A celebração do outro* (2007), among the countless discourses about identity that are objects of her analysis, Coracini affirms that the translator subject does not have a fixed and permanent identity, but that their identity is in constant transformation.

According to the author, the position of "in-between" occupied by the translator reinforces this condition of subject crossed by the event of the other, whose identity always "slips, escapes, skids ...". According to the author:

The translator is, therefore, between the desire for fidelity and the impossibility of being faithful; between the search for the author's intentions and the impossibility of that encounter; between the conscious and the unconscious; between the need and the impossibility of translation; between the reproduction and the creation; between the illusion of self-control, of its saying, of the effects of the meaning of its saying and the ineffable; in short, the translator is between the desire for the comfort of determination and the uncomfortable contingency of indetermination, shaky ground where the meanings slide, escape, postponing *ad infinitum* the such desired safe haven and the comfort of completeness; between the need for invisibility and the desire for social (and economic) recognition; between the other's language and the mother tongue, since the translator could also say, along with Derrida (1996), "I only have one language, it does not belong to me", or with Lacan: "I am a foreigner in my own home" , or with Kristeva (1988): "the stranger dwells in us", or with Rimbaud: "I is another" — and it is in and for the identification with the other that all subject defines its identity that, as the language, slides, escapes, skids... (Coracini, 2007, p. 180, our translation, her emphasis)ⁱⁱ

5

Still, in the field of identities that are created about the translator subject, it is interesting to mention the image spread by certain translation theories according to which the translator is seen as a traitor (*traduttore traditore*). Several of the principles based on the ideals of modernity considered that the translator, when reading and interpreting the original text, could commit "flaws" or even distance themselves from the source text and the ideas of the author.

Thus, as an attempt to attenuate the "betrayal" committed with each translation, it was believed for a long time that the translator should "efface himself" in the text, that is, become "invisible" to the reader. However, this invisibility, still defended by some people, has been subject of criticism, especially in the context of a postmodern thinking in/of translation.

In this context, translating is not dissociated from ideological and psychic issues, since the translator — as well as every subject — is crossed by different ideologies and by the

unconscious, that "speaks" without their consent. Therefore, it is not possible for them to be invisible, since the very existence of the translation presupposes the presence of a subject (translator).

Bearing in mind that the identity of the translator does not cease to be affected by numerous changes resulting not only from the social representations attributed to them, but also from different theories and thoughts developed within the scope of Translation Studies, we list below some aspects of the identity constitution of the translator subject in two different translation approachesⁱⁱⁱ.

In "Estudos da Tradução", Rodrigues (2012) deals with contemporary approaches of translation and the role of the translator in each one, mentioning translations that were done since the Romans and Greeks and its implications for translating. According to the author, four different approaches of Translation Studies can be pointed out: the linguistic foundation approach, the functional approach, the descriptive studies, and the studies of translation in postmodernity.

6

According to Rodrigues (2012), the linguistic foundation approach is characterized by considering translation as a transport of content from the source text to the translated text, in order to establish an equivalence with the original text. In this perspective, the process of elaborating a translation is unidirectional. According to the author, this means that:

. . . the process is treated as aseptic, as a mere passage, as if the culture or the values in effect in the culture that produces the translation did not somehow contaminate the practice, did not play an important role in the relationship that the translator establishes between original text and translation . . . (Rodrigues, 2012, pp. 357-358, our translation)^{iv}

In this regard, the translator is seen only as a "carrier of neutral and objective meanings" (p. 358), that is, they are considered a "bridge" that connects one text to another and, consequently, one culture to another. Among the various theorists and scholars who defend the linguistic foundation approach, Rodrigues cites Catford (1965), Nida (1964, 1982) and Baker (1992).

In contrast to these ideals is the perspective of thought that was conventionally called, according to Rodrigues, "postmodern condition" (2012, p. 368). Postmodernity, as the author affirms, is based on the critique of the modern thought and, consequently, on the emphasis on

the treatment of issues regarding heterogeneity, identity, difference, as well as notions concerning power relations, ideology, subjectivity, among others. Some of the main theorists who inspired this thought are Arrojo, Niranjana, Simon, and Venuti.

In a postmodern perspective, as the author states, the modern conceptions of translation, language and what it means to be a translator are questioned and acquire different meanings. Translation starts to be considered as a resistance practice, that is, a way of questioning the binaries from "traditional" theories, such as: original text x translation, author x translator, man x woman, west x east, metropolis x colony, among others. According to Rodrigues (2012), the main reason for questioning these issues is linked to the fact that binaries always value one pole over the other.

In the context of what is considered to be postmodern thinking, as the author lists, there are several orientations, such as the one of post-structuralist studies, the one of post-colonialism and the one of feminist studies. Still, according to the author, in the post-structuralist perspective, emphasis is placed on linguistic issues with a focus on a questioning view of language as a homogeneous and stable structure. Thus, for post-structuralism, language is heterogeneous, unstable and liable to change. As the subject does not have a fixed and stable identity throughout his existence (cf. Hall, 2000), the language, always modified by its use, also cannot be considered one and homogeneous.

