

TICONTRE

TEORIA TESTO TRADUZIONE

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NUMERO 7 - MAGGIO 2017

*con il contributo dell'Area dipartimentale in Studi Linguistici, Filologici e Letterari
Dipartimento di Lettere e Filosofia dell'Università degli studi di Trento*

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AUTOBIOGRAPHIES, SELF-TRANSLATIONS AND THE LIVES IN-BETWEEN: THE CASES OF GUSTAVO PÉREZ FIRMAT AND ARIEL DORFMAN

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This article focuses on two pairs of formal published autobiographies written and self-translated by the Argentine-Chilean-American Ariel Dorfman and the Cuban-American Gustavo Pérez Firmat. These writers share at least four characteristics: they are from Latin America; they chose to live in the USA while in exile and they currently live there; and they have translated their own autobiographies – *Heading South, Looking North / Rumbo al Sur, Deseando el Norte* (by Dorfman) and *Next Year in Cuba / El año que viene estamos en Cuba* (by Pérez Firmat) into Spanish, their native tongue. In this article, we explore (i) the characteristics of autobiographies in general and how these apply to the study cases; (ii) how these authors' lives in-between languages are made explicit in the texts they write and self-translate. To the purpose, we explore similarities and differences between the two cases and the two texts, the original autobiography in English and the self-translation in Spanish, especially regarding the use of heterolingualism. Both Pérez Firmat and Dorfman tell the same story – that of exile – in a similar fashion. They refer to their lives as lives “in-between” languages, a permanent condition. Language is presented as an important issue and linguistic “bumps” are explicit marks of the presence of the Other in both versions of their autobiographies.

Il contributo si occupa di due coppie di autobiografie: *Heading South, Looking North*, dallo scrittore Ariel Dorfman, autotradotta in *Rumbo al Sur, Deseando el Norte*; e *Next Year in Cuba* di Gustavo Pérez Firmat, autotradotta in spagnolo come *El año que viene estamos en Cuba*. Entrambi latino americani - Dorfman è nato in Argentina, Pérez Firmat a Cuba - i due scrittori hanno scelto gli Stati Uniti come residenza del loro esilio. Entrambi hanno scritto la prima versione della loro autobiografia in inglese, una lingua seconda, e l'hanno in seguito tradotta in spagnolo, la loro lingua madre. Dopo aver ricordato brevemente le caratteristiche del genere autobiografico, l'articolo analizza come i due testi rientrino in questa categoria e quali sono le strategie usate dai due autori per descrivere le loro vite *in-between*, fra paesi, culture e lingue. Nelle loro narrazioni, in modo simmetrico per le due versioni, inglese e spagnola, il frequente uso dell'eterolinguismo è una strategia per far confrontare il lettore con la costante presenza dell'Altro.

INTRODUCTION

Autobiographical works may take many forms, from the sometimes secret and intimate writings made during a person's whole life that were not necessarily intended for publication (including letters, diaries, journals) to a formal published autobiography. The latter offer a special kind of biographical ‘truth’: a life reshaped by recollection, with all intended and unintended omissions and faults. When written by authors who are also exiles, who turn to their adopted language to write their memories, and who self-translate them into their native languages, autobiographies and their self-translations become objects of interest to professional and non-professional readers.¹

The present article focuses on two pairs of autobiographies written and self-translated by *exilé* writers: the Argentine-Chilean-American Ariel Dorfman and the Cuban-American Gustavo Pérez Firmat. Both from Latin America, Dorfman and Pérez-Firmat currently live in the United States. They have translated their own autobiographies first written in their second language, *Heading South, Looking North* and *Next Year in Cuba*,

¹ ANDRÉ LEFEVERE, *Translation, Rewriting and the Manipulation of Literary Fame*, London-New York, Routledge, 1992, p. 3.

respectively, into their native tongue with the titles *Rumbo al Sur*, *Deseando el Norte* and *El año que viene estamos en Cuba*.

Ariel Dorfman's memoir *Heading South, Looking North* and its self-translation *Rumbo al Sur, Deseando el Norte* were both published in 1998. They are the autobiographical narratives of a «hybrid, part Yankee, part Chilean, a pinch Jew, a mestizo in search of a center»,² from his birth in 1942 in Argentina to the day he eventually escapes from Chile in 1973 to a life of exile. Dorfman's autobiography deals with identity, with special focus on its relation with language and nationality. It narrates an existence defined by the movement between continents, languages and cultures.³

Gustavo Pérez Firmat's *Next Year in Cuba* was published in 1995 and its self-translation *El año que viene estamos en Cuba*, in 1997. Pérez Firmat left Havana for Miami in 1960 at the age of 11, when the Castro regime seized his family's business. He recounts his family's struggle to make ends meet, their desire to return to their homeland, and their despair at the failure of the 1961 Bay of Pigs invasion. He also recollects his childhood in Cuba, his life (and that of his family's) in Miami, and conveys his lifelong struggle to reconcile his identities.

This article is subdivided in three sections. In the first one, we explore the characteristics of the autobiographical genre, and how these apply to the texts under study. In the second section, we focus on Pérez Firmat's and Dorfman's original and self-translated autobiographies, so as to explore how their lives in-between languages are made explicit in the texts they wrote and self-translated. We investigate similarities and differences between the two cases and compare the originals in English to their corresponding self-translated versions in Spanish. The third and final section consolidates the previous discussion with some considerations on autobiographies and self-translation as experienced by the self-translators hereby investigated.

I AUTOBIOGRAPHIES: THEORY IN PRACTICE

Autobiographies are shaped by «historic, social and cultural conventions of the time and place in which they are produced».⁴ In other words, autobiographical texts are not produced in a vacuum; i.e., in an environment that is totally devoid of social and historic pressures and power relations. Such characteristics should be considered in the critical analysis of autobiographies, but not exclusively. Sometimes, despite the often considerable time lag that exists between the writers' lived experiences and their writing of the texts, the conditions that surrounded the authors when such events actually took place may still haunt them and become present not only along the writing process but also in the final text. When writing the autobiography, authors are involved «in a continuous

2 ARIEL DORFMAN, *Heading South, Looking North. A Bilingual Journey*, New York, Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1998, p. 220.

3 INÉS GARCÍA DE LA PUENTE, *Autotraducción y Movimiento: ¿Rumbo al Sur, Deseando el Norte?*, in «Revista Iberoamericana», LXXXIII/258 (2017), pp. 103-117, p. 107.

4 ANETA PAVLENKO, *In the world of the tradition, I was unimagined. Negotiation of identities in cross-cultural autobiographies*, in «The International Journal of Bilingualism», v/3 (2001), pp. 317-344, p. 320.

process of reconsideration»⁵ reflecting, restructuring, repositioning actions and events from a sometimes distant past but that have significantly affected their present.

Ariel Dorfman's autobiography is a meaningful example of how past-lived experiences haunt a writer's present life. In *Heading South, Looking North*, the author paints a vivid picture of the past political climate in Chile, in the United States, in Latin America in general, and pays particular attention to the revolution led by Salvador Allende in the Chile of the 1970s. The author was deeply involved in the political struggle that took Allende to power, and he takes the responsibility to tell his version of the revolution in his autobiography.⁶ Thus, Dorfman's narrative combines «eight vignettes of his life before 1973 with eight scenes from the coup».⁷ That is, every single chapter of the autobiography in a way recounts the Chilean revolution that took place during that period in relation to his life story. Dorfman does not differentiate politics from writing. For him, «all writing should engage the major dilemmas of the community».⁸ Reviewer Nick Dall describes Dorfman's autobiography as an «important political and historical artefact».⁹ Dorfman's autobiography shows how the historic, social and cultural conventions and the bygone events significantly affected his life in the past, in the present, and the writing of his autobiography in a very profound way.

