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Translation Challenges in Terry Pratchett's “The Colour of Magic”

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*A mamma e papà,
che non hanno mai smesso di credere in me.*

*A Sara,
il mio esempio di forza e perseveranza,
ovunque tu sia, sempre.*

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Introduction

Translation Studies is a fascinating and complex field that has evolved significantly over the years. It involves the study of how texts are translated from one language to another and the challenges and theories that come with this process. This dissertation aims to explore the field of Translation Studies with a particular focus on the works of Terry Pratchett, a renowned author known for his unique and imaginative writing style.

In the first chapter, a historical overview of Translation Studies is provided. This will include a discussion on how translation has been perceived over time and the factors that have contributed to its recognition as a distinct academic discipline. The views of key scholars like Lefevere and Bassnett, who have highlighted the shift in the perception of translators from mere conveyors of texts to skilled artisans who play a crucial role in intercultural communication, will be discussed. Next, I will delve into the theoretical frameworks that underpin Translation Studies. Theories such as Equivalence Theory by Eugene Nida and John C. Catford, Skopos Theory by Hans J. Vermeer, and Cognitive Translation Strategies will be discussed. These theories provide different perspectives on how translations should be approached and evaluated, emphasizing various aspects like linguistic equivalence, the purpose of the translation, and the cultural context.

The core of this dissertation will focus on analyzing the translation of Terry Pratchett's works. Pratchett's writing is known for its rich use of language, humor, and cultural references, which pose significant challenges for translators. We will examine specific examples from his books to understand how these challenges have been addressed in translations and what impact they have on the readers' reception of the translated works. One of the main objectives of this thesis is also to investigate why certain translations of Pratchett's works may not meet the expectations of readers. It will explore the subjective nature of translation evaluation and the cultural factors that influence how translations are perceived. By doing so, this study aims to provide a deeper understanding of the complexities involved in translating literary works and the importance of considering both the source and target cultures in the translation process.

In conclusion, this thesis will contribute to the field of Translation Studies by providing insights into the translation of Terry Pratchett's works. It will highlight the relationship between theory and practice in translation and underscore the role of translators as mediators between cultures, hoping to shed light on the intricate and rewarding task of literary translation and the ongoing challenges that translators face in their work.

Chapter 1: Historical Overview of Translation Studies

The first chapter of this thesis provides the reader with a basic knowledge of the field of translation studies, in order to better delve into the analysis of the translation of Terry Pratchett's works. I will begin by defining the scope of translation studies and then introduce the reader to the main concepts and theories of the field, as well as different methods and approaches that are useful for analyzing the translation of a literary work. I will then focus on some of the challenges that translators face in their work. We will encounter some of these in the translation of Terry Pratchett's work.

1.1 Defining Translation Studies

1.1.1. Translation Studies as a discipline

The first section of this paper will introduce the reader to the field of Translation Studies, an interdisciplinary field that encompasses the study of translation, interpreting, and other forms of interlingual and intercultural communication. According to Lefevere (1978) is the name given to that discipline that deals with “the problems raised by the production and description of translators” . Although the history of Translation Studies dates back to ancient civilization, it has only recently been recognised as a discipline in its own right due to a number of factors. One of these, as Bassnett (1980:1) states, is that “translation has been perceived as a secondary activity, a ‘mechanical’ rather than a ‘creative’ process”. Historically, translation was often seen as a purely linguistic activity rather than a complex cultural and social phenomenon. It was seen as a practical skill rather than an academic field worthy of systematic study, and it was perceived only as a part of the foreign language teaching process.

In discussing the historical context of Translation Studies, Bassnet also focuses on the anti-theoretical Anglo-Saxon tradition and the emergence of the 'servant-translator' paradigm in the English-speaking world during the nineteenth century. She highlights a shift in the perception of translators from skilled artisans to mere conveyors of texts, particularly with the rise of amateur translators and changing concepts of nationalism. The author compares two extreme views on translation: one, presented by Hence Dante Gabriel, emphasizing the translator's subservience to the

source text and author, and the other, presented by Edward Fitzgerald, advocating for the translator's freedom to manipulate the text for their own purposes. These contrasting views reflect the hierarchical power dynamics of the time, influenced by colonial imperialism. Bassnet suggests that these historical attitudes towards translation have contributed to the ambiguity and varied perceptions of translation in the twentieth century, where it is often seen as either a servile occupation or a pragmatic mission to 'upgrade' the source text.

Bassnet also highlights the conflicting attitudes towards translation in the English-speaking world, particularly in educational settings. She notes that educational systems increasingly rely on translated texts for teaching purposes, yet fail to incorporate the study of translation processes into their curriculum. As a result, British and North American students often read works from other languages in translation without being aware of their translated status. This irony underscores the reluctance of scholars to investigate translation scientifically due to its perceived low status in academia, despite their reliance on translated texts for teaching.

However there have been significant developments in Translation Studies since the early 1960s. An increasing acceptance of linguistics and stylistics within literary criticism leads to advancements in critical methodology. The rediscovery of the work of the Russian Formalist Circle, particularly figures like Vološinov, Mukařovský, and Jakobson, has provided new criteria for the development of translation theory. These scholars emphasized that translation is a complex task that involves more than just knowledge of two languages; it is an interpenetration of two linguistic and aesthetic structures. Additionally, Eastern Europe saw a rapid development of Translation Studies, driven by the integration of linguistics and early experiments with machine translation in the 1950s. Although Translation Studies initially emerged slower in the English-speaking world, scholars like Catford made significant contributions to the field, particularly in discussing linguistic untranslatability.

Since 1965, there has been significant progress in Translation Studies, with scholars from various countries establishing distinct schools of thought. Additionally, Translation Studies has benefited from insights and methodologies from related disciplines such as semiotics, grammatology, narratology, and bilingualism studies.

At its core, Translation Studies examines the processes, theories, and practices involved in the transfer of meaning from one language and culture to another. From literary translation to technical

translation, audiovisual translation to machine translation, the field encompasses a diverse array of translation modalities and contexts. By delving into these different areas, we gain a deeper understanding of the various approaches to translation and the unique challenges they pose.

When defining the scope of Translation Studies, Bassnet (1980) notes that the discipline is firmly rooted in practical application. “Translation Studies, therefore, is exploring new ground, bridging the gap between the vast area of stylistics, literary history, linguistics, semiotics and aesthetics.” She states “But at the same time it must not be forgotten that this is a discipline firmly rooted in practical application.”

Whilst the theory of translation is indisputable and necessary to give an academic validity to the field, we must remember that Translation is mainly a practical process that conveys different theories and approaches with the experience of the translator. Theoretical frameworks provide translators with conceptual tools and methodologies to approach translation tasks, while practice brings real-world experience and challenges to theoretical discussions. The link between theory and practice in Translation Studies is symbiotic, with theoretical insights informing translation practice and practical experiences informing theoretical development. This dynamic relationship is essential for advancing the understanding and application of translation principles in diverse linguistic, cultural, and professional contexts.

1.1.2. The categories of Translation Studies

Bassnett (1980: xx) proceeds to divide the broad field of Translation Studies into four main categories - the first two being *product-related*, and the other two being *process-related*:

1. *History of Translation*: This area examines the theories, critical response, commissioning, publishing, and role of translations throughout literary history. It often involves analyzing the work of individual translators
2. *Translation in the Target Language (TL) Culture*: This category explores the influence of translated texts, authors, or genres on the TL culture, as well as the absorption of translated norms into the TL system and principles of selection within that system.

3. *Translation and Linguistics*: Studies in this area focus on the comparative arrangement of linguistic elements between the source language (SL) and TL texts, including phonemic, morphemic, lexical, syntagmatic, and syntactic levels. It includes research on linguistic equivalence, language-bound meaning, and the translation of non-literary texts.
4. *Translation and Poetics*: This category encompasses literary translation theory and practice, including genre-specific studies such as translating poetry, theatre texts, or libretti. It also covers the poetics of individual translators, formulating a theory of literary translation, and the interrelationship between SL and TL texts.

While work in the first and third categories is more widespread, there is less systematic study in categories 2 and 4, and some translation and linguistic studies may be isolated from the mainstream of translation study.

In addition to these four categories, Bassnett raises the issue of evaluation, which is crucial to the aim of this dissertation, as it seeks to investigate why the translated version of a literary work is undervalued by readers of the work.

The problem of evaluation in translation refers to the challenge of assessing the quality, accuracy, and effectiveness of translated texts. This issue arises due to the subjective nature of translation and the lack of objective criteria for measuring translation quality. As a matter of fact, translation is inherently subjective, as it involves interpretation and creative decision-making on the part of the translator. Unlike other disciplines where objective criteria can be used to evaluate performance, translation lacks universally accepted standards for assessment and even the standards canonized by professional translators vary considerably through different eras, making it difficult to even compare the quality of translation made at two different points in history. While some criteria, such as accuracy, fluency, and adherence to the source text, can be applied, their interpretation may vary among evaluators.

In addition, evaluation of translation quality is influenced by various contextual factors, including the purpose of the translation, the intended audience, cultural norms, and linguistic conventions. Evaluation of translations is culture-bound, and there is no universal canon for assessing them. Readers should bear in mind that each translation is influenced by its cultural context, making it

pointless to argue for a definitive translation. On account of this, it is not the aim of this paper to judge the quality of the translation that will be examined, but rather to analyze why the selected translation doesn't satisfy the readers' expectations, taking into account that criteria for a good translation are subjective and what may be considered a successful translation by one individual or culture may be perceived differently by another. However, it is known that, while translating a selected work, the translator faces ongoing challenges and those are what this paper aims to examine, in order to give the reader a more detailed understanding of the complexity of the work of a translator.

1.2. Theoretical Frameworks in Translation Studies

Translation studies is a multidisciplinary field that draws upon various theoretical frameworks to analyze and understand the complex process of translation. In the context of translating Terry Pratchett's works, several theoretical approaches offer valuable insights into the linguistic, cultural, and contextual challenges posed by his writing style.

1.2.1. Equivalence Theory:

Equivalence theory, proposed by Eugene Nida (1964), an American linguist considered nowadays one of the founders of modern translation studies, and later developed by the linguist Catford (1965), emphasizes the importance of achieving equivalence between the source and target texts in translation. It posits that successful translation achieves equivalence between the original and translated texts, ensuring that the meaning, style, and effect of the original text are accurately conveyed in the translation while accounting for linguistic and cultural differences. Equivalence theory encompasses various approaches and models that seek to identify and achieve equivalence at different linguistic levels, including lexical, syntactic, semantic, pragmatic, and cultural dimensions. Nida proposed the concept of dynamic equivalence - later on the linguist will rename it *functional equivalence*, to underline the communicative function of translation -, which emphasizes achieving equivalent impact or effect in the target language rather than maintaining a word-for-word correspondence with the source text.

In Nida's theory, functional equivalence involves translating the meaning and message of the source text in a way that is natural and easily understandable to the target audience, even if it requires adapting or rephrasing the content. This approach prioritizes the communicative function of the translation over formal similarity to the source text. Nida's concept of equivalence is rooted in the idea that language is a means of communication, and successful translation involves conveying the intended meaning and effect of the source text in a culturally appropriate and linguistically natural manner in the target language. Baker (1998: 47) and Bassnet (1980: 24-25) convey in saying that to reach equivalence it is necessary to analyze the message of the source text (ST) to then better choose an appropriate equivalent in the target text (TT). In this way, the process involves an operation of decoding and recoding the meaning of a text. This may involve various strategies, such as paraphrasing, cultural adaptation, and restructuring of the text, to ensure that the translation effectively communicates the message to the target audience.

