



Universidad de Valladolid

FACULTAD de FILOSOFÍA Y LETRAS
DEPARTAMENTO de FILOLOGÍA INGLESA
Grado en Estudios Ingleses

TRABAJO DE FIN DE GRADO

An Analysis of the Translation of the Harlem
Renaissance Novel *The Blacker the Berry*

Andrea Cano de Gardoqui Díez

Tutor: Qianting Yuan

2018/2019

ABSTRACT

The objective of this paper is to review the Spanish translation of the Harlem Renaissance novel *The Blacker the Berry* originally written by Wallace Thurman and to disassemble the translation process carried out by the translator Susana Prieto Mori. With this as a backdrop, the methodology adopted in the present paper is based on the model for translated-oriented text analysis proposed by Nord on the one hand and the seven translation procedures proposed by Vinay and Darbelnet on the other. More specifically, the present analysis will be carried out first by listing the principle translation problems faced by the translator and then by explaining the preferred translation procedures used to overcome them. The conclusion will be drawn based on the results of the analysis in order to evaluate the effectiveness and faithfulness of the translation.

Keywords: Literary Translation, text analysis, translation procedures, translation problems, *The Blacker the Berry*, Harlem Renaissance.

RESUMEN

El objetivo de este estudio es revisar la traducción al español de la novel del Renacimiento de Harlem *La Fruta más Negra* originalmente escrita por Wallace Thurman y descomponer el proceso de traducción llevado a cabo por la traductora Susana Prieto Mori. Con esto como telón de fondo, la metodología adoptada en el presente estudio para construir los cimientos del presente análisis se basa en el modelo orientado al análisis de textos traducidos propuesto por Nord, por un lado, y los siete procedimientos de tracción propuestos por Vinay y Darbelnet, por otro. Más específicamente, el presente análisis se llevará a cabo en primer lugar enumerando los principales problemas de traducción a los que se enfrenta el traductor y a continuación, explicando los procedimientos de traducción preferidos para afrontarlos. La conclusión se extraerá en función de los resultados del análisis para evaluar la eficacia y la fidelidad de la traducción.

Palabras clave: Traducción literaria, análisis textual, técnicas de traducción, problemas de traducción, *La Fruta más Negra*, Renacimiento de Harlem.

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1. Introduction

Wallace Thurman's first novel *The Blacker the Berry*, was a pioneer of its time since it was one of the first literary pieces that investigated the racial prejudices within the Black community in North America. The novel was translated by Susana Prieto Mori and published by Defausta in 2017 under the name of *La Fruta más Negra*. It is the only Spanish translation of the novel at the moment.

The purpose of the present thesis is to establish an analysis of the Spanish translation in order to evaluate effectiveness and faithfulness to the original novel. I will proceed to analyse the translation by means the methodology adapted from the model of text analysis proposed by Nord and from the translation procedures proposed by Vinay and Darbelnet.

The present thesis is structured in the following way: first, a brief summary of the novel will be presented in order to provide some background information which will help the readers to better understand the translation. After that, a theoretical background will be presented containing a detailed description of the translation theories proposed by Nord and Vinay and Darbelnet which will serve as the theoretical base for the analysis of the thesis. Next, the methodology adopted in the present study will be described. The results of the analysis will be presented afterwards followed by a discussion section in which an evaluation of the Spanish translation will be realized. Last but not least, conclusions will be drawn based on the analysis and discussion.

1.1 Plot Summary of *The Blacker the Berry*

Before starting off with the real gist of my paper, I would like to begin with a brief introduction to the novel in which, the plot summary will be addressed in order to achieve a better comprehension of the later analysis.

The Blacker the Berry tells the story of Emma Lou, a young black woman born in an Afro-American family of fair-skinned people that feels constantly rejected and excluded from the society in general. Her gender, her really dark skin colour as well as her ethnicity, makes that she feels repudiated not only by her peers, but also by her family. Trying to escape from this sense of abandonment and isolation, she heads first to Los Angeles, where she hopelessly finds herself in the same social situation.

Desperately, she moves later to Harlem where she tries harder to find her place in the world. As a result of the attempt to be valued somewhere she bleaches her skin, goes to a few interviews to get a respectable job and on her way stumbles with a number of indecorous men. She is always in the unsuccessfully search of the “right kind of people” that not even herself knows exactly how they are.

Emma Lou ends in the very last moment the most important relationship she has achieved, returning therefore to her beginnings when she was feeling lonely and desolate. Incapable of locating pride in her dark black body, Emma Lou accepts defeat.

2. Theoretical Background

In this section, the translation theories proposed by Nord and by Vinay and Darbelnet will be discussed in detail respectively. The two theories have different focuses. In the present thesis, I am going to adopt a methodology based on these two theories in order to carry out a comprehensive analysis of the Spanish translation of the novel.