More than just mechanically positioning events one after the other in a linear fashion, an autobiography writer selects and arranges the happenings from his or her life story¹⁰ within a multitude of historic, social and cultural conditions that were taking place at the same time, consequently designing a coherent character that will make his or her book capture the readers' attention.¹¹ In other words, an autobiography cannot be regarded as a mere account of the «true» memories of a writer. Craith suggests that «memories are reconstructed rather than played back every time one recalls an episode».¹² Autobiographies, then, are works of «creative nonfiction»,¹³ or works that present readers with the authors' own interpretations of their lives, written «in an interesting, evocative, informative way».¹⁴ Ultimately, we may state that while a writer's autobiography is the story of his or her own life, it is also, and perhaps, more importantly, the projection of a persona.

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- 5 GARY L. HAGBERG, *Describing Ourselves. Wittgenstein and Autobiographical Consciousness*, Oxford, Clarendon Press, 2008, p. 236.
- 6 NICK DALL, *Book Review: Heading South, Looking North by Ariel Dorfman*, <https://blog.saexpeditions.com/book-review-heading-south-looking-north-by-ariel-dorfman/>, p. 1.
- 7 Book review. Available at http://www.goodreads.com/book/show/163315.Heading_South_Looking_North.
- 8 DALL, *Book Review: Heading South, Looking North by Ariel Dorfman*, cit., p. 1.
- 9 *Ibid.*
- 10 MÁIRÉAD NICCRAITH, *Narratives of Place, Belonging and Language: An Intercultural Perspective. Language and globalization*, Hampshire, Palgrave Macmillan, 2012, p. 32.
- 11 BARBARA FREY WAXMAN, *Eva Hoffman's transition from Eurocentric vision and Polish to New World outlook and English, from Polish girl to American woman*, in «a/b: Auto/Biography Studies», xxii (2007), pp. 1-25, p. 9.
- 12 NICCRAITH, *Narratives of Place, Belonging and Language: An Intercultural Perspective*, cit., p. 32.
- 13 *Ibid.*
- 14 THEODORE CHENEY, *Writing Creative Nonfiction. How to Use Fiction Techniques to Make Your Nonfiction More Interesting, Dramatic and Vivid*, Berkeley (CA), Ten Speed Press, 1987, pp. 2-3.

In their autobiographies, both Ariel Dorfman and Gustavo Pérez Firmat reconstruct their life stories designing characters that are torn between countries, cultures, languages, or someone whose identity is inevitably built upon at least two different worlds.

In *Heading South, Looking North*, Dorfman narrates the story of his life of exile(s). He was born in Argentina, but he was not yet 3 when he and his mother had to follow his father into a political exile in the U.S.A. There, at the age of two, Dorfman had a traumatic experience in a hospital, which led him to renounce the Spanish language¹⁵ for ten years and to become an English speaker. The family exile in the U.S. lasted less than ten years because, when Dorfman was 12, the family had to flee to «a Chile [he] did not want to live in and whose language [he] could not speak or write».¹⁶ Eventually, he fell in love with the Spanish language and with the movement that would become the Chilean revolution, to the point of getting involved with the democratic revolution of Salvador Allende. As he narrates in his autobiography, he was so involved in the context that he swore «never to write another word in the English language. Spanish was to be the love of his life».¹⁷ On 11th September 1973, when Dorfman was 31, a Coup d'état overthrew Allende's government. Dorfman sought asylum briefly in the Argentinean embassy but then the family had to leave for Europe. They settled in Paris, where Dorfman, depressed, «had writer's block for more than two years».¹⁸ After those two years, the author «accepted a chair at the University of Amsterdam, and began to heal as he began to write».¹⁹ From Europe, Dorfman, his wife and two sons left for the USA and spent five years in Washington DC, before moving to North Carolina in 1985. Denied a visa for Mexico, where the family had planned to live, Dorfman reconciled himself to refuge in the USA.²⁰ For Dorfman, history has, in a way, forced him, «against [his] will, to become bilingual»²¹ and therefore provided him with such an important facet of the character that he designs in *Heading South, Looking North*: the «hybrid mongrel of language».²²

Gustavo Pérez Firmat arrived in the USA with his family when he was eleven years old, in 1960. In his autobiography, the author introduces himself as a member of the «one-and-a-half generation, that is, Cubans who were born on the island and came to the United States as children or adolescents»²³ and describes his life as a «delicate balancing act between two countries, two cultures, two languages».²⁴ The writer's family had been «prosperous grocery dealers in Havana, but they left behind their business, home,

15 DORFMAN, *Heading South, Looking North*, cit., p. 28.

16 ARIEL DORFMAN, *The Wandering Bigamists of Language*, in *Lives in Translation. Bilingual Writers on Identity and Creativity*, ed. by Isabelle de Courtivron, New York, Palgrave Macmillan, 2003, pp. 29-37, p. 32.

17 DORFMAN, *Heading South, Looking North*, cit., p. 101.

18 MAYA JAGGI, *Speaking for the dead*, in «The Guardian» (14 June 2003), <https://www.theguardian.com/stage/2003/jun/14/theatre.fiction>, p. 2.

19 *Ibid.*

20 *Ibid.*

21 DORFMAN, *Heading South, Looking North*, cit., p. 265.

22 *Ibid.*

23 GUSTAVO PÉREZ FIRMAT, *Next Year in Cuba. A Cubano's Coming-of-Age in America*, New York, Anchor Books, 1995, p. xi.

24 *Ibid.*

servants, and nearly all of their money to escape the Revolution»,²⁵ having decided to leave Cuba «a few days after the *almacén* was confiscated». ²⁶ Although «his parents' intention was to wait the Revolution out. [...] Then [they] and the thousands of other exiles could return»²⁷ to Cuba, the author and his family have lived in the U.S.A. since then. In fact, the title of Pérez Firmat's autobiography itself, *Next Year in Cuba*, shows the Cubans' desire for the return to their native land. It is the toast Cubans uttered and also the evidence of their hope of going back to Cuba after «the Marines would show up on the Malecón and wrest the government from him [Fidel Castro]». ²⁸

In his narrative, Pérez Firmat shows how his life was deeply influenced by language switches in accordance with the different roles English and Spanish perform. His professional life seems to depend upon his knowledge of English, his second language, the language learned at school in Cuba and acquired in the United States during exile. English is also his favoured language for writing and, as such, «represents the language of reason, of rationality». ²⁹ In his narrative, he claims that «if [his] life depended on a sentence, [he] would write it in English». ³⁰ On the other hand, his intimate thoughts seem to be better expressed in his first language, Spanish. In his autobiography, he tells his readers how he becomes far more at home in his mother tongue when he must give voice to his silent thoughts. ³¹ For Pérez Firmat, Spanish is the language of emotions: «son of bitches – *hijos de puta* – would leave me speechless; and happiness – *felicidad* – would not have a name». ³² Furthermore, Spanish is «the language of passion, of spontaneity». ³³ In the epilogue to *Next Year in Cuba*, Pérez Firmat writes that while «[he] has worked on this book, many times English has seem insufficient [...] and yet [he] suspects that [he] couldn't have written this in Spanish, perhaps less for linguistic than for cultural reasons». ³⁴ In other words, we may say that in his autobiography, Pérez Firmat celebrates his life in-between, bearing in mind that his life «oscillates ceaselessly, sometimes wildly, between the two [...] life is less a synthesis than a seesaw». ³⁵

Both Dorfman and Pérez Firmat make use of the autobiographical text to present the hybrid character that is part of their lives as exiles. In the next section, the analyses of specific instances of the two versions will show how hybridity is made explicit by Dorfman and Pérez Firmat, both in the original English autobiography and in the corresponding self-translation into Spanish.

