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Comparative Analysis of the Translation of Markus
Zusak's The Book Thief

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Abstract

Literary translation is a long-established practice that has endured several transformations since its origins. However, the issue of fidelity to the author and their work is a rather recent preoccupation, as this concern to be faithful grew during the Romanticism period. In this context, the dichotomy form vs. content settled. This matter troubled translators because they had to choose which of the two they were to be true to. This paper examines the translation of *The Book Thief* with the purpose of analyzing the translator's degree of fidelity towards the author, as well as exploring how the translator overcomes the challenges of literary translation. To do this, we give an insight to the literary genre to which the novel belongs, War Literature, and provide the most common translation procedures, which will further the execution of the text's analysis. The subsequent study shows a high degree of fidelity in the translation of Zusak's work, although there are instances in which this matter is disregarded entirely.

Key words: Analysis, Translation, War Literature, Markus Zusak, *The Book Thief*, Laura Martín de Dios

1. Introduction

Literary translation has undergone more than a few changes since the beginning of its practice. Wechsler (1998) affirms that translators tended to manipulate the works they translated freely, especially throughout classical and modern history. Romans usually prioritized the work's form but would not hesitate to do away with a stanza if deemed appropriate. Nowadays, literary translators are more prone to fidelity, which this author states "is the most basic ethical term in translation" (p. 58). However, the word 'fidelity' poses several questions. To whom or what must the translator be faithful? And to what extent? Must the translator be faithful to the content or the form? Can the translator be faithful to both?

According to this author, the term 'fidelity' referred to form, probably for the especial status of poetry. The concern to be faithful to the original and its author grew with the arrival of Romanticism, and, since then, translation has become "primarily a matter of doing the author justice" (p. 61).

Regarding the dichotomy form-content, Wechsler proposes a straightforward, but he admits not completely satisfactory, approach: if the text's primary focus is content, the translator must focus on content, and if the text's main focus is form, the translator must focus on form. He acknowledges that this proposal also poses problems. First, the translator must be the one to establish which of the two the source text focuses on and, second, form and content are indiscernible in good literature. He claims that the best writers are able to provide the form that best transmits the content, for as long as "the interpreter's goal is to capture the form and content as much as possible" (p. 81), their work can be called a translation.

The issue of fidelity is only one of many challenges literary translators face in their everyday life. The belief that translation is 'impossible', as well as the Italian phrase *Traduttore, traditore* (translator, traitor), is old-established. Literary translators must, then, swim against the tide to prove they are worthy of the respect they deserve.

The purpose of this paper is to analyze the translation of *The Book Thief*, a novel written by Markus Zusak and translated into Spanish by Laura Martín de Dios. The goal is to examine how the translator overcomes the challenges literary translation poses and the degree of fidelity she has towards Zusak's work. Two theoretical frameworks are presented: the first on War Literature (Section 2.1), in which not only is war writing as a genre set forth, but also Zusak and his writing style are examined; and the second on

translation (Section 2.2), which includes, in brief, the basics for translation analysis. Subsequently, Section 3 presents the comparison of both the Spanish and English versions of the novel. The analysis puts into practice the strategies presented in the theoretical translation background. Since it is a considerably long novel, only short fragments are considered (Appendix). In addition, it is indispensable to decide which fragments to analyze in order to be able to observe how source and target texts differ, how Martín de Dios has decided to overcome apparently impossible-to-translate fragments, and how Zusak's style is preserved (if it is).

2. Theoretical background

2.1. War Literature

Although under the title 'War Literature', this section presents the historical, cultural, and literary background necessary to completely understand *The Book Thief*. First, the historical contextualization is presented, afterwards, the general functions of war literature, and more precisely of WWII literature and perpetrator literature, a subgenre of WWII literature. Finally, the section provides an insight into Markus Zusak's writing style and his work, *The Book Thief*.

2.1.1. Contextualization: The Nazi Rule

Germany's invasion of Poland marked the beginning of WWII. From then on, the Jewish genocide became a reality. Over 6 million Jews, amongst other socially unaccepted groups, died in Concentration Camps or were killed or gassed to death in Death Camps. It all started in 1935 when Adolf Hitler approved the Nuremberg Laws. These were anti-Semitic and racist laws that established that only people of German blood were to be protected by the Reich. The "Law for the Protection of the German Blood" prescribed all the actions forbidden for the Jews. Any Jew who dared to violate any of the prescriptions was to be imprisoned.

The Night of Broken Glass ('Kristallnacht', in German) broke out in 1938. In two days, more than 250 synagogues were burned, more than 7 thousand Jewish businesses destroyed, and Jewish cemeteries, hospitals, schools, and homes looted, while the police watched from afar. This event is known as the Night of Broken Glass because of the shattered glass that covered the streets in the aftermath. Thirty thousand Jews were arrested and brought to Concentration Camps, where thousands of them died.

The first Death Camp opened in 1941 in Poland, under the name of Chelmno. The largest of them all was Auschwitz-Birkenau. After the Wannsee conference, in 1942, what is known as 'The Final Solution' began. Jews were systematically deported from all over Europe to Death Camps located in Polish territory. Nearing the end of the war, prisoners were moved again to camps in Germany. Firstly, they were taken by train. However, later, they were forced to walk in the so-called 'Death Marches', although thousands were killed in the days leading up to them. The prisoners marched long distances in extreme cold, with little to no food, water, or rest. Those who could not continue were shot. About one out of every four people died on the way. The longest Death Marches took place when the Soviet army began the liberation of Poland. On May the 8th 1945, the Third Reich capitulated to the Allies.

