Conventionality and creativity in translation: a corpus-based case study of translator's style

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Descriptive Translation Studies, and more specifically the sub-area of Corpus-based Translation Studies, have focused on the style of professional and literary translators, and addressed the translator's discursive presence in the translated text as a result. These studies have also examined large translation corpora in order to identify possible features of translated texts. Nevertheless, studies considering the association between descriptive translation studies and stylistics are still few in number and scope. In addition, they have English language as its primary focus. The relationship established between style and conventional expressions in texts translated into Brazilian Portuguese accounts, in turn, for even more restricted results. This research draws on Corpus-based Translation Studies (BAKER, 2000; SALDANHA, 2011; WALDER, 2013) and sets out to investigate stylistic traits of a literary translator from the perspective of conventionality, creativity and shifts in translation. It specifically examines patterns of linguistic choices made by a translator in Brazilian Portuguese that could be found both in his work as a translator and as an author, and the consequences of these choices for the recreation of meaning in the translated texts. Shifts in translation in the cotext of previously selected conventionality/creativity items were also investigated in order to obtain more information about the translator's linguistic preferences (PEKKANEN, 2010; BLAUTH 2015). The approach to the study of style in translation draws mainly on what was postulated by Munday (2008), Saldanha (2011) and Baker (2000). Saldanha (2011) takes into consideration the pioneering work of Baker (2000) about the style of translators in a comparable corpus, and proposes a combined approach to the investigation of style – the style of the translator as well as the style of the translated text using a combination of comparable and parallel corpora to differentiate translator's choices from author's choices. Baker (2007) introduces the study of conventionality associated with translator's style and – to some extent – translator's creativity, working with a comparable corpus. Munday (2008) investigates style from a different perspective than Corpus-based Translation Studies and identifies a certain degree of standardization regarding the voice of different authors when translated by the same translator. His results allowed him to make a connection between conventionality and creativity in translated texts. Magalhães and Barcellos (2015) focused on the investigation of translator's style in parallel corpora without specifically addressing the study of conventionality in translated texts or its relationship to translator's creativity. Therefore, the present research makes an attempt to fill in some of the gaps above mentioned through the investigation of conventionality as related to creativity and translation style in a corpus including translated texts and non-translated texts from the same translator/author. Thus, three corpora were compiled: 1) a corpus of translated texts written in Brazilian Portuguese by one of the current most prominent Brazilian literary translators, Paulo Henriques Britto, 2) a corpus of non-translated texts written

in Brazilian Portuguese by Britto, and 3) a corpus of short stories written in American English by the authors Philip Roth, John Updike, and Jhumpa Lahiri that, with the first corpus, translated texts by Britto, composed a parallel corpus. Two other corpora (COMPARA and ESTRA) were used as control corpora for frequency reference regarding the use of conventional expressions in Brazilian Portuguese. First, statistical data were obtained using the software WordSmith Tools © 6.0 (SCOTT, 2012), and elements related to conventionality in Brazilian Portuguese were analyzed at the various orders (morpheme, word, group, and clause). Second, shifts in the translated texts were investigated (CATFORD, [1965] 1978). The research methodology included compilation, preparation, alignment and tagging the texts for later analysis with WordSmith Tools © 6.0. The identification of patterns in the translated texts, attributed to the translator's style and not to the linguistic constraints of the American English/Brazilian Portuguese pair, takes on board mainly what was postulated by Munday (2008), Saldanha (2011) and Baker (1999, 2000, 2007). The results indicated that Britto made a set of choices to some extent distinct for each translated text, under the influence of the style of source texts. In general, the linguistic choices made by Britto regarding the use of conventional expressions increased the degree of colloquialism in the translated texts when compared to their respective source texts. In addition, the set of choices identified in Britto's non-translated texts presented similarities with the set of choices identified in his translated texts, in particular with the ones in Philip Roth's work. The most frequent shift in translation was addition (an amplification subcategory). These instances of addition were not directly related to explicitation. They were, on the other hand, related to a preference from the translator to use conventional expressions in translated texts, even when there was no clear motivation for this in the source texts. Britto also made use of sanitization, erasing some cultural references from the source texts. Nevertheless, the translator's creativity consistently outweighted the use of sanitization, corroborating the results obtained by Munday (2008) and refuting, to some extent, the ones obtained by Baker (1999, 2000).

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