25 *Kirkus Review of Next Year in Cuba A Cubano's Coming-of-Age in America by Gustavo Pérez Firmat*, 2010, <https://www.kirkusreviews.com/book-reviews/gustavo-perez-firmat-2/next-year-in-cuba/>.

26 PÉREZ FIRMAT, *Next Year in Cuba*, cit., p. 4.

27 *Ibid.*, p. 5.

28 *Ibid.*

29 MICHELE RUSSO, *Self-Translation and Intratextual Expansion in Nabokov's Autobiographical Texts. A Model for Brodsky's Memoirs*, in «European Scientific Journal», XII/23 (2016), pp. 1-10, p. 4.

30 PÉREZ FIRMAT, *Next Year in Cuba*, cit., p. 32.

31 *Ibid.*

32 *Ibid.*, p. 171.

33 RUSSO, *Self-Translation and Intratextual Expansion in Nabokov's Autobiographical Texts*, cit., p. 4.

34 PÉREZ FIRMAT, *Next Year in Cuba*, cit., p. 207.

35 *Ibid.*, p. 212.

2 ORIGINAL AND SELF-TRANSLATIONS: HYBRIDISM MADE EXPLICIT

Ariel Dorfman and Gustavo Pérez Firmat chose to write their original autobiographies in their second language, English, and then translated them into their first language, Spanish. The choice is not rare among writers in general since other self-translators, like Josef Brodsky and Vladimir Nabokov for example, have turned to their adopted language to write their memories. English was, for Brodsky and Nabokov, «the language of objectivity and freedom»,³⁶ as Pérez Firmat claimed. Moreover, writing in the second language «appears to have been an essential tool in creating the necessary distance between the writer and his memories»,³⁷ for there is no emotional involvement that the use of the mother tongue would entail. In fact, Ariel Dorfman states that writing the autobiography in English has allowed him to look at himself from a distance,³⁸ to look at his life in a more «tolerable» light, and to treat himself «as an almost fictional object». ³⁹ In other words, not only did the distance allow Dorfman to construct a more critical look towards the traumatic events that took place in his life, but it also helped him build a character, since writing in English worked as «an act of removal from the original». ⁴⁰ However, the opposite has happened in the self-translated autobiography, where the decision to use the first language, Spanish, led the writer to experience a painful process since his «identity is more profoundly invested in that language». ⁴¹

In reading Gustavo Pérez Firmat's work, we are confronted with the anger and the pain that exiles seem to live with. Writing an autobiography in a language other than the first one can be helpful and, in a certain way, it can even offer these writers the chance to free themselves from a painful past, as we have pointed out in Dorfman's case. When recounting the fact that his brother Pepe visited Cuba and the family's *almacén* two or three times, for example, Pérez Firmat writes that he «could never bring [himself] to follow in [his] brother's footsteps. [His] rage wouldn't let [him]». ⁴² Furthermore, when discussing exile, the author compares refugees to amputees and claims that «just as people who lose limbs sometimes continue to ache or tingle in the missing calf or hand, the exile suffers the absence of the self he left behind». ⁴³ Writing his autobiography in English may not only make the anger and the pain tolerable, as both Dorfman⁴⁴ and Nic Craith⁴⁵ suggest, but may also enable the writer to create a critical look towards the events that he experienced in his past both in Cuba and in Miami. Instead, Pérez Firmat's self-

36 RUSSO, *Self-Translation and Intratextual Expansion in Nabokov's Autobiographical Texts*, cit., p. 7.

37 NICCRAITH, *Narratives of Place, Belonging and Language: An Intercultural Perspective*, cit., p. 45.

38 STEVEN G. KELLMAN, *Writing South and North. Ariel Dorfman's Linguistic Ambidexterity*, in «Orbis Litterarum», LXVIII (2013), pp. 207-221, p. 212.

39 ARIEL DORFMAN, *Footnotes to a Double Life*, in *The Genius of Language*, ed. by Wendy Lesser, New York, Anchor Books, 2004, pp. 206-217, p. 212.

40 NICCRAITH, *Narratives of Place, Belonging and Language: An Intercultural Perspective*, cit., p. 46.

41 KELLMAN, *Writing South and North*, cit., pp. 212-213.

42 PÉREZ FIRMAT, *Next Year in Cuba*, cit., p. 19.

43 *Ibid.*, p. 7.

44 DORFMAN, *Heading South, Looking North*, cit.

45 NICCRAITH, *Narratives of Place, Belonging and Language: An Intercultural Perspective*, cit.

translation into Spanish, the language for the expression of emotions, as he states, has allowed him to tell his stories in the emotional language in which many of the original events genuinely occurred.

As we have seen so far, both autobiographies recount lives in-between countries, cultures and languages. Since self-translations may bear different relations with their original texts, it seems relevant now to compare both versions, highlighting similarities and differences. We will start by comparing the peritexts of both autobiographies, since the texts include the author's preface.

Dorfman's preface (both in the English and in the Spanish editions), is a «preface by way of a dedication / prefacio a modo de dedicatoria» in which he dedicates the book to his wife, Angelica, and presents his existence in two languages. Considering what we have been discussing so far, one may also assume that the writer introduces himself as a hybrid. We can see that the duality of Dorfman's linguistic existence is made clear from the very start, as he makes use of both languages in both versions of the prefaces. The Spanish self-translation is presented to readers as a translation with the expression «traducido del inglés original por el autor» on the first pages of the volume. As we have discussed elsewhere,⁴⁶ this expression adds to the material an aura of prestige not present in translations made by professional translators. Translating one's own work is apparently thought to involve more than a transfer between linguistic systems; it involves rewriting, reconstructing, «starting off along another creative path».⁴⁷ In other words, while self-translating, «the Muse would possess [the writer] again».⁴⁸ All that prestige may be said to have its origins in the widespread Romantic «idea of the author as originator and genius, as fully intentional, fully sentient source of the literary text, as authority for and limitation on the 'proliferating' meanings of the text».⁴⁹ We may say that non-professional readers generally believe that if the author of the original text is also the author of the translation, the two versions will be fully equivalent. By using such expression, the author declares that piece of work to be authentic for it is equal to the original version he himself has produced.⁵⁰

Pérez Firmat's Spanish edition – *El año que viene estamos en Cuba* – also has a preface in which he presents the book as a «traducción»⁵¹ and, like Ariel Dorfman, he introduces his own existence as an existence «en dos idiomas».⁵² Once again, the fact that the Spanish text is presented as a translation of the original made by the author grants the text a position of prestige. Moreover, it is sanctioned as authentic – since the author of the original and the author of the translation are the same person, the self-translated text may be expected to be 'fully equivalent' to its original version. In addition, like in Ariel

46 MARIA ALICE ANTUNES, *O Respeito pelo Original. João Ubaldo Ribeiro e a Autotradução*, São Paulo, Annablume, 2009, p. 182.

47 SUSAN BASSNETT, *The self-translator as rewriter*, in *Self-Translation. Brokering Originality in Hybrid Culture*, ed. by Anthony Cordingley, London, Bloomsbury, 2013, pp. 13-25, p. 20.

48 WA THIONG'O NGUGI, *My life in-between languages*, in «Translation Studies», 11 (2009), pp. 17-21, p. 20.

49 ANDREW BENNET, *The Author*, London, Routledge, 2005, p. 55.

50 SIMONA ANSELMINI, *On Self-translation. An Exploration in Self-translators' Tèloi and Strategies*, Milano, LED, 2012, p. 39.

