

Matteo Re

*Editor*

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**Comité Científico:** José Manuel Azcona, Matteo Re, Juan Francisco Torregrosa, Klodeta Dibra, Artur Sula, Esmeralda Kromidha, Isabel Leal, Eugenio García.

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**DIDÁCTICA DE LA ENSEÑANZA DE LENGUAS  
MODERNAS**

# **THEATRICAL TRANSLATION PROBLEMS FROM SPANISH INTO ALBANIAN AND VICE-VERSA**

**Iris Klosi**

**English Department**  
***Tirana University/Albania***

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**Esmeralda Subashi**

**English Department**  
***Tirana University/Albania***

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## **Introduction**

Translation is hard work and requires skills, knowledge and a lot of patience. In the world of theatrical translation, the task is more complicated and more difficult. Theatrical translators have a challenging job aiming at successful staging of the plays. Even though there are innumerable opinions about the differences between dramatic written text and stage text, associating the former with literary studies and the latter with performance studies, many scholars in translation, semiotic and linguistic studies, do not consider these texts as two foreign objects.

What they suggest is that theatrical translation should not be independent from performance; it is closely linked with it. For this reason, the job of a theatrical translator is to predict the theatrical event and the impact it will have on the audience. This paper aims at providing an insight how theatrical translation problems in Spanish and English cultures have been overcome. Those translation problems range from the title of the play to the names of the characters and to inter-textual references and other items of cultural significance.

Different scholars suggest alternatives how to achieve equivalent effect in the target language culture. Theatrical translation nowadays is associated with performance, that is why theatrical translators can and do adapt. What they should

have in mind is the effect translation would have on the spectators. For the purposes of a successful performance, it has been suggested that theatrical translators collaborate with living playwrights in order to discuss for idiomatic and slang expressions of their plays. A very important stage is when translators should decide to change the names of some of the characters when they pose unwanted connotations or undesired effects on the target audience. Far greater problems are faced by translators when they have to translate musicals, jokes, pun, or word play.

### **Translating Serious Imaginative Literature**

Theatrical translation is one of the most interesting and most difficult tasks to perform. Dramatic written text according to Peter Newmark falls under the classification of 'expressive texts' which in turn should 'be translated closely, matching the writing, good or bad, of the original'.<sup>1</sup> Theatrical translation cannot be imagined without the theatrical event or performance. It is an ongoing process towards perfection on stage and easiness for the interpretation of the whole theatrical event in terms of theatrical text and signs, thus considering both theatrical linguistic and sign systems. Theatrical translators start their work from the dramatic written text, and reach to the point where the dramatic written text turns into a stage text. Theatrical translators divide their work into preparatory stage, where they simply translate the dramatic written text from the linguistic aspect, trying to translate words, phrases, idioms, different lexical, grammar or stylistic units. This preparatory stage helps them identify the plot and understand the intention of the playwright. This preparatory work might involve close textual analysis such as uniting or a more physical exploration of the characters and themes of each play.

The second stage of theatrical translation differently referred to as the final stage, belongs in turn to theatrical system of signs, to be recognized, elaborated and interpreted. There is an audience out there waiting to see the performance and the translators should take long thoughts about the translated lines and try to fix any inappropriate utterance or any phrase, which is misplaced or sounds too elevated or frenetic, or too clumsy or unattractive.

Plays need to be translated in an appropriate way and theatrical translators after analyzing the text, after deciding on their methods of translation, start thinking about other important elements such as coherence and cohesion, titles, dialogue

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<sup>1</sup> Newmark. P. *A Textbook of Translation*, London, Prentice Hall, 1988, pág. 16.

cohesion, sound effects. All these units contribute to a successful performance trying to make proper use of referential synonyms, contrasts, functional sentence perspective, enumerators, etc. All these units are closely related to style and equivalent effect to the audience.