In his seminal work *A Linguistic Theory of Translation* (1965:3), the linguist and translation theorist John C. Catford will expand on Nida's theory by distinguishing between two types of translation:

- *Linguistic Equivalence*, which focuses on the correspondence between linguistic elements in the SL and TL. Catford identifies several linguistic features that can be equivalent between languages, including lexical items (words), grammatical structures, and phonological patterns. However, Catford acknowledges that achieving perfect linguistic equivalence is often impossible due to differences in language structure and cultural context.
- *Textual Equivalence*, which refers to the overall similarity in meaning and communicative function between the source text and the target text. It goes beyond individual linguistic elements and encompasses the coherence, cohesion, and overall message of the text. Textual equivalence aims to ensure that the translation conveys the same intended message as the original text, even if there are differences in language structure or expression.

Catford's concept of equivalence emphasizes the importance of maintaining fidelity to the meaning and function of the source text while adapting it to the linguistic and cultural norms of the target language. He acknowledges that achieving complete equivalence between languages is often

challenging and that translators must make strategic choices to prioritize certain linguistic features or aspects of meaning in the translation process.

Both Nida and Catford are influential figures in the field of Translation Studies and contributed significantly to the concept of equivalence in translation. However, they approached the notion of equivalence from different linguistic and theoretical perspectives. Nida prioritizes the communicative function of the translation over formal similarity to the source text, acknowledging the importance of cultural adaptation in translation and allowing translators to adapt the text to the linguistic and cultural norms of the target audience. Catford, on the other hand, although he recognizes the influence of cultural factors on translation, emphasizes achieving equivalence at the level of individual linguistic features, rather than addressing cultural nuances explicitly.

Both theories have had a significant impact on Translation Studies and continue to influence approaches to translation practice and theory.

1.2.2. Skopos Theory:

A similar but different approach to translation is given by Skopos theory, stipulated by the German translation scholar Hans J. Vermeer (1984) and further developed by Vermeer and his colleague Katharina Reiß, which presents a holistic and pragmatic approach to translation, shifting the focus from equivalence to the purpose or function of translation. At its core lies the concept of *Skopos*, a term borrowed from ancient Greek meaning "aim" or "purpose." This theory suggests that the primary aim of any translation is determined by its intended purpose or function within a particular communicative situation.

One of the central tenets of Skopos theory is the idea that translations are not merely linguistic transfers from one language to another, but rather purposeful acts of communication within specific cultural contexts. Differently from Nida's equivalence theory, which aims to produce translations that are faithful representations of the source text, preserving its meaning, style, and cultural nuances as much as possible, this functionalist perspective emphasizes the dynamic nature of translation, where the translator's choices are guided by the intended Skopos rather than rigid adherence to the source text.

As stated by Vermeer himself (1987: 29) “To translate means to produce a text in a target setting for a target purpose and target addresses in target circumstances”. He underscores, with this phrase, the dynamic and purpose-driven nature of translation, highlighting the importance of considering the target audience, purpose, and context in guiding the translator's decisions. It aligns with the core principles of Skopos theory, which emphasize the functional and context-dependent nature of translation practice.

Skopos theory recognizes that translations may serve various functions, such as informing, persuading, entertaining, or instructing, and that different Skopoi (plural of Skopos) may require different translation strategies. For example, a translation intended for a legal document may prioritize accuracy and precision, while a translation of a literary work may prioritize capturing the stylistic and aesthetic qualities of the original.

In addition to considering the intended function of the translation, Skopos theory also emphasizes the importance of audience reception and cultural norms in shaping the translation process. Translators must take into account the expectations, values, and linguistic conventions of the target audience in order to produce a translation that effectively fulfills its intended purpose. Skopos theory challenges the notion of a single "correct" translation and instead emphasizes the importance of translational adequacy, where the success of a translation is judged based on its ability to achieve its intended Skopos within its specific communicative context. In contrast with Nida's theory which often uses criteria such as semantic, syntactic, and pragmatic equivalence to evaluate the quality of a translation, this perspective allows for greater flexibility and creativity in translation practice, as translators are encouraged to adapt and innovate in order to meet the needs of the target audience.

Overall, Skopos theory offers a comprehensive framework for understanding translation as a purposeful and dynamic process, highlighting the role of intentionality, context, and audience reception in shaping the translator's decisions. It has had a significant impact on contemporary Translation Studies, contributing to the development of functionalist and descriptive approaches to translation theory and practice.

1.2.3. Cultural Translation:

Cultural translation theory, proposed by Bassnett and Lefevere (1990), explores the dynamic interaction between language, culture, and power in the process of translation. Cultural translation theory is an approach within Translation Studies that focuses on the role of culture in the translation process. It examines how cultural differences between the source and target languages impact translation decisions and strategies, and how translators negotiate these differences to produce culturally appropriate and meaningful translations. According to Susan Bassnett, cultural translation involves the interpretation, adaptation, and mediation of cultural meanings across linguistic and cultural boundaries. Bassnett views translation as a complex process that goes beyond linguistic transfer, encompassing the negotiation of cultural differences and the transmission of cultural values, norms, and identities.

In her work, Bassnett emphasizes the dynamic interplay between language and culture in the translation process. She argues that translators must be attuned to the cultural context of both the source and target texts, as well as the socio-historical, political, and ideological factors that shape cultural production and reception. Cultural translation, therefore, involves not only rendering the words of one language into another but also navigating the diverse cultural landscapes that underpin linguistic expression. Additionally, Lefevere (1990) argues that translations are not neutral representations of the source texts, but are shaped by the cultural and ideological agendas of translators, publishers, and other gatekeepers. Translators often make strategic choices to accommodate the preferences and expectations of the target audience, which may involve altering the content, style, or cultural references of the original text.

Bassnett's concept of cultural translation highlights the transformative nature of translation, as it involves the recontextualization and reinterpretation of cultural meanings in different linguistic and cultural contexts. Conveying with Lefevere, she aims for translators to act as cultural mediators who facilitate communication and understanding between cultures, interpreting cultural references, symbols, and discourses for the target audience.

This approach to translation will be useful to the purpose of this dissertation since it deals with the problem of cultural differences between the source and the translated versions of a text. By

analyzing how cultural elements from Pratchett's works are adapted or interpreted in the Italian translations, it can be assessed whether these adaptations resonate with Italian readers. Additionally cultural translation theory considers the reception and impact of translations on target audiences. By gathering feedback from Italian readers, their perceptions and interpretations of the translated texts can be understood. Examining reader responses can help identify where the Italian translations may fall short in engaging or resonating with the audience, and explore potential reasons for any discrepancies between the original and translated texts.

1.2.4. Cognitive Translation Studies:

Cognitive translation studies, influenced by the work of Gutt (1991) and others, investigates the cognitive processes involved in translation, including comprehension, decision-making, and problem-solving. Drawing from cognitive psychology, psycholinguistics, neuroscience, and cognitive linguistics, this field explores how translators comprehend and produce translations. Gutt's approach draws on cognitive psychology and cognitive linguistics to analyze how translators process linguistic and cultural information and make decisions during the translation process.

According to relevance theory, developed by Gutt himself, communication is guided by the principle of relevance, which states that effective communication aims to be meaningful and easy to understand. In translation, this means translators strive to create translations that resonate with the intended audience, conveying the original meaning clearly and succinctly. Relevance theory posits that people prefer communication that requires minimal mental effort. Thus, translators aim to craft translations that are straightforward and devoid of confusion. They carefully select words and cultural elements that aid understanding and resonate with the target audience.

Therefore the main purpose of this theory is to simplify the communication process, by translating a text in a way that facilitates its comprehension, while also taking into account the cultural, social, and situational context of the target audience.

In the context of understanding why the Italian translation of Terry Pratchett's works may not be resonating with the audience, CTS can offer valuable insights into the cognitive challenges faced by translators and the factors that may impact the quality and effectiveness of the translations.

Especially for what concerns the humorous element in Pratchett's work CTS can investigate how translators perceive and process humorous elements in the source text, and how they attempt to recreate the humor in the target language while considering cultural differences in comedic conventions and linguistic playfulness. Additionally CTS can examine how translators activate and apply cultural schemas or mental representations of cultural concepts when translating Pratchett's works. It can explore how cultural differences between English-speaking and Italian-speaking audiences affect the interpretation and reception of cultural references, satire, and social commentary in the translations.

1.3. Translation Challenges in Literary Translation

Literary translation presents a unique set of challenges compared to other types of translation due to its focus on conveying not just the literal meaning of the text, but also its stylistic nuances, cultural references, and aesthetic qualities. In the following paragraphs of this chapter are explained some of the most frequent types of challenges translators face during their work along with some translation strategies used by translators when it comes to these challenges.

1.3.1 Cultural Nuances:

Cultural nuances encompass a broad range of elements within literary texts that are deeply rooted in the cultural context of the source language. These include cultural references, customs, traditions, historical events, social norms, and values that may be unfamiliar to readers in the target language. Taylor (1998) emphasizes the importance of understanding and navigating cultural nuances when translating literary texts. The author argues that literary works are deeply embedded in the cultural context of the source language, containing references, idioms, and customs that may be unfamiliar to readers in the target language. In agreement with the functionalist approach, carried on by Nida and Vermeer's theory - discussed above in this chapter -, Taylor highlights the need for translators to carefully consider these cultural differences and adapt the translation accordingly to make sure that the intended meaning and impact of the original text are preserved and, nonetheless, to avoid

ethnocentrism with any misinterpretations or mistranslations that could offend or alienate the target audience. He also emphasizes the importance of understanding the broader socio-cultural context in which the literary work was produced, including historical events, social dynamics, and cultural traditions. According to the author, the ultimate translator should be bilingual or bicultural, in order to have a deep understanding of both cultures he or she means to put in touch. When this is not possible, he aims for translators to research and familiarize themselves with the cultural background of the source language to accurately convey the nuances and subtleties of the original text.

Taylor then proceeds to discuss various strategies for addressing cultural nuances, such as cultural adaptation (1998: 105) which involves modifying cultural elements in the source text to better suit the cultural norms and expectations of the target audience, this may include altering references, idiomatic expressions, or cultural practices to make them more familiar and relevant to the target culture. Snell-Hornby (1988: 16) also mentions substitution, which involves replacing culturally specific items with equivalents from the target culture when direct transference is not feasible due to cultural differences or lack of equivalence. Snell-Hornby also finds it useful to provide explanations or interpretations of cultural references within the translated text itself. This strategy helps bridge cultural gaps and ensures that readers understand the significance of cultural elements in the source text. Taylor aims for the translator to adapt them into equivalents that resonate with the target culture or provide explanatory footnotes or glosses to clarify unfamiliar terms or concepts or even to omit those cultural references where it is possible.

