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A Study in Scarlet: a comparative analysis of three Italian retranslations of the first Sherlock Holmes novel

Relatrice
Prof.ssa Fiona Clare Dalziel

Laureanda
Linda Bonafè
n° matr.1220035 / LMLCC

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Introduction

The aim of this thesis is to compare three different retranslations of the same literary work, which is the first Sherlock Holmes novel written by Arthur Conan Doyle in 1887, *A Study in Scarlet*. The choice fell on this specific book because it has been retranslated many more than three times throughout the 20th and the 21st centuries, thus allowing me to explore both how the Italian language has changed throughout this period and the dynamics in approaches to translation. In order to give an overall view of these changes, I chose three retranslations produced in different periods of time: the first one was produced in 1958, the second one in 1979, and the third one in 2020, which is currently the latest one. After a meticulous reading of the three retranslations and of the original version, a list containing the most evident differences was drawn up: each one of them has been classified according to the specific translation strategy applied by the translators.

The thesis is divided into three chapters. The first chapter is focused on translation theory: it explains how the Translation Studies discipline has been born, and some of the key concepts regarding literary translation, that is the concept of equivalence and those of domestication and foreignisation. The last section of the chapter is centred upon the phenomenon of retranslation, which is the main subject of this thesis: it introduces the topic by illustrating the first attempt at studying retranslation from an academic perspective with the Retranslation Hypothesis, postulated in 1990, and then by addressing the issue of the reasons which lead one to retranslate a work that has already been translated.

The second chapter deals with the comparison of the three retranslations and the original text. In order to carry out such a comparison, it has been necessary to analyse the differences found in the three versions, explaining the reasoning behind some specific translation choices in reference to the source text.

The third and last chapter is an attempt to assess the quality of the three retranslations. The first part of the chapter is more focused on the theoretical aspects of translation quality assessment, which include the criteria the translation critic has to follow in order to complete his/her task in a correct and objective way.

The last part of the chapter constitutes an attempt at evaluating these three retranslations, taking into account the original version. The evaluation reflects on the period of time in which each version was produced and published, which affects the type of language used by the translator, and the type of audience addressed, both by the source text and the retranslations. In this thesis it is possible to observe how time produces changes in the language usage. This will be discussed in the concluding section.

Chapter 1

An Introduction to Retranslation

In this first chapter I will explore the concept of translation and translation theory with reference to Translation Studies, a term introduced by James Holmes in 1972 to define the study of translation as an academic discipline. I will focus in particular on literary translation, explaining the various concepts surrounding this specific field of Translation Studies, such as equivalence, domestication and foreignization. This will lead to the major subject of the thesis: retranslation. This last phenomenon, first introduced in 1990, is still very much debated among translation scholars. In order to better understand it, I will present different points of view by different scholars.

1.1 Translation Studies

Translation is the process of transferring a text from one language into another and it generally involves two different languages: the Source Language (SL), that is the language of the Source Text (ST), and the Target Language (TL), the language in which the Target Text (TT) is produced. There are different types of translation: *Interlingual Translation* is the most common, and well known, type, and it designates “an interpretation of verbal signs by means of some other language”; *Intralingual Translation* happens within the same language, and this is why it is also called “*rewording*”; *Intersemiotic Translation* can happen within the same language (although this is not necessary) by using some other forms of communicative means other than verbal signs (Jakobson 1959/2012 in Munday 2001: 9). It is interesting to notice how Jakobson uses the term *verbal signs*: since he was a linguist he considers translation as a semiotic transfer of signs, interpreted as lexical items and/or grammatical structures, thus exploring it as a “matter of words” (Snell-Hornby 2006: 21). According to Jakobson (1959 in Bassnet 1980), it is basically impossible to achieve complete equivalence between the ST and the TT, because every language is the representation of a different social context

(Sapir 1956 in Bassnet 1980: 22). I will further discuss the concept of equivalence in the next section.

Translation Studies is the term used to identify the study of translation as an academic subject. It was first introduced by the American scholar James Holmes in a 1972 paper, published posthumously in 1988. The paper (in Venuti 2000) lists the various impediments in the way of the development of a proper research field assigned to the study of translation as a science, the first being the choice of the name to assign to such a field. The author considered the terms used in translation theories up until that point (i. e., art, craft) to be too generic to describe this new field of research. He was more attracted to terms that, during that period of time, were still neologisms, such as those formed with the addition of a suffix, such as the French *traductologie*. However, its English version *translatology* was considered by Holmes as too abstract to designate the descriptive study of texts. Holmes looked for the right terminology also among German compounds containing the word *Wissenschaft*, again rejecting these options, objecting that “not all *Wissenschaften* can be called sciences” (Holmes 1988 in Venuti 2000: 175). The choice fell on *Translation Studies*, which was adopted as the standard term of the discipline in 1972 and still used.

As for the second impediment, Holmes named “the lack of general consensus as to the scope and structure of the discipline” (Holmes 1988 in Venuti 2000: 175). It was not clear which would have been the “tangible” subject of the field of research. In almost all cases of new research fields, it is quite easy to mistake it with earlier ones, in this case comparative linguistics and translation theory. Holmes clarified that Translation Studies is neither of these. The definition accepted by Holmes is that of Koller: “Translation studies is to be understood as a collective and inclusive designation for all research activities taking the phenomena of translating and translation as their basis or focus” (Koller 1971: 4 in Venuti 2000: 176). This definition designates Translation Studies as an empirical discipline, and, as all empirical disciplines, its aim is to, in the words of Hempel (1967: 1 in Venuti 2000: 176) “to describe particular phenomena in the

world of our experience and to establish general principles by means of which they can be explained and predicted". It is a field of pure research that can be divided into two branches: *descriptive translation studies (DTS)* and *theoretical translation studies (ThTS)*.

As far as DTS is concerned, it can be divided into three subcategories, based on their focus: *product-oriented*, *function-oriented* and *process-oriented*. *Product-oriented DTS* is centred upon the study of individual translations, at first, then comparing them to other translations of the same text. Its purpose is to provide new material for surveys of larger corpora of translation. *Function-oriented DTS* is more focused on the context, describing the function of the translation in the receiving socio-cultural environment. *Process-oriented DTS* is the study of the proper act of translating, the process of translation. It analyses the way in which the translator carries out a translation task, from a psychological point of view, even though, at least at that time, almost no investigation had been made under laboratory conditions (Holmes 1988 in Venuti 2000: 176-7).

The main interest of ThTS is formulating principles on the basis of DTS findings to explain what translation, and the translation act, is and predict what it will be in the future. So, the main goal of the translation theorist is to develop a theory which would be able/enabling him/her to include everything related to translation and translating. Needless to say, a general translation theory, however possible, is extremely difficult to achieve, because of the enormous ground covered by the field of translation. According to Holmes (1988), most of the translation theories formulated until then cannot be considered general, for they deal with one or few of the many and many aspects of translation theory. He named these theories *partial translation theories*, and regrouped them into six categories. *Medium-restricted theories* are based on the medium that is used (human translation, which can be further divided into oral and written translation, machine translation and machine-aided translation). *Area-restricted theories*, the restrictions being the languages (related to comparative linguistics and stylistics) and the cultures involved: *Rank-restricted theories* deal with texts in their entirety

and are particularly focused on the lower linguistic levels, thus excluding word and sentence levels. *Text-type-restricted theories* are focused on the problems arising from translating specific text genres. *Time-restricted theories* are concerned with the translation of contemporary texts and/or texts dating back to a previous time period. Finally, *problem-restricted theories* are confined to one or more specific problems of the whole general translation theory area, problems such as the translation equivalence (which will be discussed later) or, on a more specific note, the translation of proper names and metaphors, just to give some examples. Holmes (1988) claims that these theories can combine with each other: a literary scholar could easily develop a theory which is both medium and text-type restricted, and maybe also culture-restricted.

The need to study translation from an academic point of view arises from the inherently problematic nature of the translation process itself. During the last fifty years Translation Studies have become more and more prominent: specialised translating and interpreting courses have significantly increased, as have the number of conferences, books and journals centred upon translation. As a consequence, we have witnessed a growing demand for tools that are nowadays essential for a professional translator, for example online dictionaries, terminological databases, CAT tools, encyclopaedias, handbooks and introductory texts. Since translation has become a proper job, and is not just a hobby as it was in the past, many international organisations have been founded: the *Fédération Internationale des Traducteurs*, the *European Society for Translation Studies*, the *American Translation and Interpreting Studies Association*, just to name a few (Munday 2001: 10-13).

1.2 Literary Translation

Literary translation is a specific field of Translation Studies. It refers to the translation of literary works, be they poetry or prose. Bassnet (1980) points out that there is plenty of literature regarding poetry translation, as it is considered more difficult to carry out than prose translation: poetry is generally considered a

higher level of literature, with a more complicated structure than that of the novel, and therefore it apparently is more arduous to translate, and consequently it is a rather common subject to face for a great number of translators and scholars. Prose translation might seem an easier textual structure, both to comprehend and to translate, though this does not mean it is not problematic in some other way. A novel, in the vast majority of cases, is a much longer text than a poem, and it can be said that this is, although indirectly, the main difficulty for a prose translator, not so much for the length of the text itself but for what it implies, that is the text of a novel must be translated as whole. To clarify, Bassnet (1980) describes how she conducted an experiment on her students: she gave them the first paragraph of a novel they had never read (or they had read some time earlier) to translate: as an obvious result, they would start to translate the text they are given from its very beginning, not taking into account how that first paragraph will somehow relate to the whole text later on. Since the subject of this dissertation is the comparison and the analysis of three different translations of the first Sherlock Holmes novel, I will focus solely on prose translation from now on.

Belloc (1931 in Bassnet 1980: 120-1) postulated a set of general rules for the prose translator to follow in order carry out a good novel translation, which can be summarised as follows:

- 1) The translator should translate the literary work as a whole unit: to do so, he/she should divide the text into sections, understand the sense of each section and the way in which he/she should convey the message to the target audience.
- 2) The translator should translate “idiom by idiom”: it is rarely possible to literally translate an idiom maintaining its original meaning, for it might not be the same in the TL.
- 3) The translator should translate, but maybe it is more correct to say *render* in this case, “intention by intention”: again, he/she should be careful when it comes to literal translation, and should take into account the context.

- 4) Belloc (1931) warns the translator against false friends (similar lexical items between SL and TL but with a completely different meaning).
- 5) The translator should not be afraid to “transmute boldly”: a literary text, be it the original or a translated version, is a creative work of art, and it gives the author/translator the chance to be creative with language; as Belloc (1931) writes, the essence of translating “is the resurrection of an alien thing in a native body”.
- 6) The translator should not add anything that is not essential to convey the message, that is, he/she should never “embellish”.

If the translator follows these rules, his/her translation could be defined as an equivalent of the ST. This last statement is not as straightforward as it seems. Equivalence is a key concept in Translation Studies, and it has been investigated by different scholars, who have come to the conclusion that there are several types of equivalence.

1.2.1 Equivalence

Equivalence is generally defined as “a relationship between two texts: a source text (ST) and a target text (TT)”. (Kenny 2001 in Baker, Saldanha 2009). Equivalence is a key concept in Translation Studies, and also one of the most controversial. Some translation theorists claim that such concepts are not important or even damaging to Translation Studies, while others take a rather neutral position towards it, admitting to be willing to use the notion of equivalence only because it is now well-established in the translator’s mind, not because it could be important from a theoretical point of view (Baker 1992: 5-6 in Baker, Saldanha 2009). Because of its controversial nature, many scholars have focused on this topic, and have suggested various typologies of equivalence, based on the level affected by it (word, sentence, or text level) and on the type of meaning (pragmatic, for example). Below are some scholars’ classifications.

Nida (1964 in Venuti 2012: 126-140) identifies two types of equivalence: *formal* and *dynamic*. He claims that *formal equivalence* is particularly focused on

the transfer of the message from the SL to the TL, paying special attention to both form and content. The aim of formal equivalence is to convey the message, maintaining the correspondence between the linguistic elements of both languages. On the other hand, *dynamic equivalence* still aims at conveying the same message from the SL to the TL, but taking into account the contextual difference between the two languages, thus allowing for greater freedom of expression. Obviously, among these two poles there is a large number of intervening grades.

Like Nida, Pym (2007) finds two kinds of equivalence. He realises that a rather large number of translation theories define translation as a transfer of equivalents from the SL to the TL. This is where Pym (2007) wants to draw our attention: the unidirectionality of the process, meaning that equivalents would exist only in the TL (*directional equivalence*). The theories taken into consideration (Pym refers to Oettinger, Catford, Nida and Taber, Wilss) do not give any explanation as to why equivalence would apparently be a one-way relation/phenomenon. Moreover, the equivalent itself is something different in each one of these theories: Oettinger (1960) talks about “elements of a language”, Catford (1965) “textual material”, Nida and Taber (1969) “the message”, and Wilss (1982) “source-language text”. The other kind of equivalence is named by Pym (2007) natural. *Natural equivalence* is that sort of equivalence that can go both ways, and it is unclear which term is the source and which term is the translation: the correspondence existed before the act of translation.

Unlike his colleagues, Popovič (1976 in Bassnet 1980: 33) has been able to identify four different kinds of equivalence:

- 1) *Linguistic equivalence*: this is the case where it is possible to translate word-for-word, since there is correspondence on the linguistic level.
- 2) *Paradigmatic equivalence*: the correspondence lies between the grammatical elements of the text.
- 3) *Stylistic (translational) equivalence*: where a SL expression can be translated with a TL expression having the same meaning (functional equivalence between the linguistic elements).

- 4) *Textual (syntagmatic) equivalence*: where there is correspondence of the form and shape of the text (syntagmatic structure).

One of the translation fields in which equivalence is fundamental is that of translation quality assessment (House, 2016). Translations are “doubly constrained” texts, in the sense they are heavily influenced “by their originals and their new recipient’s communicative conditions” (House, 2016: 76). Therefore, we can talk about “equivalence relation”, that is the relation between the ST and TT. According to House (2016), this relation can be relevant in the consideration of different aspects or levels of the ST and TT, such as extra-linguistic circumstances, connotative and aesthetic values, audience design and textual norms usage. The translator will decide the hierarchic order he/she wants to follow, but pragmatic equivalence is usually the most relevant one, since it refers to the meaning preservation between source language and culture and target language and culture. In this instance, three different aspects of meaning are particularly important: semantic, pragmatic, and textual aspects. While referring to equivalence, the first two are taken into consideration: a translation consists in the substitution of the ST with a pragmatically and semantically equivalent TT, that is what makes an adequate translation; it is important to bear in mind that the principal prerequisite of equivalence is that the TT must have the exact same function as the ST (House, 2016). Equivalence is a central topic in Translation Studies. It is clear from these classifications that translation theorists have very different opinions on the subject, and therefore further investigation is very much needed.

1.2.2 Domestication vs. foreignization

As I have mentioned above, during the second half of the 20th century translation became the subject of academic studies, and therefore we can safely say that translation is indeed an independent discipline. However, it is not a science, especially in the case of literary translation. A text, especially a literary work (obviously, when we refer to technical translation, things may be a little different) offers a wide range of possible translations, and as long as the message is correctly

conveyed to the target culture, we can accept those translations. When it comes to translating a novel there are generally two directions: the translator can produce a domesticated translation or a foreignised translation.

Similarly to the concept of equivalence, the notions of domestication and foreignization are particularly important in the specific field of literary translation for the reasons I have just explained, and the debate on these subjects is still very much open. The two terms were first introduced and defined by Venuti in 1995. He defined domestication as the translator's will to "make his or her work 'invisible', producing the illusory effect of transparency that simultaneously masks its status as an illusion: the translated text seems 'natural', i. e., not translated" (Venuti 1995: 5). By doing so, the translator "becomes" the author of the TT, since the domesticated translation is supposed to meet the expectations of the target reader. The secret to achieve such a kind of translation lies in the ability of the translator to produce a TT which is as fluent as the text produced in the SL, i. e., the original. It is the translator's responsibility/duty to bring the translated text as close as possible to the target reader/culture, distancing it from the original version.

As far as the concept of foreignization is concerned, Venuti states that a "foreignizing translation signifies the difference of the foreign text, yet only by disrupting the cultural codes that prevail in the target language" (Venuti 1995: 20), justifying it as "a form of resistance against ethnocentrism and racism, cultural narcissism and imperialism" (Venuti 1995: 20). Unlike the domesticated translation, the foreignised translation is characterised by its closeness to the ST, not only from the lexical point of view, but also on the stylistic and syntactic level. In this case, it is the target audience that has to make an effort to move toward the author (and, by extension, the SL).

A translation is considered domesticated or foreignised based on the translation procedures the translator chose to use. Vinay and Darbelnet (1958) state that there are two possible methods of translating: *direct* and *oblique*. *Direct translation* is possible where a SL element has its corresponding element in the TL. *Oblique translation* happens when, because of structural and/or metalinguistic

differences between the two languages, it is impossible to transpose the ST message without a major change in the syntactic structure or even in the lexis. In these cases, it is mandatory to apply one of the seven translation procedures identified by the theorists, which are divided into *direct* procedures and *oblique* procedures. The direct procedures are:

- 1) *Borrowing*: this is the insertion of a foreign word in a translation, and is mainly used by the translator to create a stylistic effect. This procedure is so widely used that there are borrowings that are now part of the TL lexicon, e.g., French words as *menu* or *chic* are so frequently used by English native speakers that they are no longer considered as borrowings.
- 2) *Calque*: this is a particular kind of borrowing, where the borrowed word or expression is translated literally in the TL. This translation can result in a *lexical calque*, when a new “mode of expression” is introduced in the TL while respecting the syntactic structure of the original; or a *structural calque*, when, in addition to a new mode of expression, a new syntactic structure is introduced in the TL.
- 3) *Literal translation*: it is also called *word-for-word translation* and it consists in the “direct transfer of a SL text into a grammatically and idiomatically appropriate TL text” (Vinay and Darbelnet 1958: 33). It is a very common translation procedure between languages pertaining to the same language family, and even more so if they share the same or a similar culture.