Postcolonial studies, as Rodrigues (2012, p. 370) points out, problematize the translation practice in the colonial condition, that is, in situations in which the relationship between translation and original text is unequal. In this orientation, notions related to difference, heterogeneity, translator's resistance and the claim of the other in translation are objects of study. In this same space of discussion, questions are addressed about domestication and foreignization: practices used by the translator that can one time erase cultural issues from an original text, another time emphasize these same questions.

It is in this context of questioning the certainties and of upheaval of the subject's stability and their own knowledge that the outlines of postmodern thought are woven, in which the contrasts original text x translation, metropolis x colony, among others, are called into question. Here, the practice of resistance in translation is defended and the translator is considered as a subject endowed with subjectivity, unstable and whose translation production is elaborated from an interpretation that is never neutral, but always permeated by subjective and ideological issues.

Finally, Rodrigues (2012, p. 371) deals with the feminist orientation of Translation Studies in postmodernity in which gender issues are emphasized. Among the concepts problematized in this approach, as the researcher reaffirms, it is the questioning about the original (male) x translation (female). In this perspective, the work of feminist translators responsible for the elaboration of interventionist translations that modify ideals considered as politically incorrect and oppressive stands out.

Thus, both perspectives discussed earlier defend divergent conceptions about translating and about the role of the translator. The issue related to translation and to the role of the translator is also highlighted by Arrojo, in her well-known work *Oficina de Tradução* (1986). In this work, the author proposes to redefine the modern concept of fidelity.

According to Arrojo, traditional approaches, among them the linguistic foundation approach, consider fidelity as the maintenance of the totality of the original text in the translation, the original style and its fluency. In a diametrically opposed view, contemporary theories consider "fidelity" as a process that involves the interpretation of a certain text according to a specific context, the conception of what is translation and the type of text to be translated. Therefore, the translator stops being "faithful" to the "original" text and becomes "faithful" to the context of producing the translation and his interpretation of the source text.

8

As reported by Arrojo (1986, p. 76), the translator is a subject who not only masters the languages with which they work, but also learn to read, to produce meanings according to their writing context. Thus, as stated by the author, the translator has the power to influence and transform the community in which their text will be published. This, therefore, is one of the images attributed to the translation professional based on a postmodern perspective.

The images responsible for the translators' identity configuration come not only from different theoretical approaches, but also from social representations reproduced from the field of common sense. Therefore, the issue of representation also underlies all the theoretical contribution listed in this work.

Conceived in the field of social theory, representation is defined by Moscovici (2003) from its first function, that is, the one of interpreting the reality that surrounds us, maintaining a symbolic relation and ascribing meanings to it. In this regard, it establishes a relationship with systems of thoughts and values, which involves the knowledge, opinions and beliefs that are produced and shared by the subjects of the same group. According to the author:

Social representations are almost tangible entities. They circulate, intersect and crystallize continuously, through a word, a gesture, or a meeting, in our daily world. They permeate most of our established relationships, the objects we produce or consume and the communications we establish. We know that they correspond on the one hand to the symbolic substance that joins its elaboration, and on the other hand to the specific practice that produces that substance, in the same way that science or myth corresponds to a scientific or mythical practice. (Moscovici, 2003, p. 10, our translation)^v

According to Moscovici, these opinions and beliefs shared by subjects from the same group are conventions that come from the very nature of representations. Therefore, categorizations of objects, people or things are elaborated so that we can separate them into different "boxes". The author also points out that "Even when a person or object does not exactly fit the standard, we force him/it to assume a certain form, to enter a certain category, actually to become identical to the others, under pain of not being either understood, or decoded." (2003, p. 34, our translation)^{vi}

9

According to Moscovici (2003, p. 36), social representations are ideas capable of delineating reality and influencing the behavior of subjects in favor of this reality. Such ideas are so resistant that they become familiar to the subjects and, consequently, unquestionable.

In addition to Moscovici, Silva (2012, p. 91) deals with representation in the context in which the issue of identity and difference are inserted. As the author states, these conceptions are directly related to the representation systems, since "It is through representation that . . . identity and difference come into existence. In this case, representing means saying: 'this is the identity', 'the identity is this'"^{vii}.

As mentioned earlier, identity and difference are culturally and socially created, which implies that they are determined by power relations between them. According to the author, it is through representation that the power relations and the problem of identity dialogue.

Whoever has the power to represent has the power to define and determine identity. That is why representation occupies such a central place in contemporary theorizing about identity and in social movements linked to identity. Questioning identity and

difference means, in this context, questioning the representation systems that support and sustain them. (Silva, 2012, p. 91, our translation)^{viii}

Thus, since the production of identity takes place through language and power relations, it can be concluded, based on Silva, that the identity formation takes place through constant repetitions.

Another theorist who also worked on the treatment of representation was Stuart Hall (2016). In *Cultura e representação*^{ix}, Hall defines culture not only as a set of artistic productions shared by a specific group of people, but also as a collection of equal practices and meanings shared between the same group. Although these meanings seem unique, the theorist states that "in every culture there is always a great diversity of meanings regarding any theme and more than one way of representing or interpreting it" (Hall, 2016, p. 20, our translation)^x.