2.1 Nord’s Model for Translation-Oriented Text Analysis: Translation Problems

Nord proposes a holistic and exhaustive model for translation-oriented text analysis in translation. According to this model, text analysis should be carried out in both the source text (ST) and the target text (TT) by means of comparison. Functionality is highlighted in Nord’s model which is in accordance with the *Skopos* theory proposed by Reiss and Vermeer in 1984 which claims that translation is considered a human action and therefore, is determined by a purpose (i.e. *skopos*) established by the initiator (i.e. the translator). Nord considers functionality as “the most important criterion for a translation” (28). This means that the deciding factor in the translation process is the function of the TT which should be in line with the initiator’s needs (Nord 9). Nord further points out that “one possible TT function may be to “imitate” the effects of the original ST reception” (5) and that “a translation should fulfil certain “translation instructions” ... explicit description of the prospective target situation” (8). According to this theory, a translation should follow the conventions assigned to a text type in a target culture (TC).

Although Nord's theory deals with several aspects of classification of a ST that she considers must be examined before the translation process begins, in this section, only the last part of Nord's model of text analysis, namely, the classification of translation problems will be dealt with, which will serve as the base for the analysis of the Spanish translation of the novel *La Fruta más Negra*. These translation problems are arranged into four categories based on their "generalizability", from those problems which may occur in any translation task to those which may occur in one concrete translation task, namely, *pragmatic translation problems, cultural translation problems, linguistic translation problems and text specific problems* (Nord 158-159). They will be discussed one at a time afterwards. However before doing this, it is essential to differentiate between translation difficulties and translation problems so better understand the concept.

2.1.1 Translation Difficulties *versus* Translation Problems

According to Nord, a translation problem is "an objective problem which every translator has to solve during a particular translation task" (151). It may arise to anyone willing to translate the text regardless of the level of competence or of the conditions of his/her work (151). Such problems were named previously and they are what I am going to deal with in the present thesis. Translation difficulties, on the other hand, are subjective and personal from any translator depending without exception on his/her competence and other working conditions like the deadline for instance (151). In fact, translation difficulties may disappear with time as the translator gains experience while translation problems are constant.

2.1.2 Translation Problems as Stated by Nord

The division among pragmatic translation problems, culture translation problems, linguistic translation problems and text specific problems is put forward by Nord to analyse any text to be translated. They will be explained below one by one.

- (1) Pragmatic translation problems emerge from the differences established between the communicative situations of the ST and those of the TT. According to Nord, these problems "are present in any translation task, irrespective of the languages

or cultures involved or of the direction of translation” (158) These kind of problems can be identified using what she called the “extra-textual factors” (39-70) of a text: the sender, the sender’s intention, the recipient’s expectation, the medium/channel, the place, the time and the motive of communication and the text function. I will deal with these extra-textual factors of the translation in the analysis in order to identify the existing pragmatic translation problems. An example of a pragmatic problem could be the distinction between the ways of addressing “you” in English and in Spanish, since in the English language “you” can be either formal or informal depending on the context while in Spanish, there is a distinction between “tú” and “usted”, the latter being used only in formal contexts. The sender’s intention then, could be confusing and may create a pragmatic problem for the translator.

(2) Culture translation problems result from differences between cultures. This is basically noticed with the presence of culture-specific terms which can be challenging to translate but a fundamental key for the translation process. According to Aixelá, culture-specific items are “those textually actualized items whose function and connotations in a ST involve a translation problem in their transference to a target text, whenever this problem is a product of the nonexistence of the referred item or of its different inter textual status in the cultural system of the readers of the TT” (58).

(3) Linguistic translation problems deal with the structural differences between two languages, in particular, in lexis and sentence structure (159), for instance, the use of pronominal expressions in English and in Spanish. Some languages, like English employ pronouns more frequently due to its very elaborate systems. However, other languages like Spanish use pronouns in a lesser quantity, as the subject is already implied by the finite verb. Another problem resulting from the linguistic field of a language is the area of meaning of a word, as remarked by Nida, “in one language the area of meaning of one word is never completely identical with the same area of meaning of a similar word in another language” (“Linguistics and Ethnology in Translation” 206). This is the case of the word

“ears” for example; in Spanish it might be translated as “orejas” or “oidos” depending on the context in which it appears. In any case, Nida presumes that cultural differences pose much more complicated and severe problems for translators than differences of language systems do (“Principles of Correspondence” 130).

- (4) Text- specific translation problems have to do with inherent complications of the ST; the innovations made by a specific text author could fall out within this category of problems. They can be occasionally complicated or differentiate but as Nord assures “any problem arising which cannot be classified as pragmatic, cultural or linguistic, has to be classified as text-specific translation problem” (160).

Nord’s suggested model have several pros being the most relevant one the valid application to any type of text. That means that it can be applied disregarding whether the text is poetic or scientific for example. It is also useful independently of the translator's level of competence without giving importance whether the translator is a professional or a trainee. Besides, this model is appropriate to use in both directions: both, into and out of the translator’s native language (1). Such advantages have been decisive in the inclusion of Nord’s model as a fundamental pillar of this analysis.

I will now proceed to discuss Vinay and Darbelnet’s theory about a set of translation procedures which will give possible solution to the problems addressed above by Nord.