When the translator regards his/her translation as unacceptable, it means that it does not provide the same meaning as the original (or has no meaning at all), or it is structurally impossible, or it does not have a corresponding expression (if it does have one, it does not belong to the same register). If one of these cases actually happens, the translator has to resort to an oblique procedure, which are:

- 1) *Transposition*: this procedure consists in replacing/the replacement of one word class with another, maintaining the same meaning. Transposition can happen also within one language (e.g., nominalisation). It can be obligatory,

when the translator must use a transposed form because of the lack of a corresponding TL expression, or optional, when the translator may choose to translate literally or to use a transposed expression.

- 2) *Modulation*: it is a “variation of the form of the message” (Vinay and Darbelnet 1958 in Venuti 2000/2004: 89), which would be unacceptable not because of grammatical incorrectness/inconsistency, but due to its unsuitability, unidiomaticity or awkwardness if used in the TL. The authors distinguish between *free* and *fixed* modulation. The translator who chooses to resort to fixed modulation must have an excellent knowledge of both languages: he/she will know how frequently that particular expression is used and its acceptance; usually, fixed modulations are indicated in/on dictionaries. As for free modulation, it is an expression which cannot be considered wrong yet because it has never been used before, and it could end up being entirely wrong (therefore rejected) or 100% correct, thus becoming a fixed modulation.
- 3) *Equivalence*: this is the way of conveying the same message by using completely different words or syntactical structures. This method is particularly used for the translation of idioms, proverbs, and onomatopoeias. Literal translation is not forbidden, but it should be the writer’s task, not the translator’s, to provide that and to face the reaction of the target audience, which will accept or reject his/her translation.
- 4) *Adaptation*: this is applied in the extreme case in which the entire situation described in the ST does not exist in the TL. The translator has to create a new equivalent situation for the TL (adaptation is also called *situational equivalence*). As an obvious consequence, the use of this method will inevitably affect the syntactic structure and the ideas behind the text, and maybe the entire work. It is possible to avoid adaptation altogether, but there could be instances in which this will be noticeable, although it may seem difficult to understand what the problem is.

According to Van Poucke (2012), a translation can be strongly domesticated or strongly foreignised, and between the two poles there are two other gradations, moderate domestication, and moderate foreignization. Not included in this continuum is neutral translation. A translation is judged as strongly/moderately domesticated/foreignised based on the translation procedures that have been prevalently used by the translator.

A strongly foreignised translation is situated as close as possible to the ST, both on the lexico-semantic level, which includes borrowings of every kind, and on a stylistic level, where the word order, the phrase and the clause structure reflect that of the SL. When the target reader is presented with a strongly foreignised translation, he/she would most likely find it a little bit “odd”, because of the presence of cultural elements specific to the source culture, therefore unfamiliar with him/her.

Van Poucke (2012) claims that, if a translation is considered strongly domesticated, it means that it stays as close as possible to the TL, so much so that it may appear as the original version in the eyes of the target reader. There is no apparent connection between the ST and the TT. Some elements could have been added or omitted in the TT to make it more culture-specific and easier to comprehend for the target reader; to achieve/obtain a translation of this kind, in some cases the translator has to change the meaning of the text, therefore the translation does not reflect the original. Omission is a particular translation procedure typical of the strongly domesticated translation: the translator can choose to omit a single detail or a whole episode. The omission of an entire episode can be caused by different reasons, e. g., for censorship reasons. (Lefevere 1992 in Van Poucke 2012: 10).

We consider a translation as moderately foreignised if it is characterised by those procedures that slightly change its form or its meaning, while maintaining its closeness to the ST. Procedures as literal translation, sometimes with the addition of the explanation of a culture-specific element which has not been substituted by an equivalent one in the target culture (Van Poucke 2012: 8). On a

syntactic and stylistic level, transposition is the most frequently used translation procedure for this kind of translation (Vinay and Darbelnet 1958 in Van Poucke 2012: 8), since it affects only the form, not the meaning.

As far as moderate domestication is concerned, Van Poucke (2012) includes the largest set of translation procedures: transposition, modulation, equivalence (Vinay and Darbelnet), generalisation, substitution (Pedersen 2005), trope change (Chesterman 1997), cultural substitution (Baker 1992), paraphrase (Baker 1992, Chesterman 1997). All these procedures “adapt the original text to some idiomatic and stylistic norms of the TL” (Van Poucke 2012: 9); they produce a change both in the form and in the meaning, moving the TT closer to the target public’s taste and expectations.

A translation can be considered as neutral when the translator does not have to face any translation problem. This is the very reason why it is difficult to identify it, especially when the language pair taken into account include two languages belonging to different language families, and syntactic and semantic restrictions may be confused with translations procedures. There is one more phenomenon specifically connected to literary translation: retranslation. I will discuss retranslation in the next section.

1.3 Retranslation

The subject of this dissertation is the comparison and analysis of three different translations carried out by three different translators of the same literary work, to be precise the first Sherlock Holmes novel, *A Study in Scarlet*, written by Arthur Conan Doyle in 1887. This is exactly what the concept of retranslation consists in: a literary work, especially one which has become a classic throughout history, can be translated more than once, by different translators, and in different periods of time. I particularly refer to literary works because of the reason I mentioned in the previous section: a literary work is a creative body of work, and therefore it allows the translator to choose among different translation options, as long as the message received by the target audience is the same as that conveyed by the ST. This would

be impossible for technical translation, for example the translation of a software manual.

After this very generic introduction to the concept of retranslation, allow me to go more into detail. Retranslation is a subject that, in the field of Translation Studies, is relatively new, even though Goethe (1819 in Sankar et al. 2016: 20), long before the 1990s, identified three different types of translation approaches according to the order of appearance of a translation on the literary scene. The first type aims at introducing the target audience to the text, therefore this translation has to be quite domesticated, to put it in familiar words, meeting the taste and the expectations of the target public by distancing itself from the ST. The second translation identified by Goethe is a bit closer to the ST: the audience is aware of the foreign nature of the text and its original meaning, but still, the culturally foreign aspects are translated by means of the target culture (by means I mean grammatical and syntactic structures), without taking into account the necessity of some sort of adaptation, thus producing a translation which could seem a little bit strange to the target reader. Finally, the third type of translation is the one that takes a more foreignising approach with respect to the first two. It is like “a person [who] lives in different temporal-spatial worlds with the same soul but different appearances” (Sankar et al. 2016: 20). The whole concept explained by Goethe is basically the same which the *Retranslation Hypothesis* is based on: the first translation is more target-oriented, or domesticated, since it has to make first contact with the target audience and culture. The domesticating approach causes some losses in translation, which will be recovered in future retranslations, so the more a literary work is retranslated, the better its retranslations will be.

1.3.1 The Retranslation Hypothesis

The Retranslation Hypothesis (RH) postulation marks the first attempt to study retranslation from an academic perspective. It was proposed by Berman in an article published in a special issue of the journal *Palimpseste* in 1990. In the article, Berman refers exclusively to literary retranslation. He argues that the translation

act itself is characterised by its incompleteness, and the only way to overcome this incompleteness is through retranslation. By “complete” translation the scholar means a TT which is as close as possible to the ST, thus making the translation a true encounter between languages (Berman 1990 in Baker et al. 2009: 233). In other words, Berman claims that a foreignised translation is the best translation. In his view, first translations are inherently fallacious (Berman 1990 in Baker et al. 2009: 233): for editorial and cultural reasons, the alterity of the TT is overlooked, and they are often subject to cuts and changes to allow a better readability and to introduce them to the target culture (Gambier 1994 in Baker et al. 2009: 233). These statements imply that a retranslation is an improved translation, and is necessary because translations age. Not everyone agrees on this, not because it is not true, but it is an oversimplification. Moreover, there have been cases where first translations were not domesticated, as well as later ones that were not foreignised, thus disproving the RH (Koskinen and Paloposki 2003: 22 in Baker et al. 2009: 234).

Another problematic aspect of Berman’s RH is the issue of ageing. Berman states that the ST will remain forever “young”, while its translations age, hence the need to retranslate; if a translation is not affected by the ageing process, it is what Berman calls a “great translation” (1990 in Baker et al. 2009: 234). Again, this is not so simple. According to Brisset (2004 in Baker et al. 2009: 234), this involves a critical discussion on the concept of “greatness” and, by consequence, the question of literary value. From a linguistic point of view, the ageing of translations is demonstrated by changes in languages, which reveal the need to update the wording and the terminology used in previous translations (Hanna 2006 in Baker et al. 2009: 234), though this reason is quite weak, since a large number of scholars argue that there are cases of retractions of the same ST carried out during a short span of time (Pym 1998, Hanna 2006 in Baker et al. 2009: 234). Consequently, time cannot be the only factor affecting the need for retractions, thus proving Berman’s RH to be not entirely correct/logical.

The issue above is particularly evident in a 2004 study by Koskinen and Paloposki where they compare Finnish retranslations of Lewis Carroll's classic *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* (1865): of the four retranslations this book went through, the first three followed a classic foreignization process (the first one being the most domesticated, the second and the third one became gradually more foreignised); the last retranslation, which dates back to 2000, shows some elements typical of a domesticated translation, the most apparent one being the translation of the main character's name. There is clearly a specific reason behind such a choice. According to the scholars, the time factor does not justify the comeback to the domesticating approach. What affected the translator in carrying out a retranslation is the audience variation, and obviously a different audience has different tastes and expectations:

it appears that while postmodern translation theories advocate emancipatory and radical translation strategies, the actual translations of our postmodern era follow a directly opposite tendency, or it may be that the perceived 'fidelity' of the translation depends on how closely it resembles our own interpretation of the text, and contemporary translations thus appear to be more faithful than previous ones that address different audiences and meet different expectations. (Koskinen and Paloposki 2004: 33-34)

On the other hand, Venuti (2004) supports the RH, claiming that first translations do age, making retranslations necessary in order to offer "an interpretation that differs from that inscribed in a previous version, which is shown to be no longer acceptable because it has come to be judged as insufficient in some sense, perhaps erroneous, lacking linguistic correctness" (Venuti 2004 in Bucknell Review 2004: 26).

Vanderschelden (2000: 8-9) maintains that retranslators are advantaged with respect to translators because of the interval between the ST publication, the first translation, and the following retranslations. In this span of time, the target

audience has become familiar with the literary work. However, the time passing between a first translation and the retranslations could be considered sort of a disadvantage, because the retranslator, by that point, must be aware of the kind of reception the target audience gave to the first translation, though he/she can choose to ignore it.

It has already been mentioned how the notion of “first translation” is associated with “deficiency” by Berman (1990). Vanderschelden (2000) reports in her work the distinction made by Demanuelli (1990): she classifies *hot retranslations* and *cold retranslations*. The first ones are the retranslations carried out within a short span of time from the publication of the ST, thus not allowing the retranslator to “benefit from the overall view considered indispensable for the cohesion and unity of any translation”; the scholar presents the example of Scott-Moncrieff’s translation of Proust, which he had been working on while Proust was still writing the ST (2000: 9). A deep knowledge of the work, concerning the critical reception of its first translation and the fact that it could have become a classic, would have conditioned its reception, which would have been based also on the previous translations carried out up until that point: this last statement explains what a cold retranslation is, which is basically the opposite of a hot retranslation. Vanderschelden (2000) compares the concept of hot translation to Berman’s first translation: the main goal for a first/hot translation is to ensure a good readability through the naturalisation of culture-specific elements, explanations and simplifications. The more a text is retranslated, the more it grows closer to the ST, showing this closeness in the preservation of the SL stylistic elements and structure, which is possible thanks to the distance between the first translation and the latest retranslation.

Despite agreeing with Berman by stating that first translations age, hence the need for retranslation, both Venuti (2004) and Vanderschelden (2000) point out other reasons to justify retranslations, which will be discussed in the next section.

1.3.2 Why is retranslation needed?

I mentioned above that the whole RH (Berman 1990) is based on the premise that translations age, implying that retranslations should be carried out just because of the passage of time, concluding that this is not entirely true. Venuti (2004) states that there are two possibilities when it comes to retranslation: either the retranslator is aware of the existence of one or more previous translations, or he/she is not aware and therefore considers his/her translation as the first translation. In the former scenario, the retranslator may choose to use a previous translation as a starting point for his/her own work, by mentioning it in the preface.

Even though Venuti (2004) concurs with Berman (1990) on the ageing process first translations (or previous translations in general) undergo, he also points out other justifications for retranslation. In agreement with Brownlie (2006 in Baker et al. 2009: 234), who states that retranslations are also motivated by changes in translation norms and social context, Venuti highlights the case of some retranslations of works written by women, which have been relatively ignored at the time of their publication: the theorist mentions the case of the Italian writer Grazia Deledda, who used to write in Sardinian dialect, and because of this her work was regarded as a variety of regionalism. Very few of her books were translated and she remained quite marginalised compared to other authors of that same period, such as Gabriele D'Annunzio. It was only during the 1980s and the 1990s, with the increasing interest in feminism and therefore in Deledda's strong female characters, that her works attracted some feminist-oriented English-language translators, resulting in the translation, and even a retranslation, of her books. The increase in the feminist interest contributed to the translation and retranslation of other female writers' books, such as Sibilla Aleramo's *Una donna*, first translated in 1979 by Rosalind Delmar. This shows how the ageing of the translation act may have nothing to do with retranslation; in these cases retranslation was motivated by "a cultural political agenda in which a particular ideology guides the choice of a foreign author or text and the development of a retranslation strategy" (Venuti 2004: 27). Kujamäki (2001) shares Venuti's

opinion, claiming that retranslations are governed by “the context of time-bound normative conditions” (2001: 65): retranslations often coincide with ideological and political changes which inevitably vary the context of reception.

Another important role played by the act of retranslating is the preservation, and sometimes the reinforcement, of the authority of a public institution, by reasserting its interpretation of a canonical text. Venuti (2004: 27) reports how the King James Bible now represents the official Bible version of the Anglican Church. It was not the first translation of the Bible: other famous versions are those of John Wycliffe (1382) and William Tyndale (from 1525 to 1534), both considered heretical and therefore rejected.

Sometimes, it may happen that two translations are published at the same time, because of a lack of communication and coordination between publishing houses, so that it is unclear which one is the “first” translation and which one is the retranslation (Gürçağlar 2009 in Baker et al. 2009: 234-5). Often, publishers decide to issue the retranslation of a not copyrighted foreign canonical book that will ensure a profit due to a high market demand, maintaining low costs as there are no copyrights which would require the acquisition of translation rights from the author (Venuti 2004: 30).

One of the main reasons for retranslation concerns the aspect of readability (Vanderschelden 2000; Du Nour 1995 in Baker et al. 2009: 234). According to Vanderschelden, there are five justifications for retranslation: the existing translation is not satisfactory anymore, due to changes in translation norms and perception, causing misinterpretations and errors of comprehension; a newly published edition of the ST becomes the new standard version, requiring a new translation to be carried out; the existing translation is considered stylistically outdated, making its retranslation a historical update, modernising it by applying new stylistic norms and changes in the idiom usage (this reason is often the justification for the retranslation of canonised TT, which are generally used for educational purposes); the retranslation is produced to fill in a specific function in the TL, for example, in dramatic texts there could be the need to emphasise some

specific elements that in a previous translation have been disregarded or even omitted; the ST could acquire a new interpretation, causing the production of one or more retranslations at the same time, being the interpretation of a text strictly subjective and different from one person to another (Vanderschelden 2000: 3-6). This last motivation is supported by Koskinen and Paloposki (2003): they affirm that retranslation is characterised by a supplementary nature, in reference to its ability to reach a different section of the audience with a different version, thus categorising texts according to different genres. The supplementary nature of retranslation can be seen as a useful tool to introduce new material and ideas to the target culture, bringing in something that was not there before (Toury 1999 in Baker et al. 2009: 235).

Based on the motivation behind a retranslation, Pym (1998) identified two types of retranslation. He differentiated between passive retranslations and active retranslations: passive retranslations are retranslations which are geographically and historically distant, meaning that they have been produced within two different geographical regions and/or during different periods of time, hence they are characterised by significantly different linguistic and cultural elements as a sign of time and/or geographical distance. A classic example of passive retranslation is the Bible, which has been retranslated throughout centuries and all over the world. Passive retranslations do not compete with each other, in the sense that they can exist at the same time without one of the versions excluding the other(s). On the other hand, active retranslations share the same temporal and geographical/cultural location, and they challenge the validity of previous translations.

To sum up, the RH, while being the very first attempt to study retranslation from an academic point of view, is not a sufficient explanation. Different scholars have joined the discussion, bringing their own proposals in order to better illustrate the topic. As I have mentioned above, retranslation is a key concept in Translation Studies, though is still, inexplicably, somewhat disregarded among translation scholars; even though some of them have focused their investigations on the subject, there is still much more research to conduct. In the next chapter, I will take

a more practical approach: I will proceed to analyse three retranslations of the book *A Study in Scarlet*. I will carry out a comparison between the versions and between each one and the English text.

Chapter 2

Comparative Analysis

In this central chapter I will introduce the book *A Study in Scarlet* by giving a short historical background about how the character of Sherlock Holmes was born and explaining the plot line of the novel. I will then set out the different translation strategies that have been used by the three Italian translators with respect to the original version of the text: the three retranslations I will analyse were produced in 1958, in 1979 and in 2020. Finally, I will regroup each difference between the translated versions into their specific translation strategy category and carry out an analysis for each element.