Thus, for Hall, representation occurs through culture and language, since the meanings shared in the same culture are produced through language. However, as the theorist points out, the meanings are not in the words by themselves, but "[w]e are the ones who fix the meaning so firmly that, after a while, it seems natural and inevitable" (Hall, 2016, p. 41-42, our translation)^{xi}.

In spite of this, these meanings can also change over time, since not even the codes, developed by social conventions, are absolute and immutable, as the author points out.

These issues concerning representation are resumed in our analysis in order to investigate which ideals about what it means to be a translator are being reproduced both in the field of common sense and in the academic field to the point of crystallizing and, consequently, attributing theoretically contradictory identities to the translator.

Identities in course

To address topics that concern the representation of the translator's identity constitution, some questionnaires answered by students from the first to the fourth year of the Bachelor's Degree in Languages with Major in Translation undergraduate course^{xii}, from São Paulo State University (Unesp), campus of São José do Rio Preto were used^{xiii}. Our corpus was formulated based on part of the answers we obtained from these questionnaires during a recent survey. When interpreting the students' discourses, we carried out a qualitative analysis through a case study that revisits and highlights the theoretical concepts listed previously.

In order to briefly discuss the method used in our research, we rely on one of the Robert K. Yin's works, in which the author investigates issues concerning the case study. In *Estudo de caso: planejamento e métodos*^{xiv} (2001), Yin states that a researcher can develop his work based on the case study method whenever he has a little control over the data to be analyzed and especially when his study is related to contemporary issues.

Also dealing with the nature of this type of research, Paiva states in "Métodos de pesquisa qualitativa" (2019) that the case study has a natural research character, as it aims to analyze issues that occur in natural environments, that is, environments that do not need to be created for the study to happen.

According to Yin (2001), the researcher could use the case study method "when he deliberately wanted to deal with contextual conditions — believing that they could be highly relevant to his study phenomenon."^{xv} (Yin, 2001, p. 32, our translation). In addition, as stated by the theorist, the case study is not a method of data collection, but rather a broad research method that usually makes use of several variables presented in the collected data and is based on the theoretical propositions listed in each research.

When analyzing the data, the author deals with the importance to examine the various evidences under consideration and to bring to the research the different interpretations that can be made of what is being analyzed.

Before starting the analysis, we will make a brief outline of the course to which this research is linked based on its Pedagogical Project. The Bachelor's Degree in Languages with Major in Translation course, from Unesp, campus of São José do Rio Preto, is recognized by MEC^{xvi} Ordinance n°. 77, of 02/18/1983 and by CEE-GP^{xvii} Ordinance n°. 429, of 11/11/2002. After several changes in its curricular proposal, Unesp Resolution n°. 33, of 03/18/2005, was approved, through which some changes were made to the course structure. With a minimum duration of four years, the course is full time and annual, and offers 32 vacancies for students taking the entrance exam of Unesp. According to the Pedagogical Project presented on the university's website, the objective of the course is to train professionals to work in the areas of translation and version of technical, scientific, literary and commercial texts.

Since the recognition of the course, as mentioned in its Pedagogical Project, students have the opportunity to learn two foreign languages, namely a Foreign Language A, English or French, and a Foreign Language B, Spanish or Italian. Although they study two languages, students graduate only with qualification in the A language, that is, in English or French. The

choice of the languages to be studied depends firstly on the ranking of the students in the entrance exam. Thus, the students with the best ranking have an advantage at the time of this selection.

In addition to the disciplines mentioned above, the course has several subjects that are considered essential for the training of translators, among them a translation internship carried out in the last year of the course. In order to present the contents studied throughout the four years of the course, we present below some tables containing all the disciplines and their respective hours.

Table 1

Disciplines of the 1st year and hours

Disciplines – 1st year	Hours
Spanish/Italian Language I	180
French/English Language I	180
Latin	90
Theory of Literature	90
Special Topics in Portuguese Language	180
Introduction to Linguistics	60
Introduction to Translation Norms	60

Source: Oliveira & Deângeli (2021).

Table 2

Disciplines of the 2nd year and hours

Disciplines – 2nd year	Hours
Translation Theories I	60
Writing Practice in French/English I	60
Translation Practice in French/English I	60
Translation Practice in Spanish/Italian I	6
Introduction to Terminology and Translation Techniques	60
French/English Language II	120
Spanish/Italian Language II	120
Writing Practice in Portuguese	120
Brazilian Culture I	90
Sociolinguistics Applied to Translation	60

Source: Oliveira & Deângeli (2021).

Table 3

Disciplines of the 3rd year and hours

Disciplines – 3rd year	Hours
Translation Theories II	60
Writing Practice in French/English II	60
Translation Practice in French/English II	60

Translation Practice in Spanish/Italian II	60
French/English Language III	90
Spanish/Italian Language III	60
French/English Culture	60
French/English Literature	60
Reading Practice in Portuguese	90
Semantics and Pragmatics	60
Brazilian Culture II	60

Source: Oliveira & Deângeli (2021).