### **Translator – Playwright collaboration**

Theatre is changing its status. There is a different approach to plays and it is a demanding market for plays that bring success. Stage directors, playwrights, translators, all work together in the world of theatre. Plays should be texts that flow so that the performance is successful and brings money to theatre practitioners. It is not difficult to engage translators on stage, make them responsible for what they are doing, make them feel as creators, authors, train them close to the work of a stage director, so that they learn about every detail on stage. Attending rehearsals, translators are able to listen to those uttered words which are associated with tempo-rhythm and breathing. This process allows them to make the necessary changes to words or phrases which sound weird or inappropriate or search more closely whether there is any use of slang, dialect or colloquial language. Translators get involved in the rehearsals and listen to the play several times. At this stage, they collaborate with directors and actors to decide on elements such as mask work and puppetry, music and dance that might be included in the each play. This is the stage where translators are considered as coauthors because they convey the meaning of the source text to the target audience but with a 'distorting mirror image'<sup>2</sup> in translation.

Each play has its own demands and the translator, actors and director employ different methodologies to make such plays acceptable and admirable by the public. Collaboration between translators, actors, directors and even playwrights is ideal, because together they can analyze the component parts of the play text, and examine each and every one of them before assembling them and producing the theatrical event, the real performance. In the process of theatrical translation, performance is the most important part. To some extent, all stagings of plays, whether or not they are translations, involve adaptation to new circumstances. If we consider the experience of some theatre translators we start thinking about the relation between theory and practice.

Eaton shares with us her experience when working with actors during rehearsals trying to realize whether the translation was properly conducted:

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<sup>2</sup> Eaton, K. "You Always Forget Something: Can Practice Make Theory?" in *With/without Theory: the Role of Theory in Translation Studies Research*. UCL, UK, April 2008, pàg 57.



As I have the good fortune to be working over time with the same nucleus of actors and directors, the idea is that we can build up between us a familiarity with Pinera's work through engaging with and exploring his texts in this intensely practical way. We can thereby detect patterns of speech and rhythms and repetitions that may not at first be apparent to the casual observer.<sup>3</sup>

Kate Eaton comments on her experience at translating the Cuban Virgilio Pinera's absurdist theatre for the British stage. She is an experienced actor and she also likes to translate and do research work on stage translation. The very fact that she knows theatre systems and she can easily recognize theatrical signs within the text makes her believe a lot in her skills as a professional:

As a translator of, and researcher into, Pinera's theatre, my aims are twofold: to render his rhythmic and playful Cuban Spanish into an equally rhythmic and playful English that will be at home in the mouth of an Anglophone actor, whilst at the same time discovering more about how his theatre works on stage. I am not a naysayer or negator of translation theory, but I am a practical opponent of it during the initial stages of target text development. I want to create translations that can be listened to and repeated, I want to position myself as translator at the root of the storytelling.<sup>4</sup>

Eaton continues by arguing that she wants both to be a "self-forgetful listener" and to recreate that state of self-forgetful listening in the audience, as she seeks to refashion the web in which the play is cradled. What she wishes to produce are templates from which further translations of Pinera's plays can be made and further studies of his theatre embarked upon:

This process is invaluable for achieving a deeper understanding of the complexities of each play and leads to a translation that is richly layered and nuanced.<sup>5</sup>

Phyllis Zatlin, an experienced translator from Spanish into English, brings invaluable opinions and arguments on how theatrical translators have faced many problems, especially at their second final stage, when different plays belonging to different periods were to be staged. She has dedicated a whole book named 'Theatrical Translation and Film Adaptation' to the steps theatrical translators should follow to have a pleasant and welcomed effect by the audience.

One of her illustrations deals with the failure of theatrical translation carried out by John Garrett Underhill of Nobel prize winner Jacinto Benavente's play *Los intereses creados* (The Bonds of interest) in the early decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century:

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<sup>3</sup> Idem.

<sup>4</sup> Idem.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibidem*, pág. 58.

