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The Fellowship of the Ring: A comparison of three Italian translations with the original text

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INTRODUCTION

This dissertation aims to analyze and discuss the differences between three different Italian translations of *The Lord of the Rings* and the original text. In particular, I will analyze some extracts from the first book *The Fellowship of the Ring* and how each translation differs in various linguistic aspects. I will show how the Italian translation of the text under examination has changed over the years, considering the period in which it was produced and the preferences and knowledge of the translators.

The 2019 release of the Italian translation seems to resemble the original text more than the others. The first one was published in the 1970s and subsequently revisited in the 2000s, becoming the most famous and most read in our country. The choice of this comparison was determined by one main reason: I was interested in understanding why the latest translation was so different from the first one and why many readers were so disappointed with it.

Thanks to the review of theoretical studies on translation conducted by several scholars such as Lawrence Venuti and Mona Baker, and subsequently, after the direct consultation of the original text *The Fellowship of the Ring*, I will attempt to investigate the main differences between the three Italian translations. In particular, I will focus on translation competencies, strategies, and the role of equivalence in translation.

The first chapter explores the theories and phenomena related to translation, and how translation has played an important role since the beginning of society. In particular, I will point out how the acquisition of translation competencies is essential for more effective communication between different countries. I will also review the most important competencies that translators need to acquire to be able to choose the type of translation that best suits the text according to the context. The chapter also focuses on the concept of domestication and foreignization, where each translator decides to domesticate the text 'bringing' the author to the reader, or 'moving' the reader towards the author, respectively creating a sort of fluency or transparency of the text.

The second chapter concentrates on the biography and literary production of the author of *The Lord of the Rings*, John Ronald Reuel Tolkien. In this chapter, I will also explain Tolkien's essential elements in the process of creating a new invented language and focus on his most famous ones: Quenya and Sindarin which are used in *The Lord of the Rings*. Finally, I will present the three Italian versions of the original text: the 1970

version translated by Vittoria Alliata, the 2000 version also translated by Vittoria Alliata but revised by the translator Quirino Principe, with further corrections suggested by the Italian Tolkienian Society, and finally the version published in 2019 and translated by Ottavio Fatica.

The third and last chapter presents an analysis of the three Italian translations compared to extracts of the original text taken from the first book *The Fellowship of the Ring*. A general description of some data collection will open the chapter and then continue with the comparison between the translations and the English text, and the reason why Italian translators have made certain choices. The comparison of the translations will also concern the linguistic registers used in the English text and the main changes regarding the translation of names and toponyms that readers most have complained about. All the extracts used for this comparison and analysis are taken from the original text and from the three Italian translations. Finally, a general comparison of the choices made by the Italian translators will end the study.

CHAPTER 1

TRANSLATION STUDIES

The study of translation is the academic discipline related to studying the theory and the phenomena related to translation. It emerged as a new academic field during the twentieth century. This discipline is known as “translation studies” thanks to the American-Dutch poet, translator, and translation scholar James S. Holmes. Holmes wrote a paper entitled “*The name and nature of translation studies*” (1972) which is considered the founding statement and the structure for the discipline. Holmes underlines how translation research was dispersed across older disciplines and develops a scheme describing what translation studies cover.

According to his framework, translation studies are classified into *pure* and *applied* areas. *Pure* translation studies are classified into *theoretical* and *descriptive* studies. The former are divided into *general*, in which Holmes is referring to those writings that generalize and will be relevant for translations as a whole, and *partial* theories. *Descriptive* translation studies are categorized into three orientations: *production*, which examines existing translations; *function*, which is a study of context rather than text, and *process* that tries to understand what happens in the mind of a translator. The *applied* branch of translation studies relates to teaching methods, translation aids such as dictionaries, grammars, information technology, and the evaluation of translations.

Since the beginning of history, translation has played an essential role in society, used for business, political and military relations. Belloc (2009: 14-15) states that translation is essential for the peace and order of nations. He claims that: “In un ambito ancora più vasto è la condizione senza la quale non può esistere una cultura comune” (Belloc 2009:14).

Belloc also put translation at the beginning of society because of the role of religion for the humankind. This role can be divided into two elements: in the first instance religion considers itself independent of time. Hence, it needs a language that develops over time to prevent the spiritual guide from falling unheard. In the second place, religion is universal, and for this reason, it is necessary that its application is

understandable in all different societies. For five centuries, making religious texts accessible to the majority of the population has been the principal role of translation. To this day, the first Bibles in English and Boem languages, the *Biblia Vulgata*, or, Vulgate, and Calvin's *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, are translations still in use. Thanks to religious translation, English prose was discovered, which helped define the unique nature of modern English.

According to Venuti (1995: 19), nowadays translation can be called a cultural-political practice as a result of different conditions such as “power in the construction of national identity for foreign cultures, [...] ethnic discrimination, geopolitical confrontations, colonialism, terrorism, war”, or its role in the maintenance or revision of literary canons in the target-language culture, research, methodologies, and clinical practices or architecture, philosophy, or law.

1.1 Translation competence

During the second half of the twentieth century, with the developments in Translation Studies, it became necessary to find a way in which translation could best be taught “in order to enhance the different skills acquired in one or more foreign languages and cultures, [...], for the purpose of more effective communication” (Adab and Schaffner 2000: vii). According to Adab and Schaffner (2000: vii-viii), in 1940 the Universities of Geneva, Vienna, Austria, Germany, and the USA started several programmes aimed at training professional translators and interpreters. This development of programmes was the response to the demand for the globalization of communication and the internationalization of business.

The acquisition of translation competence is a process influenced by the degree of complexity of the text the translator is working with, where the required level of competence will be proportional to the complexity of the text. Translators develop their professional competence by considering different contextual components. These contextual features, such as *complexity* and *heterogeneity*, are required of translators, along with the level of knowledge of the language that should be at least on par with their mother tongue. We should also consider the *approximate* nature of the expert knowledge possessed by translators, since it is impossible to cover the whole range of aspects or

fields within the areas in which they work. Consequently, translators acquire the capacity to approximate the specific subject areas to allow easy understanding among the average reader and the experts.

As a result of the approximate nature of their knowledge, translation competence is *open-ended*. Translators are always looking for different ways to say something, using any available source of information, asking for advice from the experts, and “continually to research their texts, including parallel and background texts in the source as well as in the target language. Everything said and printed is their essential lifeline” (Adab and Schaffner 2000: 4). Linked to the open-ended competence is the *creativity* competence, whereby the translator is the one who creates new contents should they not be able to locate a word. “This new creation of the target text is bound up with the translational situation” (Adab and Schaffner 2000: 4-5). All these factors are closely linked to each other and are present in all the processes involved in translation. They can be reformulated as parameters that each translator will develop to varying degrees, depending on their competencies. These five competencies essential for translation are: language, textual, subject, cultural, and transfer. “It is precisely the interplay of these kinds of competence that distinguishes translation from other kinds of communication research” (Adab and Schaffner 2000: 6).

Language competence refers to the unconscious knowledge of grammar that allows a speaker to use and understand a language. Language competence is essential for translation and refers to the innate linguistic knowledge that allows a person to match sounds and meanings. This knowledge is implicit, which means that people do not have conscious access to the principles and rules that govern the combination of sounds, words, and sentences. However, they do recognize when those rules and principles are violated. According to Adab and Schaffner (2000: 7-8), it is a common mistake to think that translators know several languages. However, having absolute knowledge of the grammatical and lexical systems of the source and target languages is essential for translation competence. Likewise, the knowledge of specific terminologies and preferred syntactic and morphological conventions are essential for linguistic competence.

Textual competence refers to the ability to understand and analyze various kinds of texts, both oral and written ones, from different fields, produced in different languages. It is the ability to develop the capacity to create different types of texts from different

fields in different languages, and to ensure that the characteristics and conventions of the major text genres used in the professional translation are made known in the distinct cultures in which the different languages are spoken. The selection of words according to genre or text type in translating texts becomes very important for translators.

Subject competence is the body of knowledge in the area of translation. “Along with the enormous quantitative growth of the volume of translated materials the specialization of texts is taking on gigantic dimensions. Subject competence can therefore rarely be exhaustive” (Adab and Schaffner 2000: 8). According to Adab and Schaffner (2000: 9), translators do not use subject knowledge such as encyclopedias all the time, they do not need to know everything, but they must know where to look for, and how to use these tools when they need them. Adab and Schaffner (2000: 9) claim that “it is also understood and accepted by the discerning that the depth of this vast and highly variable kind of knowledge is usually not equal to that of professional subject experts with their years of training and often decades of experience in the field”.

Sometimes, translators must handle some untranslatable words that do not have substitute words in the target language. This sort of difficulty must be anticipated with subject competence.

Cultural competence involves the understanding and respect of culture and the knowledge of what to say to whom from a social and pragmatic perspective. A complete understanding of the cultural nuances allows translators to effectively and appropriately deliver the intended messages. Translators need to be culturally competent for each of the target audiences they are working with by developing a thorough understanding of the cultural background, awareness, and sensitivity to effectively communicate messages from the source language to the target language audience. It is not only limited to literary matters but also to technical texts. “Just think of the culture-specific terminologies that baffle translators in areas that are only superficially identical from technical culture to culture” (Adab and Schaffner 2000: 9).

Asiri and Metwally (2020: 510-511), talk about the “Skopos theory” and the two rules related to the functional approaches to translation. The first one is *coherence*, which implies that the translated text should make sense in the communicative situation in which it is delivered. The second one is *loyalty*, which refers to the responsibility the translator has towards the source text and target audience.

“Many researchers in the field of translation describe the translator as a “cultural operator”, “bi-cultural” expert, and “cross-cultural” specialist. These studies reveal that cultural competence has a great impact on the quality of translation” (Asiri and Metwally 2020: 511).

Transfer competence is the ability to transfer a message from the source text to the target text communicatively. The translator needs to have enough linguistic and non-linguistic knowledge, especially relevant to the text content being translated. This competence is supported by the competencies mentioned above, and here translators “may boast about their knowledge, their amazing individual competencies, their language skills, and their multifarious erudition or their in-depth specialist expertise, even their profound understanding of two or more cultures” (Adab and Schaffner 2000: 10).

Translators might have to analyze the source text to obtain the text type, the purpose, and the function of the text before starting to translate. In addition, they need to consider the target language.

“In the light of what a particular translation is for, i.e., for all practical purposes, all insights on the side of the person who is commissioned to do the mediation, to achieve a social task, what counts is to put the original across, as quickly as effectively as possible. [...] Transfer competence refers to the mental equipment that constitutes the translator’s unique cognitive set or ability of matching language, textual, subject and cultural competencies” (Adab and Schaffner 2000:10-12).

Other than the five competencies mentioned above, it is necessary to talk about **bilingual competence**. It consists of the underlying systems of knowledge and skills that are needed for linguistic communication to take place in two languages.

According to Adab and Schaffner (2000: 20-21) it is first necessary to talk about the notion of bilingualism itself.

There are three factors that must be considered in defining a bilingual's skills: directionality, (direct translation L2>L1 versus inverse translation L1>L2), modality (oral or written translation), and the specific language combination.

In conclusion, it can be said that:

“The development of translation competence consists basically of three kinds of processes: (1) the acquisition of previously non-existent competence, (2) the restructuring of already existing competencies in order to facilitate transfer competence; (3) the acquisition of strategic competence” (Adab and Schaffner 2000: 29).

1.2 Translation strategies

Nowadays, in a world characterized by global communication, translation plays a key role in exchanging information between people speaking different languages. Research has been carried out in the field of translation studies and, generally speaking, it can be stated that translation is a complex process, through which the meaning of the source-language text should be conveyed to the target-language readers. Different researchers have investigated and described different translation strategies. However, the definition offered by each author or theorist represents their perspective, which might differ from that of the others. A well-known scholar is Lawrence Venuti, who is considered one of the most eminent figures in modern translation theory. He criticizes the fact that the translator is an invisible figure. In his translation studies book “*The Translator’s Invisibility: A History of Translation*”, Venuti uses the term *invisibility* “to describe the translator’s situation and activity in contemporary Anglo-American culture” (Venuti 1995: 1). He believes (1995: 1) that invisibility is created by two phenomena: the first one refers to the translator’s use of English, as they tend to translate fluently, to produce an idiomatic and readable target text, thus creating an illusion of transparency. The second one is the predominance of translated texts in the United Kingdom and in the US, among other cultures, where they are:

“acceptable by most publishers, reviewers, and readers when it reads fluently, when the absence of any linguistic or stylistic peculiarities makes it seem transparent, giving the appearance that it reflects the foreign writer’s personality or intention or the essential meaning of the foreign text – the appearance, in other words, that the translation is not in fact a translation, but the original” (Venuti 1995: 1).

1.2.1 Domestication and foreignization

Venuti (1995: 18-20), explains that during the translation process the linguistic and cultural differences of the foreign text are adjusted to be understandable for the target language reader. These differences remain fixed by the target language culture, assimilated to its codes and ideologies. “The aim of translation is to bring back a cultural other as the same” (Venuti 1995: 18), and this intent risks the complete domestication of the foreign text. Venuti, then, discusses invisibility with two types of translating strategies: domestication and foreignization. These strategies concern both the choice of text to translate and the translation method, which have been formulated at first by the German theologian and philosopher Frederich Schleiermacher in his (1813) essay on the different methods of translation. He distinguished two approaches toward translation: one states that the translator moves the reader towards the author, which implies foreignizing; the other articulates that the translator brings the author to the reader, which involves domesticating. He also acknowledged that most translation was domesticating in nature, but preferred a foreignizing strategy, which is the result that led the French theorist Berman to consider Schleiermacher's argument as an ethics of translation, where the translated text is a place where the original culture is visible. To say it with Venuti (1995):

“The translator aims to preserve the linguistic and cultural difference of the foreign text, but only as it is perceived in the translation by a limited readership, an educated elite” (Venuti 1995:101).

“The ‘foreign’ in foreignizing translation is not a transparent representation of an essence that resides in the foreign text and is valuable in itself, but a strategic construction whose value is contingent on the current target-language situation” (Venuti 1995: 20).