Table 4

Disciplines of the 4th year and hours

Disciplines – 4th year	Hours
Writing Practice in French/English III	60
Translation Practice in French/English III	60
French/English Translation Internship	240
Translation Practice in Spanish/Italian III	60
French/English Language IV	60
Spanish/Italian Language IV	90
North American/French Culture	60
North American/French Literature	60
Stylistics of the Portuguese Language	90

Source: Oliveira & Deângeli (2021).

For a better performance of all the disciplines mentioned, the course has some resources that are made available by the university. Among them are: six specialized classrooms with multimedia projector and video and audio devices, where the learning of foreign languages, literatures and cultures happens; a language lab; and a translation workshop. Among the various objectives of the creation of the translation workshop is the opening to the internal and external public with a view to receiving translation requests. In addition, students also have access to ERIC (English Resource Information Centre); CRIF (French Resource Information Centre); to the CEEI (Spanish and Italian Studies Centre) and the Teletandem Brasil Project, in which, in a partnership between Unesp and some foreign universities, students have the opportunity to establish contact and exchange knowledge with natives from other countries.

Thus, based on the theories listed in the first topic and on some selected discourses about the translator's identity configuration, we propose, to continue, the analysis of part of the data obtained.

Analysis fragments

Based on the corpus gathered, we then outline a qualitative analysis of part of the answers^{xviii} to one of the questions listed in the questionnaires, which refers to the inquiry of what it means, for the students, to be a translator. Our intention is to reflect on how such discourses are linked to the identity (trans)formations of the students who participate in this research and linked to certain representations about what it is to be a translator, reproduced in society.

It is worth clarifying that at no time did the students identify themselves in the questionnaires, thus assuring the anonymity of all those involved in the research.

In order to facilitate the handling of the corpus, questionnaires from S1 (subject number 1) to S97 (subject number 97) were enumerated, and, as already mentioned, only a few excerpts were chosen from the 97 answers we obtained.

The following fragments aim, then, to problematize ingrained and sometimes contestable beliefs, which concern the being (of the) translator.

The translator as bridge

14

Among the 97 questionnaires analyzed, 29 describe the translator as a "bridge" between two languages/cultures. In their answers, the students refer to the notion of bridge in different ways, one time as a "transmission of meanings", another time as an "adaptation of content" from one language/culture to another, or as a "transport of notions" from a source text to a target text.

This idea reproduced by the students reinforces, in our view, a paradigm according to which ". . . translation is conceived as transport or transfer or substitution of meanings by equivalent meanings in another language . . .^{xix}" (Rodrigues, 2012, p. 355, our translation). Thus, the search for equivalence in translation, the desire for fidelity to the original text or to the author of the original work are elements that permeate their imaginaries and seem to reaffirm the ideal of neutrality in/of translation as well as the effacement of the translator subject, since the "translator is a bridge", as we can observe in the following fragments.

Excerpt 1

Being a translator for me, in addition to a cultural and intellectual privilege, means being a bridge between cultures, someone who diffuses information and I consider it a profession of high responsibility.^{xx} (S1)

I am still searching for the meaning of being a translator, but one of my thoughts is that the translator is a bridge between people . . . It is working hard for a good end. A work for which one is and is not recognized. Being a translator is one of the most rewarding things that someone can be.^{xxi} (S39)

It is possible to verify that, in the discourse of S1, very complimentary qualities are attributed to the translator subject. The fact that the student considers the translator as a bridge is also seen as something positive that they associate with a "cultural and intellectual privilege". For being a "bridge", the translator acts as "someone who diffuses information", he propagates knowledge elsewhere, so he "transports" languages and cultures, tasks which, according to his vision, impose on himself a "high responsibility".

In S39, the student reveals that they do not know yet how to define what it is to be a translator, as it can be seen in the phrase: "I am still searching for the meaning". However, from this elusiveness and search for meaning, something seems to tell them that "the translator is a bridge between two people". This image of "bridge" is also associated with a profession that gives a lot of satisfaction to the subject, which leads the student to affirm that "being a translator is one of the most rewarding things that someone can be", "it is working for a good end". But, as shown in the excerpt, the student "recognizes" that the translator *métier* oscillates between visibility and invisibility: "[it is] a work for which one is and is not recognized." Thus, on the one hand, there is a very valuable perception of the profession, from an intellectual and human point of view, as attest the phrases used by the student; on the other hand, it is recognized that the occupation is not valued ("A job for which one is and is not recognized"), and here, perhaps, it alludes to the economic aspects of the translation market. As Darin points out, these contradictory images seem, for a long time, to occupy the space of translation:

From the biblical curse of Babel sentenced by God to the machine translation, the assessments that one time emphasize the failure of the translation activity and its inferior and precarious result, and another time the nobility of its mission and its inestimable social value, are unquestioning. The creation of positive or negative stereotypes about the figure of the translator comes from writers, literary critics, philosophers and language scholars, translation readers and the translators themselves.^{xxii} (Darin, 2010, p. 74)

From a mere bridge, a carrier of meanings, what can be seen in the following fragments is a subject capable of intervening in the text and reframing its meanings.