1.3.2 Language Play and Wordplay:

Another frequent issue translators face during their work that will be discussed in this dissertation is related to language play and wordplay. Literary texts frequently employ wordplay, puns, and linguistic creativity, which can be challenging to recreate in translation. This involves preserving the original wordplay's humor, wit, and subtlety while ensuring clarity and coherence in the target language. Cultural context plays a crucial role, as what may be humorous or meaningful in one culture may not translate directly to another. Taylor (1998) delves into the complexities of translation, highlighting the importance of fidelity to the source text while ensuring readability in

the target language, but this principle is challenged when it comes to translating language plays, such as puns, idioms, and metaphors, which, according to Crisafulli's analysis (1996), may not have direct equivalents in the target language, requiring translators to find creative solutions that capture the essence of the original while resonating with the target audience.

Another important issue when it comes to translating wordplays is raised by Delabastita (1996: 127), who, by underlining how wordplays are strictly rooted in the linguistic features of a language, questions their translatability in any different language. Puns, in particular, present unique hurdles due to their reliance on linguistic similarity or phonetic wordplay. By exploring how wordplay and humor relate to each other, Delabastita also suggests that, while wordplay isn't always meant to be funny, it often provokes laughter or amusement because by creating surprise or unexpectedness. This surprise occurs when words are used in ways that deviate from our expectations, and it can also involve tapping into our background knowledge or showcasing skill with language. Due to all these factors, translating puns might be almost impossible in some cases, since they are strictly rooted in the linguistic structure of a language and might not correspond in any way to the target language structure. Delabastita's exploration emphasizes the need for creative solutions in translation, such as substitution, adaptation or explanation to bridge linguistic and cultural gaps. However it must be remembered that, when it comes to humor, it is necessary to keep the same reaction of amusement and surprise in the translation of a work.

This topic will be talked about more in detail later in this dissertation, since the humorous element is a crucial component in Terry Pratchett's linguistic style and would require a less general discussion.

1.3.3. Authorial Voice:

Conserving authorial voice in translation is a crucial aspect of literary translation, ensuring that the translated text maintains the unique style, tone, and artistic expression of the original author. Several scholars have explored strategies for achieving this preservation while navigating the linguistic and cultural differences between source and target languages.

According to Venuti, the translator's role involves making strategic decisions about how to represent the author's voice in the target language while acknowledging the cultural and linguistic constraints of translation. He argues against the dominant practice of domestication, where translators prioritize fluency and readability in the target language at the expense of the source text's distinctiveness (Venuti, 1995). Instead, he advocates for a more ethically responsible approach that preserves the foreignness of the source text, making readers aware of the cultural and linguistic gaps inherent in translation. Central to Venuti's argument is the notion of challenging conventional translation practices, which often prioritize readability in the target language over fidelity to the source text. One can argue that his perspective contrasts with the functionalist approach to translation. As a matter of fact, Venuti's foreignization approach seeks to disrupt the functionalist expectations of achieving the same effect on the target audience as the original text had on its source audience. He contends that by preserving the unique linguistic and cultural attributes of the original work, translators can uphold the integrity of the author's voice. Venuti suggests several strategies for foreignizing translations, such as translating literally the source text word-for-word, even if it results in awkward or unnatural language in the target language, using calques when necessary. The retention of cultural nuances is also another foreignizing strategy, preserving cultural references and idioms from the source language that might be unfamiliar to the target audience. Foreignization also employs the preservation of the syntax, the structure and the linguistic features of the source text even if it differs from the norms of the target language.

Moreover, Venuti highlights the inherent power dynamics in translation, where dominant cultures tend to overshadow and marginalize minority voices. By embracing foreignization strategies, translators can counteract these hegemonic forces, fostering cultural diversity and inclusivity in translation. Venuti's perspective encourages translators to navigate cultural and linguistic disparities with sensitivity, ultimately promoting cross-cultural understanding and appreciation.

Overall, while functionalist approaches to translation prioritize the functional aspects of the text and aim for seamless communication, Venuti's perspective emphasizes the ethical and political dimensions of translation, advocating for a more transparent representation of linguistic and cultural diversity in translation.

It is not the purpose of this dissertation to establish which of these two perspectives is to prefer instead of the other, however, by drawing a distinction between them, it can be argued which one is more appropriate when it comes to translating a literary text with a particular and characteristic authorial voice as the one taken into analysis in this thesis. A combination of both approaches may be beneficial in translating Pratchett's works into Italian. Functionalism can ensure effective communication and readability, while foreignization can maintain the integrity and distinctiveness of Pratchett's voice and style. Translators may need to balance these approaches based on the specific linguistic and cultural nuances of each text and the preferences of the target audience.

1.3.4. Historical and Contextual References:

Historical and contextual references pose significant challenges in translation, as they often involve cultural nuances and specific knowledge that may not readily transfer between languages.

Hung (2005) discusses how historical and cultural references can shape the meaning of a text and influence its reception by readers. She emphasizes the importance of translators understanding these references in order to accurately convey the intended message of the original text to the target audience. Similarly to Venuti's (1995) perspective, when translating a literary text, Hung aims for a "foreignizing" approach that retains the cultural specificity of the original text, even if it requires footnotes or glosses to explain unfamiliar references to the target audience.

Overall, the challenges of historical and contextual references in translation underscore the importance of translators possessing cultural competency and sensitivity to the nuances of both the source and target languages. By navigating these challenges thoughtfully, translators can ensure that the richness and complexity of the original text are preserved in the translation process. The reader of a translated work has to be aware of the historical context in which the work is inlaid, in order to efficiently comprehend as many nuances as possible.

1.3.5. Other Challenges:

Addressing these challenges requires translators to possess not only linguistic proficiency but also cultural sensitivity, creativity, and literary acumen. Successful literary translation involves a delicate

balance between fidelity to the original text and adaptation to the target audience, resulting in a translation that resonates with readers while honoring the integrity of the original work. These are just some of the challenges faced by translators in their work. Of course there are more of them, such as ethical implications when dealing with sensitive topics, controversial themes, or culturally sensitive material. Translators must balance fidelity to the original text with ethical responsibilities to the target audience.

Poetry also presents unique challenges in translation, as translators must preserve not only the literal meaning of the words but also the poetic form, meter, rhyme, and rhythm. Translating poetry requires a deep understanding of both the source and target languages' poetic traditions.

Literary texts are also often open to multiple interpretations, and translators must navigate the ambiguity inherent in the original text. They must make choices that preserve the richness and depth of the original while offering clarity and coherence to the target audience. However, the challenges mentioned in this last part are not relevant for the purpose of this dissertation, thus I will not give further discussion about them.

In conclusion, the process of translating literary works presents a myriad of challenges that require careful consideration, creativity, and skill to overcome. From navigating cultural nuances and preserving the author's voice to grappling with the complexities of literary devices and multiple interpretations, translators must navigate a complex landscape to faithfully convey the essence of the original text in the target language. These challenges underscore the importance of translators as both linguists and artists, tasked with bridging linguistic and cultural divides while preserving the integrity and beauty of the source material. Despite the myriad challenges they face, translators play a vital role in fostering cross-cultural understanding and enriching the literary landscape with diverse voices and perspectives. Through their dedication, expertise, and unwavering commitment to their craft, translators ensure that literary works transcend linguistic boundaries and resonate with readers around the world.

Chapter 2: Translation Challenges in Pratchett's Works

The second chapter of this dissertation will give the reader an insight into the Discworld Series, the fantasy world invented by the English writer Terry Pratchett. Firstly it will illustrate the background of the author, along with an overview of the Discworld series, its significance and its reception and perception according to the readers. Then it will deal with the translation challenges related to Terry Pratchett's works, starting from a linguistic point of view and then exploring the cultural and contextual challenges.

2.1 An insight into Terry Pratchett's world

2.1.1 Background of the author

Terry Pratchett was born on April 28, 1948, in Beaconsfield, Buckinghamshire, England. His early life shaped his love for storytelling.

Pratchett's career in writing began during his teenage years when he contributed stories to his school magazine. His passion for storytelling led him to pursue journalism after leaving school, eventually becoming a press officer and later a journalist for the Bucks Free Press. This early experience in journalism honed his writing skills and provided valuable insights into storytelling and communication. (About Sir Terry, <https://www.terrypratchettbooks.com/>)

In 1971, when he was only 23, Pratchett published his first novel, *The Carpet People*, a fantasy story inspired by his experiences playing with carpet figures as a child. Although not as widely recognized as his later works, this first work marked the beginning of Pratchett's illustrious writing career and showcased his imaginative storytelling abilities.

In 1979 he began to work at the Central Electricity Generating Board (CEGB) and this job marked a significant chapter in his life before he achieved literary fame. Joining the CEGB in the late 1960s, Pratchett worked in the press office, where he was responsible for various communication tasks related to the organization's activities. During his time at the CEGB, Pratchett gained valuable experience in communication, writing, and public relations. His role involved crafting press

releases, responding to media inquiries, and helping to manage the organization's public image. (About Sir Terry, <https://www.terrypratchettbooks.com/>) This experience not only honed his writing skills but also provided insights into the workings of large organizations and the dynamics of media relations. Pratchett's time at the CEGB likely influenced his later writing career in several ways. His exposure to bureaucratic structures and corporate culture may have informed the satirical elements present in some of his novels, particularly those that lampooned institutional inefficiency and absurdity. However, it was the Discworld series that catapulted Pratchett to literary stardom. Spanning 41 novels and numerous spin-offs, the Discworld series garnered a dedicated global fanbase and cemented Pratchett's status as one of the most beloved and influential authors of his generation.

Throughout his career, Pratchett received numerous awards and accolades for his contributions to literature, including the Carnegie Medal, the British Fantasy Award, and a knighthood for services to literature in 2009. Beyond his literary achievements, Pratchett was also an outspoken advocate for causes such as Alzheimer's research, environmental conservation, and assisted dying. His public advocacy and philanthropic efforts further endeared him to fans and readers around the world.

On March 12, 2015, Pratchett died at the age of 66, surrounded by his family at his home in Broadchalke, Wiltshire, England. His death was attributed to complications from a rare form of early-onset Alzheimer's disease, a condition he had been battling for several years (About Sir Terry, <https://www.terrypratchettbooks.com/>). Throughout his prolific career, Pratchett had crafted a rich tapestry of worlds and characters that captivated readers with their wit, humor, and keen insight into the human condition. His Discworld series, in particular, had garnered a devoted following and earned him a place among the literary giants of his generation.

2.1.2. The Discworld Series and its significance

The Discworld series, written by Terry Pratchett, represents one of the greatest achievements in contemporary fantasy literature, captivating readers with its imaginative world-building, sharp humor, and insightful social commentary. Set on the Discworld, a flat, disc-shaped planet balanced on the backs of four elephants standing atop a giant turtle, the series offers a fantastical backdrop

for exploring a myriad of themes and narratives. (Pratchett, 1993). Spanning 41 novels, as well as supplementary works and guides, the Discworld series presents a rich tapestry of interconnected stories that delve into diverse genres such as fantasy, satire, parody, and adventure.

Pratchett revolutionized the fantasy genre by infusing it with humor, satire, and social commentary, starting with his description of his unique fantasy world. The Discworld series presents all the cliché from the fantasy genre, with a set of creatures and figures that most of us expect to see in a fantasy world (wizards, witches, trolls, vampires, werewolves, etc), however, after introducing all these archetypes, Pratchett proceeds to deconstruct or subvert them. One example is Rincewind, the wizard who is central in many books of the series. While he may initially appear as the typical cowardly wizard archetype, his experiences throughout the series challenge and complicate this stereotype, often leading to unexpected outcomes. Additionally, Pratchett frequently parodies the classic hero's journey and quest narratives by exposing the absurdities and impracticalities inherent in these tropes. Characters often find themselves involved in quests that are trivial, nonsensical, or caught in unexpected complications, highlighting the absurdity of blindly adhering to traditional narrative structures.