According to Venuti (2001: 242), Schleiermacher recommended using translation to compromise any language-based concept of a nation's culture. Using a foreignizing strategy implies excluding cultural values, that is, the domestic literary canons, professional standards and ethical norms that prevail in the target language. During the twentieth century, foreignizing translation was the focus of German experts, who saw it as an instrument of cultural innovation. During the classic and romantic

period, German culture used foreignizing translation to have a close fidelity to the foreign text, “a literalism that resulted in the importation of foreign cultural forms and the development of heterogeneous dialects and discourses” (Venuti 2001: 242).

On the opposite side, Anglo-American culture has been dominated by domesticating theories and practices in every genre, prose as well as poetry, that recommended fluent translating. This resulted in a transparent, fluent, ‘invisible’ style of translation that minimizes the foreignness of the target text. Venuti (1995: 20) states that the domesticating method is “an ethnocentric reduction of the foreign text to target-language cultural values, bringing the author back home”. By erasing cultural differences in the source text, and domesticating it for an Anglophone target audience, the translator risks ethnocentrism and homogeneity. Whether a translator chooses to be ‘fluent’ and domesticate the text or to keep an element of the foreign, his choice can have extensive repercussions on how the text is received.

According to Venuti (1995: 76-77), at the beginning of the nineteenth century, the translation method of eliminating the linguistic and cultural differences from foreign texts was rooted in the practice of English language translation, as canon, always with the intent of highlighting transparent discourse. “Domestication involves an adherence to domestic literary canons both in choosing a foreign text and in developing a translation method” (Venuti 2001: 241). Venuti also explains (1995: 21) how the illusion of transparency is produced by a fluent translation veiled as true semantic equivalence when it inscribes the foreign text with a partial interpretation, reducing or excluding the difference that the translation is called on to convey.

Venuti (2001: 243) explains that determining which one of these two divergent strategies is used depends on a reconstruction of the cultural formation in which the translation is produced and consumed, and it is necessary to have knowledge of the reference to the changing hierarchy of values in the target language culture. Translation strategies can also be determined by comparing the contemporary version of the same foreign text. It can be said that foreignizing strategies have been implemented in literary translation as opposed to technical translation. Technical translation is domesticating because it supports scientific research, geopolitical negotiation, and economic exchange. It is essential that foreign texts are translated with standard dialects and terminologies to provide immediate clarity.

1.2.2 Fluency and transparency

The strategy of domestication is used to convey a sense of fluency. Domestication is mainly used with reference to the British-American conventions of translations from foreign languages into English. The discussion, therefore, mainly concerns the illusion of transparency and the translator's invisibility in texts translated into English as the target language.

During the early English modern period, the prevalence of strategies for fluency and easy readability produced the illusion of transparency and enabled a translated poem to pass for the original while the translator became invisible. As Venuti (1995: 57) claims:

“A free translation of poetry requires the cultivation of a fluent strategy in which linear syntax, univocal meaning, and varied meter produce an illusionistic effect of transparency: the translation seems as if it were not in fact a translation, but a text originally written in English”.

Venuti also points out (1995: 61), how fluency can be seen as a discursive strategy in domesticating a given translation, because of its role in performing the ethnocentric reduction of the foreign text to the norms and conventions of the target language, thus producing the illusion that the translation is not a translation at all.

The act of domesticating a text as “violent”, as explained by Venuti (1995: 68-74), rested on a double fidelity to the source-language text, and the target language culture, especially enhancing the transparency of discourse. The trend of performing violence escalates at the end of the eighteenth century with the valorization of transparent discourse by Tytler's *Essay on the Principles of translation* and the resulting canonization of fluent translation, where linguistic and cultural differences do not exist. In this respect Venuti (1995: 72-73) says:

“For Tytler, the threat posed by translation to the author's transcendence is answered by liberal humanism, the contradiction between a general human nature and the individualist aesthetics embodied in the concept of ‘correct taste’” where “the translator with ‘correct taste’ is in fact an artist, an author”.

Here transparency represents the translator's authorship in the text, as mentioned by Tytler (1978 in Venuti 1995: 73): “the ease of originality occurs in specimens of

perfect translation, where the authors have entered with exquisite taste into the manner of their originals.”. There is a relationship between the discourse of fluent strategy and fidelity, as explained by Venuti (1995: 78-79), where transparency hides how translators interpret the foreign text and the semantic context they have created for the target language. Frere (1820 in Venuti 1995: 79) considers fluency not only as a linguistic homogenization but mainly as a generalization of the foreign text, where the historically specific markers are removed.

At the beginning of the twentieth century, as explained by Venuti (1995: 187-188), modernism emerged in Anglo-American literature and culture, and the dominance of transparent discourse in English language translation was challenged. In the translation of poetry, and sometimes in poetic composition, new translation strategies appeared that avoided fluency by cultivating extremely heterogeneous discourses. However, the dominance of transparent discourse has remained solid in English literature, and the innovation brought by modern translators continued to be marginal, since:

“Modernism believes that the responsibility of translation is to be independent, but the responsibility assumed in this belief is actually owed to domestic intelligibility and cultural force that erase, somewhat irresponsibly, the linguistic and cultural difference of the foreign text” (Venuti 1995: 188).

Venuti suggests (1995: 203-204) that what is important in modernist translation is the prioritization of the cultural autonomy of the translated text, with a view to encourage the development of translation practices that make use of a broad range of domestic discourses, as well as the recovery of the excluded and marginal innovations brought about by modern translators.

To sum up, transparency is used in the foreign text with the purpose of hiding domestication under the illusion that the translated text is not a translation, but the original. On the other hand, modernist translation, avoiding transparency, starts a foreignizing movement that marks the linguistic and cultural differences between the texts.

1.3 The role of equivalence in translation

The concept of equivalence has been the central issue in translation studies by translational experts and scholars due to its importance and cruciality. The search for the best equivalent linguistic element in the target language can require hard work and commitment. The aim of equivalence is to identify the term or expression that reproduces a given meaning as semantically similar as possible to that expressed in the source language. Equivalence represents the point of balance between two opposites, that is the best possible accuracy with respect to the source text, and linguistic accuracy according to the context in the target language. Then, translators have to identify the best linguistic equivalences and choose the one that best suits the text, according to its context.

Bialystok (1991: 144-145), points out how recently scholars have suggested that a text can be better understood through translation and interpretation, and the quality of a translation can be improved by a deeper comprehension of the source text. The connection between translation and comprehension has its origin in Catford's theory of meaning.

Catford believes that meaning in a text can be analyzed at many different levels or units since there are meanings made by words, phrases, and clauses. Catford goes on to say that:

“below the level of the sentence, the equivalence of meaning between two languages cannot be established at the same level: a word in one language may require a phrase in the other, and a clause in one language may require only a phrase in the other. It is only at the sentence level that the meaning of a source-language unit (in the sentence) may be entirely captured in an equivalent target-language unit (another sentence). Translation implies the substitution or replacement of textual material in one language by equivalent textual material in another language” (Catford 1965, in Bialystock 1991).

Likewise, Roman Jakobson, in his paper *On linguistic aspect of translation* (1959), points out how usually there is no complete equivalence between units in two different languages because for the message to be equivalent in the source text and the target text, the units have to be different. He uses the example of “cheese” in English, and “syr” (*сыр*) in Russian which are not the same since the Russian unit does not include the concept of “cottage cheese”, which is expressed with “tvarog” (*творог*), (Munday 2008: 54).

Mona Baker analyzes equivalence at different levels considering the problems that translators may face, during the translation process. In her work, she discusses translation problems arising from lack of equivalence at the word level and offers various strategies to find a solution when there is not a word in the target language that expresses the same meaning as the source language word. Baker (1992: 11) explains the importance of establishing what a word is and how it differs from a morpheme. It is not accurate to consider the word as the basic relevant element in a language, as meaning can be carried by smaller units such as morphemes. The term morpheme describes “the minimal formal element of meaning in language, as distinct from word, which may or may not contain several elements of meaning” (Baker 1992: 11). Even if it is difficult to analyze a word, pattern, or structure into distinct components of meaning, Baker (1992: 12-16) discusses a model for analyzing them, distinguishing four main types of meaning in words and utterances.

Propositional meaning is called into question when a translation is described as inaccurate. It depends on what it refers to or describes, as intended by the speaker of the language to which the word belongs. Baker gives the example of “shirt” where its propositional meaning is a cloth worn on the upper part of the body, and it would be inaccurate to use it to refer to a piece of clothing worn on the foot, such as a sock.

The **expressive meaning** relates to the speaker’s feelings rather than to what words and utterances refer to. The example Baker gives to explain the concept shows how the difference between “don’t complain” and “don’t whinge” doesn’t lie in their propositional meaning but in the expressive meaning of *whinge*, which suggests that the speaker finds the action annoying. This includes not only words in the same language, where they are referred to as synonyms, but also words of different languages. However, the meaning of a word can be both propositional and expressive. “Words which contribute solely to expressive meaning can be removed from an utterance without its information content” (Baker 1992: 14).

Evoked meanings are due to dialect and register variation. A dialect is a particular version of a language that is peculiar to a specific region or social group. A given register is a version of the language that a user considers appropriate to a specific situation. It consists of a field that refers to the processes, the interactants, and what the text is about. Different linguistic choices are made by different speakers depending on the action they

are going to perform in a specific situation. Tenor refers to the relationship between the interactants taking part in the discourse. It explains the differences between formal and informal language and the role relationship between speakers. Mode is the role language plays in the interaction (e.g., in a speech, essay, lecture, instructions) and how it is transmitted (i.e., spoken, written). Since different cultures have different expectations about the kind of language that is appropriate to particular situations, translators must ensure that their translation matches the register expectations of its target languages, unless the purpose of it is to show the source culture.

Presupposed meaning is related to co-occurrence restrictions based on what words or expressions are supposed to be before or after a particular lexical unit. These collocational types are seen as semantically arbitrary restrictions. Baker gives the example of *teeth* that are brushed in English, but are polished in Italian and German, and cleaned in Russian.

However, meaning does not always consider the collocational patterning (Baker 1992: 47-49), otherwise “carry out”, “undertake” and “perform” should be collocated with “visit”. Yet, English speakers usually “pay a visit”, less usually “make a visit”, and are unlikely to “perform” a visit. This is because “English speakers typically break rules, but they do not break regulations” (Baker 1992: 47). It is important to underline how differences in collocational patterning among languages can lead to different ways of describing an event, since some collocations reflect the material, social, or moral environment in which they exist, and suggest that the meaning of a word often depends on its association with certain collocates. For translators, it is not always simple to choose between what is accurate and what is natural. According to Baker (1992: 56-57), the aim of the translator is to choose collocations that are typical in the target language and are able to keep the meaning associated with the source collocation. However, this is not always possible, and the translator is forced to apply some changes in the meaning. These changes may be minimal and not particularly significant in given context but significant in other contexts. It is important to produce an accurate translation; however, it is also necessary to remember that the role of using a common target language, which is familiar to the target reader, plays an important role in order to keep the communication channels open.

Equivalence has been considered the central issue in translation studies, as non-equivalence causes problems for translators, particularly in literary translation where culture-specific terms or concepts that are not lexicalized in the target language can be found. According to Baker (1992: 20-22), “non-equivalence at word level means that the target language has no direct equivalent for a word which occurs in the source text”. There are different kinds of non-equivalence at word level, the difficulty of which varies greatly and will require different strategies. In addition, the context and purpose of translation have to be considered to correctly choose the translation strategies to be used. Baker’s study involving non-equivalence at word level is important as she provides a list of common types of them as well as some strategies that translators may apply.

There are different common types of non-equivalence, one of them is the concept *culture-specific*, meaning that the source-language word may express a concept that is unknown in the target culture. The source-language concept refers to a word that may express a concept that is known in the target culture, but it is not lexicalized, “that is not ‘allocated’ a target -language word to express it” (Baker 1992: 21). Translators might face the problem of the source-language word which may be semantically complex. In this case “a single morpheme can sometimes express a more complex set of meanings than a whole sentence” (Baker 1992: 22). It can be difficult for a translator to produce a good translation when in the target language there are few or more distinctions in meaning than in the source language, since one language can consider a meaning relevant, compared to the other language.

Based on the above problems, Baker (1992: 26-34) points out some of the common strategies used by professional translators to deal with non-equivalence at word level. The most general strategy is the translation by a more general word, used especially with propositional meaning. It consists of the use of a general word to avoid a relative lack of specificity in the target language. The translator can also use the strategy of cultural substitution, where the expression or item of the source language is replaced with a word or item which does not have the same propositional meaning but has a similar impact on the target language. The translator's decision to use this strategy depends on who commissioned the translation, and also it depends on the norms of translation prevailing in a given community. Another common strategy that deals with culture-specific words and modern concepts is the use of a loan word or a loan word plus

explanation. In this case, if the loan word is repeated several times in the text, the translator will explain the loan word which can then be used on its own.

Since there are many types of non-equivalence among languages, it is important to determine their significance and implications in a given context. Translators “have to try, as much as possible, to convey the meaning of keywords which are focal to the understanding and development of a text” (Baker 1992: 26).

CHAPTER 2:

Tolkien's *The Lord of the Rings*, the Original and its Translations

The following chapter aims to provide the reader with a brief overview of Tolkien's biography, his literary productions, and the different translations of the book *The Lord of the Rings*, which is one of his most famous books. According to Carpenter (1977: 214-221), when Tolkien started writing the story, he referred to it as "The new Hobbit" or "The Hobbit sequel" because he had no idea what this story was going to be about. He wrote on a note for himself "make *return of the ring* a motive", and after several false starts, the story emerged and the book mutated from being a sequel to *The Hobbit*, to being in theme more of a sequel to *The Silmarillion*, with the title *The Lord of the Rings*. The opening chapters had an informal approach that differed from the high register of prose of the rest of the book, and Tolkien was aware of it:

"We are being at once wisely aware of our own frivolity if we avoid hitting and whacking and prefer "striking" and "smiting"; talk and chat and prefer "speech" and "discourse"; well-bred, brilliant, or polite noblemen [...] and prefer the "worthy, brave and courteous men" of long ago" (Tolkien, cited in Carpenter 1977: 222).