2.1 Sherlock Holmes: a brief introduction

As I have repeatedly mentioned, the aim of this dissertation is the analysis and comparison of three different Italian translations of the book *A Study in Scarlet* by Arthur Conan Doyle. This book is the first Sherlock Holmes novel, where we have the chance to meet and know the famous detective. The character describes himself as a “consulting detective”, explaining that the profession was invented by him. In the preface to the Wordsworth edition, Davies (2004) writes that the author pursued medical studies to become a doctor. Unfortunately for him, this career path did not work, but it gave him the inspiration he needed in order to create Sherlock Holmes. The character is indeed based on one of Conan Doyle’s professors, Joseph Bell, who was particularly gifted in terms of observation abilities: being a doctor, he could tell people not only what kind of disease affected his patients, but also their job and residence just by noticing some apparently insignificant details. The character’s appearance was also based on that of Bell

“In height he was rather over six feet, and so excessively lean that he seemed to be considerably taller. His eyes were sharp and piercing [...]; and his thin, hawklike nose gave his whole expression an air of alertness and decision. His

chin, too, had the prominence and squareness which mark the man of determination. His hands were invariably blotted with ink and stained with chemicals, yet he was possessed of extraordinary delicacy of touch [...].”

Conan Doyle 1887 (2004: 10-1)

At first he was to be named Sherringford Holmes, but in the end the author chose Sherlock Holmes. Thanks to this book, Conan Doyle is considered as the father of the detective-fiction genre as we know it. The genre did exist earlier: Poe developed the template for the future detective stories, but he failed to make his own works attractive, for they lacked “real drama, tension and richness of characterisation” (Davies 2004: VII). Indeed, Conan Doyle started to write his first book during his free time between patients, mixing elements of Poe’s Dupin and Gaborieau’s crime novels. He then completed his creature by adding Bell’s distinctive behavioural traits. However, the author was not yet happy with his work. He concluded that Holmes could not be the one to tell the public his own adventures; he needed a plot device, someone who could report the detective’s stories while not affecting the intrigue. This role would be filled by Dr. John Watson, an educated and military man who could join Holmes in his adventures and narrate them through a journal: almost all of the Sherlock Holmes novels are narrated in first person by Watson (Davies 2004).

After several attempts to publish the novel, *A Study in Scarlet* first appeared in 1887 in *Beeton’s Christmas Annual*. It was not an immediate success, but eventually it became a global phenomenon, so much so that Conan Doyle wrote an entire series of Sherlock Holmes novels. All the success must have been literally overwhelming for the writer, who started to hate the character he created, to the point that he chose to kill him in his last face-to-face with his legendary archenemy, professor James Moriarty (del Buono 1979). The public was not happy with this decision, and this disapproval forced the author to bring his detective back to life. Conan Doyle wrote other Sherlock Holmes stories, but the resentment towards his own creation did not subside (del Buono 1979).

2.2 An introduction to the book

A Study in Scarlet is divided into two sections, “*Being a reprint from the reminiscences of JOHN H. WATSON MD late of the Army Medical Department*” and “*The Country of the Saints*”, and each part consists of seven chapters. In the first section we are introduced to both Watson and Holmes. Watson is looking for a place to stay after being sent home from Afghanistan, where he had been injured during the Second Afghan War. He meets Holmes, who is looking for someone to split the rent with, through a mutual friend. It is during their first encounter that Holmes shows his skills by guessing Watson’s profession based purely on observation. Later on, we are presented with the crime around which the plot unfolds: two American men have been murdered, but we do not know by who nor how. At the end of the first section, we finally find out who the murderer is, but we have to wait until the end of second part to find out the why and the how.

The second section seems like an entirely different story. It is set in Utah and it follows the story of a father, John Ferrier, and his adopted daughter Lucy. We meet them while they are starving and dehydrated in the middle of the desert, and right when it looks like they are about to die, they are rescued by a Mormon caravan. Father and daughter become part of the Mormon community, on the condition that they must believe in their creed and follow their rules. Yet a few years later, Lucy falls in love with Jefferson Hope, a nonbeliever. This is obviously forbidden: Lucy must marry one of the two men chosen by the community leader, or father and daughter will be assassinated. Ferrier, who never married despite the Council’s insistence, would like his daughter to marry Hope rather than a Mormon. So, Ferrier, Lucy and Hope try to escape. At first, the attempt seems successful: they reach the middle of the mountains, miles away from Salt lake City, and Hope decides to go hunting to provide some food. While he is away, the Mormons find Ferrier and Lucy; they kill the man and take the daughter back to Salt Lake City, where she is forced to marry one of the two Mormons she had been promised to. Hope eventually finds out about Lucy’s fate, but there is nothing he can do about it. Moreover, a month after the marriage, Lucy dies from depression. Hope then

swears to avenge her death by killing both of her suitors: after a schism in the Church, Stageron and Drebber (the two who indirectly killed Lucy) had to run away from Utah. Hope followed them around the world for decades, but they always managed to escape him.

At this point, we are reconnected to the first section, and it is clear that the second part of the book provides the background to the mystery. The men assassinated are in fact Drebber and Stangerson, and the murderer is Hope, who finally accomplished his mission and avenged Lucy's death. The second to last chapter of the second section starts where we had been left at the end of the first one: we finally know the motive, and Hope also explains how he killed Drebber by poisoning him, and Stangerson by stabbing him. In the last chapter, Holmes tells Watson how he managed to discover who the killer was by illustrating his reasoning.

2.3 The method

There are a huge number of differences between the three retranslations of *A Study in Scarlet*. In this thesis I will report the most relevant ones. Other than the classic linguistic (grammatical, syntactic) differences, there are many cultural items that have undergone a different kind of translation process. The analysis and comparison section of the chapter will be divided into subsections, each one corresponding to one of the translation procedures taken into account.

As far as the grammatical and syntactic differences are concerned, I will refer to the translation procedures proposed by Vinay and Darbelnet (1958) which I have already mentioned and explained in Chapter 1.2.2.: borrowing, calque, literal translation, modulation and adaptation (some of these will not be included for lack of examples). For the cultural items translation, I will refer to Newmark's (1988) translation procedures for rendering cultural references. As you may have noticed, there are two general translation procedures missing from Vinay and Darbelnet's (1958) list, that is equivalence and transposition. This is because

Newmark (1988) identified various types of equivalence (I will list them below) and, since transposition is mostly used in conveying cultural items, I have chosen to refer to Newmark's (1988) definition. Here is a description of Newmark's (1988) translation procedures:

Translation Procedure	Definition
Transfer/transliteration	transferring a SL word to a TL word because there is no corresponding term or because of stylistic and rhetorical reason (proper names, newspapers, geographical and institutional names, etc)
Naturalisation	adapting SL word to the pronunciation and then to the morphology of the TL
Cultural equivalence	replacing a cultural word with a TL one
Functional equivalence	using a culturally neutral word that serves the same function as the ST word
Descriptive equivalence	generalisation of a SL word by using a description
Componential equivalence	splitting the SL word into its sense components
Synonymy	using a near TL equivalent where there is no clear one-to-one equivalent
Through-translation	literal translation of common collocations, organisations, and the components of compounds (names of international organisations which are often known by their acronyms that may remain in English)

Transposition	changing the SL grammar to that of the TL (sing. to pl., V to N, the position of adjectives, etc.)
Recognised translation	using the official or generally accepted translation of any institutional term
Compensation	ensuring that the loss in one part of a sentence is compensated for in another part
Paraphrase	explaining the meaning of part of the SL text
Notes	providing additional info in a translation

Table 2.1 Newmark's definitions of translation procedures (1988: 81-93).

According to Newmark (1988), metaphors, and their translation, deserve a special mention. Metaphors have two specific functions within a text. The *referential function* consists in the metaphor insertion in those cases where the sense is more comprehensible and concise than by using the corresponding literal expression. The *pragmatic function* aims at attracting/fascinating the reader and giving the text some aesthetic value. These two functions act simultaneously (Newmark 1988: 104). When the literal translation appears to be perfectly correct from a grammatical point of view but makes no sense, the translator should consider the presence of a metaphorical meaning (Newmark 1988: 106).

Newmark distinguishes six different types of metaphors (1988: 106-13):

- 1) *Dead metaphors*: they are often universal, and therefore they are no longer connected to the image they have originated from. They are quite easy to translate, even if they cannot be translated literally.
- 2) *Cliché metaphors*: they are no longer useful and are often used as substitutes for clear thoughts (e. g., *every ounce of energy, at the end of the day*).
- 3) *Stock (or standard) metaphors*: they are established metaphors that have not been overused yet, so they cannot be considered dead. They are often used

to refer to a physical and/or mental situation. They should come out as naturally as possible, so they are quite difficult to translate. Different social classes or age groups use different stock metaphors. When it comes to this kind of metaphors, one of the possibilities for the translator is to try to convey the same image in the TL, taking into consideration its frequency of use and its register. The other possibility, which is more common, is to replace the SL metaphor with a TL one (if there is one), considering the frequency of use and the register as usual.

- 4) *Adapted metaphors*: they are metaphors that have to be translated with a corresponding metaphor or otherwise they will be incomprehensible.
- 5) *Recent metaphors*: they are metaphorical neologisms that have rapidly spread in the SL.
- 6) *Original metaphors*: they are created by the writer him/herself. They should be translated literally, since they convey a message coming directly from the writer (and with the message comes his/her personality, thoughts, culture) and provide the TL linguistic enrichment.

These are the main translation procedures taken into consideration while referring to literary translation. In the next section I will move onto a more practical approach by analysing and comparing the differences between the retranslations.

2.4 The comparative analysis

In order to carry out the analysis and comparison of the items listed below I will make use of the translation procedures described in the previous section. I have reported them all for the sake of knowledge, but I will not refer to all of them, since I could not find examples for each procedure in the book.

It is important to point out that the 1958 retranslation of *A Study in Scarlet* is not the first one, but the fourth. The first translation was carried out by Irma Rios in 1901 and published in the same volume alongside three other books by different authors. In this first translation, the title was completely different: it had been translated as *Un dramma misterioso*. The first retranslation, that is the second

translation, dates back to 1909 and is contained in the same volume with the second Sherlock Holmes novel, *The sign of the Four*. The translator (Cino Liviah) used the first translation as a reference and translated the title as *Uno strano delitto*. The second retranslation, dated 1911, was published on a journal (*Il romanzo della domenica*), and, once again, the title was very different from the original one: it had been called *Il segreto di Hope* (thus spoiling the name of the murderer). The 1958 retranslation, translated by Alberto Tedeschi, is the first one in which the title, *Uno studio in rosso*, is inspired by the original text. From this version the title has not changed, appearing as such in the 1979 version (translated by Maria Pia Janin) and in the 2020 version (translated by Alice Cominotti) as well.

It is interesting to notice how the title of the first translation, despite not being a literal translation as it is in the following retranslations, has been used as a reference for at least another translation, the 1909 version. This implies that, in this case, the retranslator, apparently, has used the first translation as a ST, perhaps changing some elements according to the historical and sociological changes which had been occurring at that time.

2.4.1 Omissions

Omission is one of the most frequently used translation procedures: it has been used mostly for single words or phrases, but in some instances it also affected entire sentences and, in a couple of cases, even short paragraphs. Obviously, the omitted elements are not so relevant as to prevent the conveyance of the SL message. The first example of omission can be found in the first chapter already. The first words spoken by Sherlock Holmes are *I've found it*, in reference to a reagent which can detect small particles of blood. In the 1958 retranslation, Holmes says *Ho trovato*, with no object pronoun, while in the other two retranslations he says *L'ho trovato*, translating the pronoun *it* with its Italian equivalent *lo (l')*. This might seem irrelevant, but it actually makes a difference, since using a pronoun in this particular expression gives immediately the idea of something specific, while saying *Ho trovato* usually implies *Ho trovato (una*

soluzione), in a more general sense. Here, what Holmes has found is clearly the solution to a problem, but he explains in a very detailed way what this solution is.

Another very evident omission can be found in the second chapter. Watson, in order to better understand his new roommate, makes a list of various subjects and indicates the degree of knowledge Holmes has for each subject (I will give the example of *literature*):

ST	1958	1979	2020
Knowledge of literature	Letteratura	Conoscenza della letteratura	- Conoscenza di letteratura - Filosofia

In the original version we can read *Knowledge of + subject*; in the 1958 and 2020 retranslations this element is omitted. The retranslator chose to state only the name of the subject. Again, this does not affect the meaning of the text: the description following each item clarifies the purpose of the list (along with the previous paragraph), but since the omission concerns the list in its entirety, it is a very noticeable one. Still in the second chapter, while referring to the apartment at 221B in Baker Street, Watson specifies that it is the apartment *of which he had spoken at our meeting*. This reference makes the text more cohesive, and being at the very beginning of the chapter, it is quite appropriate to use this kind of cohesive device, which does not appear in the 1958 retranslation.

In the third chapter we are introduced to some new characters, such as Gregson and Lestrade, two detectives who work for Scotland Yard. Holmes talks about them using not so flattering words, and makes fun of their professional rivalry, saying that *they are as jealous as a pair of professional beauties*. This mockery is omitted in the 1958 retranslation, where Holmes alludes just to their *rivalità professionale*. Another omitted sentence can be found later on. The sentence *There could be no doubt that the circlet of plain gold had once adorned*

the finger of a bride does not appear in the 1958 version, while it is present in the other two. Although it had already been stated that the ring was a wedding ring belonging to a woman, this sentence is a further confirmation.

Moving onto the fourth chapter, Holmes mentions that he wants to go to a *Hallé's concert to hear Norman-Neruda*. In the first two retranslations he only hints at Norman Neruda, without mentioning that the concert would be played by the Hallé Orchestra. Towards the end of the chapter, Holmes questions Watson and himself (since he earlier stated that he is *rather in the dark still*) by asking *But why should he come back to the house after leaving it?*, referring to the murderer. In the English version he further questions the both of them, although indirectly, saying *That is not the way of criminals*. This last indirect question is omitted in the 1958 retranslation, leaving that part of the dialogue to end with a direct question instead.

In chapter five and chapter six there are very few omissions, but they are quite important. The first one is the omission of the translation of *Lowlands*, in the 1958 retranslation, while talking about a book published in Liege. The translation appears in the other two versions, although I will talk about it in one of the following subsections. In the same retranslation the adjective *unwritten* has not been translated into Italian, even though it is quite relevant given that it is used to refer to some secret society's rules, and the fact that these rules are unwritten is a distinctive aspect which should have been transferred in the TT. The other important omission is that of the abbreviation *inst.*, which stands for the Latin expression *instante mense* ("the current month"). In the 1958 retranslation the day is specified, but not the month (*il martedì 4*).

Just like chapter five and six, chapter seven and the first chapter of the second part of the book also have instances of omissions which are quite relevant. The first omission concern a detail about the second man murdered, in particular what he had been doing the night before his assassination. Lestrade states that in the victim's room there was a novel *with which he had read himself to sleep*, but in the 1958 retranslation there is no reference to the fact that he had been reading

himself to sleep, but just that he had been reading a book. Later on, we find another example of omission of an entire sentence, which describes the face of an old dog: Watson describes it by saying *Indeed, its snow-white muzzle proclaimed that it had already exceeded the usual term of canine existence*. In the 1958 version, to specify the dog's old age, the retranslator just hints at its eyes, not its face. Another relevant omission is that of the part of the sentence *who is supported, as I have had occasion to prove, by another who is as clever as himself*. With this statement, Holmes refers to something that happened at the end of the fifth chapter. The episode appears in the 1958 version, but this reference has been omitted, which is quite strange, since Holmes asks the murderer about his accomplishments also during the questioning at the end of the book.

In the first chapter of the second part of the novel, the only omission concerns an "order". In this section, Watson is not the narrator anymore. There is an omniscient narrator who is describing the landscape - a desert. While describing what can be seen, the narrator encourages the reader to *approach, and examine them!*. The object "them" refers to the bones that lay on the ground. In the 1958 retranslation, the narrator simply states *sono ossa*, with no encouragement to the reader.

In the second chapter there is no mention of the *clearing* of the fields by the Mormons in the 1958 retranslation, while in the other two the retranslators opted for a more specific terminology and translated the noun *clearing* with the noun *disboscamento* (1979) and with the verbing noun *si disboscava* (2020). Another omission regards the event which led Lucy to meet Jefferson Hope, which will set off the chain of events of the whole book. Lucy is stuck in a herd of cattle while horse riding. The animals are described as *fierce-eyed, long-horned bullocks*, however this description is omitted in the 1958 retranslation.

The only omission that can be found in the third chapter is that of the adjective *adult*, referring to the women of the community: by *adult women* the narrator means women that can marry while he/she is explaining that lack of them

would put in danger the polygamy doctrine. This is why Lucy cannot marry someone who is not a Mormon. This adjective is omitted in the 1958 retranslation.

In chapter four, the narrator tells the reader how Ferrier, after the threat received by the Mormon leader, is scared of the terrors *which hung over him*. In the 1979 version this relative clause is omitted, just as the clause *peeping over each other's shoulders to the far horizon*, which we can find in the fifth chapter, is omitted in the 1958 retranslation. It refers to the peaks of the mountains, so in the English text, as well as in the other two retranslations, it is used as a figure of speech. In this same chapter of the 1958 version we find another interesting omission: it concerns quite a long sentence which, although not essential, is quite relevant. The sentence is *The bighorn - for so it is called - was acting, probably, as a guardian over a flock which was invisible to the hunter; but fortunately it was heading in the opposite direction and had not perceived him*. This omission is a little different from the ones I have analysed until now. Part of the missing sentence is summarised with another much shorter sentence, i.e., *L'animale non aveva scorto il cacciatore, [...]*: it is clearly an incomplete translation, since most of the message conveyed by the original version is not transferred to the TL.