Underhill's absolute fidelity to his source, coupled with his failure to recognize idiomatic expressions, resulted in the kinds of passages that give translators a bad name... No wonder Lorenzo Mans decided to do a new translation of Benavente's *Los intereses creados* (The Art of Swindling) for the 1996 staging in Atlanta.<sup>6</sup> Considering the former translator's failure in conveying the same meaning and comic flair, owes to a different approach to translation theory. Nowadays, translation theory has changed a lot and it allows more 'dynamic recreations of source text'<sup>7</sup>. A strong reason for that is the show business of theatre. Plays should sound interesting and acceptable to the audience. The most important element is the title and the opening pages. There are numerous plays which wait to be selected for performance and translation but they lack 'sparkle'.<sup>8</sup> Theatrical translators nowadays try hard to adapt the source dramatic text to the conventions and expectations of the target audience. With the revolution in semiotic approaches to theatre and the realization that theatre is a medium full of signs, it is the task of theatrical translators to understand the source dramatic text signs and interpret them in the receiving culture. Sometimes there is not any complete correspondence between one culture and another. For example in the case of Asian culture the mourning color is white, while in most European cultures it is black. Even though this detail may sound trivial, the audience should get the idea of a mortal ceremony through different theatrical signs which are clear and significant.

Many contemporary translation practitioners suggest that collaboration with living playwrights is ideal, because it helps avoiding many translation problems ranging from the title of the play to the names of the characters and to inter-textual references to movies, songs, and other items of cultural significance. Although one does not always expects that playwrights collaborate with translators of their plays, in most of the cases collaboration is efficient, because the playwrights are very much keen on the preservation of their intention and the spirit of their plays.

### **Translation of the play's title**

I have concentrated my paper on some very interesting examples I have extracted from Phyllis Zatlin's contribution in theatrical translation. These examples are those that pose problems of translation from Spanish into English and vice versa. Starting from this subdivision and on I will list these translation problems one by one and

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<sup>6</sup> Zatlin, P. *Theatrical Translation and Film Adaptation*. Cromwell Press Ltd. UK, 2005, pág. 2.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibidem*, pag. 3.

<sup>8</sup> *Idem*.

one would have the chance to see what solutions are suggested from the practitioner's view.

One of the first plays Phyllis Zatlin translated was Alonso de Santos's box-office hit, *Bajarse al moro* (Going Down to Marrakesh). From the very title, it is clear that the characters use colloquial language or more specifically drug slang. She explains that at the time when she translated the play many communities in USA differed from each other regarding their openness to scenes containing the use of drug. The play was translated in the eighties and for a long period of time it was not allowed to be performed because it was exposed to an inappropriate language.

Another example is Catalan playwright Beth Escudé's *El color del gos quan fuig*<sup>9</sup>. The translator of this play Bethany Korp due to collaboration he had with the playwright realized that the previous title *The Color of the Fleeing Dog* was not appropriate and changed it to *Killing Time*, to the satisfaction of all.<sup>10</sup>

One of the difficulties theatrical translators have is when editors are very persevering and determined to change the title the translator has provided. Zatlin herself can hardly forget the disagreement she had with Rick Hite over the translation of the protagonist's name in Paloma Pedrero's *Una estrella*. As Zatlin underlines: 'The author typically invents character names that have meaning and then plays on that meaning within the dialogue; her names thus require great care. 'Estrella', which means 'star', is not an uncommon name in Spanish. On the other hand, 'Star' is an unusual name in English and the Spanish 'Estrella' is both difficult to pronounce and meaningless for most audience members.'<sup>11</sup> The editor suggested the name 'Estelle' while the translator preferred 'Stella' instead. The translator's preference to 'Estelle' was because she thought that the spectators would have difficulty in understanding any connections between this name and its association with the meaning 'star', while 'Stella' obviously infer to such connection. 'Hite, on the other hand, not only associated 'Stella' with A Streetcar Named Desire but specifically with Marlon Brando yelling at his wife in the movie version of Tennessee Williams's play.'<sup>12</sup>

### **Translation of the setting**

It is very difficult to translate classic texts, and far more difficult translate classic texts in verse. Translators during the process of modernizing classic texts wonder

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<sup>9</sup> *Ibidem*, pág. 7.