2.2 Vinay and Darbelnet’s Method of Translation: Translation Procedures

Vinay and Darbelnet claim that the creation of relationships between the ST and the TT is an essential need within the process of translation (30). Taking the assumption that every single text can be translated as the point of departure, they put forward the classical taxonomy of seven translation procedures to help the translator “replicate the same situation as in the original, whilst using completely different wording” (342) and achieve an equivalence between the ST and the TT as its final outcome. Notwithstanding the countless methods or procedures, it may initially seem, they can be

condensed to just seven, disposed accordingly to the greater or lesser level of complexity (31); these are, namely, *literal translation, borrowing, calque, adaptation, modulation, equivalence, adaptation and transposition*. (31-39). They will be discussed one at a time below.

Vinay and Darbelnet start off by describing two main methods of translation that comprise the seven translation procedures:

- Direct Translation or Literal Translation
- Oblique Translation

Vinay and Darbelnet define direct translation as “the direct transfer of a source language (SL) text into a grammatically and idiomatically appropriate target language (TL) text in which the translator's task is limited to observing the adherence to the linguistic servitudes of the TL” (33-34). The two author point out that when the translator notices a gap between the ST and the TT, he/she can employ either a parallel category or a parallel concept to convey the meaning of the ST. Direct translation includes:

2.2.1 Borrowing

In how to deal with a lacuna, borrowing is the easiest of all translation methods. It is defined by Thomason and Kaufman as “the incorporation of foreign features into a group's native language by speakers of that language: the native language is maintained but is changed by the addition of the incorporated features” (137). The English word “sandwich” is an example of these kind of words “borrowed” by the Spanish language. Although existing another Spanish word to designate the item, “bocadillo”; the term “sandwich” has been that notoriously spread among the Spaniards that has been even included it within its lexicon.

2.2.2 Calque

Deeping further into borrowing words, there is one special category among them, the calque. This procedure takes place when an expression or usually a compound term from the ST is translated literally into the TT. Hatim and Munday differentiate two types of calque, the lexical, “when it respects the syntactic order of the elements in the TL, translating each word literally”, and the structural one, “when it introduces a new

construction into the TL because its original syntax has been ignored” (149). An example of lexical calque could be “self-service”, whose equivalent in Spanish is “auto servicio”. As it is noticeable it consists in a literal translation of words and in many occasions both terms can be used interchangeably. On the other hand, the structural calque is many times the product of erroneous connection between the elements of a sentence e.g. “to find guilty” translated as “encontrar culpable” instead of “declarar culpable”. The creation of the Spanglish language would be the result of this instance.

2.2.3 Literal Translation

Literal translation is a procedure that implies the direct transfer of a ST into a grammatically and idiomatically appropriate TT (Hatim and Munday 149). This procedure functions well between the English and Spanish languages due to the structural and metalinguistic parallelisms that often share; nevertheless, it would be considerably problematic if the languages to work with were English and Japanese since such parallelisms are found scarce in these two languages. Literal translation does not always work, that is why the other procedures exist. Normally, it is applied in the translation with simple sentences.

However, due to structural and metalinguistic differences between languages, certain stylistic effects are not achievable without modifying the lexis or the syntactic pattern in the TT. In this case, oblique translation should be adopted instead which offers the translator complete freedom in the process of translation and allows he/she to interpret the explicit contents of the ST in order to achieve equivalence. For instance, the English idiom “something is a piece of cake” means that something is very easy to do. However, in Spanish, its equivalent cannot be achieved by a literal translation; instead, the expression “esto es pan comido” (“this is eaten bread”) is its equivalence.

The oblique translation strategy includes the following procedures, from the least to the greatest degree of complexity:

2.2.4 Transposition

According to Hatim and Munday, transposition is a procedure that “involves replacing one-word class with another without changing the meaning of the message” as the act of “changing word class without changing meaning” (150). They additionally distinguish between two types of transpositions, the obligatory, that happens when only a transposition is accepted in the TT, and the optional, when the transposition used depends mostly on context and desired effect (150). In English “she likes swimming” would be translated as “le gusta nadar” instead of “le gusta nadando” in Spanish. The gerund becomes an infinitive to correctly follow the Spanish grammatical rules. This is why in this case the translation is obligatory. However, the sentence “in the cold night” can be translated as “en la noche fría” using a transposition or “en la fría noche” leaving it as it is. This would work within a poetical context for example, where the adjective does not have to come necessarily after the noun.

2.2.5 Modulation

The modulation procedure is defined as “a variation of the form of the message when the transfer from the source to the target language cannot be made directly” (Vinay and Darbelnet 88). Unlike transposition, which functions at a syntactic level, modulation “affects our mental categories since it is a changing in the point of view” (88). They distinguish two classes of modulation, recorder modulation, or standard modulation which is registered in Bilingual Dictionaries as they are conventionally established, and free modulation, “where the TL rejects the literal translation” (Bayar 11). The English sentence “It is not difficult to show” cannot be translated literally into “No es difícil de demostrar”. Although the translation is grammatically correct, it is preferable to translate it into the modulated Spanish version “Es fácil de demostrar”.