2.1.2. The Functions of War Literature

According to Lenz, "there are various opinions about what literature is, but one thing it certainly represents is the collective memory of human beings" (cited in Reiter, 2005:50), and if there is something that we, human beings, share, whether we like it or not, is war. From an actual war with significant consequences to the metaphor "argument is war", human relationships are based on fighting and reconciling. Thus, since literature represents this collective memory it is normal that war writing is a genre on its own.

Moreover, mimesis between literature and reality is reciprocal and "except for the theme of love [...] no other literary rendering of human experience has exercised such an extensive influence on human behavior" (Brosman, 1992:85). In other words, not only do we create literature, but literature also shapes us, and war writings are probably the ones which influence us the most. Furthermore, while historical recordings are founded on a factual level or "causes and conduct of armed conflict or individual battles" (p. 86), readers pursue the psychological level, the "subjective element" (p. 86), which only fiction offers. Consequently, literature in general, and war literature in particular, have different functions. Whether intentionally or not, writers have set the benchmarks of military behavior and, in other cases, they have aroused the young's national identity. However, lately, war writing tends to tell the war "as it is" and attempts to outdistance itself from the myths and glorification that settled in the genre a long time ago (Brosman, 1992).

Narrowing it down to World War II, different factors need to be taken into account. Firstly, “the different kinds of war that World War II encompassed affect its literature in profound ways” (Mackay, 2009:2), which means that WWII literature changes and has different characteristics depending on the country in which the writer has been educated. Thus, while the allied countries had the “temptation to mythologize World War II as an epic struggle of good against evil” (p. 3), “German and Japanese writers found that their war experiences were both literally and figuratively unspeakable” (p. 4). Secondly, “contemporary fiction dealing with World War II is produced by writers with no direct experience of the war” (Rau, 2008:207). Second-hand stories and memories are somewhat familiar in the latest war fiction. Moreover, at the same time, the readers’ agenda deviates from that of those who lived through the actual war (Rau, 2009). Therefore, war literature differs depending on time, space, writer, and reader. Despite all that, it can be claimed that contemporary writings do away with the glorification and mythologization of war and substitutes them for a rather self-critical approach, which includes “little known or suppressed aspects of war, and attend more carefully to the experiences of a total war whose strategies redefined civilians as legitimate targets” (p. 209).

2.1.3. Holocaust Perpetrator literature

From *This Way for the Gas, Ladies and Gentlemen* (1946) by Tadeusz Borowski to *The Diary of Anne Frank* (1947), Holocaust literature overflows with writings of those who were the main target in WWII. The war had barely finished when these narrations started to appear. It is only in the twenty-first century that Perpetrator literature surfaces. The ‘ordinary’ German also suffered a great deal during WWII, even if they were its cause. Nonetheless, “how appropriate [...] is it for Germans to talk about their own suffering in comparison to that inflicted by the Holocaust?” (Cohen-Pfister, 2005:130)

Perhaps that is principally the reason why it took them so long to talk about it. Controversy and debate would have been fast to arise if the collective memory of the perpetrators was expressed. Sebald “attributed the apparent absence of deep national trauma to a perfectly functioning mechanism of repression and silence on the topic to an unspoken taboo” (Cohen-Pfister, 2005:126). Hence, suppressing the memories of what happened was the way to carry on.

Nevertheless, Cohen-Pfister (2005) explains how the surfacing of this Perpetrator literature in the twenty-first century proves that Germany still endeavors to make peace with its unsettling past. The fact that this kind of texts is having a great reception illustrates the need to publicly address the issue of a collective memory of suffering, which tries to make room for both pain and guilt in its national narrative. This collective change of thinking is advocated by second- and third-generation writers, whose memory has been conciliated through public and private representations of war.

2.1.4. **Markus Zusak and *The Book Thief***

Zusak belongs to this second-generation of writers who attempts to make amends with their parents' inheritance of guilt and pain. In *The Book Thief* (2005), Zusak presents a collection of war stories his parents told him. He attempts to offer the reader a Germany which also suffered the impact of the Holocaust. He wants to show a different perspective of the country where not everybody followed the rules and hid Jews in their basements.

The 'ordinary' Germans that lived in this different Germany are not less of perpetrators than the Nazis because they did not do anything to stop it. Nevertheless, they had to endure a considerable amount of suffering and trauma too. As a matter of fact, one thing does not go against the other, i.e. the guilt of what they were a part of and the trauma of what they suffered can coexist in one individual or society. Furthermore, *The Book Thief* "seems to be the kind of narrative that carefully insists on attempting to comprehend both sides of collective traumatic experience" (Buráková, 2019:2). As this author (2019) highlights, the aim of Perpetrator literature is not to ask for forgiveness or defend anyone, but to call attention to the intricacy of the perpetrator discourse. In recognizing and apprehending the trauma, literary reconstruction leads towards healing.