51 PÉREZ FIRMAT, *Next Year in Cuba*, cit., p. 57.

52 *Ibid.*

Dorfman's autobiography, the hybrid persona begins to be designed in the preface since Dorfman and Pérez Firmat (at least in the Spanish edition) introduce themselves, in the very initial pages of the autobiography, as individuals whose existence is to be viewed as hybrid or in-between.

The writers' hybridism is not only expressed by means of their words in the prefaces. The self-translated versions of the autobiographies are filled with «the happy accidents that occur when two languages bump into each other»,⁵³ or simply «bumps» as Pérez Firmat names what we perceive to be the examples of the dialogic process that takes place between the culture of origin and the host culture⁵⁴ recorded in the autobiographies. The «bumps» are, in our view, the parts of the text where writers explicitly promote a dialogue between the two cultures, and readers are, to a certain extent, forced to notice the presence of the Other, represented by vocabulary items in general and also by various terms that belong to «a wide array of semantic fields: from geography and traditions to institutions and technologies».⁵⁵ In this way, not only can readers get familiar with the foreign culture, but they can also look at their own culture from a different perspective and learn about it too. Interestingly, neither Dorfman nor Pérez Firmat include a glossary or footnotes that might allow the authors to «convey maximum possible amount of information»⁵⁶ about their native culture. As we will be able to realize next, when we compare samples from the original autobiographies in English with the corresponding self-translation into Spanish, both writers often choose to make use of interpolations (when the writer introduces explanations between parentheses) or intratextual glosses. That is, both writers frequently introduce explanations of cultural references, for example, as «an indistinct part of the text, usually so as not to disturb the reader's attention».⁵⁷ In our view, by using this strategy both Dorfman and Pérez Firmat show special concern with the production of a literary work that will appeal to non-professional readers interested in exile literature, for example.

«Bumps» are first represented by cultural references. Other «bumps» correspond to instances of the Spanish language present in the English text and also to instances of English language present in the Spanish autobiography. Both types are present in the autobiographies by means of nouns, phrases, or even entire sentences and will be explored subsequently.

Ariel Dorfman includes foreign words and references to the foreign culture in the text so as to make readers feel «shipwrecked in a sea of words [they] don't understand. A tiny taste of what it means to be adrift in someone else's language».⁵⁸ However, Dorfman

53 BRUCE ALLEN DICK, *A Poet's Truth. Conversations with Latino/Latina Poets*, Tucson, University of Arizona Press, 2003, p. 149.

54 RITA WILSON and LEAH GERBER, *Introduction*, in *Creative Constraints. Translation and Authorship*, ed. by Rita Wilson and Leah Gerber, Clayton (VIC), Monash University Publishing, 2012, pp. ix-xv.

55 DAVID KATAN, *Translation as intercultural communication*, in *The Routledge Companion to Translation Studies*, London, Routledge, 2009, pp. 74-92, p. 79.

56 CLIFFORD E. LANDERS, *Literary Translation. A Practical Guide*, Sydney, Multilingual Matters, 2001, p. 93.

57 JAVIER FRANCO AIXELÁ, *Culture-specific items in translation*, in *Translation power subversion*, ed. by Román Álvarez and María Carmen Africa Vidal Claramonte, Clevedon, Multilingual Matters, 1996, pp. 52-78, p. 62.

58 DORFMAN, *Footnotes to a Double Life*, cit., pp. 210-211.

does not always leave readers alone in that sea, since he frequently chooses to treat the cultural references and the other instances of foreign language by using strategies that will help the reader construct meaning and interpret the text. These strategies include interpolation and/or intratextual glosses.

The following examples show the first type of «bumps», the cultural references – Allende, La Moneda, gringos –, present in the English text without any specific mark of foreignness. Also, there are no interpolations or intratextual glosses that would help the foreign reader, who might not know who or what the terms refer to, construct the meaning of those references:

- 1) Allende will announce tomorrow that he will submit his differences with the opposition to a plebiscite [...].⁵⁹
- 2) So now I am here at home and he is at La Moneda and we are talking on the phone.⁶⁰
- 3) [...] that these flaxen-haired, healthy, saintly gringos, these blue-eyed beauties, should be acting like paupers.⁶¹

Cultural references, such as *hijos de puta*, *empanadas* or *barrio alto* – as we can see in (4), (5) and (6) below – are presented in their Spanish form but this time the author writes them in italics in the English text. Exactly as he treats the terms in (1), (2) and (3) above, Dorfman chooses not to include interpolations or intratextual glosses that would possibly convey more information to readers but he simply differentiates them. Possibly, understanding those terms is not essential for the reader to interpret the text. Therefore, explanations are not necessary. In examples (4), (5) and (6) below, the writer chooses to leave readers «shipwrecked in a sea of words»:

- 4) But try to make the *hijos de puta* who're in control believe it.⁶²
- 5) The country I wanted to escape during my adolescence, the *empanadas* I hardly wasted time on then [...].⁶³
- 6) [...] our bus began to enter the *barrio alto*, where I lived, [...].⁶⁴

There are cases of cultural references in Dorfman's *Heading South, Looking North* to which intratextual glosses and interpolations are added, accomplishing different purposes. First, they do not disturb the readers' attention, as we have mentioned before, since readers are not forced to look up the meaning of the word in a glossary at the end of the book, for example. Secondly, they help readers become familiar with the Chilean culture, which may not be known to many North Americans, for example, thus allowing them to make comparisons with their own culture. Examples of the use of intratextual glosses and interpolations in Dorfman's autobiography are shown in (7), (8) and (9) below.

59 DORFMAN, *Heading South, Looking North*, cit., p. 8.

60 *Ibid.*

61 *Ibid.*, p. 207.

62 *Ibid.*, p. 90.

63 *Ibid.*, p. 118.

64 *Ibid.*, p. 122.

- 7) [...] when I asked her if she danced *cueca*, the Chilean national dance, and she smiled [...].⁶⁵
 8) And found myself face-to-face with the professor of *castellano*. Castellano? The name given to the Spanish language in many Latin American countries, [...].⁶⁶
 9) [...] how the *pacos* (the Chilean police) had picked him up one day and threatened to put him in an institution [...].⁶⁷

The second type of «bumps» is also present in the text. They are Spanish nouns, noun phrases, expressions and sentences that are written in italics in *Heading South, Looking North*. Their presence may be credited to the author's wish to fill his text with elements that are foreign or unknown to target readers. However, it seems sometimes important for the exiled writer that readers are not left alone in the process of interpretation as they are provided with translations that precede or follow the nouns, noun phrases, expressions and sentences placed in the middle of a sentence or paragraph. Here are some examples:

- 10) My face, because I had been assigned that *turno*, that stint, I was the one [...].⁶⁸
 11) [...] as the old man died they had forced him to call on his fucking pagan gods for help now, *sus putos dioses paganos*.⁶⁹
 12) [...] she said something to the effect that *Este niño no sabe hablar castellano*. This child can't speak Spanish.⁷⁰
 13) [...] *te internaron en ese hospital*, my mother says slowly, picking out the words as if for the first time, *no nos acordamos del nombre*, there is a large glass wall [...].⁷¹

When we take the Spanish version as the basis of the analysis, we see that Dorfman uses the same procedures that he used when writing the English original text. The writer-translator makes use of references of the North American cultural context as well as of a great many English words, phrases, sentences in the Spanish text. That does not seem surprising since Dorfman published simultaneous English and Spanish versions of his memoir. Although the writer states that he «rewrote» the memoir in Spanish «after [he] completed it in English»,⁷² we should emphasize that both texts were published in the same year and this fact may have allowed Dorfman to introduce changes in either version, should he have thought them necessary.