Pratchett draws inspiration not only by classic fantasy authors such as J.R.R. Tolkien, whose epic world-building and rich storytelling set a high standard for the genre, and Fritz Leiber, whose *Fafhrd and the Gray Mouser* series blended fantasy with humor and adventure, but also from literary satirists such as Jonathan Swift ("*Gulliver's Travels*") and Mark Twain ("*The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*") (Alton, Spruiell: 2014). Additionally, his works are often filled with references to mythology, folklore, and fairy tales from various cultures, which makes his books strictly rooted in the cultures he draws inspiration from and often not easy to interpret.

Through the lens of fantasy, Pratchett jabs various aspects of society, from politics and bureaucracy to religion and popular culture. Yet, beneath the humor lies a profound exploration of human nature, morality, and the complexities of life. As a matter of fact, Pratchett's novels often explore philosophical themes and ethical dilemmas, drawing on ideas from philosophers such as Friedrich Nietzsche, Albert Camus, and Terry Eagleton. Pratchett's interest in morality, existentialism, and the nature of reality is evident in many of his works (Held, South, 2015: 259). Instead of presenting a conventional high fantasy world with clear-cut divisions between good and evil, Pratchett's

Discworld is a satirical reflection of our own world, complete with its own quirks, absurdities, and contradictions.

By incorporating elements of the mundane and everyday into his fantastical setting, Pratchett undermines the grandiose and idealized portrayals often found in traditional fantasy literature. Additionally, despite their fantastical setting, Pratchett's novels explored timeless themes and dilemmas that resonated with readers from diverse backgrounds. Themes such as friendship, justice, love, and mortality were central to Pratchett's storytelling, offering readers insights into the human condition and the complexities of life. Pratchett's ability to weave profound themes into engaging narratives made his works accessible to readers of all ages and backgrounds, ensuring their enduring popularity and relevance.

Since the publication of the first novel, *The Colour of Magic*, in 1983, the Discworld series has garnered widespread acclaim and a devoted global following. Terry Pratchett's impact on literature extends beyond the fantasy genre. His distinctive voice, clever wordplay, and memorable characters have inspired generations of readers and writers around the world. Pratchett's influence can be seen in the works of contemporary authors, such as Neil Gaiman, Stephen Baxter and C.K. McDonnell, who continue to explore similar themes and employ similar narrative techniques. Moreover, Pratchett's novels have been translated into numerous languages and adapted for various mediums, including film, television, radio, and theater, further cementing his status as a literary icon.

2.1.3. Readers' Reception

Pratchett's ability to entertain, provoke thought, and inspire empathy has earned him a devoted following and secured his legacy as one of the most beloved authors of his generation. Readers' perception and response to Terry Pratchett's works are multifaceted and varied, reflecting the diverse themes, tones, and styles present in his writing. Readers are drawn to Pratchett's sharp wit, clever wordplay, and humorous observations. His ability to infuse even the most serious topics with humor and levity is often cited as a major appeal of his writing. Readers appreciate the laugh-out-loud moments as well as the subtle nuances of Pratchett's comedic genius. However, humor is not the only element of his literature appreciated by the audience. Pratchett's works are also renowned

for their incisive social commentary, addressing a wide range of contemporary issues with intelligence and insight. Through characters, settings, and plotlines, Pratchett skillfully explores themes such as power, justice, inequality, and the nature of reality, prompting readers to consider the implications of these themes in their own lives and in broader societal contexts. Pratchett's use of fantasy elements allows readers to approach sensitive or contentious topics from a distance, providing a degree of emotional detachment that facilitates critical engagement. By presenting social issues in a fantastical setting, Pratchett invites readers to explore complex ideas in a safe and accessible manner, encouraging them to question established norms and challenge prevailing attitudes.

2.1.4. The *Discworld* series translated

Considering his usage of humor, puns and wordplay, along with the numerous cultural nuances, the translations of his works fail to always resonate with the reader's expectation. On sites like Reddit and online forums it is not hard to find dissatisfied readers' comments and reviews on the translation of his books. About the translation of cultural nuances in Pratchett's work, Tringham (2023) writes that he is “moonlighting, researching into how the Discworld novels of Pratchett have been translated into Finnish from British English and ‘carried across’ to Finland from their home in the UK. Pratchett's fantasy Discworld series, set on a flat planet and carried through space by four elephants perched atop a giant turtle, is principally one of satire, full of humor and packed with cultural references, some writ large, others near invisible to the naked brain.”

The Discworld series has been translated into 37 languages. For what concerns the Italian version of his books, only 24 out of 41 books have been translated: the first twenty books of the Discworld series and the books *The Amazing Maurice and his Educated Rodents* (2001), *The Wee Free Men* (2003), *A Hat Full of Sky* (20014) and *Wintersmith* (2008). Most of them are published by TEA, Salani and Mondadori, and translated by Antonella Pieretti (who covered all the books published from 1992 to 2003), and Valentina Daniele (who translated all the books published from 2007 to 2011). Other translators of the books are Natalia Callori (who translated the first three books of the

series, including *The Colour of Magic*), Maurizio Bortocci and Victor Gollancz (who covered the recent publication of the Italian translations).

The following part of this chapter will deal with some of the reasons why the translation process of this series is considered this challenging, by investigating three main issues that may hinder translation. These section will present the problems faced by translators when dealing with Pratchett's works, along with the approaches, explained in the first chapter, that I aim to use in the third chapter of the dissertation and, also, with some example drawn by other translated fantasy work that I believe are exemplary to the topic.

2.2. Linguistic Challenges

As discussed previously in this chapter, one of the main features of Terry Pratchett's linguistic style is his active usage of wordplay, puns and his clever use of language, along with a richly descriptive prose, with vivid imagery and colorful language that brings his fantastical worlds to life. He has a knack for capturing the essence of a scene or character with evocative language that engages the reader's imagination. In this section we will delve deeper into the challenges of translating a literary text filled with wordplay and puns, illustrating some of the techniques frequently used to engage with this linguistic phenomenon.

2.2.1. Wordplay and puns

Delabatista (1996:133) addresses wordplay in translation by examining the complexities and challenges it poses for translators. His definition recites that wordplay is “the general name for various textual phenomena in which structural features of the language(s) used are exploited in order to bring about a communicatively significant confrontation of two (or more) linguistic structures with more or less similar forms and [...] different meanings.” This description of wordplay effectively explains how it works by showing how language's structure can be used to create important communication effects. It focuses on how wordplay uses the structure of language, like its form and meaning, to playfully engage with language in a clever and often funny way. Delabatista identifies several types of wordplay, each with its own distinctive features and effects.

The first being puns, which consist in playing with the multiple meanings or sounds of words to create humorous or ironic effects. It categorizes puns into different types, such as homonymy (identical sound and spelling), homophony (identical sound but different spelling), homography (different sound but identical spelling), and paronymy (similar but different sounds and spelling), while also distinguish between two types of relationship between wordplays: a vertical one, where wordplays occur in the same portion of the text, and a horizontal one, where they are contiguous in the same phrase. (Delabastita, 1996:133-134)

Double entendres are also one of the most common ways to use wordplay in literary text. This form of wordplay is characterized by words or phrases that have two distinct meanings, often with one interpretation being straightforward and the other more subtle, risqué, or suggestive. The term "double entendre" is derived from French and translates literally to "double meaning." The literal meaning is usually innocuous or straightforward, while the figurative meaning carries a more nuanced or suggestive connotation. Double entendres are commonly used in humor, satire, and wordplay to create witty or playful effects. By exploiting the ambiguity of language, double entendres can generate laughter, surprise, or amusement by revealing unexpected or incongruous interpretations of words or phrases.

Arguing the untranslatability of humor elements like puns, Delabastita suggests some ways of conveying these elements from a language to another. These strategies are listed below by means of equivalence, compensation, cultural adaptation and editorial techniques.

- Equivalence: Delabastita (1996: 134) proposes finding equivalent puns or linguistic devices in the target language that capture the essence of the original while maintaining the intended effect on the reader. This involves identifying words or phrases with similar sound patterns, multiple meanings, or cultural associations that can be used to recreate the wordplay in translation, but also using rhetorical devices such as repetition, alliteration, rhyme, irony, etc. This type of conversion (PUN->PUN and PUN-> RELATED RHETORICAL DEVICE), may involve a change in the source pun's formal structure. However, when substituting a pun in a source language by means of equivalence, translators must keep the humorous element of the original.

- Compensation: Given the inherent difficulty of translating puns, Delabastita suggests compensating for the loss of wordplay in translation by introducing new linguistic devices or creative solutions that convey a similar effect or evoke a comparable response from the reader. This may involve creating new puns, wordplay, or humor that aligns with the tone and style of the original text. However, he suggests (1996: 134) that compensation should be followed by a footnote explaining why new elements are added to the translation, in order to legitimize this translation technique.
- Cultural Adaptation: Adapting puns to suit the cultural context of the target language is another strategy proposed by Delabastita (1996:134). Translators may need to modify the puns to incorporate culturally relevant references, idiomatic expressions, or wordplay conventions that resonate with readers in the target culture. This ensures that the translated puns are meaningful and impactful within the cultural framework of the target audience.
- Footnotes or explanatory notes: as mentioned before, providing footnotes or explanatory notes can help clarify the wordplay for readers who may not be familiar with the linguistic or cultural references involved. This allows translators to preserve the integrity of the original puns while providing additional context or explanation to aid comprehension in the target language. (Delabastita, 1996:134)

Pratchett often incorporates double entendres into dialogues, narrative description and names of his characters, using wordplay to hint at their personalities or roles in the story. For example the name "Nobby Nobbs", a character appearing firstly in the novel *Guards! Guards!* (1989), suggests both his physical appearance (nobby meaning irregular or lumpy) and his dubious character (nobs being a slang term for wealthy or aristocratic individuals). The same goes with puns, a fundamental aspect of Pratchett's writing style, used to add wit, whimsy, and depth to his narratives, showcasing his mastery of wordplay and linguistic humor. For instance, In *Soul Music* (1994), Pratchett parodies rock band names, such as "The Whom" (a pun on The Who, a British rock band formed in London in 1964). Regarding the translation of puns in Pratchett's works, Žičkytė (2020:11) said "the type of puns that manipulate the structure of the language itself have caused the most problems for both translators and have often led to the meaning behind the pun being lost".

The strategies explained before for translating humorous elements are also shared by Vandaele (2002), who acknowledges that humor can be particularly challenging to translate because of the potential for loss or gain in the translation process. Some aspects of humor may be inherently tied to the linguistic and cultural context of the source language, making it difficult to convey the same comedic effect in translation. At the same time, translation can also result in unexpected gains, as translators may find creative solutions that enhance or reinterpret the original humor in a new context. Vandaele (2002: 165) underscores the translator's role as a mediator between the source and target cultures, tasked with navigating the complexities of translating humor while remaining faithful to the original text. Given these circumstances, it is clear that when it comes to translating the humorous element in Terry Pratchett's novels, translators must possess a deep understanding of both the source and target languages, as well as familiarity with the cultural contexts in which the humor operates, to effectively convey comedic effects in translation.