<sup>10</sup> *Idem*.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibidem*, pág. 8.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibidem*, págs. 9.

whether to preserve the original setting or to change it and adapt it to the target audience. They also need to decide whether to translate verse plays into verse or rather change them into prose. If a translator were to retain the verse form, he should have the talent for doing that.

Apart from the phenomenon of modernizing classic text, we have the opposite phenomenon of associating contemporary settings with settings similar to distant and exotic places. As Zatlin maintains that: 'Notable is the desire, both in France and in the United States, to make Spanish theatre fit the image of Andalusia. The practice works well with García Lorca, whose plays are rooted in his native region of Southern Spain, but does not fit Valle-Inclán, whose plays take place either on the Northwest coast of Spain or in Madrid. When Valle-Inclán's *Divine Words* was first staged in Paris in 1946, the cool mists of his native Galicia – a region not unlike the comparable Northwest coast of France – were converted into the blinding sun and overwhelming heat of Southern Spain. When Paloma Pedrero's *Parting Gestures* was staged at Pace University in New York City in 1991, the theatre department produced a lovely poster with a typical Andalusian building as the background; the problem is that Pedrero is from Madrid, where such architecture is not found.'<sup>13</sup>

Zatlin's approach after consultation with the author, in translating José Luis Alonso de Santos's *Hostages in the Barrio* was similar. Alonso de Santos lives in Madrid. The original title of his play, *La estanquera de Vallecas*, calls attention to a working-class neighborhood on the outskirts of the capital. When the play has been staged elsewhere in the Spanish-speaking world, local neighborhoods have routinely been substituted for Vallecas. 'The characters, in the translator's view, could be Hispanics who had emigrated to the city from any warmer or friendlier place. Rather than coming to Madrid from Andalusia, they might have come to the Bronx from Puerto Rico or – as it was discovered through staged readings at the Bridge Theater in Miami – to Hialeah from Cuba. Translator's revised title, *Hostages in the Barrio*, eliminated geographic specificity and instead emphasized the human situation.'<sup>14</sup> If the action of the play obviously takes place in the country of the source text and the translator decides to leave it there, some over- or under-translation may still be advisable.

Franz H. Link reminds us that the farther removed the audience is from particular historical events, the less informed it is about the details relating to them. The author does not tell the audience what it already knows, but 'the text is supposed to supply all the information necessary to understand the action and its

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<sup>13</sup> *Ibidem*, pág. 69.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibidem*, pág. 70.

motivation'.<sup>15</sup> Link further observes that allusions can be eliminated when they are not important.

According to Zatlin's observations José Lo'pez Rubio put that concept into practice when he rendered *Death of a Salesman*; his *La muerte de un viajante* (1952), continues to be the classic translation in Spain of Arthur Miller's great tragedy. Willy Loman's passing reference to a particular New York hotel and the American business lunch disappears completely from Lo'pez Rubio's version:

"The whole wealth of Alaska passes over the lunch table at the Commodore Hotel, and that's the wonder, the wonder of this country, that a man can end with diamonds here on the basis of being liked!" (Miller, 1976: 86).

"Toda la riqueza de Alaska puede venir a sus pies. Eso es lo maravilloso de este país, el que un hombre pueda llegar a donde quiera..." (Miller, 1983: 66).