The complexity of perpetrators can be seen in the novel through different characters (Buráková, 2019). Hans Hubermann, Liesel's foster father, is the perfect example of ambiguity. Firstly, despite being a victim in WWI, he becomes a perpetrator in WWII, even if it is only by association. He is also the person who hides a Jew, Max, in his basement. However, "in the hands of a less-able novelist, Hans Hubermann's seemingly heroic act could have been misused to romanticize realities in Nazi Germany" (p. 7). The truth is that this heroic act is not performed out of unselfishness, but morality since Max's father saved him during the WWI, and now, even if he is dead, Hubermann owes him.

Another character that illustrates this complexity is Alex Steiner, Liesel's best friend's father. Steiner is moved by utterly different reasons. He is what Arendt (2005) calls "a good family man". He is the jobholder of a family of seven, whose only aim is to be able to provide for them. That is the reason why he joins the Nazi party and "instinctively places himself on the side of the perpetrators" (Buráková, 2019:7). This is one of the many paradoxes of WWII: many were good family men. "They are not even all-natural murderers or traitors out of perversity. It is not even certain that they would do the work if it were only their own lives and futures that were at stake. They felt [...] only the responsibility toward their own families" (Arendt, 2005:129). Arendt was not only talking about men who joined the Nazi Party, but also about the camp guards, the men who turned the gas showers on, the men who shot those who could not continue during the Death Marches. She refers to anyone remotely connected to the perpetrators' side, and they were mainly good family men. Alex Steiner is, then, "representative of many 'Steiners' in Nazi Germany, who suffered from the moral and ethical dilemmas generated by the social, historical, and economic circumstances and the sense of their own preservation and survival" (Buráková, 2019:8). Therefore, by telling us about daily life in Himmel Street, Zusak aims to depict the complexity of the situation. Not everything can be conceived as a binary dichotomy: people are not either good or bad, guilty or innocent.

What distinguishes this novel from other perpetrator narratives, however, is its narrator. In *The Book Thief*, Death takes over to impose impartial objectivity. "The majority of perpetrator narratives focus on the voice and the inner life of the perpetrators themselves, thus preventing more detached and unbiased point of view" (Buráková:2). Nonetheless, in here, "Death acts as the objective, non-judgmental witness who has no allegiance to any nation or grouping of peoples and is, instead, the impartial observer" (Shields, 2016:6).

Buráková (2019) claims that there are different ways in which Zusak secures strong objectivity by making Death the narrator. He lumps together individual and collective trauma, and the victim's and perpetrator's trauma. Since Death has no alliances, no associations, he becomes the solution to the problem trauma representation poses. "Death shifts the level of suffering to the most universal perspective possible by pointing out the insignificance of the binary view of the world" (p. 11).

2.1.5. Markus Zusak's Writing Style

Zusak's writing style consists of three main characteristics: sentence simplicity, foreshadowing, and symbolism. First, his lack of sentence complexity has been criticized on different occasions, and, for this reason, critics have wrongly appointed *The Book Thief* to a young readership. There is, however, a reason why Zusak chose to use a natural and simple sentence structure. It is important to remember that the narrator of the story is Death and he is only allowed human interaction when he comes to collect them. Hence, as Brady (2013:25) states, "his language skills, by nature of his lack of ability to communicate interactively, cannot be sophisticated." Second, Death tends to let the reader know what will happen. Foreshadowing and universal truths are presented throughout, generally set off and bolded. For instance, the death of Rudy Steiner is announced roughly 300 pages before it happens. The aim is to inform the reader of what will happen so they can focus on how it happens.

Finally, from the narrator himself to each book the protagonist steals, *The Book Thief* is full of symbolism, among other literary figures, such as metaphors, ironies, or paradoxes. Death presents himself as an average human: "You want to know what I truly look like? I'll help you out. Find yourself a mirror while I continue" (Zusak, 2005:307). Additionally, colors are everywhere. Death describes the color of the sky every time he collects a human, and they set the mood and help the reader understand Death's experiences. Moreover, Hans' accordion represents something different to each character: from comfort to Liesel, to hope to Max, to friendship to Hans. Each book also has its own meaning inside the whole novel, but what is more important is what words mean, because they hold great power, especially in this book. As Zusak himself explained in an interview (2012), "it was words (and Hitler's ability to use them) that contained the power to murder and ostracize. What I set out to create was a character to juxtapose the way Hitler used words. She would be a stealer of books and a prolific reader."

In this chapter, the cultural basis has been established. The next section provides a glimpse of the vast field of translation. The literary framework has been presented before the translation background with the intention to become acquainted with the genre the novel belongs to, the novel itself, and its writer. The reason for this is the necessity to understand the work in its entirety before being ready to translate it. Section 2.2 discusses the means to transpose the novel to another language. From a brief definition of

translation to a classification of translation procedures, the section presents the necessary instruments for the subsequent analysis of Zusak's work.

2.2. Translation

No simple definition grasps the complexity of the term 'translation'. Broadly speaking, translation is a process in which something is converted from one form to another (Lexico). Jakobson (2000) established that translation can be divided into three types. Intralingual translation consists of paraphrasing or rewording a message in the same language. Intersemiotic translation deals not with different languages but with different sign systems (i.e. verbal and non-verbal). Our main focus is interlingual translation, which he described as "an interpretation of verbal signs by means of some other language" (p. 114). Jakobson also highlights the fact that, since there is no absolute equivalence between languages, a translator will not often find a literal translation for a term or an idiom. That is the reason why he believes that the translator must focus on the message. Therefore, "the goal is not to translate what the SL author wrote but what he or she meant, and thought-by-thought is usually the superior vehicle for accomplishing this" (Landers, 2001:55), especially if we are dealing with literary translation. Hence, translating the content of the message should be the aim of the translator, because focusing only on the form of the text would lead to an unnatural translation.