The translator as transformative

It was also possible to note, in the various discourses analyzed, the reference to the fact that the translator is a transformative of meanings, thus being responsible for interpreting the original text and, from their interpretation, "creating" a new text. In this regard, the translation also acquires other meanings and is conceived as a palimpsest, that is, a process that implies the "scraping" of a (source) text and the creation of another text, giving space for subjectivity and visibility of the translator (cf. Arrojo, 1986). In this way, the notion of fidelity is also understood in a new perspective, as the translator becomes "faithful" to their own interpretation and not to the original text or its author. Let us observe some excerpts from the students' answers that are related to this other identity of the translator.

16

Excerpt 2

The translator is, above all, a mediator between cultures, someone who must be critical, active and creative when interpreting and reframing a text from someone else and from another language . . . ^{xxiii} (S69)

It means producing a new text from an original. It is an attempt to update this text with possible means for the production of meanings in the context of the target language which resemble the meanings constructed by the translator when reading the original text. . . . ^{xxiv} (S37)

Being a translator is transforming the meanings, rewriting what [was] said/spoken in a language to another one . . . ^{xxv} (S40)

In these discourses, refuting the idea that associates the translator with a bridge, a faithful and neutral subject, they are emphasized the views of a "critical", "active" and "creative" translator. When interpreting the "original", he "rewrites" and "reframes" the text(s); thus, the translation results from an individual and subjective experience. In this context, translating is, then, according to Coracini:

... transforming, producing a text ... that will be neither entirely new/different, because it takes as its starting point the base text, nor totally the same, because every interpretation inevitably generates another text and every text is "fabric", is "texture" that, because it is "hidden" ". . . it can take centuries to undo its cloth. The cloth wrapping the cloth".^{xxvi} (Coracini, 2007, pp. 177-178, our translation).

The translation involving the translator, the translator involving their text, in infinite new meanings, which transform the sense, rewrite what was "said" (and perhaps what was unsaid).

Still, in S69, the use of the word "mediator" stands out. If such a role attributed to the translator evokes, above all, the image of an "intermediary", someone who, as Coracini questions, must "reproduce a certain work in another language^{xxviii}" (2007, p. 174, our translation), here, the mediator becomes critical, active, therefore, they act as a transformative, assuming a creative function.

S37 and S40 are similarly positioned, since the phrases "producing a new text" and "transforming the meanings" also point out the translator's intervention in the translation process.

In S37, let's look at the use of the words "attempt", "update" and "resemble" in the sentence: "It is an *attempt to update* this text with possible means for the production of meanings in the context of the target language which *resemble* the meanings constructed by the translator when reading the original text." (Our emphasis). It is noticed that the subject seems to hesitate between the idea of a translator who creates meanings and that of a mere meaning reproductive, since those who "update" do not necessarily create anything new; we should also add the fact that the "update", as expressed by the student, must "resemble" a supposedly original text/meaning.

It is between the illusion of fidelity and the desire for intervention that identities, that are always shifting and sometimes contradictory about the translator, are built, as we will see below.

Between the desire and the impossibility of fidelity

If doubts, uncertainties and contradictions are characteristics of the postmodern subject, crossed by the unconscious and the fissure that is established in its constitution, it is not surprising that the discourse, as a production of this/these subjectivity(ies), be also marked by these same uncertainties and contradictions. It is in this context that we intend to read and question the fragments that follow, in which the students seem to oscillate between one pole and another, that is, between affirmation and denial, between certainty and doubt, between the desire to be faithful and the impossibility of being so. Thus, they state that [being a translator is]:

Excerpt 3

Transmitting the content of a text in a source language to a target language. Being "faithful" as far as possible to the original text^{xxviii} (S85)

Being a translator means . . . being able to transfer, adapt and pass to the desired language what was done in the original work. Because of this, translations of different people will never be the same, due to the subjective attribute carried by the translator . . .^{xxix} (S4)

18

In these discourses, the students implicitly deal with the representation of the translator as a bridge when they address the issue of fidelity. However, as observed in S85, the fidelity to which they allude is partial, occurring only "as far as possible". The use of quotation marks in the word "faithful" is also emphasized in this fragment, which makes us read this assertion with caution, as perhaps it is intended to emphasize that fidelity is something inconclusive; although they consider translation as a "transmission of content" from "a source language to a target language".

In the discourse of S4, the student seems to contradict himself by defending on the one hand the translator's image as a "bridge" — since they must "be able to transfer, adapt and pass to the desired language what was done in the original work" — and by punctuating on the other hand "the subjective attribute that the translator carries".