2.2.3. Idiomatic Expression

Character and world building is one of Pratchett's strengths. It comes with no surprise that a remarkable amount of care is put in how he linguistically characterizes every population, every character and every kind of magical creature he writes about in his book.

Terry Pratchett's Discworld series is rich with English idiomatic expressions, which he employs to add color, authenticity, and humor to his writing. Pratchett's characters often speak in colloquial language peppered with idiomatic expressions that reflect their personalities, backgrounds, and social contexts. For example, the city watchmen in the *City Watch* series, such as Sam Vimes and Carrot Ironfounder-son, use idiomatic expressions that are characteristic of their working-class upbringing and military training. He also uses them to characterize individuals and communities within the Discworld universe, for instance the witches in the books often use rustic and earthy idioms that reflect their rural lifestyle and deep connection to nature. It would be a loss in the translation to not properly convey the world characterization through idiomatic expression, thus a special focus must be taken to effectively match the linguistic style the author chose to give voice to his characters.

When it comes to translating idiomatic expression, it must be taken into account the context and the genre that are dealt with, in order to properly choose which approach is more suitable to the translation. Two particular approaches from those explained in the first chapter of this dissertation might be useful to convey idiomatic expression, the first one being the functionalist approach (for references see chap. 1.3.1) and the second one being the “foreignizing” approach (chapter 1.3.3). The question around this section is whether it is better to keep the source linguistic form as it is, underlining the possible gaps between the ST and the TT or is it better to find an equivalent linguistic form to properly convey the message and style of the author. Generally accepted methods for translation include balancing between one approach and the other, taking into account the purpose of the text and the audience it is directed towards. However, given the literary aspect of Pratchett’s work, I believe that the functional approach might better suit the purpose of the translation. Therefore, translators should consider the cultural context of both the source and target languages, adapting idioms to ensure they are relevant and comprehensible to readers in the target culture and balancing fidelity to the source text with the need to produce a translation that is natural, idiomatic, and culturally appropriate for the target audience. By means of equivalence, I find a good example of translation of the linguistic style in the 1998 Italian translation of the *Harry Potter* saga. Especially when it comes to Hagrid’s dialogue, Daniele (1998) explains how she conveyed the character's ungrammatical way of talking in English in an equally ungrammatical way of talking in Italian. In order to properly convey idiomatic expressions from Pratchett’s work, it is crucial to fully understand its meaning, usage, and cultural connotations in the original English context. This may involve researching the origins of the expression and considering its figurative or metaphorical meaning. The translators should be prepared to adapt idiomatic expressions to suit the cultural context of Italian readers. This may involve substituting English idioms with Italian equivalents, rephrasing the expression to align with Italian cultural norms and conventions, or providing explanatory notes to clarify cultural references. However, in order to maintain the humorous tone of the text, they should aim to preserve the wit, whimsy, and wordplay that characterize his novels, avoiding giving explanatory notes and focusing more into finding a cultural equivalent way to convey the message and the linguistic style.

2.3. Cultural Challenges

Terry Pratchett's Discworld series is renowned for its rich tapestry of cultural references and allusions, drawing upon a wide range of literary, historical, mythological, and pop culture sources. These references add depth, humor, and intertextuality to Pratchett's narratives, inviting readers to engage with familiar themes and ideas while exploring the fantastical world of Discworld. For example, Pratchett frequently references classic literature and authors, weaving elements of Shakespeare, Dickens, Austen, and other literary giants into the fabric of Discworld. For instance, "Wyrd Sisters" is a playful parody of Shakespearean drama, while "Going Postal" features nods to Dickensian themes of social injustice and redemption. Mythology also features prominently in Discworld, with Pratchett drawing inspiration from Greek, Norse, and Celtic myths. Characters like Death and the gods of Discworld often mirror figures from mythology, providing a playful reinterpretation of familiar archetypes. Additionally, Pratchett incorporates historical events and figures into his storytelling, offering satirical commentary on themes such as politics, religion, and social change. The *Ankh-Morpork City Watch* series, for example, explores themes of law enforcement and social order, drawing parallels to real-world historical developments. Pratchett also infuses Discworld with references to contemporary pop culture, including movies, music, and television. Intertextuality and meta-references are also integral aspects of Terry Pratchett's writing style, particularly in his Discworld series, where he frequently incorporates references to literature, mythology, history, and popular culture. When translating Pratchett's works, maintaining these elements poses both challenges and opportunities for translators.

Differently to what I have said in the previous section, cultural challenges in translation need a different approach. Especially when dealing with a satirical commentary, in order to preserve the initial intention of the author to deliver a certain message, it is necessary for the reader to be aware of the topic the author is referring to. Since he often refers to the social problems of his country, it might be easier for British Pratchett's readers to understand most of the references beneath the pages of his books. However, this is not always the case for foreign readers of Pratchett's work. Therefore Venuti (1995) and Hung's (2005) perspective on Translation Studies might be useful to properly convey cultural nuances. The translator should aim to retain the foreignness of the source

text, allowing foreign readers to encounter and engage with the cultural richness of Pratchett's original work, preserving cultural references and allusions from the source text that may be unfamiliar to readers in the target culture. Rather than adapting or replacing these references with equivalents from the target culture, provide explanatory notes or glosses to retain the cultural specificity of the original text. This may include explaining why some jokes are made against certain groups of people or why the author chose certain words to describe them, referring to the historical context the book it's written in. By adapting the satirical joke to the target language, the message intended by the author might get lost in translation, losing some of his critical aspect (for reference see chapter 1.3.3). To refer again to what Tringham said (2019:1) "Pratchett's books not only tell a story, they also illustrate a truth of some kind: they are satirical as well as amusing. Any loss of cultural references in translation may affect these purposes."

2.3. Contextual Challenges

In the last section of this chapter I think it is important to also mention the importance of contextual factors when translating a literary body of works like the *Discworld* serie. Its world-building consists in geography, history, and magical systems. Pratchett's characters have distinct voices, dialects, and personalities that contribute to the richness of the Discworld universe. The name chosen for the characters are also quite expressive of their personalities and Pratchett invents numerous terms, names, and concepts in the Discworld series, many of which are integral to world-building. It is important to notice that translating fantasy is not only about conveying a message from the source culture to the target culture. That is, of course, crucial to the purpose of translation itself, however, when translating a fantasy novel like Pratchett's ones, there is also the self-contained fantasy world that should be keep into consideration, a culture that has to be conveyed as well along with the cultural elements of the source culture. This brings us to the importance of maintaining the world-building detail into the translation.

Neologisms are one of the main elements used to highlight the otterness of the fantasy world the reader is exploring through the pages of a novel. They can be created by blending existing words together, borrowing from other languages, or inventing entirely new terms. Neologisms allow writers to introduce fresh and original language into their texts, adding depth, richness, and

authenticity to the fictional worlds they create and can serve various functions, including world-building, character development, and thematic reinforcement.

In Terry Pratchett's Discworld series, neologisms are often used to invent names for characters, places, and concepts that reflect the fantastical and whimsical nature of the fictional world. For example, the character Rincewind is a "wizzard" (note the deliberate misspelling) who attends the Unseen University, where he encounters various magical creatures and phenomena. Neologisms allow Pratchett to play with language and create a sense of novelty and originality in his writing. They can add depth and richness to the fictional world of Discworld, enhancing the reader's immersion in the narrative. Since they recur throughout a literary fantasy text, forming an integral part of the fictional world's lexicon and mythology, translators should strive for consistency in their translation of neologisms, ensuring that similar terms are rendered consistently to maintain coherence and authenticity in the target language. Additionally, to create them, Pratchett often recur to elements of folklore and mythology to convey a certain significance and subtle meaning under the neologisms. Being rooted in specific cultural or linguistic contexts that are unique to the source language, translators must consider how these cultural and linguistic elements can be adapted to resonate with readers in the target language, taking into account differences in cultural references, idiomatic expressions, and linguistic conventions. They also must strive to preserve the creative and playful aspects of neologisms, adapting them in ways that capture the original author's inventiveness while remaining intelligible and engaging to readers in the target language.

When it comes to translating literary names in fantasy literature we can find some good examples in the translation of works like *The Lord of the Rings* or the *Harry Potter* series. These two translated works serve as a significant example of two common aspects of literary names. For instance, Rowling tends to rely on the semantic of a word to depict some physical or personality trait of the character. This connotation has to be maintained in the translation of a name, in order to evoke the same perception in the reader of the target language. For example, the character "Severus Snape" is translated as "Severus Piton" in Italian and "Severus Rogue" in French, both of which capture the serpentine connotations of the original name while adapting it to the linguistic norms of the target language. The same thing happens when translating some of the characters' names in *The Lord of*

the Rings. The surname “Baggins”, for instance, recalls the word “bag”, reminding the reader of the prosperity characteristic of the family. While in Italian the translator chose to not translate the surname (Principe, 2000: 21-22), "Frodo Baggins" becomes "Frodo Sacquet" in French and "Frodo Bolson" in Spanish, preserving the semantic quality of the original name while ensuring it is natural-sounding in the target language. On the other hand, Tolkien also tends to rely on the phonetic and linguistic aspect when choosing a name for geographical places, in order to recall a fairytale connotation. “Hobbiton”, with the alliteration of the vowel “o” and the letter “b” is evocative of the joyful atmosphere that hovers over town, while “Rivendell” with his sweet and harmonious sound evokes the gratefulness typical of the Elves. These two names are translated in Italian with “Hobbiville”, preserving the alliteration of the letter “b” and adapting “ton” (derived from “town”) into “ville” (more similar to the word “villaggio” in Italian), and “Gran Burrone”, preserving the legendary tone of the name in the original while adapting it to sound more familiar to the Italian audience and to avoid confusion caused by the plentiness of exotic toponyms. (Principe, 2000: 22).

Conveying literary names from one language to another, especially when dealing with fantasy literature, requires a delicate balance between fidelity to the original text and readability for readers in the target language, ensuring that the author’s work is accessible and engaging for audiences around the world. The translator must consider the cultural context of the target language and adapt names accordingly, sometimes choosing equivalents or creating new names that evoke similar associations or connotations, while also preserving the sound and rhythm of the original names while rendering them in a way that is natural and pronounceable for readers in the target language.

Chapter 3: Analysis of the Italian Translation of The Colour of Magic

This chapter's focus is to draw a comparative analysis of the original text and Italian translation of Terry Pratchett's novel *The Color of Magic*, in order to identify the translation strategies used by the translator and, eventually, to identify the gaps in the translation that might not satisfy the Italian readers. In this chapter I will also identify and evaluate the translation strategies used, assessing their suitability for the book's genre and the author's style. The book analyzed is the first novel of Pratchett's Discworld series, *The Color of Magic*, written in 1983 and translated into Italian for the first time in 1989 by Natalia Callori.

3.1. Comparative analysis of key passages.

In the following paragraphs of this section, some key passages selected from the book that are representative of Pratchett's style are reproduced, each followed by an explanation of the passage, identification of the translation strategy used by the translator and an analysis of its effectiveness. The comparison was taken by reading first the original text and then the translation, comparing the two versions and highlighting the differences between the two. Reading the two versions of the book I was able to identify three types of translation issues and those are the ones the next sections of this chapter will focus on.