Before the book was published, Tolkien was infuriated by his first sight of the proofs because he found out that the printers had changed several of his spellings, altering *dwarves* to *dwarf*, *elvish* to *elfish*, *further* to *farther* and *elvin* to *elfin*, however, the printers explained that they had followed the dictionary spellings. In 1956 Tolkien also disagreed with the first Dutch translation of *The Lord of the Rings* because of the translator's attempt to provide a translation for the complex series of names in the story. Apart from this criticism, Tolkien was satisfied with the Dutch translation but was much less pleased with the Swedish translation of the book published some years later. Tolkien disapproved of the majority of the translation and even disapproved of the preface that the translator added to the book because he interpreted the story as an allegory of contemporary world politics. After Tolkien's protest, the Swedish publishers withdrew the preface from further editions of the book. In the following years, *The Lord of the*

Rings was translated into all the major European languages and also into non-European ones, such as Japanese, and Hebrew (Carpenter 1977: 249 - 259). Tolkien published the third volume of the book with the index of names and the appendices from A to F containing: the historical background of the events in Middle-earth and *The Tale of Aragorn and Arwen* which narrates the romance between Aragorn and Arwen. Timelines from the Second, Third and Fourth Ages, several family trees of notable Hobbits Families, and calendars where Tolkien outlines the various calendar systems used in Middle-earth. The last two appendices explain how to pronounce particular sounds in the Middle-earth language, and the languages and races of Middle-earth. Tolkien also made a guide to the names in *The Lord of the Rings*, later known as “Nomenclature of *The Lord of the Rings*” (revised later for publication by his son Christopher Tolkien) to assist translators of the book. Tolkien’s works were translated into many languages not only for the popularity of the stories but also because they have elements which people from Germanic, Scandinavian, Slavic, and Romantic traditions can culturally relate to.

2.1 Tolkien’s short biography and literary production

John Ronald Reuel Tolkien was born on January 3, 1892, in Bloemfontein, South Africa. He moved to England at the age of three, and died on September 2, 1973, in Bournemouth, England. During his youth, he and his family moved to the hamlet of Sarehole in the English countryside where his imagination was able to develop deeply.

His mother introduced him to the rudiments of Latin, he was interested in the sounds and the shapes of the words and their meanings, and she realized that her son had a particular aptitude for languages. Tolkien liked reading books, mainly because he was pleased and excited by *The Arthurian Legends*, and *The Red Fairy Book*: the tale of Sigurd who slew the dragon Fafnir, a tale set in the nameless North (Carpenter, 1977: 27-28). When Tolkien enrolled at the King Edward School, thanks to his medievalist teacher he became interested and determined to learn more about the history of languages, and soon after he began to study philology.

During his studies, he found that the poem *Beowulf* written in Old English appealed to him and he began to study Middle English again, and also Old Norse, rereading accurately the story of Sigurd and the dragon Fafnir that had fascinated him

during his youth. Tolkien also took an interest in the deceased Gothic language and even began to invent Gothic words to fill the gaps in the limited vocabulary of the language. Due to his love of words, he started to invent his own languages starting with invented alphabets. (Carpenter 1977: 34 – 45).

At the age of twenty-one, he decided to study at a German university, where he studied Sanskrit, Gothic, Old Bulgarian, Lithuanian, Old Norse, Old Saxon, Old and Middle High German, and Old English. Returning to England he graduated in English language and literature from the University of Oxford in 1915. In 1920 he started his first academic position at Leeds as Reader of English Language and was promoted to Professor in 1924. Then from 1925 to 1945, he was a Professor of Old (Anglo-Saxon) and Middle English at the University of Oxford. Between the early 1930s and late 1949, Tolkien and his friend and colleague C.S. Lewis formed the *Inklings*, an informal literary discussion group at the University of Oxford, where they praised the value of narrative in fiction and encouraged the writing of fantasy.

During his academic career, Tolkien was able to bring relevant changes in the academic field. He persuaded his colleagues' professors to change the requirement for a degree in English, so that generations of Oxford students graduated with a knowledge of Old English literature rather than simply learning an abstract history of the English language. According to Jones (2003: xii), against the more fascinating genre of science fiction, Tolkien was able to revive the genre of adult fantasy fiction, creating completely new stories set in the world created by himself, whose themes and structures did not grow out of the modern novel but out of the epics, myths, and legends of medieval Europe.

Tolkien was quite interested in studying Old Norse, the language brought to Iceland by the Norwegians. He read the sagas, the (prose) Younger Edda and studied the (poetic) Elder Edda, a collection of poems. Some were written around the thirteenth century and others perhaps originated before the settlement of Iceland. Some poems are heroic, describing the world of men, and others are mythological (Carpenter 1977: 76).

In the summer of 1914, England declared war on Germany, but Tolkien was not interested in becoming a soldier. However, he became an officer in World War I, and also began to write poems. After his marriage with Edith Bratt in 1916, he found with some disappointment a letter of rejection of his poems, which did not discourage him. According to Carpenter (1977: 95), when Tolkien arrived at the base camp at Etaples, he

wrote a poem about England, and about the old professional officer soldiers that could not make friends with junior officers. However, each officer had a batman, a servant who was detailed to look after his kit (camp bed, mattress, spare boots, washstand). It is important to mention this fact because several years later Tolkien will create Sam Gamgee, one of the principal characters in *The Lord of the Rings*, as a reflection of the English soldier, of the privates and batmen he knew in the 1914 war.

Tolkien's project was to create an entire new mythology specifically for England. This idea started with his desire to express his feelings in poetry and his passion for inventing languages. To do this he needed a "history" in which those languages could develop. As Tolkien himself explained, he had in mind "to make a body of more or less connected legend, ranging from the large and cosmogonic to the level of romantic fairy-story [...] which I could dedicate simply: to England; to my country" (Tolkien, Carpenter 1977: 104). He wanted something reminiscent of the climate and soil of Britain and Europe, and the beauty of Celtic beauty.

Tolkien then proceeded in 1917 to start *The Book of Lost Tales* which is most of the major stories of *The Silmarillion*, a collection of myths and stories, as tales of the Elves and the Gnomes. The first story narrates about the creation and the established world that Tolkien called "Middle-earth", recalling the Norse *Midgard*. He also specified that this world does not belong to another planet, and the action takes place in an old period in which the shape of the continental masses was different. Carpenter (1977: 105–106) points out how Tolkien, a Roman Catholic, was able to write legends where, even without worshipping God, God was still present because Tolkien's universe is ruled over by God, "The One". This can be seen more explicitly in *The Silmarillion* than in *The Lord of the Rings*. The presence of a god to worship is important, because as a religious man Tolkien wanted to express his moral view of the universe.

Around 1922 Tolkien began a series of poems called *Tales and Songs of Bimble Bay*, with some aspects that appear later in *The Lord of the Rings*. One poem complains about the sordid noisy character of modern urban life, another one describes the havoc of a dragon who arrives at Bimble Bay, while the third talks about a strange slimy creature who lives beneath the floor of a cave and his pale luminous eyes. In the meantime, *The Book of Lost Tales* was almost complete. Instead of finding a conclusion, Tolkien started to rewrite it, perhaps because he did not want to face the thought of not having more to

“create”. With this in mind he did not complete *The Silmarillion*. Tolkien also decided to write a conventional short story for adults instead of his mythical and legendary stories. However, his attention was still occupied by *The Silmarillion*, which in the meantime he amply revisited and resulted in a large body of manuscripts (Carpenter 1977: 195).

Tolkien continued to develop his mythology and languages, until the day he wrote the following on a blank page out of nowhere: “In a hole in the ground there lived a hobbit”. After discovering what a *Hobbit* was and why he lived in a hole, in 1937 he published the book *The Hobbit*. In the beginning, Tolkien did not realise that the world of the hobbit Bilbo Baggins would be related to the world of *The Silmarillion*, but then it was clear that the journey of Bilbo Baggins and his party took place in the same Middle-earth present in *The Silmarillion*. Since the stories narrated in *The Silmarillion* are placed in the First and Second Ages of Middle-earth, it appeared that *The Hobbit* was to be a tale of the Third Age. The book had considerable success, and the publisher asked Tolkien to write a sequel. The publisher learnt that Tolkien had a large mythological work called *The Silmarillion* that he wished to publish, even though Tolkien himself admitted that it was not very suitable as a sequel to *The Hobbit*. Since the manuscript was not related to the Hobbits, and also was not completed and well organised, the producer asked Tolkien to write another story.

When Tolkien started the new story about the hobbits, he was not aware that this tale was leading toward something darker and closer in concept to *The Silmarillion* than to the joyful style of *The Hobbit*. After twelve years, between 1954 and 1955 Tolkien published *The Lord of the Rings* in three parts. According to Carpenter (1977: 238-239), when Tolkien finished the book, he wanted both *The Lord of the Rings* and *The Silmarillion* to be published together since the former included references to the early mythology. During the production of *The Lord of the Rings*, Tolkien was able to reorganise and almost finish (even if not revise) *The Silmarillion* and publishing it with *The Lord of the Rings* seemed the ideal opportunity. In 1965, when *The Lord of the Rings* was released in America, it sold one million copies. Only after his retirement Tolkien started the major task of revising and completing *The Silmarillion* but was immediately interrupted by correction, translation, and revision of his other works. During the last years of his life, Tolkien completed and published two other books: *Tree and Leaf* and *The Adventures of Tom Bombadil*, and around 1976 he also published *The Father*

Christmas Letters, a selection of illustrated letters from Santa Claus that Tolkien had the habit to write for his children for Christmas.

Due to his health condition, Tolkien died on 2 September 1973 without having the possibility to complete *The Silmarillion*. It would be published in 1977 by his son Christopher Tolkien.

2.2 Tolkien and the languages he invented

Tolkien spent a significant amount of his life creating and developing a number of languages. According to Fimi and Higgins (2020: xiv), during an Esperanto Congress in Oxford in 1930, Tolkien remembered how during his youth, he co-invented with his cousin a sort of language called *Nevbosh*, the “New Nonsense”, which was influenced by French, Latin, and English. He also mentioned *Naffarin* his first ever private language created for his personal amusement, a product of a ‘Romance’ period that is inspired in sound and structure by Latin and Spanish. Tolkien believed that there are four important elements in the process of creating a language:

- the creation of word-forms that sound aesthetically pleasing.
- a sense of ‘fitness’ between symbol (the word-form and its sound) and sense (its meaning).
- the construction of an elaborate and ingenious grammar.
- the composition of a fictional historical background for an invented language, including a sense of its (hypothetical) change in time. (Fimi and Higgins 2020: xvi).

According to Fimi and Higgins (2020: xvii), around 1915 Tolkien reached a considerable level of refinement of his invented languages and after *Naffarin* he created *Qenya* and consequently *Sindarin*. *Qenya* is based on a series of invented roots by which related *Qenya* words could be constructed (*Qenya Lexicon*), and it is also based on a document (*Qenya Phonology*) that shows the basic phonetic principles of the language, with a series of sounds combination rules, which gave *Qenya* a specific sound aesthetic influenced by the Finnish language.

Tolkien (1954: 193) pointed out that two Elvish tongues that have a European style and structure appear in the Lord of the Rings: the High-elven is *Quenya* (or Elvish), while *Sindarin* (or Grey-elven) is the language used by Western Elves that were considered

“grey” because they were neither Elves of the Light since they had never been in the Undying Lands nor Elves of Darkness. The archaic language of lore, that is the language to pass knowledge or information about a subject that is not written down but is passed from person to person, is a kind of Elven-Latin based on the spelling of the Latin language associated with Finnish and Greek phonetics. The language of the Western Elves is usually found in names and places (for example Valinor, also known as the Undying Lands, the land where Elves, and the Ring-Bearers, dwell in eternal bliss). Its origin is derived from Quenya with deliberate apt changes to give it a linguistic character similar to the British-Welsh because, for Tolkien, it seemed adequate to the Celtic type of legend and stories he was narrating. The *Sindarin* language was a later version of *Noldorin*, itself a later version of the language *Gnomish* that Tolkien started inventing in 1917-1918. According to Fimi and Higgins (2020: xix-xxiii), Gnomish was linked to the story of the exiled Elves in the *Lost Tales*, who left Valinor and wandered into the Great Lands. The sound of Gnomish is phonetically similar to the sound of Welsh, the language spoken by the Cymry, an exiled people forced out of their lands by the Anglo-Saxons who made them live as the *wealas*, the Old English word for “foreigners”, in their own lands.

In the 1920s the most distinguishing development Tolkien made when he revised his work on Gnomish, and changed it to Noldorin, was the re-conception of the plural form of nouns. Gnomish plural nouns were formed by adding endings to the root, while in Noldorin one of the ways the plural would be formed is by mutating the vowel. For example, the plural of the word *amon* (mountain) is formed by a shift in the two vowels and become *emyn*. In the same way, the plural of Welsh nouns often follows the same pattern: *bachgen* (boy) becomes *bechgyn* (boys), *castell* (castle) becomes *cestyll* (castles). This pattern is also visible in the latest version of Noldorin, renamed Sindarin, where the name for the hill *amon*, becomes *emyn* (*Amon Hen* - Hill of Sight, and *Emyn Muil* - the drear hills). Tolkien also created groups of related words with similar sound aesthetics and related morphological meaning. An example is the root MORO in the Quenya language that through primary word-association suggests a feeling of literal or metaphorical darkness. This root is used to create a series of words directly and indirectly related to the concept of darkness and the night. In *The Lord of the Rings*, the root is found in the names of two dark places: *Moria* (Black Chasm) and *Mordor* (Land of Darkness).

The construction of elaborate grammars is another important element in the process of creating a language. Fimi and Higgins (2020: xxiv-xxv), explain how Tolkien was fascinated with the structure of languages and how words develop and change over time. This change is visible in his work on inventing and refining the pronominal system of Quenya in the revision of *The Lord of the Rings*. At first, pronouns preceded a verb and were linked by a hyphen. However, years later, Tolkien started to express pronouns using suffixes added to the end of the verb form and only used as a stand-alone word form for emphasis.

According to Fimi and Higgins (2020: 23), Tolkien's last essential element in the process of creating a language is to create in outline a mythology that supports the language invented. Tolkien supported the idea that languages change over time, through the operation of regular sound shifts. In this way, his language invention skills grew alongside the growth of his languages.