The examples below show the cultural references – Shakespeare, Manhattan and Lyndon Johnson – repeated in the Spanish text without any specific mark of foreignness, or any interpolations or intratextual glosses. It goes without saying that references such as Shakespeare and Manhattan would not need any explanations since they are both widely renowned. The writer chooses the use of repetition without any mark of foreignness, as we see in (14), (15) and (16) below:

65 *Ibid.*, p. 180.

66 *Ibid.*, p. 110.

67 *Ibid.*, p. 122.

68 *Ibid.*, p. 7.

69 *Ibid.*, p. 9.

70 *Ibid.*, p. 105.

71 *Ibid.*, p. 28.

72 DORFMAN, *Footnotes to a Double Life*, cit., p. 208.

- 14) Aunque no era Shakespeare el que me daba tal poderio [...].⁷³
 15) En ese innostrado hospital de Manhattan [...].⁷⁴
 16) [...] entramos a la pieza de nuestro hotel y prendimos la television y ahí estaba Lyndon Johnson.⁷⁵

The following cultural references – *yellow cabs*, *Macy's*, *Monthly Review* – are also repeated in the Spanish text. However, they are written in italics, highlighting the cultural difference, since they may be considered less well known among Spanish readers. However, just as in the previous examples from the original autobiography in English, Dorfman chooses not to include interpolations or intratextual glosses that would convey more information to readers. That is, the self-translator leaves readers alone in the process of interpretation:

- 17) [...] los *yellow cabs* de la ciudad y las hileras infinitas de juguetes en *Macy's*.⁷⁶
 18) Y un sinnúmero de intelectuales contestatarios norteamericanos, Huberman, Sweezy, los que se agrupaban en torno a *Monthly Review*.⁷⁷

On the other hand, there are other cultural references in Dorfman's *Rumbo al Sur, Deseando el Norte* to which interpolation and intratextual glosses are added. It is possible that the North American culture is considered so popular among Chileans that very few cultural references are foreign and thought to need any explanation. There are, therefore, very few examples of the use of these procedures in the Spanish version as the ones shown below:

- 19) [...] como si hubiera salido de la película *Easy Rider* [...].⁷⁸
 20) [...] estaban en esos años adhiriendo con entusiasmo al *American Dream*, el modelo norteamericano de la existencia.⁷⁹
 21) Faltaba poco para que la política exterior de *containment* (contener al enemigo, mantenerlo dentro de su zona de influencia) derivara en una política [...].⁸⁰

Dorfman also writes English nouns, noun phrases, expressions and sentences in italics in his self-translated autobiography. They are preceded or followed by the translation into Spanish or simply written in the middle of a sentence or paragraph, as he did in his original text. Since, as we have mentioned before, the time lag that exists between writing and self-translation is short, the self-translator can compare his work and decide to make use of the same strategies. The following sentences represent such use:

- 73 ARIEL DORFMAN, *Rumbo al Sur, Deseando el Norte. Un romance en dos lenguas*, New York, Siete Cuentos Editorial, 1998, p. 165.
 74 *Ibid.*, p. 58.
 75 *Ibid.*, p. 285.
 76 *Ibid.*, p. 86.
 77 *Ibid.*, p. 175.
 78 *Ibid.*, p. 50.
 79 *Ibid.*, p. 67.
 80 *Ibid.*, p. 90.

- 22) [...] pidiéndole que me concediera despertar cada cien años para echar una miradita, *a quick look around* [...].⁸¹
- 23) [...] dentro del inglés, detrás del inglés, listo a encantarme, *charm me*.⁸²
- 24) «*I'm not going to this stupid school*». A esta escuela estúpida no voy por nada del mundo.⁸³
- 25) [...] echar unas monedas de *spare change* en alguna mano.⁸⁴

The examples presented so far have illustrated Dorfman's existence «en dos idiomas», his hybrid identity, and his attention to two different linguistic communities in his autobiography. Dorfman uses both the English and the Spanish languages in the original autobiography *Heading South, Looking North* and in its corresponding self-translation *Rumbo al Sur, Deseando el Norte*. In addition, he uses translation procedures such as the interpolation and the intratextual gloss, including information that may help the dialogic process between the two cultures. By keeping the foreign language in the text, Dorfman makes the foreign⁸⁵ visible and, in the case of the Spanish version, he reveals the presence of the self-translator. It seems relevant to highlight, once again, that Dorfman aims at making the reader adrift in someone else's language.

The next examples show the comparison of the passages of the original autobiography in English with the corresponding self-translation in Spanish. They show the attention paid by the author-translator to each of the audiences he intends to reach. Different personae are projected in the two versions, who are built upon different worlds, the world of exile with his parents in Chile, the world left in the Chile of Allende's government, the world of exile in the USA:

- | | |
|--|---|
| 26) [...] when it would become their turn to change countries the way others, perhaps most of those who read these words, change brands of cereal. ⁸⁶ | [...] cuando les tocara el turno a ellos de cambiar de país como otros se cambian los zapatos. ⁸⁷ |
| 27) [...] starting with the Jewish community, and was soon knocking at the doors of Spanish-speaking goyim as well [...]. ⁸⁸ | [...] aunque comenzó con la comunidad judía residente, en poco tiempo ya se atrevía a golpear las puertas de los <i>goyim</i> que hablaban la lengua del <i>Martín Fierro</i> . ⁸⁹ |
| 28) [...] she let me grind to a halt and stumble and cease my massacre of the language of Cervantes. ⁹⁰ | [...] permitió que yo mismo me diera cuenta del papelón que estaba haciendo y cesara por mi propia voluntad mi asesinato de la lengua de <i>Quevedo</i> . ⁹¹ |

81 *Ibid.*, p. 12.

82 *Ibid.*, p. 64.

83 *Ibid.*, p. 146.

84 *Ibid.*, p. 298.

85 LAWRENCE VENUTI, *The Translator's Invisibility. A History of Translation*, London-New York, Routledge, 1995, p. 20.

86 DORFMAN, *Heading South, Looking North*, cit., p. 41.

87 DORFMAN, *Rumbo al Sur, Deseando el Norte*, cit., p. 58.

88 DORFMAN, *Heading South, Looking North*, cit., p. 16.

89 DORFMAN, *Rumbo al Sur, Deseando el Norte*, cit., p. 25.

90 DORFMAN, *Heading South, Looking North*, cit., p. 103.

91 DORFMAN, *Rumbo al Sur, Deseando el Norte*, cit., p. 144.

29) I had, of course, less precarious ways of returning to the place I insisted on calling home, subscribing to more magazines, from *Mad* to *The Saturday Evening Post*, than I ever had read in the States, trying particularly to keep abreast of sports. And comics and mystery books that, unlike candy, could be consumed over and over again. And movies – every epic, every saccharine love story [...].⁹²

30) It was not a time to wonder how Yogi Berra would have judged one of his erstwhile fans [...].⁹⁴

31) *Compañero*. A word for which there is no adequate English equivalent, because soul mate, buddy, friend, comrade, even companion, do not contain, like an echo, the Spanish word for bread – *pan* – and it is that *pan* which speaks most profoundly in *compañero* of two people who break bread, of that other who is a brother even if you have never met him, of that trust.⁹⁶

Disponía, por cierto, de maneras menos precarias de retornar al lugar que yo seguía insistiendo en que era mi verdadero hogar: revistas de deportes, libros de misterio y ciencia ficción, historietas de todo tipo y por sobre todo películas.⁹³

[...] pero no era el momento para analizarla, ni tampoco para preguntarse cómo hubiese reaccionado el gran *catcher* norteamericano Yogi Berra [...].⁹⁵

Cuando yo escribía estas memorias en inglés, me di cuenta de que no existe en ese idioma ninguna palabra equivalente. Busqué todas las posibilidades, *soul mate*, *buddy*, *friend*, *comrade*, y ninguna servía. No se trata tan solo de que estas palabras en inglés – e incluso *companion*, que viene de la misma raíz – no contienen el escondido matiz de *pan*, un *compañero* es alguien que comparte el pan contigo, que se hace hermano al partir ese pan. Pienso que los pueblos hispanohablantes se apropiaron de esa palabra, la diferenciaron de la más partidaria y restringida *camarada*, sintieron la necesidad de una forma más democrática de dirigirse a otro ser humano que señalara su igualdad, el modo en que dentro del pan que comparten se agita un acto de compartir mucho más, de marchar juntos hacia una sociedad donde todo se comparte, de aceptar que hay riesgos en esa marcha. Esa resonancia cultural e histórica falta en el idioma inglés.