3.1.1. Linguistic accuracy, wordplay and pun

Wordplay and puns, as said in the previous chapter, are key elements in Pratchett's style. The author uses them not only to entertain the reader, but also to build his world in a way that is meant to be extravagant and absurd. Humor is the key to constructing the Discworld, a world that is itself a parody of both the fantasy worlds depicted in other works and the real world. The humorous element is not only present in all aspects of Discworld (the characterization of the characters, the description of the places, the topography, the rules that govern it) but is also one of the fundamental aspects of the storytelling. One could say that humor is the true protagonist of Pratchett's works.

Therefore, depriving the translation of this element would mean stripping the work of its most important value. However, since the humorous element is deeply rooted in wordplay and linguistic elements, transferring this element to another language can prove to be extremely difficult. For this reason, linguistic accuracy is necessary in order to convey the humorous element in the best way possible. These are some examples of how the Italian translator has dealt with the humorous and linguistic element in Terry Pratchett's *The Color of Magic*.

1. Let's just say that if complete and utter chaos were lightning, then he'd be the sort to stand on a hilltop in a thunderstorm wearing wet copper armor and shouting 'All gods are bastards.' (p. 20)

Diciamo solamente che se si scatenasse il caos, lui sarebbe tipo da starsene in cima a una collina sotto l'uragano nella sua fradicia armatura di rame a urlare "tutti gli dei sono disgraziati".

The omission of the literal translation of "lightning" and the choice to translate "thunderstorm" as "uragano" makes the specification of the person's clothing nonsensical. This is because copper is known to be a good conductor, and wearing wet copper armor in the middle of a storm while shouting at the gods would mean being struck by lightning instantly. The author used this metaphor to explain the character's idiocy and naivety, explaining with a hyperbole, that the character would be stupid enough to put himself in danger in the most idiotic way, like wearing copper armor during a thunderstorm. But since there is no reference to a thunderstorm in the translation, not only the hyperbole is diminished, but a portion of the passage (the clothing detail) becomes completely useless for the sake of the joke. This is one of the cases where linguistic accuracy is necessary to better convey the hyperbole. For instance, it would have made more sense if the translator kept just only the literal translation of "thunderstorm". This method of translation would align more closely with Venuti's perspective against the domestication of the text in order to maintain the author's voice. A more literal translation, in this case, not only brings the translated text closer to the original but also more effectively conveys the meaning of the hyperbole, which would also satisfy the functionalists.

2. “The dragon, carrying the weight of two men, was only a few yards above the grass. This turned out to be fortunate, because at the moment Lio!rt lost consciousness the dragon winked out of existence.” (p. 194)

“Gravato dal peso dei due uomini, il drago si era sollevato solo di pochi metri da terra. Fu una fortuna perché, nel momento in cui Lio!rt perse conoscenza, la vita del drago si spegneva”

To better understand the issues in this passage, it needs a little more context. In this passage the character is fighting against Lio!rt, a knight capable of creating dragons, which he can ride and control, with his imagination. Since the dragons are real only when his knight is conscious, when Lio!rt passes out the dragons disappear.

“Winked out of existence” is a way of saying “extinguished,” “vanished,” “gone” and it is usually said about a light or a flame. In this passage, the author explains how the dragon vanishes the moment its rider, Lio!rt, loses consciousness, causing the two men to fall. The Italian translator chose to keep the lexical nuances of the verb “winked” by using the word “spegnersi”, a verb that is very close to the literal meaning of “winking out”, as it is also used when speaking about a light or a flame. However, by only referring to the dragon’s death, not only does the translator not specify its disappearance, making the translation suboptimal as it can be misunderstood, but also suggests that the dragon dies, which is not correct, since the dragon is not dead, it has only disappeared.

In this case, the translator tries to maintain the meaning of "winking out" but fails to effectively convey what actually happens in this passage. A less literal translation, which omits the nuances of the term "wink out," would have made the entire scene more comprehensible and left no room for doubt. Therefore, a functionalist approach would have better served the purpose, perhaps using the word "svanire" to be closer to the original term.

Establishing the preferred translation strategy of the translator in this book is not a simple task, given that it often swings between overly literal translations — perhaps in order to avoid over-domestication of the text — where the meaning of the sentence is lost (see example 3) and

translations that definitively deviate from the original, failing to narrate the scene as the author imagined it. The following examples are explanatory of these issues.

3. There it formed an image of a storm-swept, tree-girt hill with a temple on its crest. Its shape did unpleasant things to the eye. Rincewind knew that if it was a temple to Bel-Shamharoth it would have eight sides. (Eight was also the Number of Bel-Shamharoth, which was why a sensible wizard would never mention the number if he could avoid it. Or you'll be eight alive, apprentices were jocularly warned. (pg. 118)

Lì formò un'immagine di una collina alberata e spazzata dal vento con un un tempio sulla cima. La forma di quell'edificio era spiacevole all'occhio. Scuotivento sapeva che, se si trattava del Tempio di Bel-Shamharoth, avrebbe avuto otto lati (Otto era anche il numero di Bel-Shamharoth) e per questa ragione, potendo evitarlo, un mago giudizioso non l'avrebbe mai pronunciato "Oppure sarete ottati vivi" si ammonivano scherzosamente gli apprendisti.

In this case the focus is on the pun "You'll be eight alive". This is an example of a paronymia (see paragraph 2.2.1), as it plays on the similar sounds of the words "eaten" and "eight". The literal translation in "ottati", a term that does not exist in the Italian language, leaves the reader wondering the meaning of the sentence. Referring to Delabastita techniques seen in the previous chapter, the best option would be to find an equivalent in the Italian language, perhaps playing with the words "mangiato-mangiotto", but even in this case the translation would not have the natural effect of the original joke. The second option would be to translate the sentence by omitting the joke, therefore "you will be eaten alive", opting for a PUN -> NO PUN conversion, in order to make the reading more natural, perhaps explaining the original joke with a translation note.

However, this example is not brought to devalue the choice of using a literal translation, rather to prove that literal translation aren't always the best choice and do not always constitute an efficient foreignization strategy. To demonstrate this affirmation, here's a good example of literal translation efficiently used as a foreignization strategy in order to preserve the author's voice and style.

4. The very small demon imprisoned within looked up from its tiny abacus and scowled “it lacks but ten minutes to the eight of the clock”. (pg 91)

Il minuscolo demone imprigionato all'interno alzò gli occhi dal suo piccolo abaco e disse arcigno “mancano solo dieci minuti alle otto dell'orologio”.

“Eight of the clock”, which would be abbreviated to “eight o' clock”, is traditionally rendered in Italian as “alle otto ”. However, since the expression “eight of the clock” isn't particularly usual in English, a literal translation in this case, while it might not sound as good as the traditional one, making the sentence less natural, does reflect the same effect of the original expression, which is unnatural in English as well. Therefore, this case is a good example of foreignization of the text, since the translator chose to reflect the same style of the author, preferring a literal translation of the text and preserving, in this way, the style of the author. Given these examples, it can be said that choosing to translate a text word by word is not enough to obtain the effects intended by foreignization strategies. If not used correctly, an overly literal translation can only lead to an unnatural translation that confuses the reader. The translator has to choose carefully where to apply these strategies.

5. “Yah, but what happened?” “It's rather difficult to explain—” Hrun peered up at the sky. Liartes, by far the most cautious of the two brothers, was circling high above them. (...) “The dragons ... they're imaginary (...) I'll have to tell you later!” “Fine, if you can find a really good medium,” snapped Hrun. He glared up at Liartes, who was beginning to descend in wide sweeps. (pg 195)

Già, ma che è accaduto?” “E' piuttosto difficile da spiegare” Hrun guardò il cielo. Liartes, di gran lunga il più prudente dei due fratelli, volteggiava in alto sulle loro teste. (...) “I draghi... sono immaginari (...) dovrò spiegartelo più tardi” “Bene. Se riesci a trovarne il modo”.

In this case a situation is described where the character Hrun finds his life in danger, he sarcastically turns to the interlocutor telling him that, in order to be able to talk to him, she will have to find a

medium, a creature endowed with magical powers who is capable of contacting the dead. The Italian translation completely deviates from the meaning of the word "medium", opting for the word "modo" instead. In this way, the missing literal translation fails to render the allusion to Hrun's incoming death. Given these examples it seems clear that there is not only one solution to translate effectively, rather it is necessary to choose between various strategies and combine them depending on the effect intended. It is important to note that an optimal translation of a literary text has to balance the two approaches seen in chapter 2 (the foreignization strategies and the functionalist approach). While it is important to maintain the author's voice, avoiding an over-domestication of the target text (like examples 3), it is also important to keep the reading natural, especially in fantasy literature, where it is pivotal to understand clearly the scenes that are narrated.

3.1.2. Cultural Challenges

Cultural references are also an important element in Pratchett's world. To analyze their translation we will mostly refer to Hung (2005) and Venuti's (1995) perspective on the translation of cultural nuances, which imply that references are to be maintained in the original form in order to preserve the original message the author intended to communicate. However, in *The Color of Magic*, there are few cultural references that might be hard to convey to the Italian audience. For instance, when the protagonist, Rincewind, encounters the character Death, Death can't help but to act surprised to meet Rincewind there, since he expected to see him in another city. (example 6)

6. "OF COURSE, WHAT'S SO BLOODY VEXING ABOUT THE WHOLE BUSINESS IS THAT I WAS EXPECTING TO MEET THEE IN PSEPHOPOLIS." (pg 78)

"NATURALMENTE CIO' CHE MI SECCA DI PIU' DI QUESTA FACCENDA E' CHE MI ASPETTAVO DI INCONTRARTI A PSEPHOPOLIS"

This passage alludes to the Mesopotamian tale of the servant who met Death in Baghdad, decided to escape to Samarra with a fast horse lent to him by his master, only to find Death waiting for him in the city. The tale has many versions and was adapted in books, movies and even songs (Estrucus,

Arona, 2013). This reference is not difficult to grasp for the Italian audience, since the tale has been adapted into a song by the popular songwriter Roberto Vecchioni, who wrote *Samarconda*, in 1977. As you can see in example 7, where Death offers a horse to Rincewind so he can reach Pephopolis in time for their meeting, the author refers directly to the tale in the same way Vecchioni does in his song “Presto, più presto perché possa scappare, dategli la bestia più veloce che c'è” (transl: “Hurry, faster, so he can run, give him the fastest beast we have”).

7. I COULD LEND YOU A FAST HORSE (pg 78)

TI POTREI PRESTARE UN CAVALLO MOLTO VELOCE

That is why leaving the reference as it is in the original text sorts, in this case, the same effect as the original. However, this tends to be an isolated case, since not all the references made in this book are this easy to convey. For instance, examples 8 and 9 refer to some pop-cultural elements that are more familiar to the British audience than Italian readers.

8. At two recumbent tourists. In his somewhat defenseless state a stray thought, wandering through the dimensions in search of a mind to harbor it, slid into his brain “Here’s another fine mess you’ve got me into” (pg. 90)

Due turisti sdraiati. Nel suo stato di confusione, un pensiero vagante nelle dimensioni in cerca di una mente che lo albergasse, gli si insinuò nel cervello. “Ecco un altro bel pasticcio in cui mi hai ficcato.”