The languages Tolkien invented can be seen in the names he created for people, places, and objects in his two works, *The Lord of the Rings*, and *The Hobbit*. Fimi and Higgins (2020: 118-120), explain how by the time Tolkien started working on *The Hobbit* he had already invented a nexus of languages which gave his nomenclature coherence and consistency. The names Tolkien gave to his characters give the impression that they were drawn from the myths and legends of the North. Most of the names of the Dwarves and Gandalf's were taken from one of the poems of the Poetic Edda. Originally Gandalf's name should have been *Bladorthin* a name invented from the Noldorin language and possibly meaning "grey wanderer", however, in the final text Tolkien decided to change it to Gandalf, meaning "Wand-Elf", and only later in *The Lord of the Rings*, Gandalf was given the Elvish name *Mithrandir*, which in Sindarin means "grey wanderer". In the final volume *The Return of the King*, Tolkien added two appendices on his invented languages: Appendix E "Writing and Spelling" with a detailed explanation of the pronunciation of words and names, and Appendix F "The Languages and Peoples of the Third Age".

Before the publication of the third book *The Return of the King*, many readers were already interested in exploring Tolkien's languages. This led to the study and publication of different works such as the *Working Tolkien Glossary* by Paul Nolan Hyde, and *The Languages of Middle-earth* by Ruth S. Noel with the intent to create a more complete

grammar and vocabulary in order to write and speak original and grammatically correct elvish sentences.

2.3 The Lord of the Rings

The story is a fantasy novel that begins with some events that take place in *The Hobbit*. During one of his adventures, the Hobbit Bilbo Baggins was lost in a cave where he found a ring and decided to take it with him to his home, the Shire, the part of Middle-earth where Hobbits live. Bilbo did not tell anyone about the ring. All he knew was that by wearing it he could become invisible. Bilbo was not aware that the magic ring was the One Ring forged by the main antagonist, the Dark Lord Sauron, during the Second Age. The Dark Lord Sauron, with the help of the Elven smiths created other more or less powerful rings, to gain dominion over the people of Middle-earth. There were forged *Three Rings* for the Elves that were never touched by Sauron, *Seven rings* for the Dwarf-kings, and *Nine rings* for the men that became Kings and obtained longevity that at some point faded away to become the Nazgûl, the Ringwraiths dominated by Sauron's will. Sauron then secretly forged the One Ring in the fires of Mount Doom linking his power to it to be able to control the power of all the other Rings, and to dominate the wills of their users. However, at the end of the Second Age, the Dark Lord Sauron lost the One Ring.

Originally Tolkien wanted to write a story where Bilbo Baggins, the main character of *The Hobbit*, was looking for another adventure. However, Tolkien remembered the ring and the powers it had and decided to write about that instead. Bilbo should have been the protagonist again, but the new story was too serious to use the fun-loving Hobbit, and instead, Tolkien gave space to Frodo Baggins, Bilbo's grandson (Carpenter 1977: 214).

The book is divided into three parts: *The Fellowship of the Ring*, *The Two Towers*, and *The Return of the King*. The first volume begins with Bilbo Baggins celebrating his birthday with the people of the Shire, during which he announces that he was ready to leave for another quest, and before leaving he gives the ring to Frodo. After some years, the wizard Gandalf the Grey begins to suspect that the ring was The One Ring and after some research done in Minas Tirith, the capital of Gondor, his suspicions are confirmed. He returns to the Shire and convinces Frodo to leave with the Ring because Sauron, with

the Nazgûl, is looking for him. Frodo and his friends Samwise Gamgee, Pippin and Merry evade the Nazgûl before arriving in Bree where they encounter the Ranger Aragorn, who helps them to arrive at Rivendell, the Elvish valley. Frodo volunteers to take the Ring and destroy it in the fires of Mount Doom in Mordor. This is how Frodo's quest begins, accompanied by Gandalf, Samwise, Merry, Pippin, the Elf Legolas, the Dwarf Gimli, Boromir of Gondor and Aragorn, who, all together, form The Fellowship of the Ring. They start the quest but instead of crossing a mountain range, they are forced to travel through the Mines of Moria where they are attacked by Orcs and by the demonic monster Balrog. Gandalf defeats the Balrog but loses himself too. The other members of the party survive and head to the Elvish forest of Lothlorien, however, the Ring's mighty power begins to corrupt the other member of the Fellowship, so Frodo and Sam decide to continue the journey to Mordor on their own.

The second volume begins with Frodo and Sam lost somewhere near Mordor, discovering that Gollum, a Hobbit corrupted by the Ring, is following them. Frodo and Sam capture him, but Frodo takes pity and allows Gollum to guide them to Mount Doom. Meanwhile, Merry and Pippin are held hostage by Orcs that wound Boromir mortally, while he was trying to save them. Merry and Pippin manage to escape into the Fangorn forest where they meet the Ent Treebeard, a giant talking tree. After convincing the Ent that they are allies, Treebeard decides to fight the wizard Saruman that is destroying the forest for helping Sauron in the coming war. Aragorn, Legolas, and Gimli traverse the forest where they reunite with Gandalf, that resurrected as Gandalf the White, to help save Middle-earth. Gandalf takes the trio to Rohan where he frees King Theoden from Saruman's control. They learn that Saruman wants to destroy Rohan, so Theoden evacuates his citizen to the fortress of Helm's Deep. Gandalf leaves to find the Rohirrim people (from Rohan) and convince them to fight for their king. The army of Elves from Lothlorien arrives to help in the battle too, and all together with Aragorn, Legolas, and Gimli they defeat Saruman's army. After the battle, Gandalf takes Theoden and the army to Isengard to stop Saruman, but they find Merry and Pippin at the gate explaining that the Ents have destroyed Isengard, and that Saruman is hiding in the tower. Meanwhile, Frodo, Sam and Gollum arrive at the Black Gate to Mordor heavily guarded by orcs, so Gollum proposes another route conducting them to the land of Ithilien. Gollum is torn between his loyalty to Frodo and his need for the Ring. Frodo and Sam are captured by

Rangers of Ithilien led by Faramir, brother of Boromir. Faramir learns of the One Ring and the burden they are holding and frees them so that they are again marching to Mordor. However, Gollum feels betrayed by Frodo when he delivers him to Faramir, so he decides to reclaim the Ring, leading Frodo and Sam to a creature that will kill them.

The last volume opens up with Gandalf and Pippin riding to Minas Tirith, the capital of Gondor, after discovering Sauron's intention to attack the city. While Aragorn, Legolas, Gimli, Theoden, and his army are heading to Minas Tirith, they realize they may not arrive in time to the city. Aragorn receives the reforged sword, used during the Second Age in the war against Sauron, to which he is the rightful heir. With Legolas and Gimli, Aragorn travels the Paths of the Dead where, as the True King, he receives the respect of the Dead Men, that promised to help him in the battle against Sauron in exchange for being freed. Winning the battle, Aragorn decides to march to the Black Gate to Mordor to distract Sauron from Frodo and Sam. Frodo and Sam are unaware that Gollum wants to betray them to take the ring to himself. In order to do so, Gollum convinces Frodo that Sam desires the Ring and that he ate all the remaining food supplies. Influenced by the growing power of the Ring, Frodo orders Sam to go home. Gollum and Frodo remain alone, and Gollum leads Frodo into the lair of the giant spider, but Frodo manages to escape and while fighting Gollum, he pulls him down a chasm. However, the spider finds and paralyzes Frodo but before killing him, Sam, who is mourning Frodo's apparent death, takes the Ring and hides away from a group of Orcs that take Frodo. Sam manages to save Frodo and disguising themselves as Orcs they proceed towards Mount Doom. Frodo, still injured, becomes weaker and weaker, until at the foot of the mountain Sam has to carry him. Gollum manages to survive the fall, and attacks Frodo in an attempt to steal the Ring. He takes the Ring, biting off Frodo's finger, but in the process, he falls into the cracks of Doom with the Ring. Sauron's power is finally destroyed, Aragorn's army emerges victorious as the enemies and the lands of Mordor collapse into the earth, and Gandalf flies to Mount Doom on the back of a giant eagle to rescue Frodo and Sam. Aragorn is crowned King of Gondor, Frodo, Sam, Merry and Pippin return to the Shire, however, Frodo is not able to recover from the angst of his quest and joins Gandalf to travel to the elven paradise in the West.

2.4 The translated versions: 1970, 2000, 2019 versions

As has been said before in this chapter, *The Lord of the Rings* has been translated into many different languages. In Italy there are various translations, of which the most important ones are three. The oldest is the one published by Rusconi in 1970 and translated by Vittoria Alliata di Villafranca, revised and corrected by the translator Quirino Principe. The second version was released by Bompiani in the 2000s, which was also translated by Vittoria Alliata and corrected by Quirino Principe with further corrections suggested by the Italian Tolkienian Society. The differences between these two editions concern some translation mistakes, mostly about nomenclature and poetics, made by Alliata, who translated *The Lord of the Rings* when she was very young (16-17 years old). The latest version was published in 2019 by Bompiani and translated by the translator Ottavio Fatica.

As explained by Beatrice Masini, editorial director of Bompiani, the purpose of Bompiani publishing house is to constantly renew works of contemporary classics and classics in respect of authors and readers. About fifty years since the 1970 translation of *The Lord of the Rings* it was decided to produce a new translation comparable to the original text, in agreement with the English publisher and the Tolkien Estate.

After the publisher Bompiani announced the new translation of the book, numerous controversies arose both from fans and from the translator Vittoria Alliata herself. Alliata's displeasure is based on the critiques of her work made by her colleague Fatica. He points out that there are many errors, such as doubling adjectives, that she created too long sentences, adding explanations inexistent in the original text, or errors made while translating the nomenclature. Alliata justifies her choices with literary and rhetorical arguments, explaining how her use of double adjectives was inspired by Dante and Petrarca's expressions used to convey and reinforce concepts.

Alliata underlines how in Italy every student learns figures of speech and in this way, using an Italian literary style could make it easier for the reader at the time to understand and appreciate *The Lord of the Rings*.

After the publisher Bompiani announced the new translation of the book, Alliata discovered that her contract with the publishing house had expired and decided to take legal action. In this regard, she also sued her colleague, Fatica, for the comments made about her work. About two years later, the story comes to an end. Alliata's accusations

against Fatica are dropped, while Bompiani Publishing House is forced to withdraw all copies of Alliata's translation from the market.

CHAPTER 3

DATA AND ANALYSIS

The following chapter provides an analysis of the Italian translations of *The Lord of the Ring* compared to the original text. It focuses on the translation of some parts and some names of the first book *The Lord of the ring: The Fellowship of the Ring*.

3.1 Comparison between the English source text and the Italian translations

When in 2019 the new Italian translation was announced and the very famous introductory poetry was published, many people, in particular older fans, criticized it. Nowadays people are used to expressing their disagreement on the internet, mostly on blogs, social news, or social media, even if they are not scholars, professors, or someone who studied the topic. On *Reddit*¹, a discussion website, there is a discussion made by some fans about this poetry. Here are some comments:

“Pessima. Niente rime eccetto una (che a quel punto è meglio se non ce la metti). Niente ripetizioni tattiche, tipo dark Lord e dark throne, o one ring tre volte, invece di “un anello”, poi “uno”, poi “uno”. Non è stilisticamente coerente, secondo me”.

“Dico solo che la rima vincerli/avvincerli è terribile. Il testo non deve essere semplicemente accurato/pari all’originale, ma anche leggibile e scorrevole per l’utente. La vecchia traduzione magari non era al 100% accurata ma passava perfettamente il messaggio, senza confusioni di sorta, ed era molto più scorrevole e memorabile”.

“La rima vincerli/avvincerli è oscena. “Sul suo trono tetro” non si riesce nemmeno a pronunciare, è uno scioglilingua. Ma chi l’ha pensata sta traduzione?”.

People also showed their disagreement regarding the translation of some names:

¹https://www.reddit.com/r/italy/comments/dezlfv/la_nuova_traduzione_della_poesia_dellanello_di/?sort=confidence Last visited on 01/10/2023.

“Anche se in effetti quando scopri che ci sono Passolungo il Forestale e Legolas di Boscuoro una domanda te la fai...”.

“Questa ri-traduzione del signore degli anelli con sam che si chiama samplicio e i raminghi che si chiamano forestali mi sta facendo stempiare”.

“Leggere che Aragon era un Ramingo te lo fa immaginare come un tipo incappucciato che vaga per le foreste della Terra di Mezzo. Leggere che era un forestale te lo fa immaginare vestito da carabiniere che scende da una Panda 4x4 e si accende la sigaretta”.

After collecting some data on people's negative criticism about the new translation, I decided to analyse the differences between three Italian translations and the original text. The three translations are by Vittoria Alliaata, Vittoria Alliaata and Quirino Principe, and Ottavio Fatica. This research is focused on the first book of the trilogy, *The Fellowship of the Ring*.

Table 1 shows extract from the most famous poem about the One Ring.