Furthermore, lexicon, syntax, and pragmatics, among others, differ from language to language, which causes meaning loss as the translation process develops. Talaván (2017) emphasizes the inevitability of translation loss. She states that the translator should be aware of it and accept it. She also sets forth that the amount of meaning that is lost differs among texts and different translations of the same text. Translation implies, then, a process of decision making for the translator. They must consider translation loss, but at the same time they must provide the reader with a natural, understandable text, without ever 'improving' the original, for they have no such right.

2.2.1. The Translation Process

Newmark (1988:19) divides the translating process into three steps. In the first step, the translator must choose a method of approach. There are two different ways to approach a text, regardless of whether the text is literary or not. First, one can start translating directly. This approach does without a first reading of the text and goes straightforwardly to the matter at hand. However, the translator must go back to the

beginning after a few sentences and read the whole ST. The second approach requires the translator to read the ST at least twice before starting to translate. This helps to identify the intention of the text, its tone and register. The translator can also mark the complicated snippets of the text to keep them in mind. Once this is done, the translator can start translating.

The second step is to be aware of the four different levels that a translator must have in mind when translating. The textual level is the base level, where literal translation is the bridge between SL and TL. The second level is the referential level. We make use of it when we picture in our minds what the ST is saying. This level is in close association with the textual level because the translation becomes an arrangement between text and facts. The cohesive level “encompasses both comprehension and reproduction” (Newmark, 1988:19). It deals with the structure and the moods of a text, as well as coherence and emphasis. The last level is naturalness, which assures that the translation makes sense and that it reads naturally.

The final step is revision. The translator must revise their translation to make sure it is easy to read, and no meaningful sense segment is lost. The translation must sound natural. The translator must also be accurate and economical, which Newmark (1988:47) states are the two main aims of translation.

2.2.2. **Methods and Procedures**

Vinay and Darbelnet (1965) described a unit of translation as a meaningful segment that cannot be translated separately because, if it were, it would become incoherent. Hence, the unit of translation changes depending on the text and on the part of the text being translated. The sentence usually becomes the first unit of translation because it is the basic unit of thought. Thus, “translate by sentences wherever you can [...], and *then* make sure you have accounted for (which is not the same as translated) each word in the SL text” (Newmark, 1988:51). Sometimes, however, the lexis constitutes more of a problem than a sentence itself. If a translator does not understand a word or finds it difficult to translate, Newmark proposes to look for figurative meaning, archaic or regional sense, if used ironically, in a sense particular to the author (idiolect), or misprinted. Each word is where it is for a reason, so the translator must find a way to account for it.

2.2.2.1. **Methods**

Sense over form or form over sense is the long-established dichotomy in the world of translation. As previously stated (p. 9), there is no full correspondence between two languages, and the times comes when the translator must choose between keeping the message of the passage, or its form. Newmark (1988) classifies translating methods into those that emphasize the ST (i.e., those that keep the form) and those which emphasize the TT (i.e., those that keep the message).

On the one hand, semantic translation is one method that focuses on the ST. It “is personal and individual, follows the thought processes of the author, tends to over-translate, pursues nuances of meaning, yet aims at concision in order to reproduce pragmatic impact” (Newmark: 47). Thus, it tends to be intricate and detailed. On the other hand, communicative translation is one method that focuses on the TT. It focuses on the readers and the way they process information and emphasizes the clarity and briefness of the message. Moreover, the equivalent effect is essential in communicative translation. It seeks to cause a similar reaction to the reader as the ST caused to its readers. Thus, the effectiveness and value of communicative translation will be judged according to the effect it arouses on the reader.

2.2.2.2. **Procedures**

Whereas methods describe the translation of whole texts, procedures are used to describe the translation of smaller units (Newmark 1998). However, sometimes the line between the two is blurry. Literal translation is the perfect example. “Literal translation ranges from one word to one word, through group to group, collocation to collocation, clause to clause, to sentence to sentence” (p. 69). This is the reason why many consider it a method and a procedure. The longer the unit of translation is, the more complex it is to keep working with literal translation. Thus, when translation problems arise, literal translation may not be suitable. When this happens, other procedures come into play.

The following procedures follow mainly Newmark’s classification (1988). ‘Transference’ “is the process of transferring a SL word to a TL text” (p. 81). An example would be names of people, places, newspapers, institutions, streets, etcetera, which do not vary from language to language, especially in novels. ‘Naturalization’ often follows transference in the sense that it entails that the transferred SL word pronunciation is

modified according to the pronunciation rules of the TL. Later, the transferred SL word is often modified according to the TL's morphological rules too.

'Transposition' is the only "translation procedure involving a change in the grammar from SL to TL" (p. 85). There are three types of transposition. The first type refers to when the grammar is merely different. The second type deals with structures that exist in one language but not in the other. In this case, the translator must find a suitable alternative. The third type only occurs when there is a possibility for literal translation, but it does not sound natural, so the translator has to find other alternatives. There is a considerable amount of transpositions between English and Romance languages. For instance, noun plus noun in English (e.g. 'nerve cell') is transposed to noun plus an adjective (e.g. *La cellule nerveuse, la célula nerviosa, la cèl·lula nerviosa*). Verbs of motion are also one significant difference between English and Romance languages.