There are a few other omissions in this chapter: a Mormon predicts to Hope that Lucy will die having seen her expression on her wedding day, and this prediction *was only too well fulfilled*, meaning that her death happened too soon. This detail is omitted in the 1979 version, where we can read that the Mormon's prediction *si avverò*. There is then another relative clause omitted in the 1958 retranslation: *which marked her as having been a bride*, referring to Lucy's wedding ring, which was stolen by Hope (that is the same wedding ring found by Holmes on the crime scene). The last omission in this chapter is the fact that both Stangerson and Drebber, after the schism, have *become Gentiles*. In the 1958 retranslation the narrator tells the reader that they had left Utah, omitting this detail. Moving onto the last two chapters, the narrator is again Watson. In fact, the first omission is that of a clause with which he refers to himself, that is *I remember that*

I thought to myself, as I eyed him. The remembrance part is omitted in the 1979 version, as Watson just says what he had been seen.

The next omission, this time in the 1958 retranslation, is a direct question as part of a dialogue between an inspector and Hope: the inspector asks *Hadn't you better reserve that for your trial?*, which has been omitted probably for fluency reasons. Later on, while describing in which way he murders his rivals, Hope says that he touched Drebbers's chest to hear his heartbeat, and in the English version he states that *there was no movement*, which is omitted in the 1958 retranslation. Again, this is not an essential detail, since we already know that Drebbler is dead, and moreover Hope is describing his murder, but it adds that dramatic effect which would have been appropriate since one of the characters is telling us a story within another story. While finishing his story, Hope recounts that his cab *was wanted by a gentleman at 221B Baker Street*, but in the 1958 version he only mentions the name of the street, omitting the iconic address.

Finally, the last omission is that of a very long sentence, which is *When he had finished, we sat for some minutes in a stillness which was only broken by the scratching of Lestrade's pencil as he gave the finishing touches to his shorthand account.* As (almost) always, the omission is in the 1958 version, but again, although it is quite evident considering the length of the sentence, it does not affect the plot in any way, since it only adds some irrelevant details. To sum up, it is clear that the vast majority of omissions concern the oldest of the three retranslations, the 1958 version. There are some cases in the other two retranslations as well, but they are much fewer. However, the plot line is not affected by these omissions, since there are no plot holes within the story, and the meaning of the text has been successfully transferred to the TL. The fact that omission appears mostly in the first of the three retranslations supports the statements made in the previous chapter: according to Van Poucke (2012), omission is one of the procedures typical of strongly domesticated translations; this, in turn, agrees with the RH postulate (Berman 1990), which claims that earlier retranslations tend to be characterised by

a domesticating approach in order to allow the target audience to become familiar with them.

2.4.2 Additions

Compared to omission, addition is a much less frequently adopted translation procedure. Starting from chapter one, two cases of addition can be found: one is the relative clause *che stava per portarsi alle labbra*, which refers to the glass that Stamford (Watson's former employee) was holding in his hands while having lunch; the other is *o almeno che ne abbia di gravi*, hinting at Sherlock Holmes's peculiarities. Both additions are only in the 1958 version, and they do not appear in the other two, nor in the English text.

The next addition is somewhat unexpected because the English word *breakfast* has been translated as *colazione* in the 1979 and 2020 retranslations, while in the 1958 version the translation is *prima colazione*. The adjective *prima* has been added and, though it is a frequently used expression in Italian, it is very rarely used in spoken language. Being the retranslation of a novel written towards the end of the 19th century, it is an adequate translation, but it is nonetheless an addition if compared to the English text.

In the third chapter, the first addition we encounter is, again, in the 1958 version: *ha compiuto un sopralluogo*, contained in the message sent by Gregson to inform Holmes that there had been a murder, does not appear in the ST. In chapter four of the 1958 retranslation, the first addition we can find is *quanto al sigaro...*, which corresponds to English expression *as far as the cigar is concerned* (or *as for the cigar*), which is not present, though it is a nice way to introduce a new topic in the middle of a speech without jumping right in and, perhaps, disorientating the reader. Later on, there is a rather interesting addition (which is not used so often for clarity reasons, even though the text would be more fluent) both in the 1958 and the 2020 version: in the older one, the retranslator added *in Lauriston Gardens*, while in the 2020 version he/she added the spatial deictic *là* to imply the same place. Then there is an addition that I consider also a transfer at the

same time, because it is the name of a bar, therefore it has not been translated into Italian. However, in the 1958 version, to clarify that it is in fact a bar the narrator is referring to, the name is not *White Hart* as in the English text, but it is *White Hart Bar*; since “bar” is written with first capital letter, it should be considered as part of the name.

The next instance of addition is right in the middle of a clause. In the English version the clause is *I might not have gone but for you*. In the 1979 and the 2020 version the place that is being implied is actually specified: in the first version the retranslator added in *Lauriston Gardens*, while in the second one the retranslator added *a fare quel sopralluogo*, meaning the crime scene. This example of addition can also be referred to as *explicitation*: according Laviosa-Braithwaite (2001 in Baker, Saldanha 2009), explicitation is one of the universals of translation, alongside *simplification*, *normalisation*, *discourse transfer* and *distinctive distribution patterns*. Universals of translation are linguistic features which appear in the TT rather than the ST, regardless of the language pair. Blum-Kulka (1986 in Laviosa-Braithwaite 2001) posited what is known as the “explicitation hypothesis”, which states that this translation strategy observed in second language learners’ works, may be a universal strategy inherent in any translation process (Laviosa-Braithwaite 2001 in Baker, Saldanha 2009). Another addition appears in the fifth chapter, when Holmes finds an old book and wants to show it to Watson. In the 1958 version he asks *ha visto questo libro?*, but in the ST and the other two versions he directly shows and describes the book to his new roommate. Then, while reporting a newspaper article which stated that the two victims had been seen together upon the *platform*, in the 1958 and 1979 retranslations *della stazione* has been added. Now, in the 1958 version this addition was not really necessary since it is used as a modifier of the noun *banchina* which is clearly related to a train station; moreover, the said station had been mentioned earlier in the paragraph. In the 1979 version, the retranslator used the word

marciapiede as a translation for *platform*, which, according to the dictionary¹, is correct. However, it is quite rare to use *marciapiede* to refer to the area where people wait to get on or off trains; the most common translation for *marciapiede* would be *pavement*. Maybe in this second case the addition is useful. It should be remembered, however, that Watson has already referred to a station in the paragraph so, although useful, the addition is not essential.

The next example of addition is found in the middle of a reported speech; it is *proseguiva l'articolista* in the 1958 version and *scriveva il giornalista* in the 2020 version. In the ST and the 1979 version the speech is uninterrupted. Once again in the 1958 retranslation, when Holmes asks Wiggins if he had found the murderer his answer is *no, sir, we hain't*, but in the Italian version *non ancora* has been added, thus immediately implying the he would continue his search.

In the first chapter of the second part, Lucy asks her future adoptive father if God made that country, meaning the desert they were stuck in at the time. Ferrier answers *in course He did*, to which, in the 1979 version, the translator added *molto tempo fa*. Now, for the first time, we find an addition in all three retranslations:

ST	1958	1979	2020
We have passed the Pawnees [...]	[...] il paese dei pawnee [...]	[...] zona dei Pawnees [...]	[...] il territorio dei Pawnee [...]

They are all synonyms and additions at the same time. In the English text the Mormon leader says that they *have passed the Pawnees*, implying the area in which they live. Once again, this example of addition can be regarded as an example of explicitation as well but, contrary to the ones I have analysed until now, this additions/explicitation is necessary not for the meaning transfer but for grammatical reasons, since the sentence would be syntactically incorrect in Italian.

¹ <https://www.collinsdictionary.com/it/dizionario/inglese-italiano/platform>

At the end of the chapter, when the leader tells Ferrier that he would take them with him providing that he and Lucy become believers, Ferrier answers *guess I'll come with you on any terms*; in the 1958 retranslation there is the addition of *per conto mio [...]*.

In the second chapter of Part II the narrator tells the reader that Ferrier had always refused to marry, and that some of the community thought that it was because of his *reluctance to incur expenses*. The 1958 version specifies what the expenses would be involved to, that is *di un harem*; the same happens in the 2020 version, where the addition is the relative clause *che un matrimonio avrebbe comportato*. Shortly after, while describing what happened to Lucy, the original text states that she *grew up within the log house, and assisted her adopted father in all his undertakings*. The 1958 version, after saying where she grew up, adds *quando fu grandicella* before saying that she helps her father. Later on, in the description of the accident that led Lucy to meet Hope, the 1958 version adds the sentence *troppo tardi si accorse del proprio errore*, which adds sort of a dramatic effect, which is appropriate considering the episode the public is about to read. Moreover, this dramatic effect is even more emphasised thanks to the inversion between verb and the adverbial of time: in spoken Italian the sentence would be *si accorse troppo tardi del proprio errore*.

The one and only addition in the third chapter is quite insignificant, but I will include it for the sake of completeness. The English text says *minds of men* to refer to the members of the Mormon community. In the 1958 retranslation there is the addition of *dello Utah*, which, as I have already said, is not necessary. The first addition that can be seen in the fourth chapter is in the 1958 version, and it is the addition of the adverbial of time *ogni mattina*. Later on, we find an addition in the 2020 version, in the part where Ferrier, Hope and Lucy are trying to escape. In this version it is specified that they *scavalcarono il davanzale*, while in the original text the narrator states that they *passed through*, though at the beginning of the sentence it is said that they opened the window, so it is quite obvious; nevertheless, it is an addition.

In chapter six, after Hope finds out that Ferrier has been killed and Lucy has been brought back to the city, he decides to take his revenge against the Mormons. He is described as a man with *a strong will and untiring energy*; in the 1958 version the retranslator added that he had gained it from Mother Nature, saying *di cui madre natura l'aveva dotato*.

In the penultimate chapter, for the second time there is an element that has been added to all the three retranslations: in the 1958 and the 2020 version the addition is *quando morì* (referring to Lucy) and in the 1979 it is *quando era già morta*. It is part of the story told by Hope, and he is referring to the time he stole the wedding ring from Lucy's body. We can notice that the tense is different. The present tense seems to imply that Hope stole the ring the exact moment she died, while the past tense suggests that the theft happened a little while later. It is clear from the text that the correct meaning is the second one, since Hope stole the ring before the burial, when her body was in the bier surrounded by the Mormon's other wives. In the English version Hope refers to Lucy's death by saying that he stole the ring from her *dead finger*; although it would be grammatically correct, a literal translation would not be acceptable, since it is an expression that is not used in Italian.

To conclude, as for the omissions, it can be said that the majority of cases are not relevant and/or necessary. However, some of them are in fact needed, not because the meaning would be affected, but for grammatical and syntactical reasons: as I have explained, there are some examples of clauses or simple expressions that would be unacceptable if translated literally. Once again, it is prevalently the 1958 retranslation which presents the largest number of additions, although the procedure also appears in the other two versions in a more evident way than the omission procedure. The translation procedures of omission and addition can be studied as a pair: they do not modify the existing text, but rather they cut part of the ST or add new material to the TT. Such actions have the purpose to make the TT more culture-specific for the target reader, and therefore easier to understand (Van Poucke 2012). This is the aim of a strongly domesticated

translation, so it is normal that the retranslation presenting the largest number of additions and omissions is the 1958 version, which is in line with the RH.

2.4.3 Through-translations

A first example of what could be considered a through-translation is in the first chapter. When Holmes explains that he has found a new way to detect blood, he calls this new method the *Sherlock Holmes test*. Granted, it is a totally made-up, and improvised, name, but it still is a proper name which has been translated word-for-word in the 1958 retranslation as *reazione Sherlock Holmes*.

The next instance is an interesting one. It is in fact the translation of the name of a journal; again, the name, *Police News of the Past*, is made up by Watson, and therefore this journal does not really exist, which is why it has been translated in a different way in each retranslation:

ST	1958	1979	2020
Police News of the Past	Notizie giudiziarie retrospettive	Notiziario poliziesco del passato	Cronaca nera del passato

It is clear that a translation in this case was very much needed, contrary to the previous through-translation, since the only procedure really necessary in that case would have been the word order inversion, Italian being a post-modifying language.

Another similar example can be found shortly after, and it concerns the translation of *private enquiry agencies*:

ST	1958	1979	2020
private enquiry agencies	uffici di investigazione privata	uffici di polizia privata	agenzie investigative private

The 2020 retranslation is the one which could be considered the most correct, because of the correspondence between the noun *agencies* and its Italian equivalent *agenzie*; nevertheless, *ufficio* can be considered a synonym, and therefore the meaning of the text is not affected in any way.

In the second chapter, a clear example of through-translation is at the very end of the chapter. It concerns the translation of an actual organisation which does not exist in the target culture. I am referring to the *Royal Marine Light Infantry*. This name has been translated literally in the 1979 and in the 2020 retranslations, thus becoming *Fanteria Leggera della Marina Reale*. Though the organisation does not exist, an Italian speaker is perfectly able to understand what it is, maybe not exactly, but the message is successfully sent to the target reader.

In the third chapter we find a company name. It is the *Guion Steamship Company*, whose complete name is *Liverpool and Great Western Steamship Company*² (we can be quite sure this is the company Holmes is referring to, since it had already been said the two victims were going to catch the train to Liverpool). In the 1958 and the 1979 retranslations the name has been translated as *Compagnia di navigazione Guion* (actually, there is a slight difference between the two versions: in the 1979 version the noun *compagnia* begins with a lowercase letter, which is grammatically incorrect if we are considering it as part of the name).

In chapter four Holmes and Watson questions an officer while looking for clues, and he tells them that the night of the murder he saw a drunk man who was singing *Columbine's New-fangled Banner*. This is not the title of a real song, and

² https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Guion_Line

therefore the 2020 version's retranslator chose to translate it literally as *Nuova Bandiera di Colombina*. In chapter six the reader meets for the first time Holmes's unofficial helpers: *Baker Street division of the detective police force*. Again, this made up organisation name has been translated in three different ways:

ST	1958	1979	2020
Baker Street division of the detective police force	squadra mobile di Baker Street	divisione di Baker Street del corpo di polizia investigativa	squadra investigativa di Baker Street

It is evident that the 1979 translation is the most complete and literal one, although the other two are acceptable too.

Another case of through-translation is the translation of the *Halliday's Private Hotel*: in the 1958 version it has been translated as *albergo Halliday* and in the 1979 version as *Hotel Halliday*. Both translations are correct, since *albergo* is the Italian equivalent of *hotel*, which is also a word frequently used by Italian speakers. The problem is the obvious omission of the word *Private*: since it is written with the first capital letter, it is logical thinking to assume that it is an integral part of the name, and that leaving it out is very probably a factual error.

In the third chapter of the second part of the book, the narrator talks about the *Chosen Valley*, meaning the area in which the Mormons have established. The name has been translated as *Sacra Valle* in the 1958 version, and as *Valle Eletta* in the other two. The three translations are entirely made up, since there is no Italian equivalent. If we have to choose the most correct translation, it would probably be the second one, which is the literal translation.

Moving onto the fourth chapter, we find the through-translation, which is also the recognised translation, of the sentry challenge *who goes there?*. It is translated as *chi va là?*. It is interesting to notice that in the 1979 version the

question is part of direct speech, while in the other two it is part of a reported speech. Right after this example, there is another one. It concerns the translation of the Mormons chief organisation, *the Holy Four*, which has been translated literally in the 1979 and the 2020 versions as *i Sacri Quattro*. The organisation is basically a council formed by the four most influential members of the community: the literal translation gives this kind of message, which is better rendered in the 1958 version, as I will illustrate later.

The penultimate instance of through-translation does not concern any proper name. It is the translation of the expression *being on the brink of the grave*, which is a metaphorical expression for “to be about to die” (it is an expression used by Jefferson Hope during his questioning: he knows that he has not much time left because he had been diagnosed with an aortic aneurism). The expression has been translated literally in the 1958 and the 1979 versions with the adapted metaphor *essere sull'orlo della tomba*, which is completely fine.

Finally, the last case of through-translation is that of the idiomatic collocation *judge, jury and executioner*, which has been translated literally with the corresponding Italian collocation *giudice, giuria e carnefice* in the first two retranlations; in the 2020 version the retranlator chose to translate executioner as *giustiziere*, which, although grammatically and semantically correct, is not part of the original collocation, thus making the text less fluid. We have seen that there is a rather large number of through-translations within the three retranlations. Contrary to the omissions and additions, all three versions present this procedure in an (almost) equal quantity of examples.

2.4.4 Recognised translations

The only recognised translation we can find in chapter one is the translation of *University of London*: it has been translated as *Università di Londra* in the 1958 and 2020 versions. In the second chapter the *Copernican Theory* has been translated as *teoria copernicana* in the 1979 and 2020 versions, while it has been slightly changed to *teoria di Copernico* in the 1958 retranlation. Both translations

are perfectly acceptable in the TL, therefore they can be both considered recognised translations. Another very straightforward recognised translation is in chapter three, where the acronym *USA* has been translated with the extended Italian form *Stati Uniti* (though *d'America* has been omitted). Once again, the recognised translation appears in the 1958 and the 2020 retranslations, not in the 1979 version.

In the fourth chapter there is a recognised translation in the 2020 version that is quite easy to miss. While talking about the different secret societies and doctrines which can be involved in the first assassination, Holmes mentions *Socialism*. In the latest retranslation it has been translated with its official term *Socialismo*, while in the other two versions the name has been omitted. Moving onto the fifth chapter, there are some problems with the recognised translation of *(the) Lowlands*. The Lowlands, according to the Encyclopaedia Britannica, is a “cultural and historical region of Scotland, comprising the portion of the country southeast of a line drawn from Dumbarton to Stonehaven”³, and there is no Italian equivalent, so the translation procedure concerning this term would be transfer. The problem arises because this name has been translated into Italian as *Paesi Bassi* (which would have been *the Netherlands* in English) in the 1979 and the 2020 versions. Moreover, we have to admit that the translation is paradoxically correct, and we can say so because the term is contained in the clause *published in Latin at Liege in the Lowlands in 1642*. Liege is a Belgian city. It could be that the term *Lowlands* had been used to indicate the Western-European region comprising Belgium and Holland⁴, so *Paesi Bassi* would actually be the literal translations of *Lowlands*.