Table 1. Book 1: *The Fellowship of the Ring*

| 1995 SOURCE TEXT (Tolkien) | 1970 ITALIAN TRANSLATION (Alliaata) | 2000 ITALIAN TRANSLATION (Alliaata revised by Principe) | 2019 ITALIAN TRANSLATION (Fatica) |
|--|--|--|---|
| Three Rings for the Elven Kings under the sky, Seven for the Dwarf Lords in their halls of stone, Nine for Mortal Men doomed to die, One for the Dark Lord on his dark throne In the Land of Mordor where the Shadows lie. | Tre Anelli ai Re dei Gnomi sotto il cielo che risplende, Sette ai Principi dei Nani nelle lor rocche di pietra, Nove agli Uomini Mortali che la triste morte attende, Uno per l’Oscuro Sire chiuso nella reggia tetra Nella Terra di Mordor, dove l’Ombra nera scende. Un Anello per domarli, Un Anello per trovarli, Un | Tre Anelli ai Re degli Elfi sotto il cielo che risplende, Sette ai Principi dei Nani nelle lor rocche di pietra, Nove agli Uomini Mortali che la triste morte attende, Uno per l’Oscuro Sire chiuso nella reggia tetra Nella Terra di Mordor, dove l’Ombra nera scende. Un Anello per domarli, Un Anello per trovarli, Un Anello per ghermirli e nel | Tre Anelli ai Re degli Elfi sotto il cielo, Sette ai Principi deli Nani nell’Aule di pietra, Nove agli Uomi Mortali del fato crudele, Uno al Nero Sire sul trono tetro Nella Terra di Mordor dove le Ombre si celano. Un Anello per trovarli, Uno per vincerli, Uno per |

| | | | |
|---|---|--|--|
| One Ring to rule them all, One Ring to find them, One Ring to bring them all and in the darkness bind them In the Land of Mordor where the Shadows lie. | Anello per ghermirli e nel buio incatenarli, Nella Terra di Mordor, dove l’Ombra cupa scende. | buio incatenarli, Nella Terra di Mordor, dove l’Ombra cupa scende. | radunarli e al buio avvincerli Nella Terra di Mordor dove le Ombre si celano. |
|---|---|--|--|

The famous poetry at the beginning of the first book *The Fellowship of the Ring* shows some differences between the three Italian translations. The first difference occurs in the 1970 translation in which the name *Elven Kings* was translated with the word *gnomi* instead of *elfi*. The revisor Quirino Principe (2002: 4) explains that it was a decision taken by a translator working for the Rusconi publishing house; this mistake was fixed in the second edition in which the correct translation of *elfi* is used. While there are no differences between the two older translations, except for the mistake mentioned above, in the most recent one there is a clear attempt to remain faithful to the original text. The first two verses have a literal translation in an attempt to be more accurate to the original meaning. “Seven for the Dwarf Lords in their hall of stone” is translated as “Sette ai Principi dei Nani nell’Aule di pietra”, where the English word “hall” according to the Longman Online Dictionary, means “a building or large room for public events such as meeting or dances”. Tolkien’s Dwarves dig their hall into the rock, those rocks that are their homes. This may be the reason why the translator Fatica uses the word *aule* instead of *rocche* as Alliata did.

In the verse below “Nine for Mortal Men doomed to die” Fatica’s translation is not so literal, “Nove agli Uomini Mortali dal fato crudele”. According to the Collins online Dictionary “doomed² to die” means *condannati a morire*, the less than literal

² <https://www.collinsdictionary.com/dictionary/english/doom> Last visited on 1/10/2023

translation could be a questionable choice. Still, Fatica’s intention was perhaps to avoid the repetition of *mortali* and *morire*.

As reported by Collins Online Dictionary, “doom” is “a terrible future state or event which you cannot prevent”, the meaning is something negative, and undesirable, hence the translator uses the strategy of cultural substitution where he replaces the expression of the source language with *fato crudele* that has a similar impact on the target language, since for the Mortal Men death is a cruel sentence.

The differences in the translations are clear in the fifth verse where the original reads: “In the Land of Mordor where the Shadows lie”. Fatica translates it with “Nella Terra di Mordor dove le Ombre si celano”, while Alliata’s translation is “Nella Terra di Mordor dove l’Ombra nera scende”. In English the verb “to lie³” means both *mentire* and *giacere*, so in this case the correct meaning is the latter, however, the verb can also mean “that something is or remains in a particular state or condition”, that is in Italian *celare*. It seems here that Fatica uses his language competence by choosing the word *celare*, since in Mordor shadows not only do lie with the meaning of *giacere*, but *si celano*, they hide themselves waiting for the right time to leave.

The most relevant and criticized translation of this Verse of the Rings relates to the two final verses “One Ring to rule them all, One Ring to find them, One Ring to bring them all and in the darkness bind them”. Fatica uses the strategy of paraphrasing “Un Anello per trovarli, Uno per vincerli, Uno per radunarli e al buio avvincerli” and change the order of the verbs *trovarli* and *vincerli* to maintain the rhyme with the next final verb *avvincerli*. “To bind⁴” means “to tie someone so that they cannot move or escape” and *avvincere*⁵ comes from Latin *vincire* which means *legare*, in the figurative sense of *attrarre a sè*. This is what happens in the story, where the One Ring binds to itself all the other Rings. The translator Alliata (2000), with her translation “Un Anello per domarli, Un Anello per trovarli, Un Anello per ghermirli e nel buio incatenarli”, which in the last fifty years became the most famous Italian translation, tried to follow the scheme of the original text.

³ <https://www.collinsdictionary.com/dictionary/english/lie> Last visited on 01/10/2023.

⁴ <https://www.ldoceonline.com/dictionary/bind> Last visited on 01/10/2023.

⁵ <https://www.treccani.it/vocabolario/avvincere/> Last visited on 01/10/2023.

Although the last part of the Verse could have been translated in a different way, it is clear that Fatica tried to connect the meaning of the verses to the plot and tried to preserve the rhythm of the original Verse.

Table 2 shows the original version of another extract and the three translations.

Table 2. Book 1. *The Fellowship of the Ring*. Chapter 1: A long-expected party.

| 1995 SOURCE TEXT (Page 21) | 1970 ITALIAN TRANSLATION (Page 47) | 2000 ITALIAN TRANSLATION (Page 51) | 2019 ITALIAN TRANSLATION (Page 45) |
|---|---|---|---|
| When Mr. Bilbo Baggins of Bag End announced that he would shortly be celebrating his eleventy-first birthday with a <u>party of special magnificence</u> , there was much <u>talk and excitement</u> in Hobbiton. | Quando il signor Bilbo Baggins di casa Baggins annunciò che avrebbe presto festeggiato il suo centoundicesimo compleanno con <u>una festa sontuosissima</u> , tutta Hobbiville si mise in agitazione. | Quando il signor Bilbo Baggins di casa Baggins annunciò che avrebbe presto festeggiato il suo centoundicesimo compleanno con <u>una festa sontuosissima</u> , tutta Hobbiville <u>si mise in agitazione</u> . | Quando il signor Bilbo Baggins di casa Baggins annunciò che presto avrebbe festeggiato il suo undicesimo compleanno <u>con una festa oltremodo fastosa, i commenti e i fermenti</u> a Hobbiton si sprecarono. |

In the new translation, Fatica tries to be more loyal to the original text than Alliaata was, even using some unusual words for the target language such as *i commenti e i fermenti* to translate “talk and excitement”. In the Italian language, the word *fermenti*⁶ have a food connotation and rarely is the word used with the figurative meaning of *stato di agitazione*. However, it is not only important to consider the meaning of a word, but even that word did not change its meaning over the years, as Belloc (2009: 24) explains. Since excitement comes from the verb *excite* and, according to the Longman Dictionary, the first meaning

⁶<https://www.treccani.it/vocabolario/fermento/#:~:text=Con%20altro%20senso%20fig.%2C%20per,era%20scossa%20da%20nuovi%20f.> Last visited on 01/10/2023.

is “to make someone feel happy, interested or eager”, it may therefore be not the best choice using *fermenti*, but instead a more common word like *frenesia*⁷ or *agitazione*. The Alliaata and Principe (2000) Italian translation seems to be more domesticated, where “a party of special magnificence” becomes *una festa sontuosissima*, and “there was much talk and excitement in Hobbiton” is translated as *tutta Hobbville si mise in agitazione*. The sentence is smooth, and a typical Italian idiomatic sentence occurs: *si mise in agitazione*.

Table 3 shows the extract focused on Bilbo Baggins from Chapter One.

Table 3. Book 1. *The Fellowship of the Ring*. Chapter 1: A long expected party.

| 1995 SOURCE TEXT (Page 21) | 1970 ITALIAN TRANSLATION (Page 47) | 2000 ITALIAN TRANSLATION (Page 51) | 2019 ITALIAN TRANSLATION (Page 45) |
|---|---|---|---|
| Bilbo was very rich and very peculiar, and had been the wonder of the Shire for sixty years, ever since his remarkable disappearance and unexpected return. | Bilbo era estremamente ricco e bizzarro e, da quando sessant’anni prima era sparito di colpo, per ritornare poi inaspettatamente, rappresentava la meraviglia della Contea. | Bilbo era estremamente ricco e bizzarro e, da quando sessant’anni prima era sparito di colpo, per ritornare poi inaspettatamente, rappresentava la meraviglia della Contea. | Bilbo era ricchissimo e alquanto stravagante e, fin dalla straordinaria sparizione, seguita dal ritorno inaspettato, era stato per sessant’anni il prodigio della Contea. |

The most remarkable difference in this extract and its translations is visible in the syntax structure of the sentence. Fatica’s (2019) translation of the sentence does not seem linear, according to the grammar rules of the Italian language. The translator says at the beginning that Bilbo had disappeared and reappeared, and only at the end does he explain that his disappearance happened sixty years before, giving the reader a sense of apparent confusion. In this regard, Belloc (2009: 29) explains that when a translator is too familiar with a foreign language they could be confused between the foreign language and their own.

⁷ <https://www.ldoceonline.com/dictionary/excite> Last visited on 01/10/2023.

“Tale confusione deve essere evitata nella traduzione [...] affinché, essendo immerso nella lingua straniera, uno non cada nella propria lingua, in un ordine insolito, in strani neologismi ed espressioni metaforiche la cui forza è un luogo comune per lo straniero ma una novità grottesca per noi.” (Belloc 2009: 29)

Table 4 shows a difference in the syntax structure between the three translation and the original text.

Table 4. Book 1. *The Fellowship of the Ring*. Prologue 4. *Of the Finding of the Ring*.

| 1995 SOURCE TEXT (Page 13) | 1970 ITALIAN TRANSLATION (Page 39) | 2000 ITALIAN TRANSLATION (Page 43) | 2019 ITALIAN TRANSLATION (Page 36) |
|--|---|---|--|
| His sword, Sting, Bilbo hung over his fireplace. | Al suo ritorno, Bilbo appese la spada Pungolo sul camino. | Al suo ritorno, Bilbo appese la spada Pungolo sul camino. | Pungiglione, la sua spada, Bilbo appese sopra il camino. |

Another example of the difference in the syntax structure can be seen here. Alliata and Principe (1970-2000) follow the Italian structure, while in Fatica’s attempt to be more loyal to the original text, his translation seems to be the sword *Pungiglione* that hung Bilbo over the fireplace. In her studies, Baker (1995: 110) points out how the order of linguistic elements as subject, predicator, and object is more fixed in some languages than in others. In the English language, the word order is generally fixed, thus the meaning of sentences depends on it.

“Word order is extremely important in translation because it plays a major role in maintaining a coherent point of view and in orienting messages at text level” (Baker 1995: 110).

The order of constituents in a message is considered to be unmarked if it respects the default rules of the grammar of the language. In English, the default order of constituents in a message is subject, predicator, objects and/or complements, and adverbials. The message presents information units in order of increasing informativity to help the reader/listener’s processing of the message itself. However, speakers and writers may adopt an unusual order of constituents to deliver the message that may clash with the

grammatical requirements. Placing the constituents of the message in a non-canonical position is what Tolkien did in the sentence “his sword, Sting, Bilbo hung over his fireplace”. Since Fatica tried to be as loyal to the original text as possible, he might have added an object complement to clarify the position of the sword, such as “Pungiglione, la sua spada, Bilbo *la* appese sopra il camino”.

Table 5 shows the extract from chapter 3 of the first book.

Table 5. Book 1. *The Fellowship of the Ring*. Chapter 3. *Three is company*.

| 1995 SOURCE TEXT (Page 72) | 1970 ITALIAN TRANSLATION (Page 110) | 2000 ITALIAN TRANSLATION (Page 115) | 2019 ITALIAN TRANSLATION (Page 132) |
|---|--|--|--|
| Frodo stripped the blankets from Pippin, and rolled him over, and then walked off to the edge of the wood. Away eastward the sun was rising red out of the mists that lay thick on the world. <u>Touched with gold and red the autumn trees</u> seemed to be sailing rootless in a shadowy sea. | Frodo tirò la coperta di dosso a Pipino, voltandolo a pancia all’aria, quindi fece quattro passi fino al margine del bosco. Lontano, ad oriente, il sole rosso si levava dalla nebbia che copriva densa e pesante il paesaggio. <u>Gli alberi autunnali, pennellati d’oro e di carminio</u> , parevano navigare senza radici in un mare d’ombra. | Frodo tirò la coperta di dosso a Pipino, voltandolo a pancia all’aria, quindi fece quattro passi fino al margine del bosco. Lontano, ad oriente, il sole rosso si levava dalla nebbia che copriva densa e pesante il paesaggio. <u>Gli alberi autunnali, pennellati d’oro e di carminio</u> , parevano navigare senza radici in un mare d’ombra. | Frodo strappò la coperta di dosso a Pippin, ribaltandolo a pancia all’aria, e poi si avviò fino al limitare del bosco. In lontananza, a oriente, il sole si levava rosso sulla fitta coltre di nebbia stesa sul mondo. <u>Pittati d’oro e rosso, gli alberi autunnali sembrano salpare privi di radici in un mare umbratile.</u> |

Belloc (2009: 20-21) believes that there are three general rules for translation: the translation should be performed into the translator’s language, the language translated has to be known in the best possible way, and the translator has to be free from the limitation of space and form. “Il fine della traduzione è la produzione di un’opera in una certa lingua” (Belloc 2009: 23). On this premise, Alliaia’s translation “Gli alberi autunnali,

pennellati d'oro e di carminio, parevano navigare senza radici in un mare d'ombra" is able to capture and explain what the original text is trying to share with the reader. The expression *d'oro e di carminio* is a poetic way to describe how the light of the sun lights up with red the trees in autumn. The Italian translation is fluent, and the translator bringing the author to the reader seems to domesticate the text.

On the other hand, in Fatica's translation "pittati d'oro e rosso, gli alberi autunnali sembravano salpare privi di radici in un mare umbratile" the word *pittati*⁸ is a verb that has the same meaning of *dipingere* but represents a regional use, typical of the Neapolitan area. The word *umbratile*⁹ is an old-fashioned term and mostly used in literature, and in the same sentence with a regional word doesn't sound correct.

3.2 Linguistic registers

This section explores differences in linguistic registers used by different characters and how the registers are different from each other.

Table 6 shows another extract from chapter two where Gandalf is speaking.