'Modulation' is used to convey the same idea with different phrasing. Some types of modulation are: active for passive, cause for effect ('you're quite a stranger' vs. *on ne vous voit plus*), one part for another ('from cover to cover' vs. *de la première à la dernière*), or reversal of terms (*assurance-maladie* vs. 'health insurance').¹

Translation 'by omission' excludes from the translation words, phrases, or even sentences, to adapt the text to the target audience. As Dimitriu (2004) explains, many scholars do not consider it a translation procedure for different reasons. Some consider that it is not faithful to the original; others consider that it disregards necessary information. Nonetheless, omission is a procedure used by professional translators nowadays. 'Compensation' counterbalances whatever translation loss may arise by adding the meaning or metaphor lost in another part of the sentence.

Talaván (2017) proposes two strategies that deal with culture: 'domestication' and 'foreignization'. On the one hand, 'domestication' trades the ST cultural values for TL cultural values, which are easily understood by the TL reader. On the other hand, 'foreignization' preserves the SL culture, which may be out of the ordinary for the reader. It is important to bear in mind that there must be balance and that it is necessary to pay especial attention when translating cultural words not to change the ST too much, but not to maintain so many cultural words that the TT audience does not understand the text.

¹ Examples from Newmark, 1988: 87-89.

Finally, the last three strategies are ‘calque’, ‘cultural transplantation’ and ‘couplets’. In the case of ‘calque’, “the SL expression is borrowed, but literally translated” (Talaván: 64). For example, ‘The White House’ is in Spanish *La Casa blanca*. In the case of ‘cultural transplantation’, “the SL cultural item is replaced by a TL specific cultural reference” (p. 64). For instance, ‘Easter pudding’ in Spanish could be translated as *torrijas*. Lastly, ‘couplets’ blend more than one procedure to face just one single problem. They are especially usual for cultural words, which tend to complicate translation. For example, the term ‘The White House’ could be transferred to give a sense of foreignization, but at the same time the calque *La Casa blanca* is offered as an explanation.

In this section, we have reviewed the most common procedures used by translators that will guide our analysis in Section 3. In summary, there is rarely full equivalence between languages, so as the translation process develops, some of the meaning may be lost. Since translation is a complex task, the translator must use these procedures to ensure a natural reading, without changing the original excessively, because, under any circumstances, is the translator entitled to ‘improve’ the original.

3. Analysis

This section analyzes some extracts from *The Book Thief* in order to see the translation procedures chosen by the translator Martín de Dios and how these procedures deal with Zusak’s style. In order to perform this analysis, we will use the classification provided in Section 2.2.

The procedure that has been used more extensively is *Omission* (see Appendix, Fragments 1 and 2) Surprisingly enough, the omitted part in the text in Fragment 1 does not seem to pose a real translation problem. A possible translation could be: *Tuvo suerte de que yo estuviera allí. Pero si vamos a eso, ¿a quién quiero engañar? He estado en la mayoría de sitios al menos una vez, y en 1943, estaba prácticamente en todas partes.* A possible explanation to this omission could be the change of the verb in the sentence before. Death explains how he took the book from a garbage truck. In Martín de Dios’ translation, Death rescued the book (“y lo rescaté antes de que el camión arrancara” (521)). The book was then, not just taken but saved from a dangerous situation, and that made it a lucky book. She might have decided that *It’s lucky I was there* was not a necessary sentence anymore, because it was accounted for in her decision to choose the verb *rescatar*.

Fragment 2 presents an omission of more considerable consequences, since it causes a change of the chapter title. Thus, ‘Death and Chocolate’ becomes ‘La muerte y tú’. Since most of the content of the ST is alluded to or connoted in the TT, Martín de Dios’ purpose might have been to present only essential information more concisely than Zusak had. Nonetheless, the part which justifies the chapter title is completely omitted, which forced her to change it.

Cultural references are another aspect that has been explored when analyzing *The Book Thief*’s translation. Zusak uses German words or expressions on many occasions, and it is interesting to see how Martín de Dios deals with them. In this case, she maintains every German word he uses. Since the original text is written in English, German words provide a sense of foreignization (p. 12) that the translator chose to preserve. The use of German words can help the reader feel closer to the characters and their world. Fragments 3, 4, and 5 in Appendix present examples of foreignization.

Rosa Hubermann, a character from the book, is keen to insults in German. In Fragment 3, Death himself explains the insults she uses, so in this case a translation of his explanation is enough to clarify any doubts foreign words can cause. This is what Martín de Dios does. In Fragment 4, we can observe the use of the German words *Führer* and *Heil Hitler*, which are maintained in the translation in all probability because the translator considers that they belong to shared knowledge. WWII is studied in school and there are plenty of movies, books and biographies about it and the Holocaust. Since these words are most likely well-known to readers, and they are often said in German, they need no further explanation. There is, however, a difference between ST and TT when it comes to the name of the street. While Zusak uses the English version of street naming (‘Munich Street’), Martín de Dios does not use the Spanish one (‘la calle Munich’). She uses foreignization once more and presents the name of the street in German (‘Münchenstrasse’). Lastly, Fragment 5 shows another difference between ST and TT. On the one hand, Zusak only provides the term *Kristallnacht*. Thus, he transfers the German word to English. On the other, Martín de Dios offers *Kristallnacht* and *La Noche de los Cristales Rotos*. Therefore, she uses couplets (p. 13), which means she uses two different strategies (in this case, transference and calque) to deal with the same problem.