### **Translation of Characters' names**

Sometime it may happen that some of the characters' names may have unpleasant connotations or are difficult to pronounce. Edney reports that American translators of Molière have tended to use the original French names while British translators have Anglicized some of them.<sup>16</sup> If foreign names are unpronounceable or have unwanted connotations in the target language, change is clearly required. López Rubio kept Miller's original names in his translation of *Death of a Salesman*, but in performance in Spain Uncle Ben is replaced by Tío Fred, no doubt to avoid confusion between 'Ben' and a word that is pronounced identically, "ven", meaning 'come', as a command.<sup>17</sup>

A very interesting phenomenon that Zatlin has considered in her long experience with the translation of Spanish language and culture is the translation of names with unwanted connotations in the target language. In *Going Down to Marrakesh*, one character is named Jaimito, the diminutive of Jaime. 'If properly pronounced, Jaime sounds very similar to Hymie, a name with Jewish connotations. The author clarified that he chose the original name because there are stock Jaimito jokes in Spain. There are also stock Pepito jokes, so translator and author agreed to go with the latter name instead.'<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>15</sup> Link, F. H. *Translation, Adaptation and Interpretation of Dramatic Texts*. Oxford and New York, Pergamon Press, 1980. Quoted by Zatlin, P. *Theatrical Translation...*, pág. 70-71.

<sup>16</sup> Edney, D. *Molière in North America: Problems of Translation and adaptation*. Modern Drama 41.1 (Spring 1998), pág 66. Quoted by Zatlin, *Theatrical Translation...*, pág. 73.

<sup>17</sup> Idem.

<sup>18</sup> Ibídem, págs. 73-74.

## **Spanish and English on Stage**

Regarding the uniqueness of both languages Spanish and English, the researcher Zatlin has observed that Spanish actors speak much more rapidly than American ones, particularly in comedies. 'Indeed part of Spanish comic acting style is directly related to speed. Spanish is known to produce sentences, on average, that are about 25% longer than their counterparts in English. This is true because Spanish has fewer monosyllabic words and often uses prepositional phrases where a single adjective will serve in English. (Example: 'my son's dog' ¼ three syllables; 'el perro de mi hijo' ¼ six syllables, when mi is correctly elided with the following hi-.) The automatic reduction in word or syllable count that takes place in translation from Spanish to English is generally not sufficient to offset the slower delivery of American actors.'<sup>19</sup>

Another suggestion and solution to timing the performance on stage is pruning. It is also called for in drama because 'acting styles in the Mediterranean countries (Spain, Italy, Greece) – like the corresponding languages – are more passionate than in Northern Europe or the United States.'<sup>20</sup> For this reason, Wellwarth suggests that translators into English tone down the natural emotion of the Romance languages to keep the dialogue from seeming too florid.<sup>21</sup> Apart from the distinction between the acting styles in different countries, there is a growing tendency to reduce the length of the plays. This phenomenon occurs when there are long old texts consisting in three acts, which are now played with no intermission.

## **Spanishness of the play**

Idiolect or individual dialect, a very important stylistic and linguistic tool, is the one which individualizes each character in the play. That is why in order to have performable and successful plays on stage, translators should give each character his or her own voice. Good translations maintain that differentiation; and inspired translators may enhance the differentiation if the playwright has failed to do so effectively. Pulvers believes that a translator must have a clear idea of how the work will be directed: 'When translating plays, one has to direct them in the mind

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<sup>19</sup> *Ibíd.*, pág. 75-76.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibíd.*, pág. 76.

<sup>21</sup> *Idem.*

as one translates. The language must be acceptable, and the characters must have distinct verbal personalities'.<sup>22</sup>

In order to illustrate what is considered the Spanishness of the play *Zatlin* brings the approaches Gwynne Edwards and David Johnston have taken Federico García Lorca (1898–1936) and Ramón del Valle-Inclán (1866–1936), respectively.