Table 6. Book 1. *The Fellowship of the Ring*. Chapter 2. *The Shadow of the Past*.

| 1995 SOURCE TEXT (Page 57) | 1970 ITALIAN TRANSLATION (Page 92) | 2000 ITALIAN TRANSLATION (Page 96) | 2019 ITALIAN TRANSLATION (Page 107) |
|--|---|--|---|
| That is a sample of his talk. I don't suppose you want anymore. <u>I had weary days of it.</u> But from hints dropped among the snarls I gathered that <u>his padding feet</u> had taken him at last | Questo è un esempio della sua conversazione; non penso che tu voglia sentirne ancora. <u>Ho penato giorni e giorni per capirlo.</u> Dagli accenni frammisti alle imprecazioni ho potuto dedurre che <u>i suoi viscidi</u> | Questo è un esempio della sua conversazione; non penso che tu voglia sentirne ancora. <u>Ho penato giorni e giorni per capirlo.</u> Dagli accenni frammisti alle imprecazioni ho potuto dedurre che <u>i suoi viscidi piedi</u> l'avevano condotto | Ecco un assaggio dei suoi discorsi. Dovrebbe bastarti, immagino. <u>Me li sono sciroppati per giorni e giorni.</u> Ma da accenni lasciati cadere in mezzo ai ringhi ho capito <u>che a passi felpati era</u> giunto fino a Esgaroth e perfino |

⁸ [https://accademiadellacrusca.it/it/consulenza/%C3%A8-meglio-dipingere-che-pittare/1589#:~:text=Il%20verbo%20pittare%20\(dal%20latino,ma%20%C3%A8%20di%20uso%20regionale.](https://accademiadellacrusca.it/it/consulenza/%C3%A8-meglio-dipingere-che-pittare/1589#:~:text=Il%20verbo%20pittare%20(dal%20latino,ma%20%C3%A8%20di%20uso%20regionale.) Last visited on 01/10/2023.

⁹ <https://www.treccani.it/vocabolario/umbratile/> Last visited on 01/10/2023.

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| to Esgaroth, and even to the streets of Dale, listening secretly and peering. | <u>piedi</u> l’avevano condotto fino a Esgaroth e persino nelle vie della Valle, per ascoltare e curiosare ovunque. | fino a Esgaroth e persino nelle vie della Valle, per ascoltare e curiosare ovunque. | per le vie di Vallea, per ascoltare in segreto e sbirciare. |
|---|---|---|---|

In this extract, Gandalf is talking to Frodo, complaining about how difficult it had been to get information from Gollum. Fatica once again is trying to preserve the short English structure even in the Italian language. What differs most from Alliata’s translation is the sentence “me li sono sciroppati per giorni e giorni”, where *sciroppare*¹⁰ is considered informal and low register. In the original text “I had weary days of it”, “weary¹¹” means that you have become tired of something and have lost the enthusiasm for it. Alliata’s translation expresses Gandalf’s sense of pain. By contrast, in Fatica’s translation this sense of pain is not perceived and instead seems that Gandalf is only bothered. In addition, in this translation, Gandalf’s linguistic register results low, despite the fact that he is a member of the Order of Istari (or Wizards), and his register is always formal.

However, Alliata’s translation is not immune from mistakes. She translated “his padding feet” as *i suoi piedi viscid*, however the noun “padding¹²” is a soft material that is put on something or inside it in order to make it less hard, to protect it, or to give it a different shape. On the contrary, Fatica uses the rhetorical figure *passi felpati*¹³ which refers to something soft, and noiseless, and it is clearly more loyal to the original text, and it respects the typical Italian idiomatic sentence.

Table 7 shows an extract from chapter one which contains another interesting aspect to analyse.

Table 7. Book 1. *The Fellowship of the Ring*. Chapter 1. *A Long-Expected Party*.

¹⁰ <https://www.treccani.it/vocabolario/sciroppare/> Last visited on 01/10/2023.

¹¹ <https://www.collinsdictionary.com/dictionary/english/weary> Last visited on 01/10/2023.

¹² <https://www.collinsdictionary.com/dictionary/english/padding> Last visited on 01/10/2023.

¹³ <https://www.treccani.it/vocabolario/felpato/> Last visited on 01/10/2023.

| 1995 SOURCE TEXT (Page 28) | 1970 ITALIAN TRANSLATION (Page 56) | 2000 ITALIAN TRANSLATION (Page 58) | 2019 ITALIAN TRANSLATION (Page 58) |
|---|--|--|--|
| Though they rather dreaded the after-dinner speech of their host (an inevitable item) [...] They had a very pleasant feast, in fact an engrossing entertainment. | Malgrado temessero il discorso commemorativo del padrone di casa (inevitabile conclusione). [...] Il banchetto fu estremamente piacevole. | Malgrado temessero il discorso commemorativo del padrone di casa (inevitabile conclusione). [...] Il banchetto fu estremamente piacevole. | Pur paventando il discorso postprandiale dell'anfitrione (numero immancabile). [...] Il banchetto fu davvero piacevole, una vera goduria. |

The first sentence in the original text is quite simple in contrast to the Fatica's translation, where the register appears to be higher with the *discorso postprandiale dell'anfitrione*. However, a few lines below he used *una vera goduria*¹⁴ to explain how pleasant Bilbo's feast was, where *Goduria* is a colloquial and regional term.

Alliata added the word *commemorativo* which it is not present in the original text, but it is used to translate the "after-dinner speech" that is "a public address event that is traditionally spoken after a dinner and meant to take an important topic."¹⁵

Table 8 shows an extract from chapter two where Frodo is speaking.

Table 8. Book 1. *The Fellowship of the Ring*. Chapter 2. *The Shadow of the Past*.

| 1995 SOURCE TEXT (Page 54) | 1970 ITALIAN TRANSLATION (Page 87) | 2000 ITALIAN TRANSLATION (Page 92) | 2019 ITALIAN TRANSLATION (Page 102) |
|-------------------------------|---------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|--|
| | | | |

¹⁴ <https://www.treccani.it/vocabolario/goduria/> Last visited on 01/10/2023.

¹⁵ [https://en.wiktionary.org/wiki/after-dinner_speech#:~:text=after%2Ddinner%20speech%20\(plural%20after.relevant%20to%20the%20idea%20presented](https://en.wiktionary.org/wiki/after-dinner_speech#:~:text=after%2Ddinner%20speech%20(plural%20after.relevant%20to%20the%20idea%20presented) Last visited on 01/10/2023.

| | | | |
|---|--|--|---|
| <p>“Do you mean that this is the very <u>Gollum-creature</u> that Bilbo met? <u>How loathsome!</u>” [...] “And I daresay it amused his wickedness to start a game which might end in <u>providing him</u> with an easy victim”.</p> | <p>“Vuoi dire che quello era lo stesso <u>orribile mostro</u> incontrato da Bilbo? <u>Quale orrore!</u>” [...] “E sono convinto che il suo animo malvagio godeva a dare inizio a un gioco che, se avesse vinto gli avrebbe <u>procurato</u> una facile vittima”.</p> | <p>“Vuoi dire che quello era lo stesso <u>orribile mostro</u> incontrato da Bilbo? <u>Quale orrore!</u>” [...] “E sono convinto che il suo animo malvagio godeva a dare inizio a un gioco che, se avesse vinto gli avrebbe <u>procurato</u> una facile vittima”.</p> | <p>“Vuoi dire che era quello stesso <u>bruto di un Gollum</u> incontrato da Bilbo? <u>Che schifo!</u>” [...] “E avviare un gioco che avrebbe finito per <u>procacciargli</u> una facile vittima”.</p> |
|---|--|--|---|

The change of register in Fatica’s translation is even visible in Frodo’s utterances. “Quel bruto di un Gollum” is not an old-fashioned term, however the following “che schifo” makes Frodo sound more vulgar than he really is. According to the Oxford Learner’s Dictionary, the origin of “loathsome¹⁶” comes from archaic “loath” (disgust) and -some”. Tolkien created different linguistic registers for different characters, and cultures. Hobbits have a simple modern style, however Tolkien declared that he changed the speaking style of some characters to suit their interactions with other characters, in particular Frodo who is able to adopt the style of those whom he meets. (Tolkien, 1995: 1113) Hence, in the extract shown in Table 8, Frodo is talking with Gandalf, another character that uses a formal register.

A few lines below, Fatica uses the expression *procacciargli*¹⁷ that is a much less common synonym than *procurargli*. In this case Frodo’s register changes again.

Table 9 shows an extract from chapter three.

Table 9. Book 1. *The Fellowship of the Ring*. Chapter 3. *Three is company*.

¹⁶ <https://www.oxfordlearnersdictionaries.com/definition/english/loathsome?q=loathsome> Last visited 01/10/2023.

¹⁷ <https://www.treccani.it/vocabolario/procacciare/> Last visited on 01/10/2023.

| 1995 SOURCE TEXT (Page 75) | 1970 ITALIAN TRANSLATION (Page 113) | 2000 ITALIAN TRANSLATION (Page 119) | 2019 ITALIAN TRANSLATION (Page 137) |
|--|--|--|--|
| “When I got back to our hole yesterday evening with the key, my dad, he says to me” [...] “Not that I liked the sound of him” [...] “What sort of a fellow was he? Says I to the Gaffer” | “Quando sono tornato a casa ieri sera per riportare la chiave, mio padre mi fa” [...] “Ma non mi piaceva affatto quel tipo” [...] “Che tipo era? Chiedo al Gaffiere” | “Quando sono tornato a casa ieri sera per riportare la chiave, mio padre mi fa” [...] “Ma non mi piaceva affatto quel tipo” [...] “Che tipo era? Chiedo al Gaffiere” | “Quando sono tornato alla nostra buca ieri sera con la chiave, mio padre mi fa” [...] “Non mi sconfinferava” [...] “Che razza di persona era? faccio io al Veglio” |

In Alliaata’s translation there is a general tendency to make the language more elegant and therefore typical of a high register. However, even in this translation there are changes of register with the attempt to follow Toliken’s style.

In this extract, Samwise Gamgee is talking with Frodo about his father’s encounter with a Black Night. Sam is Frodo’s servant and is a humble, low social class Hobbit. “He says to me” is translated with *mi fa* and the use of the verb *fare* instead of *dire* makes the register low and colloquial. Again, “of him” become *quel tipo*, another colloquial way to describe someone you do not know.

In the same way, Fatica used a colloquial register to show how Sam is a low social-class Hobbit. He uses terms such as *sconfinferare*¹⁸, a very colloquial and regional term for “suit” or “appeal”, *mi fa* and *faccio io*. To underline Sams’ low register, Tolkien uses the form “says I” that is colloquial and can be translated as *dico*.

¹⁸<https://accademiadellacrusca.it/it/consulenza/questa-risposta-vi-sconfinfera/1539>

Last visited on 01/10/2023.

3.3 Names and toponyms

This section explores the use of names and toponyms in the book and their translations in the Italian texts. In this respect, it must be pointed out that in 1967 J.R.R. Tolkien wrote a collection of notes about nomenclature to assist translators of his book in other languages. It was called *The Guide to the Names in The Lord of the Rings* and later known as *Nomenclature of The Lord of the Rings*¹⁹. In this booklet Tolkien explains how all names that are not present in the Guide should be left entirely unchanged in any language, except for the inflectional -s, -es that should be rendered according to the grammar of the language.

Table 10 represents some of the names that Italian people lamented most with the last translation.

Table 10 shows represents the difference between some names of places and people between the three Italian translations and the original text.

| 1995 SOURCE TEXT | 1970 ITALIAN TRANSLATION | 2000 ITALIAN TRANSLATION | 2019 ITALIAN TRANSLATION |
|----------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| Big Folk, Big People | Gente Alta | Gente Alta | Gente Grossa |
| Gaffer | Gaffiere | Gaffiere | Veglio |
| Bag End | Casa Baggins | Casa Baggins | Casa Baggins |
| Rivendell | Gran Burrone | Gran Burrone | Valforra |
| Withywindle | Sinuosalice | Sinuosalice | Circonvolvolo |
| Wilderland | Terre Selvagge | Terre Selvagge | Selvalanda |
| Samwise “Sam” Gamgee | Samwise “Sam” Gamgee | Samwise “Sam” Gamgee | Samplicio “Sam” Gamgee |
| Ranger | Ramingo | Ramingo | Forestale |

¹⁹https://tolkiengateway.net/wiki/Guide_to_the_Names_in_The_Lord_of_the_Rings Last visited on 01/10/2023.

Big Folk and Big People are referred to as Mortal Men, given them by the Hobbits, who they in turn called the Little Folk (index: 1145). *Grossa* is one of the first translations for “big” maybe to differentiate from the Hobbits that are small in stature. Alliaata used the adjective *Alta*, which is less literal but has the same aim, differentiating the two races.

According to the Guide, **Gaffer** should have been left untranslated. “Gaffer²⁰” is an informal British English word used by the author with the meaning of “old man”, especially one living in the country. However, Alliaata used *Gaffiere*, which is not a translation but a phonetic adaptation of the original word, and Fatica used *Veglio*²¹, the archaic word for “old” when is used in reference to a person.

Bag End is the local name of Bilbo’s house and is associated with the end of a “bag” also known as “cul-de-sac²²”, a short road that is closed off at one end (Collins Online Dictionary). Baggins is associated with Bag End, the local name for Bilbo’s house. (Tolkien also suggests also comparing Sackville-Baggins where the translation should contain an element meaning “sack” or “bag”).

According to the nomenclature, **Rivendell** is the translation of Grey-elven *Imladris* “Glen of the cleft”, and “deep dale of the cleft”. “Dell²³” is a small valley that has trees growing in it, thus the decision to translate it with *Forra*²⁴ that means “profonda gola a pareti verticali”, and *Burrone* has the same meaning as *forra*.

Whitywindle refers to the River-name in the Old forest (where Frodo, Sam, Marry, and Pippin encounter the Old Man Willow), and it was a winding river surrounded by willows (or “withy”, *salice*). “Windle” is not a common English word. As Tolkien explains in his Guide, “Withywindle was modeled on withwind, a name of the convolvulus or bindweed” (Tolkien,1967:21). According to Wikipedia, convolvulus is a genus of species of flowering plants, commonly called bindweed.