2.2.6 Equivalence

According to Vinay and Darbelnet, equivalence refers to a procedure that describes the same situation by using completely different stylistic or structural methods for producing equivalent texts (52). They describe it as something which is intrinsically cultural, that is why it works quite well with idioms, clichés or proverbs, being able to communicate the same idea, but by different means. For example, when saying “it is

raining cats and dogs” in English, its equivalent in Spanish would be “está lloviendo a mares”. Although not being a literal translation, both convey the same idea; it is raining heavily. It can be mistaken with “modulation”, as it is seen as an “extreme case” of this procedure, but it is associated with the semantic level, not with the lexical one.

2.2.7 Adaptation

Adaptation, or cultural equivalent, as stated by Newmark, is used in those cases in which the type of situation being referred to by the SL message is unknown in the TC (Cited by Lewandoska 176) and translators create a new situation that can be described as situational equivalence (Vinay and Darbelnet 52-53). The processes of modulation and adaptation can be complicated to differentiate sometimes. “To adapt” is to make suitable; to make to fit or suit naturally in a language; while “to modulate” is “to regulate”, to adjust the point of view of the thing said in order to also achieve naturalness.

Within this category of adaptation, Bayar puts forward three specific procedures of adapting the ST to the TT (16). The first one is the “Cultural Substitution” which happens when the translator uses equivalent words that are already prearranged in the TL, meeting the same aim as those of the SL. In other words, there is a substitution of cultural words of the SL by cultural words of the TL. Another procedure that Bayar distinguishes is “Paraphrase”, which takes place when the translator cannot find an equivalent cultural expression to make the substitution as it was shown previously referring to the cultural substitution. Paraphrasing a word or a sentence can be realized helped by adding some new information, explaining the already given information or by means of varying the word order. On the contrary, when none of the abovementioned procedures can be executed, the translator uses “omission” deciding as its name suggests, to ignore a word or words from the SL. In the English sentence “try this Christmas Pudding” for instance, the word “Christmas Pudding” can lead to confusion when translate it. Using the adaptation translational procedure and the three choices proposed by Bayar, it could be translated as “turrón” (cultural substitution), “pudding de Navidad” (paraphrase) or simply, “dulce” (omission).

3. Methodology

In the present paper, a text analysis of the Spanish translation of *The Blacker the Berry* realized by Susana Prieto Mori will be carried out on the basis of the translation model proposed by Nord and the translation procedures proposed by Vinay and Darbelnet as discussed in section 2. The purpose of the present paper is to explore the difficulties the translator may have encountered and how she has applied the appropriate procedures to achieve the translation under study. The translation difficulties will be categorised into four sets following Nord's model, namely, pragmatic translation problems, cultural translation problems, linguistic translation problems and text-specific problems, as discussed in section 2.1.

Once the translation problems are identified and classified, the application of the seven translation procedures put forward by Vinay and Darbelnet in the Spanish translation of the novel will be addressed and analysed as the solutions to the problems.

It is not coincidental that I have combined the two very different approaches as the methodology of the text analysis of the translation. On the one hand, Nord reckons that, essentially, the obstacles confronted by the translator are what have to be taken into account. According to her, the contrast between source culture (SC) and TC or between different periods of time, etc., will make these obstacles arise in a way that the translator will have to decide which problem-solving methods may be the most suitable. On the other hand, Vinay and Darbelnet bring these problem-solving methods in question to the fore.

In the following section, I will address the translation problems and the corresponding solutions found in Spanish translation of the novel *The Blacker the Berry* by providing examples.

The analysis will be presented hereunder in the following way:

Table X. Examples of (translation procedure in question) in *La Fruta más Negra*

ST (English)	TT (Spanish translation)	Comments

In the left column, the ST will be provided while the corresponding translation will be presented in the column in the middle. Interpretations and comments regarding the translation will be added in the right column in order to explore and clarify the reason why the translator has decided to translate the ST in this way.

4. Text Analysis of the Translation

In this section, an analysis of the translation will be displayed in which I believe, was the most practical way for the reader to comprehend. The core structure will be following Nord's methodology, and to each translation problem listed in Nord's categorization, the translation procedure will be discussed following Vinay and Darbelnet's arrangement of procedures as the possible solutions to the problem.

4.1 Pragmatic Translation Problems

An original text is produced for a native speaker and it is not addressed for a future translator who probably also belongs to another culture. This means that even if the translator has a high level of knowledge about the SC, he or she will have to adjust the translation for a specific target audience. Nord says that the key is "not simplifying it, but reducing the difficulty of the translation" (154).

In the case of *La Fruta más Negra*, the pragmatic translation problems deal mainly with the differences between America approximately in the 1920s when the story took place and Spain in 2017 when the book was translated into Spanish.

The main theme of the novel is the inequality between black and white with all the consequences this entails, and it definitely was a really sensitive topic of discussion at the beginning of the twentieth century in America. Nowadays this racism issue undeniable still is subject of debate everywhere, although not with the same strength leading. Therefore, the awakened emotions in a reader back at that time and now would be completely different as well. This difference could lead to think that varying the intensity of the matter (through the use of a different lexis for example) would lower the pragmatic differences between both languages but nothing further from the truth, it would only bring on a poor and inaccurate translation. That is why most of the time the translator does not make any sudden change in the translation, but has left as it is in the

original text. This “leave-it-as-it-is” technique is what Vinay and Darbelnet classify as “literal translation”.