'In a discussion of works by García Lorca on the English stage, Edwards reveals his preference for relatively literal translation and uses his rendering of *Blood Wedding* for staging in Manchester in 1987 as a model. Edwards wished to convey as accurately as possible 'the essential Spanishness of the play'. He sought the 'exact translation of references to food, dress, houses, climate, flowers, plants, landscape, customs, and other things which create' Lorca's special world. He therefore says that his literal reference to a 'good crop of esparto', despite the low frequency of the word 'esparto', is superior to 'hemp harvest', the expression that was used by James Graham-Luján and Richard L. O'Connell in their 1945 translation of the same tragedy.'<sup>23</sup>

Zatlin further comments on the effect the use of the collocation 'hemp harvest' created on her students in an advanced translation class in 2004. Students laughed at 'hemp harvest' because for them 'hemp' is a reference to marijuana. Anyone staging this 1945 translation today would have to take into account the prevalent contemporary meaning of the word. The students had no idea what 'esparto' might mean. As Alan Thomas points out, 'an actually attempted literal translation would produce opacity not transparency'.<sup>24</sup>

### **Use of Slang**

Another point in translation is the problem of slang. When a character speaks street language or slang throughout the play, the translator quickly sees the problem and sets about solving it. The strategy to solve this problem is similar to that of idiomatic or colloquial expressions. Slang is difficult to translate and may slip by unnoticed. Translation practitioners advise to pay careful attention to phrases containing slang expression. From the first sight, they may be confused and translators may undergo the risk of literal translation of slang. The ideal outcome is collaboration with living playwrights asking them about the specific meaning of an idiomatic expression. The following line shows the effect the Spanish expression

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<sup>22</sup> *Ibidem*, pág. 77.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibidem*, págs.79-80.

<sup>24</sup> Thomas, A. *Introduction. Modern Drama 41.1*. Spring 1998, pág 4. Quoted by Zatlin, P. *Theatrical Translation and Film Adaptation*. Cromwell Press Ltd. UK 2005, pág. 80.

'quedarse con alguien' has on the audience. Zatlin is the translator of the play *Luna de Miel (Honeymoon)* by Yolanda Pallín and she explains that the idiom was difficult and could only be clarified when both playwright and translator sat and read line by line the source text and the translation. As Zatlin explains the following line is spoken by the groom to his bride in the opening scene of *Luna de miel (Honeymoon)* – moments after carrying her over the threshold: '¿Te quieres quedar conmigo?'. If the line had been translated word for word its literal rendering would have been: 'Do you want to stay with me?' which makes no sense under the circumstances. 'What he really says, in response to her previous comment, is 'Are you kidding?'<sup>25</sup>

A good translator understands when something goes wrong with an expression which is translated literally. But this is not always the case. Sometime it is very difficult to make that distinction. Practitioners advise theatrical translators to make frequent use of slang dictionaries or if they have the possibility, they may ask native speakers about the colloquial use or meaning of an expression.

A very sad situation for both the translator and the playwright was the incident with the German premiere of Ernesto Caballero's *Auto*. It is a flagrant case when the idiom was lost. As Zatlin observes, the production coincided with a conference on contemporary Spanish theatre sponsored by the university in that city, and the author was present. 'The Spanish work is a modern auto sacramental (eucharistic play); its four characters have just been killed in an auto accident but do not yet realize they are dead. Near the end, there is a long silence followed by five lines of dialogue that play on the idiom 'ha pasado un ángel'.<sup>26</sup> According to literal meaning the words say that an angel passed by, but 'any fluent native speaker of Spanish or good bilingual dictionary will define the expression as signifying a break in the conversation.'<sup>27</sup> The translator could not grasp the idiomatic usage of the phrase and failed to render the meaning and the intention of the whole play, which in fact from the very title 'Auto', the fatal accident and the silence after the disaster, makes it clear that the four characters are dead. The literal rendering in German, like English, misses the basic meaning and seems to refer only to an actual presence of an angel. 'Taking it that way, the director brought the word to life by adding a fifth character to the cast: an angel-waiter who walked across the stage carrying a tray and then joined the others for curtain calls.'<sup>28</sup>

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<sup>25</sup> Zatlin, P. *Theatrical Translation...*, pág. 85.

<sup>26</sup> *Ibidem*, pág. 86.