Wilderland is based on “wilderness” the meaning of a country not inhabited by men but with wild creatures, with a side-reference to the verb “bewilder”. *Landa*²⁵ means

²⁰<https://www.collinsdictionary.com/dictionary/english/gaffer> Last visited on 01/10/2023.

²¹<https://www.treccani.it/vocabolario/veglio/> Last visited on 01/10/2023.

²²<https://www.collinsdictionary.com/dictionary/english/cul-de-sac> Last visited on 01/10/2023.

²³<https://www.collinsdictionary.com/dictionary/english/dell> Last visited on 01/10/2023.

²⁴<https://www.treccani.it/vocabolario/forra/> Last visited on 01/10/2023.

²⁵<https://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/landa/#:~:text=Terreno%2C%20per%20lo%20pi%C3%B9%20incolto,lo%20ricopre%20vegetano%20piante%20xerofile>. Last visited on 01/10/2023.

“terreno per lo più incolto, delle regioni fredde” but with this translation, the reference to “wild creatures” is lost. On the other end, *Terre Selvagge*²⁶ calls to mind a place inhabited not by men but beasts and challenging to cross even if with this translation the connection with the concept of “bewilder” is lost.

Samwise Gamgee: In appendix F of “The Lord of the Rings”, Tolkien explains how Sam and his father Ham were called Ban and Ran, the shortenings form for *Banazîr* and *Ranugad* meaning “half-wise, simple” and “stay-at-home”. Since these words had fallen out of colloquial use, Tolkien tried to preserve these features by using Samwise and Hamfast, which are the modernization of ancient English *samwîs* and *hamfæst* that have similar meanings. Alliaata attempted to adapt the name with *Samwise* since perhaps she didn’t know ancient English, while Fatica’s *Samplicio* is clearer perhaps also because this translation has been made only recently.

Ranger: The title of Ranger translated as *Forestale*²⁷ is the name that Italian people most lamented. The Rangers of the North, commonly referred to as *Rangers*, were a northern wandering people of Eriador. They protected the land, wandering the wastes of Eriador, but their secretiveness made the people of Bree and the Shire consider them dangerous even because their appearance was grim, their deeds seldom recorded, and they were usually dressed in grey or dark green.

Alliaata used the term *Ramingo*²⁸, according to Vocabolario Treccani, one of its meanings is *vagabondo* “che va errando in qua e là”. One of the first meanings of Ranger in the Oxford English Dictionary is *wanderer* or *rover*²⁹. *Rover*³⁰ has roots in Dutch and Middle Low German, and it means travelling from place to place without a specific destination, over a wide area, but also a pirate, a robber, or a rider, all of which can have negative connotations. However, Alliaata’s choice may be linked to the word *raméngo*³¹, a dialect form of *ramingo* used mainly in Venetian dialect but also elsewhere, with the meaning of *rovina*, *malora* (ruin), as explained by the Vocabolario Treccani.

²⁶https://www.treccani.it/vocabolario/selvaggio_%28Sinonimi-e-Contrari%29/ Last visited on 01/10/2023.

²⁷ <https://www.treccani.it/vocabolario/forestale/> Last visited on 01/10/2023.

²⁸ <https://www.treccani.it/vocabolario/ricerca/ramingo/> Last visited on 01/10/2023.

²⁹ <https://www.oed.com/view/Entry/168130?rskey=nCsn3A&result=1&isAdvanced=false#eid> (Rover1) Last visited on 01/10/2023.

³⁰ <https://www.oed.com/view/Entry/168129?rskey=nCsn3A&result=2&isAdvanced=false#eid> (Rover 2) Last visited on 01/10/2023.

³¹ <https://www.treccani.it/vocabolario/ramengo/> Last visited on 01/10/2023.

Nowadays, *ranger*³² means “someone whose job is to look after a forest or an area of the countryside”. Originally the meaning³³ was a gamekeeper, a forester, or someone having charge of a forest (Oxford English Dictionary). *Forestale* is the adjective derived from *foresta* which refers to forests and woods, and currently in Italian *la Forestale* is the term used to refer to the officers of the *Corpo forestale dello Stato*³⁴ (State Forestry Corp). When founded it had police powers and acted as a park ranger force, responsible for controlling and protecting the territory, particularly rural and mountainous areas. Aragorn is not only a wandering person, but he has the responsibility to protect Eriador from possible raids by orcs and trolls. In the prologue of the book, it is said that Rangers are not only hunters but also Guardians and that Hobbits have them to thank for their safety. As Aragorn himself remembers at the council of Elrond “Lonely men are we, Rangers of the wild, hunters - but hunters ever of the servants of the enemy; for they are found in many places, not in Mordor only” (Tolkien 1955: 248).

Perhaps Tolkien used the different meanings of the word *Ranger* to represent the different populations’ points of view: the people of Bree, who after the collapse of the North Kingdom continued to thrive without any central authority or government, see *Ranger* as wandering and with a negative connotation, while in Gondor, a society with a state organization, the word means a military body. However, the first definition in the Oxford English Dictionary, a warden of a forest (or a national or a state park) is the one linked to what *Rangers* effectively do, that is to say, protect people from the dangers of the wilderness.

This shows how for Tolkien the story is the context that supports the language and how the language sees its meanings made specific in the story. In my opinion, both terms *Forestale* and *Ramingo* are good translations, that is, each choice highlights one of the characteristics sacrificing the other. Perhaps, the old fans are more attached to *Ramingo* because it was the translation that accompanied them throughout adolescence and somehow it sounds more aulic than *Forestale*.

Fatica’s new translation resembles the original text because he tried to show Tolkien’s style of writing. The translator sometimes even uses English short forms in his

³²<https://www.ldoceonline.com/dictionary/ranger> Last visited on 01/10/2023.

³³<https://www.oed.com/view/Entry/158019?rskey=bXJbC2&result=1&isAdvanced=false#eid> Last visited on 01/10/2023.

³⁴<https://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/corpo-forestale-dello-stato/> Last visited on 01/10/2023.

translation that are not usually present in the Italian language. Perhaps his choices were not always the best, (e.g.: the word *pittati* or changing register for Gandalf and Frodo), however, he brought a new and fresh translation to the great story of *The Lord of the Rings*.

On the other hand, Alliata's way to show Tolkien's style is different, because she domesticated the text and created a chivalric poem, an epic text; while Fatica's text seems to be more realistic because it has been made for a different audience. It could be seen as young adult fiction for today's teens.

In an interview for the Italian newspaper *Il Giornale*, Alliata explains how around 1970 the *Astrolabio* editor asked her to translate *The Lord of the Rings*. At that time Italian people were familiar with Dante and Petrarca's epic stories, and they were familiar with the literary Italian language. In her vision, epic and chivalric poems could best represent the story created by Tolkien.

Nowadays, people, especially teens and young adults, usually prefer to read the original text of a story, because everyone, as a result of the advent of the internet, is absorbed in the English language, consumes English content, more generally speaking. Furthermore, it has become easier to acquire, consume and appreciate more the original version of a story. As Venuti (1995: 93) says: "we can more fully understand the translator's different motives and methods by considering their translation in the context of their other work, their lives, and their different historical moments".

CONCLUSIONS

This dissertation has aimed to present some of the main differences in two Italian translations of the literary text *The Lord of the Rings* in different times. This research involved the selection of some excerpts from the first book, *The Fellowship of the Ring*, as well as comparing them with the original text, and analyzing the different linguistic and translation choices.

The research has shown that the choice of using a given strategy when translating a text depends on multiple factors. Also, the cultural context is crucial in interpreting the message, and translators have to be culturally competent to deliver the intended message to each of the target audiences they are working with.

The Lord of the Rings is influenced by several features of various languages, such as Finnish, Latin, and Greek phonetics, British-Welsh languages, Christianity, mythology, ancient and modern literature, and personal experiences. To deliver the message accurately, translators need to understand the whole culture behind the text, but they also have to consider the cultural influence of their target audience.

It is recognized that in a globally interconnected world, translation plays a fundamental role in exchanging information between people speaking different languages. Translators can choose to be ‘invisible’ and deliver a translation with the appearance that the translation is not a translation but the original one, or they can choose to exclude cultural values because the translation text is a ‘place’ where the original culture is visible (Venuti 1995). Whether a translator adopts the domesticating strategy to translate a text or not, their choice can have extensive repercussions on how the text is received. The choice between foreignization and domestication does not depend only on the translator’s personal choice, but his cultural environment and scholarly formation may influence it.

Language changes through time, and each generation has its own linguistic ways of using languages even though they are imperceptible, therefore when the first two Italian translations were published, Italian people had different habits and mindsets from today’s. Precisely because the world is globally interconnected, it is easier to find texts in the original language, and for the most passionate to make comparisons between the translated text and the original one. Therefore, it can be argued that there is a greater open-mindedness among younger people in accepting a more literal translation than was

the case in the past. However, accepting a text retranslated in a more modern key can be difficult to accept for a reader who grew up with a more domesticated text, that for them feels more like ‘home’.

As we observed in the third chapter, the first two translations made in the 1970s and 2000s by Vittoria Alliata are domesticated and the linguistic and cultural differences of the English text are adjusted or erased to be understandable for the target language reader. In this way, the translator becomes invisible, because of the use of the domestication strategy involving an adherence to domestic literary canons, used to convey a sense of fluency.

Having said that, it was necessary to stress the differences between the historical contexts in which these two translations were published. During the 1970s and the 2000s, there was a preference for literary works that best represented the problems of the time. For example, *Il romanzo delle Stragi* written by Pier Paolo Pasolini to accuse political corruption during a period of workers’ struggles for workers’ rights, aimed to spark a desire for a renewal of the country. Umberto Eco is another important writer of that time, with his novel *Il Nome Della Rosa*, which indirectly talks about the events in Italy in the 70s. Although the postmodern literature of the 2000s established different genres of the novel, authors continue to rely on the great classics of the past.

In this sense, fluency is used to produce translations that do not read like translations at all. With regard to Alliata’s work, it recalls the style of the great Italian classics, recreating the epic and chivalrous style, with a view to rendering the archaisms present in the original text.

If Fatica’s 2019 translation is compared to Alliata’s translations and to the original text, one could criticize Alliata’s translations as generally inaccurate. For example, the general tendency of embellishing the language of the text when the register used in the original text is lower, or using double adjectives that are not present in the original text such as *brief visit* that becomes *breve capatina*, where “capatina” already means “short visit”.

However, it is legitimate to talk about the strategy of cultural substitution, where the expression of the source language is replaced with a word that does not have the same propositional meaning, but has a similar impact on the target language. For example, “a party of special magnificence” becomes *una festa sontuosissima*, and “there was much

talk and excitement” becomes *si mise in agitazione* which is a typical Italian idiomatic sentence.

In contrast to Alliaata’s invisible style, the strength of Fatica’s translation is the adherence to the original text. However, sometimes, this strength becomes a weakness because, as said in Chapter 1, the equivalence of meaning between two languages cannot be established at the same level. A word in one language may be translated with a phrase into the other language, and the ability to master a foreign idiomatic expression has to go far beyond the ability to master the literal meaning of a sentence or word.

For translators, it is not always simple to choose between what is accurate and what is natural. From the analysis it has emerged that Ottavio Fatica recognized the archaisms of Tolkien’s style and tried to make them visible, without considering domesticating the text. He attempted to maintain the original culture and style of writing that lies behind the story, even when he uses the more concise English form which, does not sound clear in the Italian translated language. On the other hand, Vittoria Alliaata’s illusion of transparency leads the reader to think that her style is Tolkien’s style.

To conclude, we can say that, in the 1970s and 2000s the translations of Tolkien’s work into Italian attempted to domesticate the original language. One reason for this might be that people at the time were not ready to interpret and accept the Anglo-Saxon cultural background that Tolkien put in his novel. Therefore, Alliaata decided to domesticate the original text, making her readers experience the story as an epic poem, a genre they were familiar with considering the classical literary education of the Italian school system of the time.

On the other hand, Ottavio Fatica’s translation aimed to find a balance between the literal translation and the re-proposal of the original mythological meanings in present-day Italian language and sensibility. His translation appears to be young adult fiction for today’s teens, who perceive classic poems as far apart from their reality.

The 2000s translation was more appreciated because there were no other translations to compare it with, and was not common to read foreign texts in their original language, in the same way and with the same ease with which it can be done today. Today’s relationship between literature and society is different from the one of the past.

It is essential to produce an accurate translation, but it is also important to use a common target language, that is familiar to the target reader. Having said that, there is no way to consider one translation better than the other since it is necessary to consider the cultural background in which the translation is produced and consumed.

Regarding Alliaata's translation, it is remarkable to remember that when she was a teenager, she was able to render such an epic text in Italian with the education that could be achieved by a young woman in the 70s. She tried to make readers feel the comfort they needed to comprehend a story as far-reaching as *The Lord of the Rings*. Fatica's mastery goes hand in hand with that of his colleague. He tried to create a translation that could do justice to both the original text, considering the interests and way of being of the new generation of teens and young adults.

As can be seen from this study, the translator's work does not consist of the simple literal translation of the text, so it is not possible to determine which of the three translations is the best one as each presents its strengths and weaknesses.

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ITALIAN SUMMARY

In questo studio si andranno ad analizzare alcune differenze linguistiche tra tre traduzioni italiane e il testo originale del romanzo epico *Il Signore degli Anelli*. Nello specifico verranno analizzati alcuni estratti dal primo volume *La Compagnia dell'Anello*. Verrà mostrato come ciascuna traduzione differisca in vari aspetti linguistici, come la traduzione del testo esaminato sia cambiata nel corso degli anni, tenendo in considerazione il periodo in cui è stata prodotta, le preferenze e le conoscenze dei traduttori.

Gli aspetti linguistici analizzati si concentrano sulle differenze nelle strutture sintattiche tra le traduzioni e il testo originale, sul tentativo di rimanere il più fedele possibile al testo originale in una traduzione, in contrapposizione all'uso idiomatico di parole italiane per rendere il testo più chiaro al lettore nell'altra.

Nel 2019 è stata pubblicata una nuova versione del romanzo che sembra aderire maggiormente al testo originale comparata con la prima traduzione degli anni 1970, e successivamente con la versione rivisitata degli anni 2000, divenuta la più famosa in Italia.