Table 1. Example of Literal Translation in *La Fruta más Negra*

ST	TT	Comments
<p>“She was always trying to emphasize those things about her, that seemed, somehow, to atone for her despised darkness, and she never faced the mirror without speculating upon how good-looking she might have been had she not been so black.” (73)</p>	<p>“Siempre estaba tratando de acentuar las cosas que parecían, de algún modo, compensar su despreciada negrura y nunca se miraba al espejo sin especular sobre lo guapa que habría sido de no haber sido tan negra.” (85)</p>	<p>The procedure of literal translation works excellent, even in long sentences. The TT does not suffer any grammatical or structural variation and it keeps its meaning and uniformity.</p>

However, it might happen that the audience do not understand the whole meaning of the text because of these pragmatic differences. The only solution that I see to overcome this problem will be the use of devices such as Internet or another searching tool which will benefit the reader to meet the American social situation in the past century. In occasions, the target reader must need an extra support since not only with a good translation the text will be fully understood.

4.2 Culture Translation Problems

Every text is intrinsically linked to its own culture. When the translation process takes place it is normal that certain cultural problems arise as a result of the differences between cultures. The rendering of cultural specific items is one of the biggest challenges of this translation. However, it might become easier by consulting parallel texts. “Cultureme” is the term used by Nord to refer to these culture specific items and she defines it a "a cultural phenomenon that is present in culture X but not present (in the same way) in culture Y" (34).

In this section I will focus my attention on the cultural translational problems that have been solved helped by the translational procedures of “equivalence”, “borrowing”, “calque” and “adaptation” given by Vinay and Darbelnet. Besides, I will include one special section which deals with all the terms referring to all varieties of

skin colour appearing in the translation.

4.2.1 Colour Range

In the Spanish version *La Fruta más Negra* there is an introductory chapter written by the translator where it is explained the translation given for the wide variety of skin tones mentioned in the novel. In an attempt to reflect the richness of the vocabulary and the American jargon of the time, the translator has assigned peculiar terms for their translation using the translation procedure of “equivalence”.

Table 2. Examples of Equivalences Referring to Colour Range in *La Fruta más Negra*

ST	TT	Comments
“Negro”	“Negro/a”	Applied to the population of African-American ethnicity in general, it always begins with capital letters.
“nigger”	“negrata”	Although among the Caucasian population “nigger” has a pejorative connotation, it is something colloquial among the African-Americans.
“black”	“negro/a”	–
“blue black”	“negro azulado”	Variant of black, the darkest tone of the range.
“brown”	“bistre”	Brown in its various shades.
“light brown”	“canela”	Light brown.
“yellow/yaller”	“catire”	Very light brown or even gold in people with some African ancestor.
“mulatto”	“mulato/a”	People who are fruit of the relationship between a white person and a black person.

The purpose of the equivalence is to communicate the same idea with another words creating like this, a better understandable meaning for the target audience. Following also the translation procedure of equivalence I have included interjections, proverbs and idioms. Hereafter there are some examples found in the translation of *The Blacker the Berry*.

Table 3. Examples of Equivalences in *La Fruta más Negra*

ST	TT	Comments
“Aw!” (101)	Ay! (111)	Interjections are a good example of equivalence. Each language express feelings in a different manner.
“Ugh!” (74)	Puf! (86)	
“the other ceased the peck-peck-pecking on the typewriter keys” (89)	“la otra cesó el taca-taca-taca de las teclas de la máquina” (100)	
“...as a person thinketh, so he is” (161)	“...que cual es su pensamiento en su corazón, tal es él” (167)	The translation of proverbs also falls into the category of equivalences.
“...lean days were upon him” (162)	“...amenazaban tiempos de vacas flacas” (169)	Idioms, defined as “a group of words in a fixed order that have a particular meaning that is different from the meaning of each word on its own”. (Cambridge Dictionary)
“...there was no getting around it” (122)	“...no había vuelta de hoja” (130)	
“He had it in a bottle” (168)	“Comía de su mano” (174)	
“cry herself to sleep” (133)	“lloró hasta quedarse dormida” (140)	
“she is a quick worker” (131)	“sí que va deprisa” (138)	

Another procedure applied to solve cultural translation problems is *borrowing*. The reason that encourages the translator to borrow several words from the SL and include them in the text without a translation is because all these words are Cultural-bound Terms (Harvey 2-6), they do not have an exact equivalent in the target culture and as the American linguist Haugen stated, “there is a growing tendency to import rather than substitute as the bilingual command of the language grows more adequate” (213).