In what follows, idioms have been examined (see Appendix, Fragment 6), although it has been challenging to find many within Zusak’s writing. As aforementioned (p. 11), communicative translation focuses on the message and the effect it causes on the

reader. Idioms give a sense of informality that, if possible, translators should maintain, or compensate in other parts of the text. In Fragment 6, the idiom is *to be a bad egg*, which means to be “a mischievous person, harmless in nature, but always up to be a brat” (Urban Dictionary). The translator chose to find an equivalent idiom in Spanish: *salir rana*. In this case, *salir rana* provides quite well the same effect Zusak wanted to when he used *to be a bad egg*.

Fragments 7 to 12 present examples of some of the transpositions found. As mentioned above (p. 12), transpositions involve a change in grammar from ST to TT. In Fragment 7, the word *frightener* requires transposition. The nominalized adjective *asustador(a)* would be an equivalent of *frightener*. Despite that, a sentence such as *La enfermera, Rudy decidió, era una asustadora* would sound highly unnatural. *Meter el miedo en el cuerpo*, on the other hand, is a fairly common expression and the result is the same: the nurse was scary. Fragment 8 shows a similar case to the one just mentioned (Fragment 7). The nominalized adjective *silbador(a)* is a close equivalent to *whistler*. Nevertheless, *el hombre que silbaba* provides a naturalness that *silbador* fails to. In Fragment 9, an adjective has been replaced by a prepositional phrase. Again, there is the possibility for literal translation, but the result sounds rather odd. Thus, *fringerprinted* becomes *con sus huellas todavía impresas en él*, granting then a more genuine reading.

Excerpts in Fragments 10 to 12 exemplify several common transpositions between English and Romance languages. Firstly, an adverb in English becomes an adverbial phrase in the Romance language. Hence, *como una imbécil* (see Appendix, Fragment 10) constitutes an appropriate translation for *stupidly*, even though *estúpidamente* also exists. Secondly, verbs of movement are a common cognitive concept of our lives, but they are lexicalized differently depending on the language we speak. On the one hand, English generally presents movement with verbs expressing manner followed by a preposition, i.e. the verb describes how the object or person moves, and the preposition expresses the direction. On the other, Spanish uses mainly verbs of motion usually followed by a present participle of description, i.e. the verb expresses the direction, and the present participle expresses the manner in which the object or person moves (Talmy, 1985). An instance of this is Fragment 11. *Float* indicates the way in which the book moves, which is on the surface of water, without sinking, and *down* indicates the direction. In the equivalent Spanish sentence, the verb *bajar* expresses the same as the preposition *down* in English, the direction of the movement. The manner in which the book moves is

expressed by the present participle *flotando*, which is, again, on the surface of water, without sinking. Fragment 12 also shows this kind of transposition. The manner of the movement is expressed in English by the verb (*hurried*) whereas in Spanish by the present participle (*corriendo*). Direction is conveyed in English by the preposition (*across*) while in Spanish it is conveyed by the verb (*se acercó*).

Next, instances in which the procedure ‘modulation’ (p. 12) has been used are presented. Modulation implies different paraphrasing for the same ideas. On occasions, modulation is expressed with a ‘reversal of terms’ (Newmark, 1988). The two fragments presented in Fragment 13 convey the same idea, although they are communicated in inverted ways. If one states they could not do more, it is fair to assume that they did their best. The same happens with Fragment 14. If the situation is unbelievable, it is only natural that no one can believe it. The idea is the same, but it is expressed inversely. Lastly, Fragment 15 presents an example of the same kind. Once again, the image is quite the same, but its transmission is opposite. On other occasions, modulation means the change from passive to active voice or vice versa. Fragment 16 provides a clear example of change of voice. The choice of passive in English might have been to avoid mentioning who bombed their cities. Since Spanish allows pro-drop subjects, there is no real need to use the passive in the translation. The agent can be easily omitted in an active Spanish sentence by making it a null-subject.

Fragment 17 is another example of couplets. In this case, modulation and transposition are used at the same time. Modulation involves the change of passive voice ST to active voice TT. Transposition involves the change of the superlative adverb in the ST to a superlative adjective plus subordination in the TT. While superlative adverbs do exist in Spanish, superlative adjectives are perhaps more frequent. Hence, although the possibility of a literal translation is there, a genuine reading is prioritized.

Lastly, as mentioned above (p. 8), one of the main characteristics of Zusak’s writing in *The Book Thief* is sentence simplicity. There are, however, several instances (see Appendix, Fragments 18 and 19) in which Martín de Dios merges the two segments of a coordinated sentence and offers subordination. This implies not only a change of style, but also the need to use a broader range of translation strategies. Therefore, a passive sentence (see Fragment 18) is replaced by a relative clause. On other occasions, a passive sentence (see Fragment 19) is substituted for an adverbial clause. In both cases, the procedure used has been modulation.