In this context, it is interesting to highlight the issue of the "in-between" as addressed by Coracini (2007). According to the author, the translator is not situated in only one language/culture, as well as they are not only in one place, but in several at the same time, that is, they do not have a fixed identity; they transit incessantly between plural identities that contradict and "complete" each other. According to Coracini:

The translator is, therefore, between the desire for fidelity and the impossibility of being faithful; between the search for the author's intentions and the impossibility of that encounter; between the conscious and the unconscious; between the need and the impossibility of translation . . .^{xxx} (Coracini, 2007, p. 180, our translation)

Indeed, it is from this discursive and translational "between" that they describe themselves and the challenges of being a translator:

Excerpt 4

For me, being a translator means being able to read and understand a text in the source language and pass the message of that text into the target language, making the necessary changes and interventions.^{xxx} (S2)

The translator is the guy who, at some point, assumes the role of the one who receives the discourse, and at another, the role of the author of the discourse. The translator needs to be very cautious in both, in the perception of the text and in the reconstruction, reproduction of it. Being a translator is being a bridge between two languages/cultures.^{xxxii} (S30)

19

Serving as a bridge to *anzar*^{xxxiii} a river that does not exactly have fixed banks. Some boards are lost along the way and others are created.^{xxxiv} (S22)

In S2, three interesting issues are pointed out by the student: firstly, the conception about translation competence, viewed here as a capacity acquired by the translator because they must "be able to read and understand"; secondly, the allusion to the fact that the translator is a "bridge", since they must also be able to "pass the message" from one language to another, and, finally, contrasting with this last argument, the idea that the translator must make "the necessary changes and interventions" in the text, that is, intervene in the text. The use of the words "changes" and "interventions" seems to refer to a concept of translation in which the translator is also an author. And here, again, the discourse points one thing and another at the same time: the translator as a mere conveyor and as a mediator.

Something similar occurs in the discourse of S30. At first, the subject assumes that the translator is, at some point, author of their own text, and that, therefore, they must be attentive to "reconstruct" it, that is, they must "scrape carefully this parchment". However, right after

that, the student refers to the translator as a "bridge between two languages/cultures". Thus, they hesitate between "reconstruction" and "reproduction"; between the "passage" and the "bridge".

In S22 we also see marks of these contradictions. Metaphorically, the student states that the translator must serve as a bridge to cross a river, but it is not just any river, since its banks are not fixed. So, what could be a simple transport is unsettled by the non-fixity of the banks. In this crossing, the translator "navigates in turbulent waters in which the (ideal) desire for fidelity and the awareness, even if partial, of their impossibility are mixed^{xxxv}" (Coracini, 2007, p. 185, our translation). As if the non-fixed banks of the river were not enough, it is also announced that "[s]ome boards (sic) are lost on the way and others are created", in this way, it is suggested that the load never reaches its destination completely. Poking around, wandering and "making mistakes", the translator always walks between the (im)possible.

What is noticeable in the discourses of these students is that the translator's identity is marked by heterogeneity and difference. By defining what it is to be a translator based on two opposing aspects of translation, the subjects discard the defense of a limiting and forceful view of what it is to be a translator, unconsciously emphasizing the various identities that the subjects can assume.

Based on these arguments and from the analysis outlined, we bring some notes below.

Some considerations

In this study, we were drawn to the contradictory images reproduced by the students about what it is to be a translator. We understand that the comparison between translator and bridge, reproduced both in the field of common sense and in the academic environment, reinforces the idea of a conception of translation as something "neutral", without interference, and a conception of the translator as a subject "faithful" to the original, since as a bridge they would be responsible only for transporting (faithfully) the meanings from one language to another. These representations seem to lead to the effacement of this translator subject. However, in a contradictory way, in their discourses, the students also defend the empowerment of the translator and suggest that they intervene in an "active", "critical" and "creative" way in the translated text, thus claiming them a place of speaking and a space of resistance. Thereby, they seem to oscillate, as pointed out by Darin (2010), between melancholy and the idealization of the translator figure. Darin, resuming the thought of Lages (1992), affirms that:

The text of Lages offers an analysis of the views of translators, writers and theorists about translation, through the bias of Psychoanalysis. Her central argument is that the examination of the translator's traditional and more widespread images reveals one time a discourse marked by melancholy and deep sadness, another an idealization of the figure of the translator, understood as a tendency to mania (euphoria), a tendency that is opposite and complementary to melancholy. (Darin, 2010, p. 74, our translation)^{xxxvi}

Controlled by melancholy and euphoria, the translators express their desire to be heard and make themselves visible in their discourses and their translations. They certainly consider the bridge as an anchorage, but they know that the crossing reserves surprises and it is not done without deviations. They believe it is possible to transport the load, however, they admit that it might overflow. It is right there, where the here is elsewhere, between melancholy and euphoria, the conscious and the unconscious, the oneself and the other, that the translator is found. It is in this infinitely plural place, without fixed banks, where the translation is, responding to the demands of the market, sometimes betraying their beliefs, their authors and their languages, that they can be perceived as subjects of their discourses.

21

Bridges will always exist, translators also will... and they will allow us to come and go, cross, make mistakes, even if only questions remain from the route...

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ⁱ T.N.: "The question of cultural identity" is the title of the original text written by Stuart Hall and published by the Politic Press and the Open University Press, in 1992. Although some of the works cited in this article have their original texts in English, we chose to do our translation of the excerpts that appear in the text.