Table 4. Examples of Borrowings in *La Fruta más Negra*

ST	TT	Comments
Minstrel (57)	The same terms have been preserved in the translation.	Musical theatrical genre, popular in the United States since the second half of the nineteenth century, played by white artists who painted themselves in black to parody African-Americans.
Buck-and-wing (68)		Dance style characterized by rapid and sliding movements.
Bob (106)		Famous haircut in the twenties.
Black and Tan (116)		Expression used to refer to premises that did not practice racial segregation.
Black bottom (118)		Type of dance originally from the south of the United States, very popular at the beginning of the twentieth century thanks to the minstrel shows.
Hopping-John (158)		Typical dish of the Southern United States from Eastern Africa.
Flapper (168)		Term used in the twenties to refer to modern girls with a lifestyle outside the traditional.

It is also worth noting that some other borrowings have been taken from other languages, not only from English. That is the case of the French expression “savoir-fair” (166), which means “the ability to do and say the right thing in any social situation” (Cambridge English Dictionary) and because of its large usage in the English language, the translator has decided to leave it like that. However, there is a German term “spagat” or the equivalent in English “splits”, defined as “the gymnastic exercise of sitting down on the floor with one leg straight forward and the other straight back” (Cambridge English Dictionary) whose presence in the TT I fail to comprehend. In occasions like this one, the translator has free choice in deciding whether she wants to translate the original term or not.

Another translation procedure that has helped to bridge the cultural gap between both cultures is the *calque*. It is difficult sometimes to differentiate between what a calque is and what a borrowing is. The fundamental aspect to consider then is whether or not the expression has been translated into the target language. If it appears in its original “foreign” form in the target language is a borrowing but if it has been translated, is a calque.

Table 5. Examples of Calques in *La Fruta más Negra*

ST	TT	Comments
“Monkey-chaser”	“Caza-monos” (125)	The calques found in the novel are classified as lexical calques (The original structure remains equal, if it is slightly changed is due to compulsory transpositions) and are not registered into any “Bilingual Dictionary” so once again the translator has translated these terms in a more or less literally way.
“Pink niggers”	“Negratas lilas” (151)	
“Rent Parties”	“Fiestas de alquiler” (146)	

With regard to the adaptation procedure, I have divided it into three sub-procedures based on the division given by Bayar, previously mentioned. The different procedures to overcome a cultural translation problem adapting the SL to the TL are the paraphrase, the cultural substitution, and the omission. (16)

Table 6. Examples of Adaptations in *La Fruta más Negra*

ST	TT	Comments
“Why there ain't nothing here but white people?” (107)	“Vaya, aquí no hay nada más que blancos.” (117)	The translator is paraphrasing the SL and includes the addition of the Spanish word “vaya” which expresses disappointment.
“It was an acquired family characteristic, this moaning and grieving over the color of her skin.” (21)	“Las quejas y los lamentos por el color de su piel eran una característica familiar adquirida.” (37)	Another paraphrase, this time based on a changing of word order in search of the naturalness in the TL.
“What's the diff!” (113)	“Qué más da!” (122)	Cultural substitutions. They have already predetermined translations in the TL to gain spontaneity in the SL.
“Damned if I'm going to carry you.” (169)	“Que me cuelguen si me hago cargo de ti.” (175)	
“The world was his.” (174)	“Era el amo del mundo.” (168)	
“He looked at her, then over her and passed on.” (97)	“La miró con detenimiento y luego pasó de largo.” (107)	The omission made by the translator is noticeable. She has eliminated the part of sentence “...then over her” and substituted it by “miró con detenimiento”.

4.3 Linguistic Translation Problems

Linguistic translational problems result from the differences between grammars and syntaxes among languages. Unquestionable is, that the linguistic structure between English and Spanish is dissimilar giving rise to problems in the translation process.

I have included in this category those problems which have been solved by the translation procedures that Vinay and Darbelnet name transposition and modulation.

Transposition requires a shift in word class without altering the meaning of the

ST. It is a type of oblique or free translation according to Vinay and Darbelnet (36) since the translator apply it with complete freedom in search of equivalence and naturalization.

Thus, as stated by Vinay and Darbelnet, the original expression in translation is called “the base expression”, while the translated form of the ST is called “the transposed expression” (36).

Table 7. Examples of Transpositions in *La Fruta más Negra*

ST	TT	Comments (Transposition Type)
“switching and giggling” (96)	“risitas y parloteo” (106)	Adjective to Noun
“...there was scant possibility that her children would have revolting dark skins, thick lips, spreading nostrils, and kinky hair.” (30)	“...era casi imposible que sus hijos tuviesen la piel asquerosamente negra, los labios gruesos, la nariz ancha y el pelo encrespado.” (45)	Position of the Adjective
“She looked for a place to sit down and, finding none.” (79)	“Buscó un sitio para sentarse y, al no encontrar ninguno.” (90)	Gerund to Prepositional Phrase
“...would be the come-back” (169)	“replicaba Alva” (175)	Noun to Verb
“The baby now a year old was assuredly and idiot” (192)	“El bebé, que ya tenía un año, era sin lugar a dudas idiota” (195)	Adverb to Preposition
“A yellow gal rides in a limousine, a brown-skin rides a Ford, a black gal rides an old jackass...” (174)	“Las catiras van en limusina, los bistres montan en Ford, las negras van en borrico...” (180)	Indefinite to Definite Article
“made herself laugh by classifying them as a litter of sick puppies” (199)	“Le daba la risa clasificándolos de cachorritos enfermos” (202)	Passive to Active Voice
“Anything congenial” (78)	“Cualquiera que sea agradable” (90)	Adjective for Relative Clause
“the aunt was stoic” (163)	“La tía lo aceptó con estoicismo” (169)	Adjective for Prepositional Phrase
“She was half heard” (87)	“Lo oyó a medias” (98)	Gerund for Relative Clause
“People passing by. Children playing” (97)	“Gente que pasaba. Niños que jugaban” (107)	