Nevertheless, there are instances in which subordination is substituted for coordination, which counterbalances the loss of sentence simplicity mentioned above. Since the lack of sentence complexity is one of the main characteristics of the narrator, it is important that Martín de Dios accounts for it (see compensation – p. 13) In this case, an adverbial clause (see Appendix, Fragment 20) is replaced by coordination.

In this section, we used the procedures explained in Section 2.2 to analyze Martín de Dios' translation of Zusak's *The Book Thief*. This section aimed to provide an analysis of the procedures used by the translator and to account for her decisions. Several examples exhibited the differences between ST and TT. Overall, excerpts that posed a translation problem or that required a procedure other than literal translation were examined.

4. Conclusion

This paper was born out of the need to become acquainted with the field of translation. At the same time, there was a compelling desire to work with the literary genre of war, especially WWII, which has been a field of interest of mine for a long time. Given the fact that I had read *The Book Thief* on several occasions in both English and Spanish, this novel proved to be the most appropriate subject of study. The aim of this paper was, then, to analyze its translation.

In this work, we have reviewed different fields of research. First, Section 2.1. provided an insight into the cultural and literary aspects of the novel. As aforementioned, from the point of view of Death, Zusak presents a perpetrator novel that offers the reader the intricacy of a Germany where the culprits are also victims. Second, Section 2.2. examined mainly the most common translation procedures, which were deemed necessary to analyze the translation of Zusak's work.

Regarding the analysis, a wide range of facets of the novel were examined. Cultural references, for example, have proven to be a relevant aspect to maintain in the translation because they provided a sense of foreignization, which means that they helped the readers immerse themselves in the story completely. The translator included even more foreignization than Zusak, which leads us to believe that she also considered it a critical matter. Furthermore, concerning the main features of the author's style, we have observed instances in which the translator disregards sentence simplicity, a central characteristic of the narrator. However, she outweighs this loss by simplifying occurrences of a more complex discourse, thus, showing that the author's style was an aspect of relevance in her translation.

Nonetheless, there is one other matter of the analysis that is worth pointing out. Two excerpts in which the procedure ‘translation by omission’ is used have been presented. In the second one, the omitted part is almost a page long. Presenting a summary of only crucial information might have been the translator’s objective, but the basic information that justified the chapter title was omitted. The fact that there is an omission as significant as this one, which additionally demands a change of chapter title, implies that the author’s style may not have been such an essential matter to the translator as previously thought for her fidelity to the original’s both form and content is compromised.

In regard to the limitations of this paper, it is worth highlighting that, although many instances of the novel have been analyzed, it was not possible to account for all the decisions the translator made. Providing plausible and rational explanations has been a priority but understanding some of her choices has been out of reach. Furthermore, the length of the work hinders a more exhaustive analysis. However, this project has provided the opportunity to take the first step into this world and become familiar with a possible future line of work.

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Appendix

Fragment 1

Original (539)	Translation (521)
<p>There was much work to be done, and with a collection of other materials, <i>The Book Thief</i> was stepped on several times and eventually picked up without even a glance and thrown aboard a garbage truck. Just before the truck left, I climbed quickly up and took it in my hand... It's lucky I was there. Then again, who am I kidding? I'm in most places at least once, and in 1943, I was just about everywhere.</p>	<p>Había mucho trabajo que hacer y, junto a otro montón de objetos variopintos, <i>La ladrona de libros</i> acabó pisoteado varias veces hasta que lo recogieron sin echarle siquiera un vistazo y lo arrojaron al camión de la basura. Me subí de un salto y lo rescaté antes de que el camión arrancara.</p>

Fragment 2

Original (4)	Translation (12)
<p>The question is, what color will everything be at that moment when I come for you? What will the sky be saying? Personally, I like a chocolate colored sky. Dark, dark chocolate. People say it suits me. I do however, try to enjoy every color I see —the whole spectrum. A billion or so flavors, none of</p>	<p>Casi siempre consigo salir ilesa. Encuentro un color, aspiro al cielo. Me ayuda a relajarme. A veces, sin embargo, no es tan fácil, y me veo arrastrada hacía los supervivientes, que siempre se llevan la peor parte. Los observo mientras andan tropezando en la nueva situación, la desesperación</p>

them quite the same, and a sky to slowly suck on. It takes the edge off the stress. It helps me relax.

A SMALL THEORY

People observe the colors of a day only at its beginnings and ends, but to me it's quite clear that a day merges through a multitude of shades and intonations, with each passing moment. A single *hour* can consist of thousands of different colors. Waxy yellows, cloud-spat blues. Murky darknesses. In my line of work, I make it a point to notice them.

As I've been alluding to, my one saving grace is distraction. It keeps me sane. It helps me cope, considering the length of time I've been performing this job. The trouble is, who could ever replace me? Who could step in while I take a break in your stock-standard resort-style vacation destination, whether it be tropical or of the ski trip variety? The answer, of course, is nobody, which has prompted me to make a conscious, deliberate decision —to make distraction my vacation. Needless to say, I vacation in increments. In colors.

Still, it's possible that you might be asking, why does he even need a vacation? What does he need distraction *from*?

Which brings me to my next point.

It's the leftover humans.

The survivors.

y la sorpresa. Sus corazones están heridos, sus pulmones dañados.