ⁱⁱ "O tradutor se encontra, pois, entre a ânsia de fidelidade e a impossibilidade de ser fiel; entre a busca das intenções do autor e a impossibilidade desse encontro; entre o consciente e o inconsciente; entre a necessidade e a impossibilidade da tradução; entre a reprodução e a criação; entre a ilusão do controle de si, do seu dizer, dos efeitos de sentido de seu dizer e o inefável; enfim, o tradutor se encontra entre o desejo do conforto da determinação e a contingência desconfortável da indeterminação, terreno movediço onde os sentidos deslizam, escapam, adiando *ad infinitum* o tão desejado porto seguro e o conforto da totalização; entre a necessidade da invisibilidade e o desejo de um reconhecimento social (e econômico); entre a língua do outro e a língua dita materna, já que o tradutor também poderia dizer, juntamente com Derrida (1996), 'só tenho uma língua, ela não me pertence', ou com Lacan: 'sou estrangeiro em minha própria casa', ou ainda com Kristeva (1988): 'o estranho

habita em nós', ou com Rimbaud: 'Eu é um outro' – e é na e pela identificação com o outro que todo sujeito define sua identidade que, tal como a linguagem, desliza, escapa, derrapa..." (Coracini, 2007, p. 180, grifos da autora)

ⁱⁱⁱ It is worth mentioning that in this article we intend to talk about two competing approaches that are explicit in the discourses of translators in training about what it is to be a translator: the linguistic foundation approach and the approach rooted in a post-modern orientation.

^{iv} ". . . o processo é tratado como asséptico, como uma mera passagem, como se a cultura, ou os valores vigentes na cultura que produz a tradução, não contaminassem de alguma forma a prática, não exercessem papel importante na relação que o tradutor estabelece entre texto original e tradução . . ." (Rodrigues, 2012, p. 357-358).

^v "As representações sociais são entidades quase tangíveis. Elas circulam, se entrecruzam e se cristalizam continuamente, através duma palavra, dum gesto, ou duma reunião, em nosso mundo cotidiano. Elas impregnam a maioria de nossas relações estabelecidas, os objetos que nós produzimos ou consumimos e as comunicações que estabelecemos. Nós sabemos que elas correspondem, dum lado, à substância simbólica que entra na sua elaboração e, por outro lado, à prática específica que produz essa substância, do mesmo modo como a ciência ou o mito correspondem a uma prática científica ou mítica." (Moscovi, 2003, p. 10)

^{vi} "Mesmo quando uma pessoa ou objeto não se adequam exatamente ao modelo, nós o forçamos a assumir determinada forma, entrar em determinada categoria, na realidade, a se tornar idêntico aos outros, sob pena de não ser nem compreendido, nem decodificado." (Moscovi, 2003, p. 34)

^{vii} "É por meio da representação que . . . a identidade e a diferença passam a existir. Representar significa, neste caso, dizer: 'essa é a identidade', 'a identidade é isso'".

^{viii} "Quem tem o poder de representar tem o poder de definir e determinar a identidade. É por isso que a representação ocupa um lugar tão central na teorização contemporânea sobre a identidade e nos movimentos sociais ligados à identidade. Questionar a identidade e a diferença significa, nesse contexto, questionar os sistemas de representação que lhe dão suporte e sustentação." (Silva, 2012, p. 91)

^{ix} T.N.: *Representation* is the title of the original text written by Stuart Hall and published by Sage Publications, in 2013.

^x "em toda cultura há sempre uma grande diversidade de significados a respeito de qualquer tema e mais de uma maneira de representá-lo ou interpretá-lo" (Hall, 2016, p. 20)

^{xi} "Somos nós quem fixamos o sentido tão firmemente que, depois de um tempo, ele parece natural e inevitável" (Hall, 2016, p. 41-42)

^{xii} We opted for elaborating this article in the context of this specific course since the student responsible for this work graduated recently with a Bachelor's Degree in Languages with Major in Translation of the same university.

^{xiii} The questionnaires are part of the corpus elaborated by us in recent research. Before distributing the questionnaires to the students, the project related to this research and the IC (Informed Consent), necessary to the development of this study, were submitted and approved by the Committee for Ethics in Research (CEP). Process number: 99305518.0.0000.5466. Ethics Committee: 5466 – Unesp – Biosciences, Languages and Exact Sciences Institute/ Campus of São José do Rio Preto/Ibilce.

^{xiv} T.N.: *Case study research: design and methods* is the title of the original text written by Robert K. Yin and published by Sage Publications, in 1994.

^{xv} "quando deliberadamente quisesse lidar com condições contextuais — acreditando que elas poderiam ser altamente pertinentes ao seu fenômeno de estudo." (Yin, 2001, p. 32)

^{xvi} T.N.: The Ministry of Education in Brazil.

^{xvii} T.N.: A State Counsel of Education.

^{xviii} Is it worth mentioning that the spelling presented in the answers of the questionnaires were kept as they were given.