In some occasions, the translator is obliged to change the word class of a given word in the ST into another word class in the TT. In other cases, this change is optional. In the given phrase “the aunt was stoic” for example, the translator has had to establish if the use of a transposition would be the best choice as the sentence could be translated as “la tía lo aceptó con estoicismo” changing the adjective “stoic” for a prepositional phrase “con estoicismo” or be translated as “la tía fue estoica” making use of a simple literal translation.

The translation procedure of modulation is also commonly used to tackle the linguistic problems in the translation process. Although the purpose is the same as for a transposition, the search of equivalence; whereas a transposition works at a grammatical level, a modulation operates at semantic degree. Modulation implies a change in the point of view but without changing the principle idea of the phrase.

Table 8. Examples of Modulations in *La Fruta más Negra*

ST	TT	Comments
“They ain't got no go.” (115)	“No quiero saber nada.” (124)	Modulation helps the target reader in order to preserve the naturalness of the translation. This change of point of view in a message is what makes a reader think that he or she is reading an original, not a translation.
“The landlord be here.” (101)	“El casero vendrá” (111)	
“...black cats must go” (138)	“no querían gatos negros” (146)	
“He was not yet of age” (163)	“Todavía no era mayor de edad” (169)	
“Braxton had little trouble in attracting her to him.” (165)	“...a Braxton no le costó atraerla” (171)”	
“If you tried it wouldn't make no difference.” (169)	“Aunque lo intentases daría igual.” (175)	

Modulations can be either obligatory or optional as we have seen with transposition and according to Venuti, the translator is forced to use this method when the literal or transposed translation is considered as unsuitable or unidiomatic in the TL (89). For example, the given sentence “Braxton had little trouble in attracting her to him” can be considered as an optional modulation. It could be translated as “Braxton apenas tuvo problema en atraerla” or as it has been translated “a Braxton no le costó

atraerla”. Both expressions seemed to be suitable in Spanish what gives the translator the choice to decide which one is going to use. Vinay and Darbelnet (2008) emphasize modulation as “the touchstone of a good translator” over transposition as it “simply shows a very good command of the TL” (qtd. in Munday 57).

4.4 Text Specific Problems

Text specific difficulties are related to the level of accuracy the ST brings to a target audience. Nord tries to redefine it with the purpose of making it clearer and says that “the more the translator knows about the situation in which the ST is, the better the comprehensibility of the text” (152) Within this category of difficulties, I include the use of dialogue (which always appears when a black or coloured person is talking) and the title of the novel itself.

4.4.1 The Use of Dialect

An important part of the novel, and a major translation problem, is formed by the use of dialect. There are some characters throughout the novel who due to their poor education adopt a low level of speech full of improprieties (word shortening, grammatical errors...) The translator trying not to lose the essence and fluidity of the dialogue uses the procedure of adaptation to replicate roughly the same way of talking.

Table 9. Examples of Adaptations Referring to Dialect in *La Fruta más Negra*

ST	TT	Comments
“I’ve been standin’ in line and climbin’ stairs and talkin’ and a-signin’ till I’m just ‘bout done for.” (40)	“He estao hacienda cola y sube p’arriba y p’abajo y venga a hablar y a cantar hasta jartarme.” (54)	The dialects have their level of complexity since the translator has to evaluate.
“Wonder were all the spades keep themselves? I ain’t seen but two ‘sides you.” (41)	“¿Ande s’abrán metío tos los negratas? No hi visto más qu’a dos amás de ti.” (55)	

4.4.2 The Title

When Wallace Thurman gave title to this book he borrowed the Southern saying: “The blacker the berry, the sweeter the juice”. Occasionally the saying has been interpreted as the connection of pride with dark skin rather than with shame but sometimes, the saying has had a sexual significance. Anyway, when it comes to the

translation, the Spanish title *La Fruta más Negra* has little to do with the original, “The Blacker the Berry”. It is true that both refer to a comparison between a fruit and the colour of it, but in the Spanish version, the translator has decided not to specify which is the exact fruit we are talking about and use its hypernym.

Regarding Vinay and Darbelnet’s classification of translation procedures, the translator did not use any of them as such but I consider that what has prevailed is more a free translation.

Once finished the analysis of the novel, I will carry on with the discussions section consequently followed by the conclusion. In the discussion section I will answer the unresolved issue proposed in the introduction giving a summary of the aims and the results of this paper. On the contrary, in the conclusion I will restate my thesis and summarize the main points of evidence for the reader.