This passage refers to one of the most popular quotes of the British-American comedy team Laurel and Hardy, (in Italian “Onlio e Stanlio”). The precise quote of the duo would be “Well, here's another nice mess you've gotten me into!”, however this catchphrase has been often misquoted in popular culture and turned into “another fine mess” (probably due to the title of their film *Another Fine Mess*, 1930) (Andrews, 1997:389). The Italian audience might not recognize this catchphrase being a reference to Laurel and Hardy, since in the Italian version of their films and tv shows the catchphrase has been translated in “Bene. Mi hai ficcato in un altro bel pasticcio.” Thus, if the

translator wanted to maintain the reference as it was, also referring to the Italian version of the show, the best option would have been to use the Italian catchphrase directly instead of focusing on the literal translation. This is because the original line in the Italian show is very close to the literal translation of the British line. In this way, the translator could obtain the goal of preserving the cultural reference (as Venuti and Hung aim to), while also finding a really close equivalent that is easily accessible to the Italian audience.

For the last example reported in this section I will refer again to the portion of text reported in example 1, precisely to the part that quotes “All gods are bastards”. Foreign readers might need to take a second look at this line before grasping what it references to, but the most attentive ones will note the similarity to the popular phrase “All coppers are bastards”, which first appeared in England in 1920 (Patridge, 1986) and was then abbreviated into the popular acronym ACAB during the 40’s by workers on strike, becoming famous internationally as anarchist and anti-authoritarian slogan (Groundwater, 2020). In Italy the acronym also became famous thanks to Stefano Sollima’s 2012 film, A.C.A.B. All Cops Are Bastards. In this case, since the phrase and the acronym became famous in their original form, that is, in English, even a literal translation of the phrase would not have made the reference easily accessible to the Italian audience. In fact, Italians are more familiar with the quote "All cops are bastards" in its English form, as it has never been translated into Italian. The best move to maintain this reference in the translation would have been not to translate the line at all, keeping it as "All gods are bastards," which is the most familiar form to Italian readers. Of course, this would still require an explanation or a translator's note on why the phrase was left in its original form, but adding explanatory notes would still be a way to maintain the foreignness of the text and make it easier to understand the references made by the author.

3.1.3. Contextual Challenges

As explained in the previous chapter, the world-building of the Discworld is quite particular, as it is deeply rooted in linguistic aspects and cultural references. As it was mentioned before, Pratchett frequently uses neologism as a way to play with language, filling them with humor and cultural

references in order to create a world that is extravagant and unique. What is necessary when it comes to translating these elements is consistency. That is an aspect that seems to be missing in the translation of this novel. For instance, the translator chose to translate some of them, while she kept some others in the original form.

Starting from the principle toponymy of the Discworld (effectively translated “Mondo Disco”), a flat world in a circular shape, the note of the author about the cosmology of the world is quite important.

9. The shape and cosmology of the disc system are perhaps worthy of note at this point. There are, of course, two major directions on the disc: hubward and rimward. But since the disc itself revolves at the rate of once every eight hundred days (in order to distribute the weight fairly upon its supportive pachyderms, according to Reforgule of Krull) there are also two lesser directions, which are Turnwise and Widdershins. (pg. 18)

Forse a questo punto la forma e la cosmologia del sistema del Disco meritano una spiegazione. Ovviamente nel Disco vi sono due direzioni principali: Centripeta e Centrifuga. Ma poiché il Disco ruota alla velocità di una volta ogni ottocento giorni (al fine di distribuire equamente il peso sui pachidermi che lo sostengono, secondo Reforgule di Krull), ci sono anche due direzioni minori che si chiamano Turnwise e Widdershins.

As can be seen, the two main directions of the Disc are translated into their Italian equivalents, “Centripeta” and “Centrifuga.” However, when mentioned later in the book, the translator never uses these words again (see examples 10 and 11).

10. Hubwards, towards the centre of the forest. (pg 114)

In direzione del centro, verso il centro della foresta.

11. Heading rimward at speed. (pg 153)

Si dirigono velocemente verso il bordo del cerchio.

The terms “rimwards” and “hubwards” are not easy to convey in Italian, since they are made by combining the word “towards” with the words “Rim” and “Hub” (respectively the extremity and the center of the Discworld). In doing so, the author can use only one word to say “towards the Rim” and “towards the Hub”, just like he would say “going North, South”. However, it is not possible to maintain this formula in Italian, since the Italian language uses prepositions when it comes to indicate a direction (such as “andare a Nord”, “proseguire a destra”). The translator has to choose between maintaining a similar form as the original, inventing a new term that can be used as a direction, like “Centrodiretto” “Bordodiretto”, using them with the same properties of the Italian word “diritto”. In this way an alternative translation of the example 10 could be “si dirigono velocemente bordodiretti”. However, since this option can result quite unnatural for the Italian translation, the other option would be to give up the possibility of using only one word and prioritize a translation that results more natural and legible for the target language, choosing to convey the word as “verso il Centro”, “verso il Bordo”. What is most important here is that consistency has to be maintained by choosing one way to translate the word and using it every time the word recur in the book. Translating the same word in two or more different ways, would lead to the loss of the aspect of world-building. This is the case of the term Rim, which is translated sometimes with “bordo”, sometimes with “orlo” (p. 11), and frequently used as a common noun instead of a proper noun as it is intended in the original text.

Another thing to note on example 9 is how the words “widdershins” and “turnwise” haven’t been translated in Italian. The word “widdershin”, is a Scottish word that means “to go counterclockwise” or “to go in a direction opposite to the usual” and “in a direction contrary to the apparent course of the sun”. Apparently the word comes from the Middle Low German and it is a combination of the words *widar* “against” and *sinnen* “to travel, go” (Ellis, 1994). There is no evidence of the existence of the word “turnwise” in the English language, but, since it indicates the opposite direction of “widdershin” which is “anticlockwise”, in the Discworld to go “turnwise” would be the equivalent of going “clockwise”, meaning going in the same direction the Disc rotates. These two words not being translated in the Italian version might be bothersome for the reader for two reasons. First, it is not easily comprehensible what these directions imply (for an English reader, they are easily understandable despite the fact that one is invented and the other is not

frequently used) since there is no further explanation of the two terms. This leads to the second reason: when the two words recur in the book, they are often left untranslated (examples 12 and 16) or translated incorrectly (examples 13, 14, and 15).

12. Hrun was said to be roving somewhere Turnwise. (pg. 51)

Si diceva che stesse vagando per Turnwise.

13. You sail turnwise from the Brown Islands for about a week and there it is. (pg. 34)

Si circumnavigano le Brown Island e si viaggia per circa una settimana prima di arrivarci.

14. Only a madman would possibly undergo all the privations of crossing the Turnwise Ocean. (pg. 43)

Soltanto un pazzo si sottometterebbe a tutte le privazioni di una traversata dell'Oceano del Bordo.

15. Most of the humbler folk on the widdershin side of the river (pg. 28)

La povera gente che viveva sull'altra sponda del fiume.

16. "The Widdershin Gate's the nearest!" (pg. 85)

"La Porta Widdershin è la più vicina"

As can be seen, the two words are used in the original text similarly to the words "North" or "South" ("the Widdershin Gate", "sail Turnwise", "somewhere Turnwise"), while, in the Italian translation, these words are conveyed each time in a different way and, most of the time, not actually indicating something precise as a direction. For instance, in example 12 "Turnwise" seems like a place, while in example 16 "widdershin" is used as the proper noun of the gate, but it doesn't allude in any way to the direction where this gate is located. In examples 13 and 11 the two words are almost completely omitted by the translator, who replaces them with "sull'altra sponda" or even with the verb "circumnavigare" as equivalent to "sailing turnwise". Besides, in example 14, the translator even conveys "Turnwise Ocean", which would be the Ocean that is "located turnwise" the position of the character who is speaking, with "Oceano del Bordo". Yet the Rim ("Bordo") would be in a totally different position compared to turnwise (if the Ocean was near the Rim then it

would've been called Rimward Ocean). The result of these translation choices is that the reader is left with no clue of what Turnwise and Widdershin actually mean and, by replacing them with wrong equivalents, the accuracy and precision of the author's world-building is almost completely lost. It would be impossible to find an equivalent in Italian that can be used in an identical way to the original text, however, as explained in the previous chapter (2.4), it is necessary that the translation is readable and accessible in the same way as the author intended it to be. The best option to ensure a better result would be to maintain the literal meaning of the two words, adapting them to the various phrases, following the principles of the equivalence theory by Nida (1964). An alternative translation of the two words "Turnwise" and "Widdershin" would be "Orario" and "Anti-orario". The translator can start from these two Italian words and choose how to adapt to the context of each phrase, while ensuring that the meaning is clear and understandable. For instance, since in examples 14 and 17 the two words are used to name a specific place or a specific thing, combined to form a proper noun, the same effect can be obtained in Italian by translating them with "Portone Antiorario" or "Oceano Orario", while to indicate a direction, like in examples 12 and 13, the translator can use the formulas "vagava in direzione oraria" or "navigare in senso orario". On the other hand, it must be said that translation of literary names in this book can prove to be almost impossible in some cases, since they often rely on wordplay as well.

17. "So why aren't we going over the Edge, then?" asked Rincewind with glassy calmness. "Because your boat hit the Circumfence," said the voice behind him (...). "The Circumfence?" he repeated. "Yes. It runs along the edge of the world," said the unseen troll. (...) "Ah. You mean the circumference," said Rincewind. "The circumference makes the edge of things." "So does the Circumfence," said the troll. (pg. 226)

In this portion of dialogue, it seems that the troll is saying the word "Circumference" incorrectly, which indicates the perimeter of the Discworld, however, investigating further on what the troll is saying, the reader learns that what it intended wasn't the perimeter of the world, but a net located over the Circumference that kept everything from falling over the Edge. This net is nominated Circumfence, as a wordplay on the words "Circumference" and "Fence" (in Italian "Recinzione").

For the Italian readers, however, the entire nature of the misunderstanding is impossible to grasp, since in the translation the words “Circumference” and “Circumfence” are translated both as “Circonferenza”: ““Ah, vuoi dire la circonferenza” disse “La circonferenza costituisce il bordo delle cose” “E tale è la Circonferenza”” (pg. 61). The insertion of a translation note here would’ve better helped the Italian readers understand this portion of text, however, it seems impossible to find a way to convey the humorous nature of the pun as well as the sense of the text, since there are no words in Italian that come close to the structure of the wordplay. Following the techniques proposed by Delabastita regarding the translation of jokes, it would not be easy to convert the jokes in a way that achieves an effect of equivalence or compensation. The only alternative, in order to at least preserve the clarity of the textual part from a narrative point of view, would be to explain the joke in a translator's note, focusing on the fact that it is a literary name that primarily indicates a place, and dispensing with the humorous character of the pun. Of course, this would mean that, despite the effort to translate and convey every pun, it is impossible to effectively translate some elements of Pratchett’s literature into Italian while retaining its humorous aspect.

3.2. Evaluation of Overall Translation Approach

The translation of Terry Pratchett’s *The Color of Magic* into Italian shows several challenges in keeping the author's unique style, humor, and cultural references. Natalia Callori, the translator, used different strategies, often preferring literal translation but sometimes choosing more adaptive methods. However, these strategies were often not successful in capturing the essence of Pratchett’s work for the Italian audience.