In the sixth chapter, the name of the German organisation *Vehmgericht* has been transferred from German to English in the ST, which is one of the recognised

³ <https://www.britannica.com/place/Lowlands-region-Scotland>

⁴ According to the Treccani encyclopaedia, Belgium and Holland were a united state until 1830, when the Southern region insurrected and obtained its independence, becoming what is nowadays known as Belgium. https://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/belgio-e-paesi-bassi_%28Enciclopedia-dell%27-Arte-Medievale%29/

translations, alongside *Vehmic court*, *holy vehme* and *Vehm*⁵. There are more recognised translations also in Italian, including the one appearing in the 2020 version *Sacra Vehme*; the other translations are *Corte Vehmica*, *Vehme* and the transfers *Vehmgericht* and *Fehmgericht*⁶. Shortly after, while retracing the Mormons' actions, Watson mentions *Euston Station*, which has been translated as *stazione di Euston*.

The next recognised translation involves the translation of the British organisation *Her Majesty's Navy*. Clearly, Italy is not a monarchy, and therefore it does not have an exact correspondent organisation. However, *Her Majesty's Navy* is a very well-known organisation, so there is an official Italian translation, which has been used in the 1979 and the 2020 versions, which is *Marina di Sua Maestà* (in the 1979 version it is all in lowercase letters, which I would consider an error, being a proper name). In the 1958 retranslation it has been translated as *regia marina*, which conveys the same meaning but is not an official translation.

In the first chapter of the second part of the book, the term *Blackfeet*, referring to the Indian tribe, has been correctly translated with *Piedi Neri* in the 1979 retranslation, while in the 1958 version the retranslator bypassed the problem by translating with the hypernym *indiani*. As far as the term *Redskins* is concerned, it has been translated in two ways (kind of): *pellirosse* in the 1958 retranslation and *pellerossa* in the 1979 and 2020 retranlations. Both versions are correct, since the term is considered both countable and uncountable, thus admitting two different plural forms.⁷

In chapter two, the Mormon community is called the *Latter Day Saints*. In the 1958 and the 2020 version it is translated as *Santi dell'Ultimo Giorno* and *Santi degli Ultimi Giorni*: the correct version is supposed to be the second one, though the first one is not to be considered erroneous. In the 1979 version the community is translated simply as *Mormoni*: again, this is not an error. The difference is that

⁵ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Vehmic_court

⁶ https://it.wikipedia.org/wiki/Corte_Vehmica

⁷ https://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/pellerossa-o-pellirosse_%28La-grammatica-italiana%29/

Mormonism includes the *Latter Day Saints* and other religious branches. In the fifth chapter, the narrator mentions the *Endowment House*, which is the actual Mormon headquarters in Salt Lake City. The recognised translation does appear in the 2020 retranslation, that is *Casa delle Investiture*⁸. In the sixth chapter there is a similar case to the first one I analysed: *York College* has in fact been translated as *Università di York*. The same happened for the translation of *St Petersburg*, which has been translated with his Italian equivalent *San Pietroburgo* in the 1979 and the 2020 versions, and as *Pietroburgo* in the 1958 retranslations.

2.4.5 Transfers

The first example of transfer in the first chapter is the same one as the first through-translation of this same chapter. The term *University of London* appears in English in the 1979 retranslations, as well as the city *Kandahar* (in the 1958 and 2020 versions) and the name *Jezail* (in the 1979 and 2020 versions) indicating a type of weapon. The difference between these three cases is that the first one does have an official Italian translation, as we saw in the previous section, while the last two do not have an Italian translation.

Another example of transfer is that of the chemical reaction elaborated by Holmes which he chose to name *Sherlock Holmes test*. The noun *test* (which is an English word that is very frequently used also Italian) is maintained in the last two retranslations, which are differentiated from the ST from the word order, which is inverted in Italian, that is *test Sherlock Holmes*. As for the majority of the cases concerning proper nouns (especially for people), also in the case of the translation of the name *Von Bischoff* we can see the transfer procedure, although only in the 2020 version.

In the second chapter, the name *Niagara* does not have a translation and stays the same in all three Italian versions. However, the implicitation in the ST appears only in 1979, while in the others the retranslators chose to specify by

⁸ <https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/study/history/topics/endowment-house?lang=ita>

adding *cascata/e del (Niagara)*. In the third chapter the transfer concerns the acronym *USA* (which obviously stands for *United States of America*). In the 1979 retranslation the acronym reappears: this does not cause any problem, since *USA* is nowadays part of the Italian lexicon.

Later on, we can see the transfer of the company name *Guion Steamship Company* in the 2020 version: the fact that the other two versions, which are quite old, adopted the through-translation procedure, could be a sign of the increasing internationalisation and integration between languages. It also confirms the theory that the latest retranslations are characterised by a more foreignised approach than the previous ones, for all the reasons I have already thoroughly discussed in chapter 1.3.2. Moving onto the fourth chapter, the rendering of the proper noun *White Hart* differs in each retranslation, while remaining a transfer in all the three versions:

ST	1958	1979	2020
White Hart	White Hart Bar	White Hart	White Heart

We can see that the only real example of transfer is that of the 1979 version. I have already explained the addition in the 1958 retranslation in chapter 2.4.2. As for the 2020 version, I would consider it an error: I would not consider it a spelling mistake, but a deliberate decision of the retranslator, who could have thought that the Italian reader is much more familiar with the word *heart* rather than with the word *hart*.

Throughout the first part of the book, we find other examples of transfer, the most evident one being *Baker Street*; there are others as well, such as *Lauriston Gardens*, *Brixton Road*, *Scotland Yard*, not to mention the names of the characters, starting from *Sherlock Holmes*, *John Watson*, *Gregson*, *Lestrade*, *Jefferson Hope*, *William* (this last instance can be found in the 1979 and the 2020 versions) and so on.

In the sixth chapter I have already discussed the through-translation in the 2020 version concerning *Vehmgericht*. Contrary to what happened in the latest retranslation, in the 1958 and the 1979 versions this noun has not been translated; as I said earlier, it is acceptable to maintain the noun in its SL, which is German in this case. Then, one of the newspapers mentions the *Ratcliff Highway murders*. *Ratcliff Highway* has been transferred into the 1979 and the 2020 retranslations, while it has been omitted/substituted in the 1958 version with *e così via*. The retranslators had to maintain the original name because it is a real event occurred in December 1811: the attack was aimed at two separate families and resulted in seven assassinations.⁹

We have seen that in the 1958 and the 2020 versions the term *Euston Station* has been translated as *stazione di Euston*; in the 1979 retranslation it remains in the SL. It is not really appropriate, since the translation is quite an easy one, and therefore the retranslator should have rendered it as did the other two. Moreover, in 1979 the English language was not taught in Italian schools (at least not everywhere): it could not be taken for granted that everybody could speak English, or even understand it. Luckily, the word *station* is self-explanatory for an Italian native speaker, and earlier the newspaper has talked about the fact that the victims were about to catch a train, so the message is clear enough. However, it should have been translated.

In this same chapter we find another example of transfer: Holmes mentions the name of a company specialising in the manufacture of hats, *John Underwood and Sons*. It is the last part we are interested in: the phrase *and Sons* does have an Italian equivalent (which I will illustrate later), but in the 1979 retranslation it has been transferred as it is in the SL. The last example of transfer which can be found in chapter six is that of the name of the hotel where Stangerson body was found: *Halliday's Private Hotel* appears in its original version in the 2020 retranslation.

⁹ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ratcliff_Highway_murders

As I said before, *hotel* is kind of a borrowing/naturalisation in Italian, and has become part of the Italian native speaker's vocabulary.

In the first chapter of the second half of the book, the Indian tribe name *Pawnee* has been transferred in the 1979 and the 2020 versions. This is the only correct choice: according the Treccani encyclopaedia, *Pawnee* could be translated as *Pani* or *Pauni*¹⁰, but it is very rarely used, and the original term is much more understandable for the Italian reader, even if he/she has not ever heard the name before. The same thing could be said about the name *Blackfeet*, which has been transferred in the 2020 version: it is clear that the narrator is talking about Indian tribes, and even though the reader does not understand what *Blackfeet* exactly means, it is not a problem.

I have explained that this part of the book is set in America. The first chapter is set in the Colorado desert, in the *Sierra Blanco* specifically: the noun is transferred in the first two retranslations as well. An interesting case of transfer can be seen shortly after. The ST says *dwarfish chaparral bushes* (while describing the landscape); there is no mention of the noun *chaparral* in the 1958 and 1979 versions, as they just hint at *cespugli nani*, which is correct but incomplete. In the 2020 version the retranslator explained what a *chaparral* is by translating as *bassi cespugli di arbusti, chiamati chaparral*. It is a useful and effective way of conveying the message, since the word *chaparral* is unknown to Italian readers.

Something similar to the previous instance happens in the fifth chapter. Still in the 2020 version, the retranslator translated the English clause *the bighorn - for so it is called - as la bighorn - si chiama così -*: he/she transferred the original name of the animal into Italian while telling the reader that it is in fact the name of the animal. This particular is omitted in the 1979 version, and in the 1958 version, as I have discussed in the Omissions sections that the retranslator omitted the entire sentence. In chapter six, Hope tells Holmes that he had worked at *York college*. The name has been transferred in the 1979 and the 2020 versions, while in the 1958

¹⁰ https://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/pawnee_%28Enciclopedia-Italiana%29/

version it has been translated as *università di York*. This creates coherence, since in the first chapter we have seen that *University of London* has been transferred in the 1979 retranslation as well.

2.4.6 Borrowings

We can find some cases of borrowing, both in the original and in the three retranslations. Almost all borrowings come from French. One of the examples is that of the French word *outré* in the sentence *This murder would have been infinitely more difficult to unravel had the body of the victim been simply found lying in the roadway without any of those outré and sensational accompaniments which have rendered it remarkable*. The word *outré*, according to the Collins Dictionary, means *excessive* or *extravagant*¹¹. Given the context, we can confirm that this borrowing actually works in this sentence. In all three retranslations, there is no trace of such borrowing:

ST	1958	1979	2020
[...] without any of those <i>outré</i> and sensational accompaniments [...]	[...] senza che emergesse nessuna di quelle circostanze insolite e sensazionali [...]	[...] senza alcuna di quelle componenti vistose e sensazionali [...]	[...] senza nessuno di quegli elementi stravaganti e sensazionali [...]

Despite the choice not to borrow any French word, the three retranslators have managed to render the same meaning as the ST by using all synonyms.

A similar phenomenon can be found for the translation of another French borrowing, that is *portmanteau*, which has been translated as *valigia* in the 1958

¹¹ <https://www.collinsdictionary.com/it/dizionario/inglese/outré>

version, *bauletto* in the 1979 version, and *baule* in the 2020 one. The 1958 retranslation is not exactly accurate, since the definition of *portmanteau* is “a large travelling case made of stiff leather, esp one hinged at the back so as to open out into two compartments”.¹²

Conan Doyle also borrowed an entire sentence from French. The sentence, pronounced by Holmes, is *Un sot trouve toujours un plus sot qui l'admire*: it is a citation from *L'Art poétique*¹³, a treatise in verse written by Nicolas Boileau-Despréaux¹⁴. To contextualise, Holmes quotes this citation while explaining to Watson how Gregson and Lestrade would get all the credit for the solution of the mystery and the arrest of the murderer, even if they did nothing to earn it. This borrowing does appear in all three retranslations; in the 2020 version the reader can also find a footnote indicating the Italian translation and where it comes from.

The opposite happens in the third chapter, in the sense that the borrowing can be found only in the 2020 version, and it is not present neither in the ST nor in the other two retranslations. In the ST we find the word *waistcoat*, which is translated as *panciotto* in the 1958 and the 1979 versions, but as *gilet* in the 2020 version. *Gilet* is one of those borrowings which have now become part of the TL lexicon and are no longer considered foreign words since they are so frequently used.

Finally, at the very end of the book (it is, in fact, the last sentence), there is a Latin citation, this time quoted by Watson. The citation, *populus me sibilat, at mihi plaudo Ipse domi simul ac nummos contemplar in arca*, can be found once again in all three retranslations. It comes from the *Satires* by Horace, as it is indicated in a footnote in the 2020 version alongside the Italian translation. Similarly to the previous citation example, Watson pronounce this sentence after

¹² <https://www.collinsdictionary.com/it/dizionario/inglese/portmanteau>

¹³ <https://www.dicocitations.com/citations/citation-2669.php#:~:text=%2D%20Nicolas%20Boileau%2DDespr%C3%A9aux,-citation%201&text=Un%20Sot%20trouve%20toujours%20un%20plus%20Sot%20qui%20l'admire.>

¹⁴ <https://www.britannica.com/topic/LArt-poetique-by-Boileau-Despreaux>

Holmes told him that Gregson and Lestrade would even receive a testimonial to recognise their work, but Watson replicates by saying that he had written everything that has really happened in his journal, and that he would publish it at some point for the public to know the truth.

2.4.7 Functional equivalents

In *A Study in Scarlet* there are some cases of functional equivalence too. The first one is in chapter one, where *Underground* is translated as *ferrovia sotterranea* in the 1958 version. In the third chapter, Watson uses the expression *Parthian shot*. According to the Collins Dictionary, it is a synonym for *parting shot*, which is defined as *an unpleasant or forceful remark at the end of a conversation, and then [they] leave so that no-one has the chance to reply*. The term Parthian shot is used in this sense because its original image alludes to *the custom of Parthian archers who shot their arrows backwards while retreating*¹⁵ (we could say that it is a dead metaphor). It is exactly the meaning this expression has in the ST: Watson is referring to the way Holmes ended his conversation with the police. A literal translation would not have made any sense in Italian. Luckily, there is a corresponding metaphor, which is the one used by all three retranslators: in the 1958 and the 1979 versions the metaphor used is *frecciata*, while in the 2020 version is *stoccata*. It is not the exact same thing as in the ST, but it calls to mind a similar image.

Another case of functional is in chapter six, where the *express* (meaning the train) has been translated as *direttissimo* in the 1958 version. An interesting example can be found in chapter seven. Holmes has to show how Hope has killed the first victim, and to do so he uses a dying dog that is wandering on the street. He asks Watson to *fetch[ing] that poor little devil of a terrier*. In the 1979 and the 2020 version the noun *terrier* has been transferred, since it is known that it is a dog breed. However, in the 1958 retranslation it has been translated with the more

¹⁵ <https://www.collinsdictionary.com/it/dizionario/inglese/parthian-shot>

neutral noun *cagnolino*. The diminutive suffix adds up to the compassionate tone used by Holmes.

2.4.8 Descriptive equivalents

As far as descriptive equivalence is concerned, there are very few instances. However, they are quite interesting and it is worth illustrating them in this thesis. The first case can be found in the first chapter, right at the beginning, when Watson is telling the reader about his misfortunes in the army, starting by being shot in the shoulder by a *Jezeil bullet*. The Jezeil is an arm used in South Asia and the Middle East during the anglo-Afghan War¹⁶, that is the war where Watson served as assistant surgeon in. In the 1979 and the 2020 versions the noun has been transferred as it is in the ST, but in the 1958 retranslation it has been translated as *nemico*, although it is quite obvious even for the reader who does not know what a Jezeil is.

The second case is in the third chapter, and it concerns the translation of the term *frock coat*. It is a strictly cultural element which could have been rendered through procedures such as transfer or borrowing (from French *redingote*)¹⁷. Neither of these options has been chosen by the three retranslators. The 1979 and the 2020 version retranslators in particular opted for a translation consisting in an explicit description: in the 1979 version it has been translated as *giacca a doppio petto*, in the 2020 version as *pesante cappotto lungo*. Maybe both these translations are not culturally adequate; nevertheless, they convey the correct meaning, even if not the exact one as the ST. This same procedure has been used also for the translation of *ulster*, which has been translated as *lungo impermeabile* in the 1958 and the 2020 versions and as *ampio cappotto* in the 1979 version.

In the third chapter, Gregson tells Holmes that in the victim's pockets they have found *a gold Albert chain, very heavy and solid*. An *Albert chain* is a cultural item which does not have an Italian equivalent, and it denotes “a chain used to give

¹⁶ <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jezeil>

¹⁷ https://it.wikipedia.org/wiki/Frock_coat

easier access to a pocket watch in the watchpocket of a waistcoat”; it has been named after Prince Albert, Queen Victoria’s husband¹⁸. The retranslators had to translate by writing a description of the object, since a literal translation would have been incomprehensible for the Italian reader:

ST	1958	1979	2020
Gold Albert chain, very heavy and solid.	Una catena d'oro pesante.	Catena d'oro pesante e solida.	Catena per orologio da tasca in oro, molto pesante e robusta.

The most precise translation is the 2020 version, since it specifies that it is a chain meant to be attached to a pocket watch, and that it is heavy and solid. In the 1979 version the retranslator did not specify that an Albert chain is related to pocket watches; the same thing happened in the 1958 version, where also the translation of the adjective *solid* has been omitted. The last instance of descriptive equivalence is in the fourth chapter of the second part. The organisation called *the Holy Four*, in the 1958 version, is translated as *Consiglio dei Quattro*: it is the addition of the noun *consiglio* that serves as an explanation of what this organisation actually is.