Si ese hombre pudo mandarme un mensaje de esperanza con un gesto como ése, fue porque habíamos acordado, en forma invisible y sin que jamás nos hubiéramos visto antes, un pacto entre los dos en que participaban también miles y quizá millones de otros *compañeros*, todos buscando justicia y libertad. Ese es el pacto que ahora los militares intentan destruir.⁹⁷

A closer look at examples (26) to (31) in the self-translated text shows Dorfman's choice for references that are closer to the Chilean culture. Apparently, Chileans change shoes more often than they change brands of cereal. Therefore, it seems more reasonable to choose «cambiar los zapatos» as a translation for «change brands of cereal» (exam-

92 DORFMAN, *Heading South, Looking North*, cit., p. 118.

93 DORFMAN, *Rumbo al Sur, Deseando el Norte*, cit., p. 164.

94 DORFMAN, *Heading South, Looking North*, cit., p. 95.

95 DORFMAN, *Rumbo al Sur, Deseando el Norte*, cit., p. 132.

96 DORFMAN, *Heading South, Looking North*, cit., p. 136.

97 DORFMAN, *Rumbo al Sur, Deseando el Norte*, cit., p. 189.

ple 26, above). South American readers are expected to understand that «la lengua del *Martín Fierro*» can only refer to Spanish (see example 27, above). «The language of Cervantes» becomes «la lengua de Quevedo» (see example 28, above), since an Anglophone appears to be familiar with the author of *Don Quixote* but not with Francisco de Quevedo, a poet of the Spanish Baroque, more likely to be known by readers of Spanish. On the other hand, Spanish readers would be familiar with Cervantes. Therefore, the change introduced by the self-translator can be understood as the decision to creatively rework the text while self-translation takes place. Also, in example (29), the self-translator prefers to delete some of the cultural references present in the English text such as *Mad* and *The Saturday Evening Post* and chooses ‘neutral’ references for his readers of Spanish. The choice to delete foreign cultural references or to replace them with neutral ones is sometimes criticised on account of the fact that «this entails translating in a transparent, fluent, ‘invisible’ style in order to minimize the foreignness of the target text».⁹⁸ Furthermore, if foreign cultural references are erased, readers are deprived of the chance of being confronted with the Other. In this way, the dialogic process between cultures cannot exist. It does not seem surprising, therefore, that substitution strategies, which conceal the foreign references, are not frequently used by Dorfman. As we have been able to notice so far, the self-translator favours the construction of the dialogic process between cultures, the presence of the Other, and the construction of an identity that is hybrid, that is in-between two cultures, two languages. In addition, the self-translator seems to trust the work of readers who are active and open to the foreign culture. In the case of Yogi Berra (30, above), the self-translator again makes use of a conservation strategy and introduces an intratextual gloss – in English – so as to give his South American readers more information about the foreign culture.

Example (31) shows a different type of change. Dorfman keeps the marks of foreignness by writing the nouns *compañero* and *pan* in italics. However, the dramatic discussion of the Spanish text somewhat disappears from the English text. In his discussion about Dorfman’s self-translation, Kellman states that «it would not have the same dramatic impact in English».⁹⁹ Considering the dramatic impact would be lost, the self-translator prefers to reduce the English text and tries to expand his readers’ knowledge of the foreigner’s language. This passage also seems to produce what Brecht termed *Verfremdungseffekt* («alienation effect»),¹⁰⁰ for the reflection upon language is made in the eyes of the readers turning them into consciously critical observers, necessarily aware of the presence of language since it is the object observed. The reader is reminded that languages are not interchangeable¹⁰¹ and, what’s more, that translation cannot be regarded as a simple activity, as an easy task of simply replacing one word with another. It seems evident that readers should be at least partially aware of the processes of meaning construction, of reading, and of translation so as to be able to interpret the passage

98 JEREMY MUNDAY, *Introducing Translation Studies. Theories and Applications*, London, Routledge, 2001, p. 146.

99 KELLMAN, *Writing South and North*, cit., p. 215.

100 BERTOLT BRECHT, *Brecht on Theatre. The Development of an Aesthetic*, ed. and trans. by John Willett, New York, Hill & Wang, 1964, p. 192.

101 KELLMAN, *Writing South and North*, cit., p. 215.

critically. Finally, all these passages show marks of the visibility of the translator and of translation.¹⁰²

Having highlighted Dorfman's writing choices we will now take a closer look at the Cuban-American writer Gustavo Pérez Firmat, who seems to have chosen strategies that enable his writing to reach the foreigner. As we analyse his autobiography *Next Year in Cuba* and the Spanish self-translation *El año que viene estamos en Cuba*, we immediately note the writer's use of strategies similar to those used by Dorfman. Unlike Dorfman's texts, however, which were published simultaneously, Pérez Firmat's texts were published with a two-year time interval. It is difficult to state how this short interval affected the final product.

The Cuban-American writer's favourite strategies are the intratextual gloss and the use of Spanish (foreign) words in the original English text. By keeping the Spanish terms in the text and by inserting the glosses, Pérez Firmat retains the Cuba of his past in the present English text, trying to make the past Cuba less distant and less incomprehensible to the North American readers and other readers of English. In addition, Pérez Firmat helps establish a dialogue between the two cultures. Here are some examples of these references followed by intratextual glosses used by the author in the English autobiographical text *Next Year in Cuba*.

32) A Cuban proverb says, *Caballo grande, ande o no ande*; it means roughly that a big lame horse is preferable to a small healthy one.¹⁰³

33) From the start we knew we were *gusanos*, worms, the sobriquet given by the Castro regime to its opponents.¹⁰⁴

34) Instead of sweet plantains, I've opted for *tostones* – green plantains cut into inch-thick slices that are then flattened out and fried in lard.¹⁰⁵

Intratextual glosses are not always used by the writer. The references below appear in *Next Year in Cuba* without the addition of intratextual glosses that give more information about the Cuban culture to readers of English. Also, as we stated in the discussion about Dorfman's autobiographical texts, Pérez Firmat's autobiography does not have a glossary in which the writer would include explanations so as to help his readers learn more about the Cuban culture. On the other hand, the author may have chosen to write the items in italics because he wanted to call the readers' attention to the foreignness of the cultural references he chose to include in his text, as we can see in excerpts (35), (36) and (37) of the English text:

35) [...] and he's no more than a *marimbero* than I am.¹⁰⁶

36) That was my kind of *bolero*.¹⁰⁷

37) One night when we were coming home in my mother's Lincoln, we were stopped by a *miliciano* who demanded a ride.¹⁰⁸

102 VENUTI, *The Translator's Invisibility*, cit., p. 20.

103 PÉREZ FIRMAT, *Next Year in Cuba*, cit., p. II.

104 *Ibid.*, p. 12.

105 *Ibid.*, p. 69.

106 *Ibid.*, p. 135.

107 *Ibid.*, p. 72.

108 *Ibid.*, p. 13.