Callori's use of literal translation worked well in some cases, especially in keeping the original meaning and cultural references. For example, keeping direct references to well-known cultural elements, like the tale of the servant meeting Death in Baghdad (example 6), helped Italian readers connect with the story. But this strategy did not work well for puns, wordplay, and idiomatic expressions, which are important for Pratchett’s humor. Literal translations of phrases like “you’ll be eight alive” (example 3) and “winked out of existence” (example 2) did not convey the intended humor and whimsical nature, leading to a loss of humor and clarity.

Adaptive translation was used less often but was important when a literal approach would not work. However, Callori's adaptations often missed the target. For example, translating "All gods are bastards" to "tutti gli dei sono disgraziati" removed the cultural connotation and humor linked to the English phrase. Similarly, not adapting the pun on "medium" to a more suitable Italian equivalent resulted in a loss of the joke's impact.

The translation of *The Color of Magic* could have been better with a more balanced approach, using both literal and adaptive strategies while keeping the original's intent and tone. A functionalist perspective, focusing on the purpose and effect of the text, would help the translator adapt puns and idiomatic expressions in a way that keeps their humor and relevance. Also, a foreignizing approach could keep the cultural uniqueness of Pratchett's work, giving Italian readers the same whimsical experience as the original audience.

In summary, while Callori's translation captures the main narrative of Pratchett's *The Color of Magic*, it often fails to convey the nuanced humor and cultural richness. A better translation strategy would use a careful balance between literal and adaptive techniques, guided by a functionalist perspective and an understanding of the source material's unique cultural context. This approach would ensure that Pratchett's distinctive style, humor, and cultural references resonate with Italian readers, keeping the spirit and enjoyment of the original work.

Conclusion

This dissertation delved into the field of Translation Studies, focusing particularly on the translation challenges and strategies associated with Terry Pratchett's works. The study covered several key topics: the historical development of Translation Studies, the theoretical frameworks that guide translation practices, and the practical analysis of translating Pratchett's unique literary style.

The historical overview noted how Translation Studies evolved from being perceived as a mechanical task to a recognized academic discipline. Key scholars like Lefevere and Bassnett highlighted the translator's role as a mediator of culture, a view that underscores the importance of translators in global communication.

The discussion of theoretical frameworks included Equivalence Theory, Skopos Theory, and Descriptive Translation Studies. These theories provide different perspectives on how translations should be approached and evaluated. Equivalence Theory emphasizes linguistic accuracy, while Skopos Theory focuses on the purpose of the translation, and Descriptive Translation Studies look at how translations function within the target culture. These theories collectively illustrate the complexity and multifaceted nature of translation.

In analyzing the translation of Terry Pratchett's works, several challenges were discovered, such as maintaining humor, preserving cultural references, and conveying Pratchett's distinctive voice. The findings indicate that these challenges often require creative and culturally informed solutions. For example, translators must sometimes adapt jokes or cultural references to make them understandable and enjoyable for the target audience.

The study connects with previous research in the field by affirming the views of scholars like Venuti, who emphasize the translator's visibility and the impact of cultural context on translation. It also aligns with Nida's views on dynamic equivalence, where the translator aims to evoke the same response in the target audience as the original text does in the source audience.

However the analysis was limited to a selection of Pratchett's works, which may not represent the full range of translation challenges his body of work presents. Additionally, the focus was primarily on English-to-Italian translations, which might limit the generalizability of the findings to other

language pairs. Future research could expand the scope by including more of Pratchett's works and examining translations into other languages.

The implications of this study are significant for both translators and scholars in Translation Studies. By highlighting the specific challenges of translating Pratchett's works, valuable insights are provided into the practical application of translation theories. The findings suggest that a deep understanding of both source and target cultures is essential for successful translation, a point that is crucial for training future translators.

These results are important because they contribute to a deeper understanding of literary translation, particularly in the context of humor and cultural references. They also underscore the importance of the translator's role in preserving the author's voice and intent, which is vital for maintaining the integrity of literary works across languages.

Further research could explore the translation of other complex literary works, comparing different translators' approaches and their outcomes. Studies could also investigate the impact of digital tools and technologies on literary translation, considering how these innovations might aid or challenge translators. Additionally, research could look into the reception of translated works by different cultural audiences to better understand how translations are perceived and appreciated.

In conclusion, this dissertation has illuminated the intricate and rewarding task of translating Terry Pratchett's works. It has shown that successful translation is not just about linguistic accuracy but also about cultural sensitivity and creativity. By building on the foundations of Translation Studies and addressing its contemporary challenges, the field can continue to be enriched, enhancing the global exchange of literature.

Riassunto in italiano

Questa tesi si propone di esplorare il campo degli Studi sulla Traduzione, con un focus particolare sulle sfide e le strategie di traduzione delle opere del rinomato scrittore fantasy inglese Terry Pratchett. La ricerca affronta diversi argomenti chiave, tra il quale lo sviluppo storico degli Studi sulla Traduzione, i quadri teorici che guidano le pratiche traduttive e l'analisi pratica della traduzione dello stile letterario unico di Pratchett, con lo scopo di identificare le strategie di traduzione utilizzate e di verificare la loro efficacia.

Il percorso storico degli Studi sulla Traduzione mostra come la disciplina si sia evoluta da un compito meccanico a una disciplina accademica riconosciuta. Il primo capitolo tratta proprio dello sviluppo di questa disciplina, inizialmente vista come un semplice trasferimento di parole da una lingua all'altra, delineando come, solo in seguito, sia emersa la consapevolezza di come la traduzione implichi molto di più, includendo la trasposizione di significati, toni, e contesti culturali. Studiosi come Lefevre e Bassnett hanno evidenziato il ruolo del traduttore come mediatore culturale, sottolineando l'importanza dei traduttori nella comunicazione globale. Questo ha portato a una maggiore enfasi sulla formazione dei traduttori e sullo sviluppo di teorie traduttive sofisticate.

La tesi discute diversi quadri teorici, tra cui la Teoria dell'Equivalenza, la Teoria dello Skopos e gli Studi Descrittivi sulla Traduzione. La Teoria dell'Equivalenza, sviluppata da Nida (1964), si concentra sull'importanza di mantenere lo stesso effetto sul lettore della traduzione come quello avuto dal lettore dell'originale. Questa teoria enfatizza l'accuratezza linguistica e la fedeltà al testo originale. D'altra parte, la Teoria dello Skopos, introdotta da Vermeer (1984), pone l'accento sullo scopo della traduzione, sostenendo che il fine ultimo della traduzione dovrebbe guidare tutte le decisioni traduttive. Infine viene trattata la Teoria della Rilevanza di Gutt (1991), il cui scopo è quello di semplificare il processo di comunicazione, traducendo il testo in modo che la sua comprensione risulti facilitata, tenendo comunque conto del contesto socioculturale del pubblico di destinazione. Questi approcci dimostrano la complessità e la natura sfaccettata della traduzione, offrendo prospettive complementari su come le traduzioni dovrebbero essere affrontate e valutate.

Il secondo capitolo si concentra sull'analisi pratica delle opere di Terry Pratchett, identificando le principali sfide nella traduzione del suo stile distintivo. Pratchett è rinomato per il suo uso creativo

della lingua, i giochi di parole, l'umorismo e i riferimenti culturali specifici, tutti elementi che rappresentano una sfida significativa per i traduttori. Questo capitolo esplora come i traduttori affrontano il compito di mantenere l'umorismo di Pratchett, spesso radicato nei giochi di parole e nelle allusioni culturali. Vengono analizzate diverse strategie, come l'adattamento dei giochi di parole per preservare l'effetto comico e la sostituzione dei riferimenti culturali con equivalenti comprensibili per il pubblico di destinazione. Inoltre, il capitolo discute l'importanza di mantenere la voce unica dell'autore, aspetto fondamentale per il fascino delle sue opere. Viene evidenziato come i traduttori debbano bilanciare la fedeltà al testo originale e la creatività nel rendere il testo accessibile e divertente per i lettori della lingua di arrivo.

Analizzando la traduzione delle opere di Terry Pratchett, sono state identificate diverse sfide, come il mantenimento dell'umorismo, la preservazione dei riferimenti culturali e la trasmissione della voce distintiva di Pratchett. I risultati indicano come queste sfide richiedano spesso soluzioni creative e culturalmente informate. I traduttori si trovano talvolta a dover adattare battute o riferimenti culturali per renderli comprensibili e piacevoli per il pubblico di destinazione. Questo può significare modificare i giochi di parole per mantenere l'effetto umoristico originale o trovare equivalenti culturali che abbiano lo stesso impatto sui lettori nella lingua di destinazione.

La ricerca si collega con studi precedenti nel campo, proponendosi di bilanciare approcci di traduzione spesso contrastanti, come quelli proposti da Venuti (1995), che enfatizzano la visibilità del traduttore e l'impatto del contesto culturale sulla traduzione, con quelli di Nida sull'equivalenza dinamica (1964), in cui il traduttore mira a evocare la stessa risposta nel pubblico di destinazione che il testo originale suscita nel pubblico di partenza. Entrambi gli approcci richiedono una profonda comprensione delle culture di partenza e di arrivo, nonché una grande sensibilità verso le sfumature linguistiche e culturali.

Evidenziando le sfide specifiche della traduzione delle opere di Pratchett, vengono forniti preziosi spunti sull'applicazione pratica delle teorie traduttive. I risultati suggeriscono che una profonda comprensione delle culture di partenza e di arrivo è essenziale per una traduzione di successo, un punto cruciale per la formazione dei futuri traduttori. Questo studio sottolinea anche l'importanza di un approccio flessibile e creativo alla traduzione, in cui il traduttore deve essere in grado di adattarsi alle diverse esigenze del testo e del pubblico di destinazione. Questi risultati possono influenzare la

formazione dei traduttori, suggerendo l'inclusione di esercizi pratici che mettano alla prova la capacità dei traduttori di gestire l'umorismo, i giochi di parole e i riferimenti culturali. Inoltre, contribuiscono a una comprensione più profonda della traduzione letteraria, in particolare nel contesto dell'umorismo e dei riferimenti culturali. L'umorismo pone spesso una sfida difficile durante i processi di traduzione letteraria, poiché è spesso profondamente radicato nella lingua e nella cultura. Inoltre, sottolineano l'importanza del ruolo del traduttore nel preservare la voce e l'intento dell'autore, è essenziale per mantenere l'integrità delle opere letterarie attraverso le lingue. Questo è particolarmente vero per autori come Pratchett, la cui voce distintiva è una parte fondamentale del suo fascino. Riconoscere e valorizzare il lavoro dei traduttori può anche contribuire a una maggiore apprezzamento delle opere tradotte da parte del pubblico.

In conclusione, questa tesi descrive il compito complesso di traduzione delle opere di Terry Pratchett, dimostrando come una traduzione di successo non riguardi solo l'accuratezza linguistica, ma anche la sensibilità culturale e la creatività. Costruendo sulle fondamenta degli Studi sulla Traduzione e affrontando le sfide contemporanee, il campo può continuare a essere arricchito, migliorando lo scambio globale di letteratura. Tradurre Pratchett richiede non solo competenza linguistica, ma anche una profonda comprensione del contesto culturale e un'abilità creativa per mantenere l'umorismo e il tono originale dell'opera. Questo studio contribuisce a una maggiore comprensione di queste sfide e offre suggerimenti pratici per affrontarle, arricchendo così il campo degli Studi di Traduzione.

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