2.4.9 Cultural equivalents

Starting from Chapter Two, we find a cultural equivalent in the translation of the word *Underground*, which has been translated as *metropolitana* in the 1979 and the 2020 versions. The same happened for the rendering of *Royal Marine Light Infantry*, which, in the 1958 version, has been translated with the Italian cultural equivalent *fanteria di marina*. The monarchy is one the most, if not the most, distinctive traits of England, so it would have been more adequate to proceed with

¹⁸ https://en.wiktionary.org/wiki/Albert_chain

a through-translation as in the other two retranslations, thus making a reference to the monarchy. For the translation of *frock coat*, the 1958 retranslator chose to translate with the cultural equivalent *finanziere*. Not being a very common word in Italian, it would have been more effective to translate with a descriptive equivalent as in the other two retranslations.

Cultural equivalence applies whenever the translator has to face a conversion, whether it is a measurement conversion, a temperature conversion, a time conversion (meaning the use of the 24-hour clock instead of the 12-hour clock). There are examples of these conversions throughout the whole book. I will report some of the most interesting. The first example concerns the conversion from miles to kilometres: there is the case of the translation of the expression *miles of streets*:

ST	1958	1979	2020
[...] miles of streets [...]	[...] chilometri e chilometri di strade [...]	[...] un'infinità di strade [...]	[...] miglia e miglia di strade [...]

We can see in the 2020 version the expression has been translated literally, while in the 1979 no measurement has been used, but rather an expression indicating an undefined quantity. An exact measurement can be found in the first chapter of second part, which is *fifteen hundred miles*:

ST	1958	1979	2020
[...] fifteen hundred miles [...]	[...] duemilaquattrocento chilometri [...]	[...] miglia e miglia [...]	[...] millecinquecento miglia [...]

As in the previous example, the 2020 version opted for a literal translation, in the 1979 version the quantity is not determined, and in the 1958 version it has been used a cultural equivalent, thus converting the measurement in the unit used in the target culture.

Another example is in the fifth chapter of the second part: the narrator says that the three runaways, which are by that point in the middle of the mountains, are at *nearly five thousand feet above the sea level*:

ST	1958	1979	2020
[...] nearly five thousand feet above sea level [...]	[...] a quasi duemila metri di altezza [...]	[...] circa 1500 metri sul livello del mare [...]	[...] a più di millecinquecento metri di altitudine [...]

In this case, for the 2020 version the retranslator converted the measurement from feet to metres, which is more culturally adequate. Five thousand feet corresponds to 1524 metres to be precise, so we can safely accept both the 1979 and the 2020 retranlations, while the 1958 version is slightly inaccurate. There are also a couple of examples concerning the time conversion. Holmes tells Watson that they would probably receive some visitor *between eight and nine this evening*:

ST	1958	1979	2020
[...] between eight and nine this evening.	[...] tra le 20 e le 21.	[...] stasera fra le otto e le nove.	[...] tra le otto e le nove di stasera.

The 1958 version is the only one in which the retranslator used the 24-hour clock. For this reason, he/she was allowed to omit any other specification other than the time. This was not possible neither for the ST nor the other two versions: the use of the 12-hour clock requires the narrator to specify if the indicated time is before midday or after midday. In spoken Italian, it is quite rare to hear someone use the 24-hour clock when telling the time: however it is used in the written language or, if spoken, in very formal occasions.

In the last chapter, Hope confesses that, the night when he committed the murder, he followed Drebber to some *liquor shops* and waited for him outside a *gin palace*. Both these terms are cultural-specific items. A liquor shop is a shop which sells beer, wine, and other alcoholic drinks.¹⁹ In the UK and Ireland it is also called *off-licence*, because the purchase must be on the licensed premises but its consumption must be *off* the premises. These shops sell every kind of alcoholic beverage.²⁰ It has been retranslated with culture-specific elements, which are not accurate. In the 1958 and the 1979 versions *liquor shops* has been translated as *bar*: it is not the same thing as a shop, since in a bar the client can buy and consume alcohol inside the building. In the 2020 version it is even more inaccurate: the retranslator translated *liquor shops* as *distillerie*: this is incorrect, since a *distilleria* designates the establishment where the alcoholic beverage (in particular spirits) is produced. Some of them might have their own shop where they sell their products, but they are usually located in the countryside, or in the vicinity of some vineyard, certainly not in the town centre.

As far as the rendering of *gin palace* is concerned, this is even more problematic. A *gin palace* is what is nowadays known as pub, or sort of: from an aesthetic point of view they are very similar, characterised by the 19th century Victorian architecture. The client can, as in a bar, buy and consume alcohol within the building. Below are the three retranslations:

¹⁹ This is the Collins Dictionary definition for *liquor store*, which is synonym for *liquor shop*; <https://www.collinsdictionary.com/dictionary/english/liquor-store>

²⁰https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Liquor_store

ST	1958	1979	2020
gin palace	osteria	bar	mescita di gin

The most accurate is the 1958 version: *osteria* could be considered as a cultural equivalent, since the architecture is clearly not the same as that of a *gin palace*, but it is very typical; it mostly serves wine, not so much spirits, but again, from a cultural perspective they are equivalents. However, the character of Sherlock Holmes is strictly related to London, and England in general, so, although, the cultural equivalence, I find that the retranslators should have transferred instead of translated, to maintain the ST cultural value. In the 2020 version the retranslator used the noun *mescita*, which is a synonym for *osteria*. He/she tried to transfer the cultural element by adding *di gin*, because a *mescita*, just like an *osteria*, mostly serves wine. Cultural equivalents are another linguistic means used by translators to approach the translated text to the target audience in the same way as additions and omissions do. It is one of the most effective strategies if the aim of the translator is to produce a translation which does not seem like a translation, and in some cases it is almost a necessary requirement, or else the target reader would not be able to understand that specific reference. As further evidence in favour of the RH (Berman 1990), this translation procedure is particularly present in the 1958 retranslation, supporting the hypothesis which states that earlier translations are characterised by a more domesticating approach than the latest ones (Van Poucke 2012).

2.4.10 Transpositions

Transposition is one of the procedures which has been frequently used by all three retranslators. Being a procedure that mostly concerns the grammatical and syntactical aspects of the language, this should not come as a surprise: Italian and English are two languages which present a great number of differences, on a

grammatical and a syntactic level, but also on a lexical level, as I have explained more than once throughout the chapter.

The first case of transposition affects all three retranslations. It can be found in chapter one, when Holmes is illustrating to Watson how he managed to find a new method enabling him to detect blood; the clause taken into account is *you perceive that the resulting mixture [has the appearance of pure water]*:

ST	1958	1979	2020
You perceive that the resulting mixture has the appearance of pure water.	All'occhio non si avverte la presenza di sangue.	Noterà che la miscela ottenuta ha l'aspetto di acqua pura.	Come vede la miscela ottenuta ha ancora l'aspetto dell'acqua pura.

It is quite clear which one of the retranslations is the less transposed one. The 1958 version, while conveying the same message, is completely different from the ST: in the ST and in the two latest retranslations Holmes focuses on how water appears in the eyes of Watson, while in the retranslation he is focused on the (apparent) absence of blood. This change of perspective required a change in the structure of the clause. In the 1979 and 2020 versions the subject is Watson, while in the 1958 retranslation the *si* particle makes the clause a passive clause, being it followed by direct complement. Once again, the focus change required a change of verb too; that is why in this version the retranslator chose the verb *avvertire*, which could actually be translated as *to perceive* in English, however it does not work if inserted in an active phrase such as those in the other two Italian versions.

Another transposition can be found shortly after this one. Watson is telling the reader that Holmes is putting a plaster *over the prick* on his finger. In the ST the author opted for a prepositional phrase, which is much smoother than a verbal phrase. The prepositional phrase has also been the choice for the 1979 retranslator,

who rendered the ST with *sulla scalfitura*. Things changed in the 1958 and 2020 versions, where the retranslators translated with the verbal phrase [*dove*] *si era punto*. Contrary to the previous example, the *si* particle serves as a reflexive pronoun, since it is followed by a verb.

The next instance of transposition is again in this first chapter. The expression *sharing his rooms with me* has been translated with three different verbs:

ST	1958	1979	2020
[...] sharing his rooms with me.	[...] condividere l'abitazione con me.	[...] coabitare con me.	[...] abitare con me.

The 1958 version is the most similar to the ST, although the TL does not admit a plural in this particular expression, as the ST does, so *rooms* has been translated as *abitazione*. The prepositional phrase *con me* is quite redundant in this case, because of the use of the verb *condividere* (which contains the same preposition) and the context. We can say the same about the 1979 retranslation. Actually, it is even more redundant because the verb *coabitare* already implies *con me*. The 2020 version is the most correct, if we consider it from a readability point of view: the verb *abitare* does not have any implication and can be followed by any kind of complement without any issue.

While making arrangements for their future accommodation, Holmes asks Watson if it is a problem for him if he plays the violin, and Watson answers that he loves to hear violin, unless it is *a badly-played one*:

ST	1958	1979	2020
It depends on the player, [...] A well-played violin is a treat for the gods - a badly-played one...	Dipende da chi lo suona [...] Una musica eseguita bene al violino è un dono degli dei...ma se il violinista è scadente...	Dipende da chi lo suona; se è ben suonato il violino può essere delizioso, se invece è mal suonato...	Dipende dal violinista [...] Un violino ben suonato è un dono degli dei...uno suonato male, invece...

We can see that in the 1958 and 1979 retranslations the phrase is introduced by the conditional particle *se*, which introduces the hypothetical period (in this case it is not complete). Moreover, in the 1958 version, the subject changes: in the ST the subject is the violin, while in the retranslation the subject is the violin player/violinist(?) (*il violinista*). This variation requires a change in the compound nominal predicate too, since the adjective *suonato* cannot be applied to animate objects, so *suonato* becomes *scadente*. The 1979 and the 2020 versions are quite similar to the ST. There are just a couple of differences which I would like to point out: the 1979 version, as the 1958 version, the phrase is introduced by a conditional particle, as I have already said, and the order adverb-adjective is the same as in the ST; in the 2020 version the order is adjective-adverb, which is more common in Italian, and in this case the phrase is part of an affirmative sentence, since there is no conditional particle.

In the ST, Watson mentions the *Copernican Theory*, thus making the proper name Copernicus a proper adjective (this is why it starts with a capital letter). In the 1979 and 2020 versions the retranslators, just as in the ST, used the proper adjective *copernicana*, which had to be placed after the noun *teoria* (*teoria copernicana* is the standard term in Italian). In the 1958 retranslation, the specifier of *teoria* is the name of the scientist who postulated it, therefore it is *teoria di*

Copernico. As for the adjective, the specifier must follow the noun it refers to since, as I have already said, Italian is a postmodifying language, while English is a premodifying language.

Shortly after, Holmes tells Watson about his *brain-attic*, a mnemonic technique which allows him to memorise only useful information: by imagining the brain as an actual attic, he would know how to find the piece of information whenever he needs it. This compound/noun phrase has been translated in a different way in each retranslation:

ST	1958	1979	2020
Now the skilful workman is very careful indeed as to what he takes into his brain-attic.	Viceversa lo studioso accorto seleziona accuratamente ciò che immagazzina nella soffitta del suo cervello.	Ora, il lavoratore accorto sta molto attento a quello che introduce nella sua soffitta mentale.	Lo studioso accorto, invece, sta molto attento a ciò che fa entrare nel suo cervello-soffitta.

The 2020 version is a through-translation, and therefore an exact copy of the ST. In the 1958 version, though, the noun *soffitta* is accompanied by the specifying phrase *del suo cervello*, while in the 1979 version this phrase is converted into an adjectival phrase with *mentale*. Despite these differences, the concept is immediately understandable, even though I find the 1958 version very redundant, while the other two versions are more fluent.

The expression *his manner*, which is singular in the ST, has become plural in the 2020 version, with it being translated as *i suoi modi*. It could have been translated with a singular noun, but in that case the retranslator should have added *di fare*, so the translation would have been *il suo modo di fare*, otherwise it would

not sound right in Italian, since the common expression (without additions) is in the plural form.

In the third chapter, we find the word *spirits*, in plural form, used as a synonym for *mood*. Used in its singular form it acquires different meanings, that is *soul* and/or *ghost*. Given the context, these meanings would not have made any sense, since Watson is describing how he feels after having visited the crime scene and having seen the body. The TL does not make this distinction. Whether the word is in its plural form or in its singular form the meaning does not change; this is why, in the 1958 version, it has been translated as *spirito* without causing any issue. The title of the fifth chapter is another example of transposition. In the ST we can read *Our advertisement brings a visitor*. In the 1958 version this title underwent a nominalisation process, thus becoming *Il risultato di un annuncio*.

Similarly to what happened in the first chapter, in the ST there is the expression *in lodgings at 3*. In the 1958 and 2020 retranslations this plural has become a singular, since it has been translated as *appartamento* in the 1958 version (note the omission of the address) and as *stanza d'affitto al numero 3* in the 1979 version and *stanza in affitto al numero 3* in the 2020 version. The last two versions are a bit more precise because they clearly state that the apartment is rented, while in the 1958 retranslation this is another detail which has been omitted.

In the second chapter of the second part of the book, Jefferson Hope refers to his family as *the Jefferson Hopes*. This grammatical structure has been transferred in all three retranslations, although it is more common, in the TL, to refer to someone's family by the last name, so it would have been *gli Hope*, with plural *-s*. The plural has been transferred only in the 1979 version, while in the other two it has been rendered as *i Jefferson Hope*.

2.4.11 Synonyms

The last translation procedure used by the three retranslators is that of synonymy. There are plenty of synonyms in this book, both with respect to the ST (in the sense

that a certain word has been translated not with an exact translation, but with a synonym) and between the three versions as well.

The first synonym is in the first chapter, where the adjective *lonely* has been translated as *smarrito* in the 1958 version, while it has been omitted in the other two. The correct translation for *lonely* might be *solo*, but the option chosen by the retranslator works as well: in this context, where Watson is telling the reader how he is feeling after being sent home because of his injury, *smarrito* is not used in its most common meaning, which is supposed to be *perso/perduto* (*lost*). Even if it would have been used with this meaning, it would have worked as well, since both *perso/perduto* and *smarrito* have a second, figurative meaning which corresponds to the English *lonely*.

Another synonym, which is an indication of the fact that the 1958 is a domesticated retranslation to some extent, is the translation of *test* with the Italian word *reazione*. Actually, *reazione* is a bit more specific than *test*, which is used in Italian as well, as we can see in the other two retranslations: Holmes is talking about a chemical reaction which allows him to detect blood even in its smallest particles. Therefore, the synonym *reazione*, despite not being the most faithful translation, is the most specific one, even more than the ST. Shortly after, *test* is translated again with a synonym in the 1958 version, which is *prova*, here used with the meaning of *check/verification*. In this case, the word *test* would have been appropriate too, since it has the same meaning in both languages.

In the list made by Watson where he lists different subjects and the degree of knowledge Holmes possesses for each one of them, the word *nil* has been translated as *zero* in the 1958 and the 1979 versions, while it is translated as *nessuna* in the 2020 version. The feminine form of the adverb directly refers to the word *conoscenze*, which appears only in the first item of the list, then he names only the subject. This does not make much sense, since Watson titles the list *I suoi limiti*, which is a masculine noun. The addition of the word *conoscenze* at the beginning of the first item is pointless, it should have been used as a title instead of *limiti*.

Later on, the word *trousers* has been translated as *pantaloni* in the 1979 and 2020 retranslations, and as *calzoni* in the 1958 version. This is coherent with the period in which these retranslations were published: the word *calzoni* is not very frequent in current spoken Italian, it is much more common to use the word *pantaloni*. The use of synonyms such as *calzoni* (and *pastrano*, as we will see later on), which are words very rarely, if not ever, used in current spoken Italian, shows the change the TL went through because of time. This phenomenon can be observed only in the TT, especially in a retranslation, since it can be compared with other translations of the same ST. The ST is not affected by the ageing process as translations are: it is timeless, and therefore, according to Berman (1990), remains forever young. I would say that synonyms such as *calzoni* and *pastrano* would have been adequate even if they were used in the 1979 and the 2020 versions: since Sherlock Holmes is a 19th century character, he is expected to speak in a way which the target reader would consider outdated, but which is appropriate for a man living in the Victorian Age.

When questioned about his job, Holmes answers that he is a *consulting detective*, a profession he invented himself. In the 1958 and 1979 versions this word has been translated with a compound noun, that is *investigatore-consulente*. This translation almost implies that he is both a detective and a consultant at the same time, which is not true. The translation in the 2020 version explains in a better way what the profession is, that is *consulente investigativo*: we can notice that in the ST the noun is *detective* and the adjective is *consulting*, while in the TT the noun is *consulente* which is specified by the adjective *investigativo*. The TT suggests that Holmes, before being a detective, is a consultant in the first place. Again, this is not true. Holmes is known to be the most famous detective in literary history; neither of the three retranslations convey the same message of the ST.

Then, we find the word *retired* in reference to a man who used to work in the Royal Marine Light Infantry. This word has been translated in three different ways:

ST	1958	1979	2020
retired	ex	in ritiro	in pensione

The most correct translation would be the last one, that is *in pensione*, because the other two translations have a slightly different meaning than this: by saying *in pensione* it is implied that the man stopped working because he reached the age according to which the law imposed him to stop working; by saying *ex* or *in ritiro* we do not know if he stopped for this reason or for other reasons, that could be because he was injured like Watson, or any other personal reasons.

In the third chapter, Watson describes Drebber's jaw as *prognathous*, which is the specific terminology used to indicate a protruding jaw. It has been translated as *prognatica* in the 1958 version and it has been nominalised in the 2020 version, thus becoming *prognatismo*. In the 1979 version the retranslator chose to translate using a more generic, reader-friendly word, that is *prominente*.