Other cultural references are present in *Next Year in Cuba*, but they are not written in italics. Moreover, there are no intratextual glosses or interpolations. The writer appears to believe that items such as Cuban Revolution, Malecón and Fidel Castro have become very popular among his target readers and are not unfamiliar to readers of English in general, which, in our view, explains the absence of italics and/or glosses. Here are the examples in context:

- 38) The Cuban Revolution cost many people many things; [...].¹⁰⁹
 39) [...] or the Marines would show up on the Malecón and wrest the government from him.¹¹⁰
 40) Although Fidel Castro had been in power less than two years, [...].¹¹¹

Pérez Firmat's *Next Year in Cuba* also includes Spanish common words, phrases and/or expressions written in italics. They are preceded or followed by their translation into English or simply written in the middle of a sentence or a paragraph. These are instruments used by the writer to «teach» North Americans and other readers of English some elements of Cuban culture and of the Spanish language. See the examples (41), (42) and (43) below:

- 41) I had been here many times before, since my father's food wholesaling business, which we always called *el almacén*, was only a few blocks away. (An *almacén*, literally, is a storehouse, but in Cuba the term referred primarily to food wholesalers and distributors; *almacén* was short for *almacén de víveres*, a storehouse of eatables.)¹¹²
 42) Many exiles who had given up on the possibility of ever returning to the island believe once again that *regreso*, or return, is not a dream, but an option.¹¹³
 43) My trouble is that I don't see myself as Latino, but as Cuban – *cubano*, *cubiche*, *cubanazo*, *criollo*.¹¹⁴

As for the following cultural references – Jerry Lewis, Kennedy, L. P. Hartley –, they are repeated in Pérez Firmat's self-translated Spanish text without any specific mark of foreignness. There are also no intratextual glosses or interpolations. As it happened in Dorfman's case, it seems obvious that references such as Jerry Lewis and Kennedy would not need any explanations since both are largely renowned:

- 44) Estoy haciendo payasadas mientras Pepe imita a Jerry Lewis.¹¹⁵
 45) De hecho, Kennedy se había declarado a favor de una acción militar contra el gobierno de Castro.¹¹⁶
 46) Al decir de L. P. Hartley, el pasado es otro país, [...].¹¹⁷

109 *Ibid.*, p. 82.

110 *Ibid.*, p. 5.

111 *Ibid.*, p. 4.

112 *Ibid.*, p. 3.

113 *Ibid.*, p. xii.

114 *Ibid.*, p. 59.

115 GUSTAVO PÉREZ FIRMAT, *El año que viene estamos en Cuba*, Texas, Arte Público Press, 1997, p. 6.

116 *Ibid.*, p. 3.

117 *Ibid.*, p. 15.

When we analyse the Spanish text, it is noticeable that the following cultural references – *redneck*, *spic y hick*, *riffs*, *rock* – are repeated in Pérez Firmat’s self-translation. Despite the use of italics, the self-translator chooses not to include intratextual glosses or interpolations to convey more information. The writer may not have done so because at least part of his target audience, the Cubans who live in Miami, is familiar with those cultural references:

47) Y si todos esos años no han hecho de mí un *redneck* cubano, *spic y hick* por partes iguales [...].¹¹⁸

48) Entonces se pone a tocar su música alegre y pegajosa, mezclando ritmos cubanos con *riffs* americanos al estilo del sonido de Miami, que tiene alma de *rock* y corazón de bolero.¹¹⁹

Nonetheless, there are other cultural references in Pérez Firmat’s self-translated text to which glosses are added. Curiously, it seems that it is the somewhat famous North American «institutions» that will make the self-translator include the glosses:

49) El punto de mayor emoción durante cada partido era cuando el grupo de *cheerleaders*, las chicas que organizaban los vótores y que eran todas americanas [...].¹²⁰

50) Dentro de un par de años empezará a recibir el *Social Security*, la pensión del gobierno, [...].¹²¹

51) Aunque pertenecen a la denominada «Generación ABC» (*American-Born-Cubans*), son Cubanos solo en nombre, o mejor dicho, en apellido. Un mote más justo sería «Generación CBA» (*Cuban-Bred-Americans*), [...].¹²²

The examples presented so far illustrate Pérez Firmat’s life in-between, his hybrid identity, and his concern with different communities, namely the community of exiles who live in Miami in addition to other speakers of Spanish and North Americans in general. Like Dorfman, Pérez Firmat uses both the English and the Spanish languages in the original autobiography *Next Year in Cuba* and in its corresponding self-translation into Spanish *El año que viene estamos en Cuba*. Moreover, Pérez Firmat also uses conservation strategies such as the repetition and the intratextual glosses, including information that may help construct a dialogic process between the two cultures.

In order to understand the attention paid by the author-translator to each of his audiences, we will now compare a few passages of the original English text with the corresponding self-translation into Spanish:

52) Everyone ate Spam steaks. Everyone pinched pennies. Everyone was sardined into small houses or apartments.¹²³

Todos comíamos carne del Refugio; todos estábamos apretujados en pequeñas casas y *eficiencias*; nadie tenía un kilo.¹²⁴

118 *Ibid.*, p. vii.

119 *Ibid.*, p. v.

120 *Ibid.*, p. 45.

121 *Ibid.*, p. 75.

122 *Ibid.*, p. xii.

123 PÉREZ FIRMAT, *Next Year in Cuba*, cit., p. 41.

124 PÉREZ FIRMAT, *El año que viene estamos en Cuba*, cit., p. 41.

53) When we partied, we partied among ourselves. When we fought, we fought among ourselves. Although the Cubans sometimes dated American girls (the converse – a *cubana* with an *americano* – was very rare, because most Cuban girls required chaperones), almost everyone I hung out with eventually settled into a same-culture *novia* (girlfriend). Sometimes Cuban teenagers did American things – went to beach parties [...].¹²⁵

54) In Spanish there's only one kind of growth, *crecer*, to grow, pure and simple; but English affords other possibilities: you grow up and you grow old, you grow fond and you grow distant. You can grow things and they can grow on you. You outgrow clothes, you ingrow toenails, and you grow back hair. Yes, in English you can actually grow back. Imagine that. The past as prologue. Yesterday as tomorrow. What was as what will be.

The paradox of growing back, of a growth that's also a recovery, best describes the connection I'd like to have to the Cuban boy I left behind. Having outgrown him, I want now to grow him back, to let him grow in and on me until we are the same person again.¹²⁷

55) In Spanish there are two verbs of being: *ser*, which denotes existence, and *estar*, which denotes location. No matter how much geography may confine us, *ser* cannot be reduced to *estar* – a state of being cannot be reduced to a geographical place. Melding essence and residence, Miami Cubans picked up where history had dropped them off (or perhaps, where we had dropped ourselves off). Little Havana became the greater Havana.¹²⁹

Cuando montábamos una fiesta, lo hacíamos con otros cubanos. Cuando peleábamos, lo hacíamos con otros cubanos. Aunque de vez en cuando alguien se echaba una novia americana (lo opuesto – un americano con una cubana – era raro, ya que casi todas las cubanas requerían chaperonas), casi todos terminamos casados con cubanas. A veces los cubanos adoptábamos costumbres norteamericanas – organizábamos un *beach party* [...].¹²⁶

Quisiera afirmar que yo crecí «de» él, como crece un árbol de sus raíces. Así se expresaría en inglés, un idioma que hace posible diversos tipos de crecimiento. En español se crece y punto; pero en inglés el verbo admite diversos matices, según el adverbio con el cual se combine: *grow up* es crecer; *grow old* es envejecer; *grow fond* es encariñarse; *grow distant* es distanciarse. En inglés, acostumbrarse a algo es permitir que «crezca» dentro de nosotros; y las flores no se cultivan, «se crecen». Se puede crecer hacia dentro, *ingrow*; hacia afuera, *outgrow*; hacia adelante, *grow out of*; y hasta se puede crecer hacia atrás o volver a crecer, *grow back*. Sí, el idioma inglés nos permite crecer en todos los sentidos.