Lo que a su vez me lleva al tema del que estoy hablándote esta noche, o esta tarde, a la hora o el color que sea. Es la historia de uno de eso perpetuos supervivientes, una chica menuda que sabía muy bien qué significa la palabra abandono.

<p>They're the ones I can't stand to look at, although on many occasions I still fail. I deliberately seek out the colors to keep my mind off them, but now and then, I witness the ones who are left behind, crumbling among the jigsaw puzzle of realization, despair, and surprise. They have punctured hearts. They have beaten lungs.</p> <p>Which in turn brings me to the subject I am telling you about tonight, or today, or whatever the hour and color. It's the story of one of those perpetual survivors —an expert at being left behind.</p> <p>It's just a small story really, about, among other things:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> *A girl *Some words *An accordionist *Some fanatical Germans *A Jewish fist fighter *And quite a lot of thievery <p>I saw the book thief three times.</p>	
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Fragment 3

Original (32)	Translation (35)
<p>In the beginning, it was the profanity that made an immediate impact. It was so <i>vehement</i> and prolific. Every second word was either <i>Saumench</i> or <i>Saukerl</i> or <i>Arschloch</i>. For people who aren't familiar with these words, I should explain. <i>Sau</i>, of course, refers to pigs. In the case of <i>Saumensch</i>, it serves to castigate,</p>	<p>Al principio, lo que más le impactó de la familia fue su procacidad verbal, sobre todo por la vehemencia y asiduidad con que se desataba. La última palabra siempre era <i>Saumensch</i> o bien <i>Saukerl</i> o <i>Arschloch</i>. Para los que no estén familiarizados con estas palabras, me explico: <i>Sau</i>, como todos sabemos, hace referencia a los cerdos. Y <i>Saumensch</i> se utiliza</p>

berate, or plain humiliate a female. <i>Suakerl</i> (pronounced “saukairl”) is for a male. <i>Arschloch</i> can be translated directly into “asshole.” That word, however, does not differentiate between the sexes. It simply is.	para censurar o humillar a la mujer. <i>Saukerl</i> (pronunciado tal cual) se utiliza para insultar al hombre. <i>Arschloch</i> podría traducirse por «imbécil», y no distingue entre el femenino y el masculino. Uno simplemente lo es.
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Fragment 4

Original (128)	Translation (130)
With typical affability, Hans replied, “Nothing, my good man, nothing at all. <i>Heil Hitler</i> ,” and he walked down Munich Street, holding the pages of the <i>Führer</i> .	—Nada, buen hombre, nada de nada — contestó Hans con su típica cordialidad—. <i>Heil Hitler!</i> Y siguió caminando por Münchenstrasse, con las páginas del Führer bajo el brazo.

Fragment 5

Original (183)	Translation (186)
Toward the end of 1938, when the Jews were cleared out completely after Kristallnacht, the Gestapo visited.	Hacia finales de 1938, cuando los judíos fueron expulsados sin dilación después de la <i>Kristallnacht</i> , la Noche de los Cristales Rotos, lo visitó la Gestapo.

Fragment 6

Original (58)	Translation (60)
At least one of them had to be a bad egg.	Al menos uno de ellos tenía que salirle rana.

Fragment 7

Original (412)	Translation (404)
The nurse, Rudy decided, was a frightener.	Rudy pensó que habían llevado a la enfermera para meterles el miedo en el cuerpo.

Fragment 8

Original (239)	Translation (241)
PART FIVE The whistler	QUINTA PARTE El hombre que silbaba

Fragment 9

Original (176)	Translation (179)
[...] and the fingerprinted accordion.	[...] y el acordeón, con sus huellas todavía impresas en él.

Fragment 10

Original (21)	Translation (25)
Stupidly, I stayed. I watched.	Me quedé mirando como una imbécil.

Fragment 11

Original (241)	Translation (243)
A book floated down the Amper River.	Un libro bajaba flotando por el río Amper.

Fragment 12

Original (417)	Translation (409)
Liesel hurried across and took it from the stove.	Liesel se acercó corriendo y la apartó de los fogones.

Fragment 13

Original (40)	Translation (42)
“It was the best we could do,” Papa apologized.	—No hemos podido hacer más —se disculpó el padre.

Fragment 14

Original (499)	Translation (484)
“I can’t believe it —she’s alive!”	—Es increíble... ¡Está viva!

Fragment 15

Original (539)	Translation (520)
Her arms held him.	Sus brazos se negaban a soltarlo.

Fragment 16

Original (418)	Translation (410)
Their cities were being bombed.	Bombardeaban sus ciudades.

Fragment 17

Original (25)	Translation (28)
[...] the poor were the most easily recognized.	[...] los más fáciles de reconocer eran los pobres.

Fragment 18

Original (26)	Translation (29)
They’d been expecting a girl and a boy and would be paid a small allowance for having them.	Esperaban a un niño y una niña, por cuya manutención recibirían una pequeña mensualidad.

Fragment 19

Original (414)	Translation (406)
The examination was completed and he managed to perform his first nude “ <i>heil Hitler</i> .”	Al acabar el reconocimiento, entonó su primer <i>«Heil Hitler!»</i> en pelotas.

Fragment 20

Original (184)	Translation (187)
They sat and talked quietly for fifteen minutes or so, arranging a meeting for later on, in the night.	Se sentaron y charlaron en voz baja unos quince minutos, y acordaron un encuentro para más tarde, por la noche.