Another case of synonymy can be found shortly after this last one, where the verb *written* has been translated as *scritta* in the 1979, which is the correct translation, and by using two different synonyms in the 1958 and the 2020 version.

ST	1958	1979	2020
[...] it bears every mark of having been written by the other participant [...]	[...] ha tutta l'aria di essere stata vergata dal secondo personaggio [...]	[...] ha tutta l'aria di essere stata scritta dall'altra persona [...]	[...] sembra essere a tutti gli effetti opera dell'altro partecipante [...]

In the first one the translation is *vergata*: it is not very common in the spoken language, especially used as a verb, since it is mostly used as a noun. In the 2020 version, *written* has been translated with the expression *essere opera di*, which

translates as *to be made by*; it is the context which gives us the information the reader needs, since he/she has already been told that there is a blood-written word on the wall on the crime scene.

For the translation of the word *overcoat* the retranslators used three different synonyms which have all more or less the same meaning:

ST	1958	1979	2020
overcoat	pastrano	soprabito	cappotto

There are not any issues with these synonyms; the only thing is that the word *pastrano* denotes a man's coat, which is correct since in the ST it is worn by the murderer; however it is not a very frequent word used in the current spoken Italian (unless it is used for humorous effects), but the choice is understandable since *A Study in Scarlet* was written at the end of the 19th century, and therefore a word like *pastrano* gives the idea of a distant period of time, contrary to the other two which are used in current spoken and written language.

In the 1958 retranslation the verb *shuffle off [down the stairs]* has been translated as *scese [le scale]*: it could be considered a synonym, although the meaning is slightly different. *To shuffle off* actually means “to move away by, or as if by, shuffling” (for example, *They shuffled off to school [...]*)²¹. The Italian verb *scendere* is more neutral and does not convey the same meaning. On the contrary, the correct meaning is conveyed in the 1979 and the 2020 versions, where it has been translated as *si trascinò giù [per le scale]*.

A clear case of synonymy is that of the translation of *deceased* used as noun: its literal translation would be *deceduto*, but this translation has not been used in any of the three Italian versions. Instead, it has been translated as *vittima* in the 1958 version, *morto* in the 1979 version, and *defunto* in the 2020 one. I could say

²¹ <https://www.collinsdictionary.com/it/dizionario/inglese/shuffle-off>

that the noun *vittima* does not always designate someone who is dead (we can use *vittima* when referring to assaults, bullism, etc.), but in this case the context has thoroughly made clear that there has been a murder.

An interesting example can be found for the translation of the expression *our shores*: in the 1958 version the retranslator chose to make explicit what Watson meant by using such expression, that is his own country, Great Britain, and this is why it has been translated as *Gran Bretagna*, to avoid any misinterpretation. Something similar happened in the 1979 version, where it has been translated with the synonym *nostro paese*, while in the 2020 retranslation the retranslator translated literally with *nostre sponde*.

Shortly after, the house in Lauriston Gardens, where they have found the deceased, is described as *empty*: the adjective *empty* can refer both to the lack of inhabitants and to the lack of furniture. It is explained that the house is indeed neither furnished nor inhabited. The word *empty* has been translated as *deserta* in the 1958 version. The retranslator could have opted for the literal translations, which would be *vuota*, because the adjective *deserta* gives the idea of temporary, meaning that the house is empty in that precise moment, but could not be in the future. In the 1979 and the 2020 versions the word *empty* has been translated with a more fitting adjective, that is *disabitata*. Granted, this does not imply that the house is bare of furniture, but the reader already knows that thanks to the previous description.

As for the penultimate example, the title of the first chapter, *On the great alkali plain*, has been translated in three different ways:

ST	1958	1979	2020
On the Great Alkali Plain	Nel deserto del Colorado	Nella grande pianura sabbiosa	Sulla grande pianura alcalina

Once again, the 2020 version retranslator gives us a literal translation, although the adjective *alcalina* is not very clear for an Italian speaker. Not that this is an issue, since the narrator describes in detail what the landscape looks like. In the 1958 version, the retranslator chose to make the location where the events take place explicit by translating as *Nel deserto del Colorado*. The 1979 retranslation is very similar to the 2020 version: the only difference between them is the use of the synonym *sabbiosa*, which is more understandable for the TL reader. There is another difference between the first two retranslations and the latest: a preposition change. In the 2020 version, the preposition *on (the)* is translated literally as *sulla*, while in the 1958 and the 1979 versions it has been translated as *nel/la* (according to the genre of the noun that follows). Although the preposition *su* is grammatically correct in this case, I would say that the preposition *in* (which becomes *nel/la* when combined with the definite article) is more frequently used, even though it is not correct.

In this first chapter, as I have already mentioned, we find a detailed description of the landscape, including the animals that can be seen in this desert. One of them is the *coyote*, which is a Mexican Spanish borrowing used both in English and in Italian.²² For this reason, the 1979 and the 2020 versions retranslators opted for a transfer procedure and did not translate the word. On the other hand, in the 1958 version the word *coyote* has been translated as *lupo delle praterie*, which is much more unusual, and therefore not immediately comprehensible for the target reader.

To refer to the Mormon community, the ST narrator uses the term *settlement*, which has been translated using both synonyms and literal translation:

²² <https://www.etymonline.com/word/coyote>

ST	1958	1979	2020
Everything prospered in the strange settlement.	La strana colonia prosperava [...]	Tutto prosperava in quella strana comunità.	In quello strano insediamento ogni cosa prosperava [...]

The literal translation is in the 2020 version's *insediamento*, while the other two are synonyms. The 1979 synonym in particular, *comunità*, denotes only the group of people forming the community, but does not denote a place, which is what the literal translation, *insediamento*, and the other synonym *colonia*, do. On more than one occasion, the 1979 version refers to the *Latter Day Saints* community as *Mormons*. The problem is that the term *Mormon* includes other communities other than the Latter Day Saints²³, and therefore it is a hypernym.

In the fourth chapter, Ferrier goes back home to find Drebber and Stangerson waiting for him, and one of them is singing some *hymn*. In English, a *hymn* is a religious song²⁴, so, in the ST, the use of this specific word is suitable given that the two men are Mormons. In the TT it has been translated in three ways:

ST	1958	1979	2020
[...] whistling a popular hymn.	[...] fischiettava una canzonetta popolare.	[...] fischiettava un motivo popolare.	[...] e fischiettava un popolare inno.

²³ <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mormonism>

²⁴ <https://www.collinsdictionary.com/it/dizionario/inglese/hymn>

The first two versions contain two synonyms, which do not convey the religious aspect as in the ST, but we could say that this detail is quite irrelevant. In the 2020 retranslation we find the translation *inno*. This is not a correct translation: while, in Italian, the expression *inno religioso* does exist, it is not the most popular one. The first thing an Italian thinks of when he/she hears the word *inno* is what is called an *anthem* in English, as in *national anthem*. It is clear that the Mormon is not singing any national anthem, and this makes the translation quite unusual for an Italian speaker.

We then find the word *game*, which makes sense thanks to the context: in this case it denotes “wild animals or birds that are hunted for sport and sometimes cooked and eaten”²⁵. This is not the first and most popular meaning of the word *game*. To give you an idea, the definition above, which comes from the Collins Dictionary, is the ninth definition. However, all the three retranslators have not been misled, and have translated the word with the synonyms *cacciagione* (1958 version) and *selvaggina* (2020 version) and with the extended expression *animali da cacciare* in the 1979 version.

At the end of this chapter, the narrator is telling the reader that Hope followed Stangerson and Drebber around the world, and that he almost caught them in the *Danish capital* (the author used this expression to avoid the repetition of the name Copenhagen, which has been already used at the end of the previous sentence). In the 1958 and the 2020 versions the retranslators used the equivalent nationality adjective *danese* (with the inversion between noun and adjective). In the 1979 version the retranslator opted for the proper nation name, so the adjective *Danish* has been translated as *della Danimarca*.

Later on, Holmes is arranging with the other two detectives a way to take the murderer to the police station to question him. Lestrade says he would drive Hope’s cab, and Holmes answers *Good! and Gregson can come inside with me*. In the 1958 and the 2020 versions the adverb good has been translated as *benissimo*,

²⁵ <https://www.collinsdictionary.com/it/dizionario/inglese/game>

so as a superlative, and as *ottimo*, another superlative form; the following sentence does not present any issue. However, there are few mistakes in the 1979 version, which are quite serious. First of all, the adverb *good* has not been translated into Italian, and it appears in its SL form in the TT. This is not acceptable. The other big mistake is in the sentence which follows the adverb, which has been translated as *e Gregson possono venire dentro con me*: the verbal form *possono* has a plural subject, while here the subject is clearly Gregson, so it is a third person singular. We do not know if these errors are typos or if the retranslator has consciously translated (or forgot to translate, for the first case). I would say that the lack of translation of the adverb has been a carelessness/inattention error, and I would consider the wrong verbal form as a typo, because Lestrade had already told Holmes his task, so the only remaining subject for Holmes was Gregson indeed; I find it not realistic that the translator had forgot who the subject is.

2.4.12 Inaccuracies

Apart from those which I have already explained because they were related with other translation procedures, there is a relatively large number of inaccuracies. It is important to stress that the message of the ST has not been affected in any way because of these inaccurate translations, since they are referred to short expressions or single words. I will here report the most evident ones and omit those which are irrelevant that I found during my first analysis and comparison of the ST and the TTs.

The first inaccuracies which stand out are some terms such as *lunch*, *dinner*, *evening* which are not always translated with their Italian equivalents. For example, in the ST Watson and Stamford go to *lunch* together, while in the 1958 and the 1979 versions the translation is *fare colazione*, which would have been *to have breakfast*; in another instance, by the time Holmes came back home *dinner* was already served, but in the 1958 retranslation it was *pranzo* which was already been served. Then, Holmes asks Watson if he had seen the *evening* paper, which

has been translated as *del pomeriggio* in Italian, and this same error is repeated shortly after in the same chapter.

In the 1958 version, the ST expression *during the first week or so* has been translated as *per qualche settimana*: it gives the idea of an undefined period of time but it implies that this period is longer than a week, and therefore it has to be considered inaccurate. In this same version, in the sixth chapter, the ST says *nearly three weeks*, but the retranslation says *quasi due settimane*: again, the adverb *nearly* has been correctly translated as *quasi*, suggesting the vagueness conveyed by the ST, but the number of weeks is not correct, and therefore the entire phrase has to be considered inaccurate.

Another example is the translation of the expression *on the very day*, which has been translated as *all'indomani* in the 1958 version. Then, when questioned by Lestrade, a woman answers *yes* in the ST, but that affirmative answer has become *non lo so* in the Italian version, in reference to the number of hours a person had been missing:

ST	1958	1979	2020
-Possibly four or five? - Yes.	- Forse anche quattro o cinque, no? - Non lo so.	- Ma anche quattro o cinque, forse...? - Sì.	- O forse per quattro o cinque? - Sì.

Watson describes Lestrade as *ferret-like*. Now, the word *ferret* denotes both the animal and “an assiduous searcher” (it can be used also as a verb in this meaning, although it is usually followed by the preposition *out*)²⁶. Both meanings could make sense in the description of a detective, but since the ST expression is followed by the adjective *lean*, it is very likely that Watson is describing Lestrade’s

²⁶ <https://www.collinsdictionary.com/it/dizionario/inglese/ferret>

appearance, and therefore the first meaning is the correct one. In the 1958 and the 2020 version the expression has been translated with the expressions *aria da furetto* and *simile a un furetto*. In the 1979 version, the retranslator, apparently, has chosen the second meaning, since he/she translated with *aria professionale*: I am aware that this is not exactly the meaning I mentioned above, but since Watson is talking about a detective, it is implied that a professional-looking detective is an assiduous searcher. However, I would consider the 1979 retranslation inaccurate for the reason I have just explained.

Among the inaccuracies, we can also find wrong numbers, as in the Albert chain serial number. In the ST and the 1979 and 2020 versions the number is 97163, while in the 1958 version the number is 97173. It is very likely that this is just a typo that could have nothing to do with the retranslator, and certainly not with his abilities.

The next series of inaccuracies are quite irrelevant, but they would immediately stand out to a reader who wants to compare the original text with a translated version. They are almost all contained in the 1958 retranslation. Firstly, in the ST Holmes mentions the *off foreleg* in reference to a horse's shoe, which has been translated as *zoccolo anteriore sinisro*. It has been correctly translated with the adjective *anteriore*, but it is not the left one, rather the right one²⁷ (as it is indicated in the other two retranslations). Another example is the translation of the adjective *right* in reference to Ferrier's shoulder which had been carrying some sort of bag. It has been translated as *sinistra* in the 1958 version, which is obviously not accurate.

Shortly after, the narrator tells the reader that *a score* of men was at the head of the Mormon caravan who saved Ferrier and Lucy's life. A *score*, apart from being both a noun and a verb, denotes a quantity too, "twenty or approximately twenty" according to the Collins Dictionary²⁸. In the 1958 version it has been

²⁷The front legs of a horse are called forelegs, the back legs are called hind legs; the left side is referred to as the "near" side, the right side as the "off" side; <https://www.quora.com/What-are-horses-legs-called>

²⁸ <https://www.collinsdictionary.com/it/dizionario/inglese/score>

translated as *sei o sette*, way less than twenty, while in the other versions it has been translated with the expression *una ventina*, which correctly indicates an undefined number. Again, the dress Lucy is wearing is *pink* in the ST, but it is described as *rosso* in the first retranslation.

Later on, after having been threatened by the Mormon leader, Ferrier finds the number of the remaining days left before he makes his decision on Lucy's marriage written everywhere, even on the *floors*. In the 1958 version *floors* has been translated as *soffitti*, which would be *ceilings* in English. Then, while referring to the number of men he would be able to kill if caught while escaping, Hope says *two or three*, but in the 1958 retranslation it is *tre o quattro*. The *Endowment House*, as I said earlier, is a real building in Salt Lake City (which is the place where this part of the book is located), and therefore it has a recognised translation, that we can find in the 2020 version. Another solution for its translation, is to translate with a functional equivalent, as did the 1958 version's retranslator. In the 1979 version, the retranslator opted for what could apparently look like a descriptive equivalent, but it is not. In fact, it has been translated as *casa che è stata assegnata in dote*. *Dote* is translated as *dowry* in English, and is the amount of goods, and money, given by the bride's family to the husband²⁹. In the past, meaning the first half of the 20th century (and maybe during the 60s and the 70s as well), it was a very common custom/tradition in Italy. It is not the correct translation for *Endowment House*, since it is an administrative building used by the Mormons to celebrate religious ceremonies, which cannot be handled by privates.

When Hope is questioned by Holmes, he says that when he had found Drebber he could finally take his vengeance and make him pay for his *old sin*, meaning Ferrier and Lucy's murder. In the 1958 retranslation it has been retranslated as *peccato sanguinoso*, which, despite being a true statement, is not an accurate translation. Then, he says he stopped in front of the house in *Brixton*

²⁹ <https://www.collinsdictionary.com/it/dizionario/inglese/dowry>

Road, which could have been transferred as it is, but in the 1958 retranslation it has been changed to *Lauriston Gardens*. When Drebber spontaneously followed him inside the house, Hope says *I suppose he thought [...]*. The expression *I suppose* does not denote any certainty, but in the 1958 retranslation it has been rendered as *certamente*, while in the other two versions it has been translated using some hedging expressions such as *forse* and *credo*. Finally, the last inaccuracy example is the wrong translation of *Thursday*, which, for some unknown reason, in the 1958 version has been translated as *mercoledì*.

2.5 Some considerations

To conclude this analysis, I can confirm that the most “different” retranslation is the 1958 version. This difference with respect to the other two versions is not always a negative aspect. As I have tried to show, there are many cases in which the 1958 version presented inaccuracies, omissions and/or additions where there should not have been any, or inadequate translations. On the other hand, it is also true that there are other cases in which the oldest of the three retranslations taken into account is the most (and sometimes the only) correct one. There is obviously a reason for this.

Firstly, the English used by Conan Doyle is standard English, which does not differ much from the current spoken and written English, even though the book dates back to 1887. The same thing cannot be said about the 1958 retranslation, where, on more than one occasion, single words and expressions have been translated in a way with which the current Italian speaker/reader is not familiar, at least not anymore: the Italian historical dictionary presents many examples of the word *calzoni* contained in literary works by Ariosto, Manzoni, D’Annunzio and Pavese, just to name a few³⁰. Just to give an example, the English word *trousers*, which is currently used by the English speaker on a daily basis, has been translated

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https://www.gdli.it/pdf_viewer/Scripts/pdf.js/web/viewer.asp?file=/PDF/GDLI02/GDLI_02_ocr_573.pdf&parola=calzoni

with the Italian word *calzoni*. It is very rare, if not impossible, to hear someone in Italy refer to *trousers* as *calzoni*. The most common translation is *pantaloni*, which is also the translation that can be found in the 1979 and in the 2020 versions. In fact, despite being closer to the 1958 version, from a date perspective, the 1979 retranslation is much more similar to the 2020 version; this observation takes into account, as for the previous one for the 1958 version, both correct translations and inaccuracies. In other words the two latest versions present many similarities between them rather than with the 1958 retranslation, from any point of view, since the translation requirements between the 1950s, and the 1970s and the 2000s were very different, as I will thoroughly explain in the third chapter.

Generally speaking, all three translations are acceptable. They do present a number of differences between the three of them and with respect to the ST, but the main goal for a translator is to convey the same message from the SL to the TL, which is what these three different versions have successfully accomplished. Using some criteria set out by different scholars, I will give a more specific evaluation in the next chapter. In order to do so, I will specifically refer to the time of publication of the ST and the three retranslations, and the audience originally addressed by Conan Doyle, which may be expected to be the same as the one addressed by the retranslators.