La paradoja de volver a crecer, de un crecimiento que es también una recuperación, capta la relación que deseo entablar con ese niño que quedó en el muelle. Quisiera dejar que crezca dentro de mí hasta convertirnos nuevamente en el mismo ser.¹²⁸

Ser no es *estar* – una forma de vida no se reduce a un lugar de residencia. Los cubanos de Miami dejaron su país, pero no abandonaron su patria.¹³⁰

These examples illustrate how Pérez Firmat deals with the intersection of languages. Example (52) shows the self-translated text with the specific references to the meat that came from Cuban Refugee Center (*carne del Refugio*) and the noun that names the apartment in which one room typically contains the kitchen, living, and sleeping quarters, with a separate bathroom – the «efficiencies». The term is also the only word written

125 PÉREZ FIRMAT, *Next Year in Cuba*, cit., p. 45.

126 PÉREZ FIRMAT, *El año que viene estamos en Cuba*, cit., pp. 46-47.

127 PÉREZ FIRMAT, *Next Year in Cuba*, cit., p. 6.

128 PÉREZ FIRMAT, *El año que viene estamos en Cuba*, cit., p. 5.

129 PÉREZ FIRMAT, *Next Year in Cuba*, cit., p. 58.

130 PÉREZ FIRMAT, *El año que viene estamos en Cuba*, cit., p. 62.

in English in this short passage and therefore the only language «bump». The original English text brings the trademark – Spam – for a canned meat product made mainly from ham, but it does not make any reference to the Cuban Refugee Centre. Very clearly, the self-translated text aims at readers who have experienced that routine and are therefore more familiar with the terms used by Pérez Firmat. Those readers are the exiles who lived in Miami, like Pérez Firmat's family. We can thus see an example of a memory that has been re-worked for a different readership. In addition, we can see that when reworking his memory for a different audience, the writer shows he is split between at least two different personae, the boy of his past who lived among other Cubans in Miami and the man of the present who lives among North Americans, as we mentioned in section one of this article.

Example (53) shows the use of English in the Spanish self-translated text, making the Spanish reader «bump» into the North American culture as he moves along the text. Interestingly, in this passage in the Spanish text, the self-translator also empowers the Spanish boys who «organizaban» beach parties and did not only «go» to beach parties as in the English original. In our view, the power to organize parties belongs to those who also own the place. The self-translator «gives» that power to the Cuban boys who went to the school in Miami in the Spanish self-translation.

Examples (54) and (55) show another type of foreign reference since the author, like Dorfman, asks the reader to reflect upon the English and the Spanish languages. Another characteristic of this «bump» is that if readers have a good knowledge of the two languages, their understanding of the passage will be facilitated. In example (54), we can see that the self-translator remains close to the original English text while he explains all the different meanings of combinations between verb and particles or adjectives. It seems clear that the text in Spanish demands a good knowledge of the structure of the English language. In example (55), the opposite happens. Pérez Firmat's reflections in English are reduced in the Spanish version, especially because Spanish readers do not need any of the explanation given in the original text on the particularities of the verbs *ser* and *estar*.

Pérez Firmat's and Dorfman's use of foreign words make their existences in-between cultures and languages unequivocal. Moreover, they foreignize their texts making the presence of the exiled writer and of the self-translator explicit, and forcing the reader to realize they are reading a work that is, at least partly, from a foreign culture. Besides that, the cultural references, common words, expressions and sentences written in the foreign language, favour the construction of the dialogue between different cultures. In addition, we have been able to contrast examples of some passages from both texts where writers show the existence of different personae and where readers are induced to reflect upon language. More specifically, examples (31), (54) and (55) involve the readers to the point of turning them into critical observers.

3 FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

We have analysed the cases of Gustavo Pérez Firmat and Ariel Dorfman, two Latin-American writers, who have chosen to live in the USA while in exile, who currently live there, who have written their autobiographies in English – their second language – and who have translated them into Spanish, their native tongue. We have studied their texts individually and contrasted specific self-translated excerpts in order to observe the strategies used by both writers when the two languages intersect.

In analysing the Latin-American writers' cases, we find that both Pérez Firmat and Dorfman tell the story of exile in a similar fashion. First of all, both authors, like other exiled writers, refer to their lives as lives «in-between» languages, a permanent condition. The autobiographers also present language as an important issue. From our point of view, they present different foreign references – the so-called bumps – as explicit marks of the presence of the Other. As we read through the original autobiographies in English and the self-translated versions in Spanish, it is impossible not to notice the presence of the Other since they can clearly be seen in the numerous words, expressions, sentences and cultural references. All of these details highlight the foreign identity of the text, «sending the reader abroad».¹³¹ That is, readers are not left in the comfort zone of their own culture. They are made to move towards the writer¹³² and interact with the culture whose characteristics are introduced in that *oeuvre*. One might ask if readers are open to such dialogue. More investigation is necessary so as to find out the impact these works have in the North American literary polysystem, the reception of these works and the place exile literature occupies in that system.

In comparing the original autobiographies in English with the corresponding self-translations into Spanish, we realize that at times the self-translated text presents passages which would be considered, strictly speaking, the translation of the English original. However, as we have seen, both Dorfman and Pérez Firmat try to make readers reflect upon language. Interestingly, both authors' translations of these specific passages are significantly different from the original English text, since they – or at least most of them – expand the original. It would be interesting to investigate whether the same strategies are used in Dorfman's most recent autobiographical production: *Feeding on Dreams: Confessions of an Unrepentant Exile*¹³³ and its self-translation into Spanish *Entre sueños y traidores: Un striptease del exilio*.¹³⁴ Definitely, further research about the product of self-translators' work is needed to define its precise characteristics.¹³⁵

¹³¹ VENUTI, *The Translator's Invisibility*, cit., p. 20.

¹³² FRIEDRICH SCHLEIERMACHER, *On the different methods of translating*, in *Theories of Translation*, Chicago, The University of Chicago Press, 1992, pp. 36-54, p. 42.

¹³³ ARIEL DORFMAN, *Feeding on Dreams. Confessions of an Unrepentant Exile*, New York, First Mariner Books, 2011.

¹³⁴ ARIEL DORFMAN, *Entre sueños y traidores. Un striptease del exilio*, Buenos Aires, Seix Barral, 2012.

¹³⁵ RAINIER GRUTMAN and TRISH VAN BOLDEREN, *Self-Translation*, in *A Companion to Translation Studies*, ed. by Sandra Bermann and Catherine Porter, West Sussex, Wiley-Blackwell, 2014, pp. 323-332, p. 330.

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Self-translation; autobiography; Latin-American writers; exile; in-between languages; heterolingualism; Other; original.

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COME CITARE QUESTO ARTICOLO

MARIA ALICE ANTUNES, *Autobiographies, Self-translations and the Lives In-Between: the Cases of Gustavo Pérez Firmat and Ariel Dorfman*, in «Ticontre. Teoria Testo Traduzione», VII (2017), pp. 85-107.

L'articolo è reperibile al sito <http://www.ticontre.org>.



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TICONTRE. TEORIA TESTO TRADUZIONE

NUMERO 7 - MAGGIO 2017

*con il contributo dell'Area dipartimentale in Studi Linguistici, Filologici e Letterari
Dipartimento di Lettere e Filosofia dell'Università degli studi di Trento*

<http://www.ticontre.org>

Registrazione presso il Tribunale di Trento n. 14 dell'11 luglio 2013


Direttore responsabile: PIETRO TARAVACCI

ISSN 2284-4473

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