<sup>27</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>28</sup> *Ibidem*.



Aside from losing the original meaning of the idiom, the appearance of the angel made more specific than the source text what awaited the characters in the afterlife. The author and other audience members who knew the original play were bewildered.

### **Translation of Musical Comedies and Humor**

There are many difficulties faced by translators of musical comedies, for the songs generally must be maintained and lyrics made to fit both sense and music. In 2002–2003 *My Fair Lady*, Lerner and Loewe's classic 1956 musical adaptation of Shaw's *Pygmalion*, finally reached the Madrid stage and became the hit of the season. 'Ignacio Artime and Jaime Azpilicueta passed the test of 'The rain in Spain stays mainly in the plain' by keeping the rain but cleverly changing Eliza's pronunciation puzzle from a vowel sound to b/v, consonants that cause spelling, if not pronunciation, problems for uneducated speakers of Spanish: 'La lluvia en España bellos valles baña'. Because h is silent in Spanish, for the aspirated h of 'Hartford, Havershire and Hampshire' they substituted the Spanish j: 'jardín japonés, jaula'. The solution works well even though the Spanish j is not equivalent to Eliza's struggle with the English h.'<sup>29</sup>

Some plays may contain comic episodes or there are comedies that need translation due to their sense of humor and the laughter they provoke on the audience. Theatrical translators who can translate comedy are the ones who have an inborn sense of humor. The ideal equivalent effect will be the case if a pun translates for a pun or a joke for a joke. Sometime compensation is required inventing a new pun for the one that was lost in the previous lines.

A famous example is the translation of Oscar Wilde's *The Importance of Being Earnest*, a comedy that treats the name 'Earnest' ironically. 'The standard Spanish translation of the title, *La importancia de llamarse Ernesto*, misses the point in that Ernesto is not a word. Jaume Melendres's 1983 translation to Catalan, *La importa`ncia de ser Frank*, hits the mark by playing on *franc*, meaning sincere.'<sup>30</sup>

One last and very interesting example is Paloma Pedrero's one-act play, *A Night Divided*, where an actress-character uses the professional name 'Luna Aláez'. 'Near the end of the play, the other character looks up at the sky, sees the moon, and says 'La Luna'; the woman, thinking he is speaking to her, responds, and the

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<sup>29</sup> *Ibidem*, pág. 91.

<sup>30</sup> *Ibidem*, págs. 92-93.

audience laughs.<sup>31</sup> The translator found it appropriate to change the name of the character but preserving at the same time the comic effect it has on the source culture audience. Zatin, as the translator of the play could not decide on the name Moon, which does not work in English as a first name. The last name Aláez is difficult to pronounce. The translator settled on Venus Vega. Audiences at the Pace University premiere and recently at New Jersey Repertory laughed heartily when the man identified the planet and the woman responded, 'What?'<sup>32</sup>

## **Conclusions**

Stage translation is very interesting and difficult. It has always been on the core of theoretical debates about the rules it should follow. According to theatre semioticians there are different approaches for stage translation. They provide a distinction between written play text and the performance or stage text. They see stage translation as closely linked with performance.

But from a practical perspective, stage translation is not a solitary work of an individual translator. Of course, there are different potential readings and interpretations of the written play text, as there may be different translations of the same written text. But the written play text does not remain written in the theatre. It becomes the stage or performance text. Stage translation then, is part of a collaborative process between translators and directors. The words and phrases are not only decoded by the translator, but they are also re-coded by the director, who serves the theatrical event to the audience, which in turn has to decode it again. The integrity of a play text does not remain untouched. The authority is delegated to the audience to interpret the play and to decide about its success. Theory is part of the first stage in a translator's work. Later, stage translators think more about the whole performance which involves other technical and musical devices, which make him a coauthor, somebody who bridges the source language culture and the target language culture.

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<sup>31</sup> *Ibidem*, pág. 93.

<sup>32</sup> *Idem*.