^{xix} ". . . concebe-se a tradução como transporte ou transferência ou substituição de significados por significados equivalentes em outra língua . . ." (Rodrigues, 2012, p. 355)

^{xx} Ser tradutor para mim, além de um privilégio cultural e intelectual, significa ser ponte entre culturas, difusor de informação e considero uma profissão de alta responsabilidade. (S1)

^{xxi} Ainda estou em busca do significado de ser tradutor, mas um de meus pensamentos é que o tradutor é uma ponte entre pessoas . . . É trabalhar arduamente para um bom fim. Um trabalho pelo qual se é e não é reconhecido. Ser tradutor é uma das coisas mais gratificantes que alguém pode ser. (S39)

^{xxii} "Da maldição bíblica de Babel sentenciada por Deus à tradução automática, são incontestáveis as avaliações que ora enfatizam o fracasso da atividade tradutória e seu resultado inferior e precário, ora a nobreza de sua missão e seu inestimável valor social. A criação de estereótipos positivos ou negativos sobre a figura do tradutor parte de escritores, críticos literários, filósofos e estudiosos da linguagem, leitores de tradução e dos próprios tradutores." (Darin, 2010, p. 74)

^{xxiii} O tradutor é, antes de tudo, um mediador entre culturas, alguém que deve ser crítico, ativo e criativo ao interpretar e resignificar (sic) um texto de outra pessoa e outra língua . . . (S69)

OLIVEIRA, Andressa Franco; DEÂNGELI, Maria Angélica. About the Possible Translator's Identities: Some "Bridges" of Question. *Belas Infêis*, Brasília, v. 10, n. 2, p. 01-24, 2021. e-ISSN: 2316-6614.

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.26512/belasinfeis.v10.n2.2021.32915>

^{xxiv} Significa produzir um novo texto a partir de um original. É uma tentativa de atualizar esse texto com meios possíveis para a produção de sentidos no contexto da língua de chegada que se assemelhem com os sentidos construídos pelo tradutor ao ler o texto original . . . (S37)

^{xxv} Ser tradutor é transformar os sentidos, reescrevendo aquilo que [foi] dito/falado em uma língua para outra . . . (S40)

^{xxvi} ". . . transformar, produzir um texto . . . que não será nem totalmente novo/diferente, porque toma como ponto de partida o texto-base, nem totalmente o mesmo, porque toda interpretação gera inevitavelmente outro texto e todo texto é tecido, é textura que, por se encontrar dissimulada, escondida ' . . . pode levar séculos para desfazer seu pano. O pano envolvendo o pano'." (Coracini, 2007, p. 177-178).

^{xxvii} "reproduzir em outro idioma uma dada obra" (Coracini, 2007, p. 174)

^{xxviii} Transmitir o conteúdo de um texto em uma língua de partida para uma língua de chegada. Sendo "fiel" na medida do possível ao texto original (S85)

^{xxix} Ser tradutor significa . . . ser capaz de transferir, adaptar e passar para a língua que se deseja o que foi feito na obra original. Visto isso traduções de diferentes pessoas nunca serão iguais, devido a carga subjetiva que carrega o tradutor . . . (S4)

^{xxx} O tradutor se encontra, pois, entre a ânsia de fidelidade e a impossibilidade de ser fiel; entre a busca das intenções do autor e a impossibilidade desse encontro; entre o consciente e o inconsciente; entre a necessidade e a impossibilidade da tradução . . . (Coracini, 2007, p. 180)

^{xxxi} Para mim, ser tradutor significa ser capaz de ler e entender um texto em na (sic) língua de partida e passar a mensagem desse texto para a língua de chegada, fazendo as alterações e intervenções necessárias. (S2)

^{xxxii} O tradutor é o cara que, em algum momento, assume o papel do receptor do discurso, e em outro, assume o papel do autor do discurso. O tradutor precisa ser muito cauteloso em ambos, tanto na percepção do texto como na reconstrução, reprodução dele. Ser tradutor é ser uma ponte entre duas línguas/culturas. (S30)

^{xxxiii} T.N.: The word "anzar" does not exist in Portuguese. Taking into consideration the phonetic similarity between the words "anzar" and "andar", this last one meaning "to walk", we inferred, then, that the student might have wanted to express this meaning of "to walk" as "to cross". Nevertheless, we opted to maintain the word "anzar" since what we exposed here is just a hypothesis of reading.

^{xxxiv} Servir de ponte para anzar (sic) um rio que não exatamente tem margens fixas. Algumas tabuas (sic) se perdem no caminho e outras são criadas. (S22)

^{xxxv} "navega em águas turbulentas em que se misturam o desejo (ideal) de fidelidade e a consciência, ainda que parcial, de sua impossibilidade" (Coracini, 2007, p. 185).

^{xxxvi} "O texto de Lages oferece uma análise das visões de tradutores, escritores e teóricos a respeito da tradução, pelo viés da Psicanálise. Seu argumento central é o de que o exame das imagens tradicionais e mais difundidas do tradutor revela ora um discurso marcado pela melancolia e por uma profunda tristeza, ora uma idealização da figura do tradutor, entendida como tendência à mania (euforia), tendência essa oposta e complementar à melancolia." (Darin, 2010, p. 74)