5. Discussion

Taking a close look at the translation it is appreciable that the translator has used literal translation as the preferred method for rendering one language into the other over the rest of the translation procedures. This could be the result of the fact that the English and Spanish languages share a great amount of parallelisms, for example, both languages have the same grammar structure which is based on the tense and also a large amount of words in English have a related word in Spanish, what is known as a “cognate”. The relationship between cognates can be created either due to their sound, their meaning or both; when looking through the analysis of the translation, it is appreciable for instance the English words in “-ly”, which in Spanish correspond with the ending of “-mente”, e.g. hurriedly/ apresuradamente, slowly/lentamente or softly/suavemente. These pairs of cognates respond to the relationship established between them due to meaning.

However, in some occasions in which literal translation has been impossible due to the absence of an equivalent between the ST and the TT, the application of the other two direct translation procedures namely borrowing and calques and the so-called oblique procedures of translation (which includes equivalence, adaptation, transposition and modulation) have been adopted.

The major complication of the translation has been the rendering of cultural

items. Being a novel set in North America in a different period of time and with the issue of race as its background, it is understandable that it is full of cultural terms which belong to a different reality new for the receiving community and because of that, they do not have an exact equivalent. Therefore, the translator decides which of these cultural items is going to literally translate leading to the appearance of calques (rent parties/ fiestas de alquiler) or leave them without translation in the case of borrowings (*black bottom*).

The borrowings included in the translation appear in italics with a clarification of their meaning in a footnote while the calques have not needed any kind of explanation because they are understood by their context. The appearance of borrowings can be the result of the fact that the translator has wanted to provide a dash of local color to the translation in order to not lose the particular essence of the original novel. However, in the case of calques, these cultural items must be translated so the reader grasps the whole meaning of the text.

Transposition has been applied frequently, and so has been modulation. Using the literal translation instead of these procedures, might have been grammatically correct, but it could have sounded bizarre or awkward in the TL. The necessity of the procedures of transposition and modulation in translation lies in the fact that it endows naturalness of the TT, so that the target reader has the illusion that he or she is not reading a translation, but an original text.

On the other hand, adaptation and equivalence have had a greater involvement in the achievement of correlation and effectiveness. The translator has tried to reproduce the contextual meaning in an exact way as the original so that both the content and the language are easily understood by the readers. When using these two procedures, the translator has wanted to produce in the receiver an effect as close as possible to that obtained by the readers of the original text.

To sum up, the Spanish translation of the novel has accomplished the desired equivalence between the ST and the TT. In the first place, it has achieved to render the exact semantic and syntactic structures of the original language thanks to the faithfulness to the ST. In the second place, it displays the exact contextual meaning of the original text in a way that both the content and the language are comprehensible to the readers.

6. Conclusion

The objective of this thesis is to analyse the Spanish translation *La Fruta más Negra* realized by Susana Prieto Mori of the novel *The Blacker the Berry*. The main focus is to analyse the translation problems that may have come up in the translation process and to explore the application of different translation procedures as the solutions to such problems.

The four set of translation problems proposed by Nord, namely, pragmatic translation problems, culture specific problems, linguistic translation problems and text specific problems have been identified by close scrutiny of the English original version and the Spanish translation. The translation procedures proposed by Vinay and Darbelnet have been found to serve as excellent ways to tackle these problems.

First of all, regarding the pragmatic translation problems which, in this particular case, have arisen due to the fact that the communicative situations in the ST and TT are different, the procedure of literal translation together with the search of extra information by the reader have been found appropriate to bridge the current pragmatic gap between the ST and the TT.

Next, regarding the culture translation problems which have led to different culture-specific items complicating the translation task, the procedures of equivalence, borrowing, calque and adaptation have been found convenient to deal with these kind of problems either by not or partly translating them (borrowings and calques), searching for an equivalent when possible or adapting the term to the TC, being the two last the ones which contribute to give a greater level of naturalness to the TT. The translator must decide which cultural items should include or change making them relevant and accurate for their audience.

In terms of the linguistic translation problems, which have to do with the structural differences between the English and the Spanish language in texts sentence, the translation procedures of transposition or modulation have been suitable to deal with these kinds of problems. The sought point has been the search of equivalence between the ST and the TT in terms of syntax and discourse order.

Last but not least, the text specific problems or problems inherent to the text have been divided into two categories namely, the use of dialect and the title. These kinds of problems are concerned with the implicit style that the original author provides

to the text. Referring to the use of dialect, the procedure of adaptation has been the one which could render the dialect spoken by many characters of the novel without losing the essence of it. On the other hand, the title which gives name to the novel has followed a different translation procedure of the ones provided herein, the free translation.

In conclusion, the Spanish Translation *La Fruta más Negra* of the English novel can be considered a good translation and the reasons are the following, it has followed the semantic and syntactic structure of the original, it contains all the relevant cultural references of the ST and although following the original, it has been adapted in order to preserve fluency above all else, besides, what also stands out is the fact that the translation has evoked the same emotions as it has in the ST.

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