Questo studio è nato dall'interesse di capire il motivo per cui le traduzioni italiane siano così differenti tra loro e il motivo per cui molti lettori italiani siano rimasti insoddisfatti dall'ultima traduzione pubblicata.

Lo scopo principale di questo studio è quindi quello di comparare le tre traduzioni italiane con il testo originale dal punto di vista linguistico, analizzando le differenti competenze necessarie per tradurre un testo letterario, le strategie di traduzione e il ruolo che l'equivalenza svolge nella traduzione.

Il primo capitolo della tesi fornisce un'introduzione generale sulla disciplina accademica circa lo studio della traduzione. Lo studioso James S. Holmes scrisse nel 1972 l'articolo "*Il Nome e la natura degli studi sulla traduzione*", ancora oggi considerato la base della disciplina. Holmes, divide la disciplina in due aree principali: gli studi sulla traduzione pura e gli studi sulla traduzione applicata. La prima ha il duplice obiettivo di descrivere i fenomeni traduttivi nel momento in cui vengono tradotti e di sviluppare principi per descrivere e spiegare tali fenomeni. Mentre la seconda si focalizza sui metodi

di insegnamento, gli ausili utilizzati per tradurre (dizionari, grammatiche, tecnologie informatiche) e la valutazione delle traduzioni.

Durante la seconda metà del ventesimo secolo, con lo sviluppo dello studio sulla traduzione, è nata la necessità di cercare un modo per insegnare al meglio come tradurre, al fine di valorizzare le diverse competenze acquisite in una o più lingue straniere. I traduttori sviluppano la loro competenza professionale sulla traduzione secondo diverse componenti come: la complessità del testo, il livello di conoscenza della lingua che dovrebbe essere allo stesso livello della lingua madre, e il carattere approssimativo delle conoscenze specialistiche.

I cinque parametri essenziali che un traduttore deve sviluppare riguardano: competenze linguistiche, testuali, culturali, competenze disciplinari e la competenza di trasferimento. La competenza linguistica è una conoscenza linguistica innata e quindi implicita, poichè le persone non hanno un accesso consapevole dei principi e regole che governano l'unione di suoni, parole e frasi. Tuttavia essi riconoscono quando questi principi vengono violati.

La competenza testuale è legata all'abilità di capire e analizzare tipi di testi differenti, scritti e orali, in diversi campi e in diverse lingue, in modo da utilizzare un lessico adeguato al tipo di testo da tradurre.

La competenza disciplinare è l'insieme delle conoscenze nell'area della traduzione. È importante sottolineare come il traduttore non sia tenuto a conoscere ogni cosa, ma piuttosto deve sapere dove cercare e come utilizzare gli strumenti di ricerca. Un traduttore deve essere culturalmente competente, ovvero deve possedere una comprensione approfondita delle sfumature culturali del pubblico di partenza e di destinazione, per comunicare efficacemente i messaggi dalla lingua originale al pubblico della lingua di destinazione.

La competenza di trasferimento è l'abilità nel trasferire in modo comunicativo un messaggio dal testo di partenza a quello di destinazione. A questa competenza si affiancano le altre sopra menzionate, dove il traduttore deve possedere le conoscenze linguistiche, necessarie e non, riguardanti il testo da tradurre.

Al giorno d'oggi, in un mondo globalmente interconnesso, la traduzione gioca un ruolo chiave nello scambio di informazioni tra persone che parlano diverse lingue. Lo studioso Lawrence Venuti critica come la figura del traduttore sia invisibile. Venuti usa

il termine “invisibilità” (*invisibility*) che nasce da due fenomeni: l’uso dell’inglese da parte del traduttore che tende a tradurre fluentemente, per produrre un testo nella lingua di arrivo, attraverso espressioni idiomatiche e facilmente comprensibili creando l’illusione della trasparenza; e la predominanza di testi tradotti in Inglese rispetto alle altre culture.

Venuti discute dell’invisibilità attraverso due tipi di strategie di traduzione: la domesticazione e l’estraniamento. Nella domesticazione il traduttore porta l’autore del testo originale verso il lettore, optando per una traduzione fluente, eliminando le differenze culturali nel testo di origine, e rimanendo invisibile. Nell’estraneamento, il traduttore porta il lettore verso l’autore del testo originale. In questo caso la cultura originaria del testo è visibile anche nel testo tradotto.

Agli inizi del diciannovesimo secolo, la strategia di domesticazione era radicata nella pratica di traduzione della lingua inglese con l’intento di mettere in luce un discorso trasparente, poichè la domesticazione comporta un’adesione ai canoni letterari nazionali sia nella scelta di un testo straniero che nello sviluppo di un metodo traduttivo. La scelta di un traduttore di domesticare un testo o meno, può avere ampie ripercussioni su come il testo viene recepito. La determinazione di quale di queste due strategie è utilizzata dipende da una ricostruzione della formazione culturale in cui la traduzione viene prodotta e consumata, ed è necessario conoscere il riferimento alla mutevole gerarchia dei valori nella cultura della lingua di arrivo.

Il concetto di equivalenza è stato la questione centrale negli studi sulla traduzione da parte di esperti e studiosi di traduzione a causa della sua importanza e crucialità. L’equivalenza rappresenta il punto di equilibrio tra due opposti, ovvero la migliore accuratezza possibile rispetto al testo di partenza, e l’accuratezza linguistica in base al contesto nella lingua di arrivo. Lo studioso Catford crede che il significato di un testo possa essere analizzato a livelli o unità differenti, poiché esistono significati fatti da parole, frasi e proposizioni. Tuttavia, non può essere stabilita una completa equivalenza tra due unità in due lingue differenti, poiché una parola in una lingua può richiedere una frase in un’altra. Perché il messaggio risulti equivalente sia nel testo di partenza che in quello di arrivo, le unità devono essere diverse.

Mona Baker analizza l’equivalenza su livelli differenti tenendo in considerazione i problemi in cui potrebbero incorrere i traduttori durante il processo di traduzione,

offrendo varie strategie per trovare una soluzione quando non è presente una parola nel testo di arrivo che esprima lo stesso significato della parola del testo originale. Tra le varie strategie le più comuni sono: la traduzione attraverso una parola più generica, e la sostituzione culturale, ovvero quando l'espressione, o l'elemento della lingua di partenza è sostituito con una parola o un elemento che non ha lo stesso significato proposizionale ma ha un impatto simile sulla lingua di destinazione.

Baker distingue quattro tipi di significato: il significato proposizionale è messo in discussione quando una traduzione è descritta come imprecisa. Il significato espressivo si riferisce ai sentimenti di chi parla, piuttosto che a ciò a cui si riferiscono le parole o espressioni. Il significato evocativo riguarda la variazione dialettale del registro linguistico, dove un dato registro è la versione della lingua che il parlante considera appropriata in una situazione specifica. Il significato presupposto è correlato a restrizioni di co-concorrenza basate su quali parole o espressioni si suppone siano prima o dopo una particolare unità lessicale.

È quindi importante produrre una traduzione accurata ma è altrettanto importante ricordare che l'utilizzo di un linguaggio di destinazione comune, familiare al lettore di destinazione, gioca un importante ruolo nel mantenere i canali di comunicazione aperti.

Il secondo capitolo della tesi si focalizza sulla biografia e la produzione letteraria di John Ronald Reuel Tolkien, autore del romanzo epico *Il Signore degli Anelli*. Inizialmente nato come sequel de *Lo Hobbit*, muterà successivamente per essere il sequel de *Il Silmarillion*. *Il Signore degli Anelli* è stato pubblicato tra il 1954 e il 1955 in tre volumi separati e successivamente tradotto in tutte le principali lingue europee e non europee come il giapponese e l'ebraico. Tolkien, amante e studioso di lingue, creò anche una guida approfondita sui nomi e toponimi del romanzo, chiamata "Nomenclatura de *Il Signore degli Anelli*", per assistere i traduttori nel processo di traduzione della storia.

Tolkien nacque il 3 gennaio del 1892 in Sud Africa, per poi trasferirsi con la famiglia, durante la sua giovinezza, in Inghilterra. Studiò diverse lingue tra cui sanscrito, gotico, latino, norreno e, inglese antico. Diventò Ufficiale durante la prima Guerra Mondiale nel 1914 e durante quegli anni creò il personaggio di Sam Gamgee, come riflesso del soldato semplice inglese, poiché il suo progetto era quello di creare una nuova mitologia specificatamente per l'Inghilterra.

Tolkien ha trascorso una parte significativa della sua vita a creare e sviluppare diverse lingue, in particolare le sue due più famose: *Quenya* e *Sindarin* che verranno utilizzate per persone, luoghi e oggetti ne *Il Signore degli Anelli* e ne *Lo Hobbit*.

Secondo Tolkien, gli elementi fondamentali nel processo di creazione di una lingua sono quattro: la creazione di parole che suonino esteticamente piacevoli, un senso di appropriatezza tra la parola e il suo significato, la costruzione di una grammatica elaborata, e la composizione di uno sfondo storico di fantasia per una lingua inventata, compreso il senso del suo ipotetico cambiamento nel tempo.

Il Signore degli Anelli ha varie traduzioni italiane, di cui tre sono le principali. La più vecchia risale al 1970, pubblicata da Rusconi e tradotta da Vittoria Alliata di Villafranca. Questa traduzione fu in seguito rivisitata e corretta dal traduttore Quirino Principe, e pubblicata negli anni 2000 da Bompiani. Le maggiori differenze tra queste due edizioni sono relative a errori di traduzione, principalmente riguardanti la nomenclatura e le poesie. Ottavio Fatica ha tradotto la versione del 2019 pubblicata da Bompiani con l'intento di rinnovare i classici contemporanei nel rispetto degli autori e dei lettori. Dopo la pubblicazione della nuova traduzione sono sorte numerose controversie da parte dei lettori e dalla stessa Vittoria Alliata.

Il terzo e ultimo capitolo presenta un'analisi delle tre traduzioni italiane confrontate con alcuni estratti del testo originale tratti dal primo libro *La Compagnia dell'Anello*. Una descrizione generale di alcuni dati raccolti aprirà il capitolo per poi proseguire con il confronto tra le traduzioni e il testo in inglese, e il motivo per cui i traduttori italiani hanno fatto determinate scelte. Il confronto delle traduzioni riguarderà anche i registri linguistici utilizzati nel testo originale e le principali modifiche riguardanti la traduzione di nomi e toponimi di cui i lettori si sono maggiormente lamentati. Tutti gli estratti utilizzati per questo confronto e analisi sono tratti dal testo originale e dalle tre traduzioni italiane. Infine, un confronto generale delle scelte fatte dai traduttori italiani concluderà lo studio.

È riconosciuto che in un mondo globalmente interconnesso, la traduzione svolge un ruolo fondamentale nello scambio di informazioni tra persone che parlano lingue diverse. Le lingue cambiano nel tempo, e ogni generazione ha i suoi modi linguistici di usare le lingue, anche se impercettibili, quindi quando sono state pubblicate le prime due traduzioni italiane, gli italiani avevano abitudini e mentalità diverse da quelle di oggi.

Proprio perché il mondo è globalmente interconnesso, oggi è più facile trovare testi in lingua originale. Pertanto, si può sostenere che c'è una maggiore apertura mentale tra i giovani, nell'accettare una traduzione più letterale rispetto al passato. Tuttavia, può essere difficile accettare un testo ritradotto in chiave più moderna, per un lettore cresciuto con un testo più addomesticato, che percepisce come "casa".

Come si evince dal terzo capitolo di questa tesi, le prime due traduzioni realizzate negli anni 1970 e 2000 da Vittoria Alliaata sono addomesticate e le differenze linguistiche e culturali del testo originale vengono adattate o cancellate per essere comprensibili al lettore italiano. In questo modo, il traduttore diventa invisibile, facendo aderire il testo ai canoni letterari domestici, utilizzati per trasmettere un senso di fluidità. Alliaata addomestica il testo richiamando lo stile dei grandi classici italiani, ricreando lo stile epico e cavalleresco, nell'ottica di rendere gli arcaismi presenti nel testo originale. Il motivo della sua scelta può essere dato dal fatto che in passato le persone non erano pronte ad interpretare ed accettare lo sfondo culturale anglosassone che Tolkien ha inserito nel suo romanzo.

In contrasto con lo stile invisibile di Alliaata, la forza della traduzione di Fatica è l'aderenza al testo originale. Tuttavia, a volte, questa forza diventa una debolezza poiché l'equivalenza di significato tra due lingue non può essere stabilita allo stesso livello. Una parola in una lingua può essere tradotta con una frase nell'altra lingua, e la capacità di padroneggiare un'espressione idiomatica straniera deve andare ben oltre la capacità di padroneggiare il significato letterale di una frase o parola. La traduzione di Fatica mira a trovare un equilibrio tra la traduzione letterale e la riproposizione dei significati mitologici originali nella lingua e nella sensibilità italiana contemporanea. Riconosce gli arcaismi dello stile di Tolkien e cerca di renderli visibili, mantenendo la cultura e lo stile di scrittura originali. La sua narrazione sembra essere una narrativa per giovani adulti di oggi, che percepiscono i grandi classici lontani dalla loro realtà.

La principale conclusione che emerge da questo studio è che la scelta nell'uso di una determinata strategia di traduzione dipende da molteplici fattori. È cruciale il contesto culturale per interpretare il messaggio e i traduttori devono essere culturalmente competenti per trasmettere il messaggio previsto a ciascuno dei destinatari. La traduzione degli anni 2000 è stata maggiormente apprezzata anche perché non erano presenti altre traduzioni da mettere a confronto, ma soprattutto non era usuale leggere testi stranieri in

lingua originale, nello stesso modo e con la stessa facilità con cui è possibile oggi. È essenziale produrre una traduzione accurata, ma è anche importante utilizzare una lingua di destinazione comune, che sia familiare al lettore di destinazione. Detto questo, non c'è modo di considerare una traduzione migliore dell'altra, in quanto ogniuna presenta i suoi punti di forza e di debolezza, oltre alla necessità di considerare lo sfondo culturale in cui la traduzione viene prodotta e consumata.