Chapter 3

An evaluation attempt

After the analysis carried out in the previous chapter, I have an adequate amount of data to make an evaluation of the three retranslations as compared to the ST. In this chapter I will discuss the topic of translation quality assessment from a theoretical point of view, explaining the essential criteria, and I will then apply them to the case study.

3.1 An essential factor: the text type

The first thing that has to be said about translation quality assessment is that it is rarely, if not never, objective. An assessment is basically a judgement, and the judgement is made by a critic, in this case a translation critic. In fact, we can refer to translation quality assessment as translation criticism as well. Whatever it is called - assessment, evaluation, judgement, criticism or even review - subjectivity will always be one of the main features of this task. However, the degree of subjectivity can vary: to carry out a professional and trustworthy evaluation, according to Reiss (1971), the translation critic must take into account some aspects which depend on one principal factor, that is the text type, regarding both the ST and TT.

The translation critic has to understand the type of text he/she is going to assess, because the text type affects the linguistic and extra-linguistic elements which are to be considered in order to complete the assessment task, that is, the translation method. It may seem quite obvious, but critics often overlook this requirement, and therefore their evaluations are not valid. Reiss (1971), after analysing various classifications made by different scholars (which she considered too broad and/or incomplete), classified three different text types according to Bühler's language functions (1934/1965 in Reiss 1971, House 2015): the representative, the expressive and the persuasive function. The three functions can be displayed within the same text, although only one is the dominant one. The

representative function is dominant in content-focused texts; the expressive function is emphasised in form-focused texts; the persuasive function can be mostly perceived in appeal-focused texts. In addition to these three types of text based on language functions, Reiss included audio-medial texts, which are texts “*written to be spoken (or sung) and hence are not read by their audience but heard, often with the aid of some extra-linguistic medium, which itself plays a part in the mediation of the complex literary blend*” (Reiss 1971: 27).

3.1.1 The content-focused text

In content-focused texts the main interest is to convey some sort of content, be it information or data. This does not mean that other aspects, such as the form, are not important: in order to convey a content, a text must be comprehensible to the audience. Such texts are judged on the basis of their semantics, grammar and stylistic features, which must be able to transfer the message from one language into another, but these characteristics do not usually possess any value from an aesthetic point of view. As long as the meaning transfer is successful, the translation is to be considered satisfactory.

The texts which can be considered content-focused texts are press releases and comments, news reports, commercial correspondence, inventories of merchandise, operating instructions, directions for use, patent specifications, treaties, official documents, educational works, non-fiction books of some sorts, essays, treatises, reports, theses, and specialised literature in the humanities, the natural sciences, and other technical fields (Reiss 1971: 27). For some of these texts, particularly for official documents such as certificates, the translator also has to pay attention also to some technical formalities, for example the layout, prescribed formulae, etc, which differentiate various kinds of documents.

Since this type of text conveys information about a specific topic, one of the criteria the translation critic has to consider is the appropriate usage of field-specific terminology and phraseology, in order to convey the same content as the ST. This criterion implies that the translation must be TL-oriented (that is,

domesticated), so that the target reader will be familiar with the way the information is presented (Jumpelt 1961 in Reiss 1971: 31).

3.1.2 The form-focused text

In form-focused texts, the author, and by consequence the translator, can “play” with language, in the sense he/she can be creative and choose among different options how to convey the message. Form and content are intrinsically correlated, and one cannot exist without the other. However, in form-focused texts, how the message is conveyed is as important, maybe more, as the message itself. To clarify, a play on words in a content-focused text can be ignored by the translator as long as he/she is able to convey the information; in a form-focused text the play on words has to be transferred to the TL, alongside the content of course.

The author is free to express himself/herself by using various forms of expression which add an aesthetic value to the text (form-focused texts correspond, indeed, to the expressive function of language). Form-focused texts may be more challenging for the translator, because he/she has to maintain the meaning of the ST and transfer it to the TT while paying attention to elements such as stylistic forms, rhyme schemes, comparative and figurative manners of speaking (Nida 1964 in Reiss 1971: 33) and phonostylistic elements as well (Blixen 1954 in Reiss 1971: 33).

In order to carry out a satisfactory translation, the translator has to insert similar expressions in the TT; however, this is not always possible because of the many differences between languages. In this case, the aim is to “achieve a similar aesthetic effect” (Reiss 1971: 33), which can be ignored in content-focused texts. This requirement would be achieved through the creation of equivalents making use of new forms, thus leading the translator to develop new analogous expressions in the TL. During this creation process, clearly the translator has to use the ST as a reference and be inspired by it; form-focused texts are therefore SL-oriented texts. In the form-focused text category we can include literary (essays, biographies, belles-lettres) and imaginative (anecdotes, short stories, novellas and

romances) prose, and all forms of poetry. While all these texts have been provided with some kind of content, their content will lose its meaning if the translator does not preserve the author's style, literary structures, and so on.

Usually, the author of this type of text likes to play with language and unleash his/her creativity. As a result, we can find forms which may seem incorrect because the writer deviated from the standard usage of language. In form-focused texts the TT has to reflect this apparently incorrect usage of the language, for it is part of its aesthetic value, and therefore it cannot be considered a mistake. This is why the translation critic, before starting the assessment of a translation, has to be aware of what type of text he/she is in front of.

3.1.3 The appeal-focused text

The aim of this type of text is a non-linguistic one, that is to attract the reader (or hearer): any linguistic form used in an appeal-focused text is of secondary importance. We can find appeal-focused texts in advertising, publicity, satire, and propaganda. Rohner (1966 in Reiss 1971: 41) describes satirical text as *“tendentious, involved in non-literary interests. Concentration on a particular purpose inhibits the satirist's freedom and undermines the literary form”*. Tendentiousness, extra-linguistic interest and focus on a specific purpose are the typical features of all appeal-focused texts (Reiss 1971: 41). The translator has to achieve, by using language in an adequate manner, the same effect of the ST, so that both content and form become less important, and the function is what becomes relevant. To achieve such a result, one of the most useful translation procedures is cultural equivalence, through which the translator can be successful in sparking the interest of a culture different from that of the ST. Even if the appeal-focused text is very rarely, if not ever, a literary text, one of Belloc's six rules (1931 in Bassnet 1980: 120-1) for the prose translation can be applied: I am referring to the rule which states that the literary translator should render *“intention by intention”*, which often does not correspond to the literal translation of a work. Generally speaking, any kind of equivalence could work as a good translation

strategy for the appeal-focused text, since, according to House (2016), equivalence's main prerequisite is to preserve the same function of the ST in the TT.

3.1.4 The audio-medial text

The distinctive feature of audio-medial texts is that they are conveyed through the use of graphic, acoustic and visual kinds of expressions, such as radio and TV scripts, and stage productions (Reiss 1971). A significant role is played by acoustics and visual aids, not just grammar and elocution as in the previous text types, although they are still relevant. In texts where music is combined with words, prosody, which is connected to grammar, is of primary importance, and varies according to the language (Reiss 1971: 45). To give an example, when a song is translated, it rarely maintains the same meaning as in the SL, because words and phrases would not “physically” fit in that specific musical scheme. As for appeal-focused texts, the audio-medial text translator's aim is to preserve the same effect as the one of the ST, even if, in doing so, the message is altered.

3.2 The linguistic elements

Other fundamental criteria for a translation critic are the linguistic elements of the text. After having determined the type of text, he/she has to check the linguistic elements which determine the language function of the text. Since the case study concerns a literary work, I will particularly emphasise those elements typical of content- and form-focused texts.

Linguistic elements act on different text levels:

- 1) *Semantic elements*: they mostly concern the content of the text, that is what the author wants to express. They depend on the context in general, and on the macrocontext (from single paragraphs to the whole text) and the microcontext (from single words to sentences) in particular. The context has to be thoroughly analysed by the translator in order to achieve the semantic

equivalence between ST and TT. According to Baker (1992 in Baker, Saldanha 2009) the similarity in ST and TT information flow combined with the similarity played by cohesive devices in their respective texts constitute what she calls the *textual equivalence*, which is what the translator has to achieve. Sometimes, especially when the meaning is not explicit, some extra-linguistic elements are considered to achieve semantic equivalence: elements as emphasis and intonation, which determine the correct or incorrect interpretation of the text (Reiss 1971).

- 2) *Lexical elements*: they determine whether a translation is adequate or not. Since a word-for-word translation is not always possible, because of the so many differences between languages, the critical translator has to pay attention to the transfer of elements such as technical terminology and special idioms (Pelster 1966; Güttinger 1963 in Reiss 1971: 58), false friends, homonyms, untranslatable words (Mounin, 1967; Koschmieder, 1955 in Reiss 1971: 58), names, metaphors, wordplays, idiomatic expressions, proverbs, etc.
- 3) *Grammatical elements*: the criterion determining the grammatical aspect of a text is correctness. This applies to all types of text. As for the lexical elements, there are quite a few grammatical differences as well between languages. It goes without saying that the TT has to observe the TL morphology and syntactical norms while rendering the grammatical structures of the SL (Reiss 1971).
- 4) *Stylistic elements*: from the stylistic point of view, the translation critic has to verify if there is complete correspondence between ST and TT. The elements determining the correspondence concern the register of language, which could be colloquial, standard or formal, and the comparability of the differences between SL and TL. The translation critic has to consider if the TT takes into account the stylistic components of the ST and if the author's creativity causes a deviation from the normal language usage. If this is the case, the critic should question whether it was the author's deliberate

decision or if it was a mistake. This is another translation problem which raises quite a debate among translators and critics: whether a text should be improved or not, demanding that a new translation be carried out. Once again, we can see that time is not the only factor affecting the need for retranslation, as previously stated by Berman (1990). Venuti (2004) claims that changes in the social context and translation norms certainly affects the stylistic elements of a text, such as the register as I have mentioned above (this will be thoroughly exemplified in chapter 3.4.1), while Vanderschelden (2000) and Du Nour (1995 in Baker, Saldanha 2009: 234) deal with another aspect concerning the style of a text, that is readability. Generally speaking, in content-focused texts changes in the stylistic components are often considered errors, and therefore they are corrected during the translation process; in form-focused texts “the translator’s stylistic or other faults should not be ignored” (Reiss 1971: 65). This is the reason why the translation critic should always read the ST before making any judgement on a TT (Reiss 1971), especially if the text to be assessed is a form-focused text, because of the *law of interference*, postulated by Toury in 1995, which states that the aesthetic elements of the ST tend to be transferred to the TT as the result of an automatic mental process involved in translation (Laviosa-Braithwaite 2001 in Baker, Saldanha 2009). The translator has to pay attention to whether the transfer of the aesthetic element would be considered an error in the TL or not.

To sum up, a translation critic must take into account the semantic equivalence, the lexical adequacy, the grammatical correctness and the stylistic correspondence when assessing a TT. Their relevance varies according to the text type.

3.3 The extra-linguistic elements

It is important to keep in mind that translation is not an exact science: there is no such a thing as *the* correct translation. During the translation process, the translator is required to make a choice among a number of different equivalents, trying to

pick the optimal one among all the potential ones. But how is he/she able to distinguish the optimal equivalent?

A crucial role is played by the extra-linguistic elements (Reiss 1971), which enable the translator to choose the optimal equivalent. These elements are also called *determinants* since they affect the linguistic elements of the text. The extra-linguistic determinants constitute the *situational context*. This concept sums up Nida's (1964 in Reiss 1971: 68) notions of communicative context (meaning time, place, audience, author and intent, all referred to the ST) and cultural context of the SL. Another scholar who had proposed a similar idea (with reference to literary texts only) is Mounin (1967 in Reiss 1971: 68): the term *situation* denotes the geographical, historical and cultural data which may not always be expressed, but are necessary in order for the translation to make sense. According to House (2015), the situational context, or, as she calls it, *the context of situation*, denotes "the context in which the text unfolds, and which must be taken into account for the text's interpretation" (House 2015: 26). It is a fundamental element to establish the so-called *textual profile*, which is the result of the linguistic-pragmatic analysis of the text, from which the critic can determine its function. House (2015) compares the notion of context of situation to that of *context of culture*, which refers to the larger cultural background, once again useful for the interpretation of the meaning of the text.

Various factors constitute the extra-linguistic aspect of a text:

- 1) *The immediate situation*: it affects the text on the lexical, grammatical, and stylistic level, and helps in the interpretation of its implicit semantic elements. The immediate situation includes elements such as interjections, allusions (to other works, for example), abbreviated colloquialisms, which allow the author to reduce to a minimum the linguistic form of his/her text without causing any issue because the source audience will immediately understand given the situation/context. The translation of such elements is challenging for the translator, because he/she has to imagine himself/herself in the situation described in the ST. Once he/she has identified with the

source culture, he/she will be able to choose the optimal equivalent. The translation critic should follow this reasoning as well, so that he/she will understand why the translator picked that particular translation solution (Reiss 1971).

- 2) *The subject/field*: the translator has to be somewhat familiar with the topic the text he/she is working on is about, in order to be able to use the correct lexicon and terminology. It is particularly relevant for technical texts, but applies to all types of text. Once again, the translation critic, just like the translator, has to have at least a minimal knowledge of the text subject, or he/she will not be able to assess the TT in a correct and objective way (Reiss 1971).
- 3) *The time*: this factor will be particularly relevant given the subject of this thesis. The language used in a text (especially in a literary text) is strictly related to the period of time in which the text has been composed. As far as poetry is concerned, the translation should preserve the morphological and syntactical structures of the period, including the use of figures of speech which are not common anymore in the current TL. As far as prose translation is concerned, the translator is supposed to use language the target audience is familiar with: in this sense, a novel can be considered both a content-focused and a form-focused text. If we consider the three retranslations of *A Study in Scarlet*, the translation critic cannot judge them all based on the same standards, since they have been produced in different periods of time, and therefore they present different language usages as we have seen in the previous chapter (Reiss 1971).
- 4) *The place*: this factor includes everything related to the country, and by extension the culture, of the SL. The translator has to be able to transfer a message that the target reader could not even imagine because it does not pertain to his/her culture. The main translation procedure used to solve this problem is the descriptive equivalence, so that the translator focuses on the description of the unfamiliar concept. As we have seen multiple times by

now, this is the typical approach applied to strongly domesticated translations (usually earlier ones), which do not have a corresponding cultural equivalent or whose readership does not have access to similar concepts as that of the SL (Van Poucke 2012). It gets especially difficult if the translation concerns institutions, customs and habits typical of the SL country. The translator can overcome such problems by resorting to other procedures, such as borrowings, calques, transfers, using the foreign expression with the explanation in a footnote. The choice is made on the basis of the text type the translator is working on. Thankfully, phenomena such as the globalisation has been making it much easier for the translator, and it is even better if both translator and critic are familiar with the reality portrayed in the ST: the translation critic has to understand the reasons behind a specific translation procedure, deciding if the place factor has influenced the translator's choice. However, there are some cases in which this problem does not affect only translations, but even communications between speakers of the same language, if they live in different regions of the same country, or in different countries with the same idiom (Reiss 1971).

- 5) *The audience*: only the audience chosen by the author should be considered a determinant (that is the source audience), since it will automatically correspond to the target audience. It is strictly related to the situational context specific of the SL. The audience factor is evident in the usage of idiomatic expressions, quotations, proverbs of the SL. The translator should be able to transfer the meaning of these expressions to his/her own cultural context, enabling the target audience to understand them. When it is not possible to do so, due to the differences between SL and TL, transposition is considered a solution (Reiss 1971).
- 6) *The speaker*: speaker determinants are those elements which affect the language of the author and, by consequence, appear in the text. They may appear on a lexical, grammatical and stylistic level. They are especially

relevant in form-focused texts: the author's origins, his/her education, the time period he/she lived in and his/her relationship to particular schools and traditions directly affect his/her style and determine his/her stylistic "persona". Following the analysis, it has become evident how the period of time in which the author and the translator live, which is shaped by historical events of various relevance, thus causing transformations in the social context, strongly affects his/her language, especially on a stylistic and lexical level. It is indeed the different social context between the SL and the TL, according to Jakobson (1959 in Bassnet 1980) that is the main obstacle the translator has to overcome in order to achieve complete equivalence, because every language is the representation a different social context (Sapir 1956 in Bassnet 1980: 22). The language usage can identify members of a particular region (as they may speak some sort of dialect), social level (based on the usage of jargon, colloquialisms), and professional and/or religious group (by the use of technical terms) (Reiss 1971).

- 7) *The emotion*: emotional determinants affect the ST on a lexical, stylistic, and even grammatical level. This extra-linguistic factor is particularly relevant in form-focused texts, that is in literary texts, which we have already established are creative works of art, thus allowing for a greater freedom of expression on the part of the author and the translator (Bassnet 1980). The translation critic should judge if the translator has been able to transfer the same affective implications from the ST to the TT, that is if the linguistic means used in the ST to express sarcasm, irony, excitement, etc., have been rendered in a way that they evoke the same emotion in the TT. These linguistic means include the addition of the diminutive suffix, in which case the translator has to be able to distinguish whether it is used as an objective size indication or as a sign of affective quality. Swear words require particular attention in the translation process, as they may not render the same meaning in the two languages: this applies especially to animal names, which usually have a different connotation according to the

language. This last category of extra-linguistic determinants reveals the limits of translation criticism, highlighting how much subjective interpretations affect the assessment task, and therefore make it more difficult to achieve an objective judgement (Reiss 1971).

3.4 The assessment

As I have already stated more than once in Chapter 2, all three retranslations of *A Study in Scarlet* can be considered acceptable, since the meaning of the TT is roughly the same as that of the ST. House (2015) asserts that the notion of meaning (and its preservation in particular), which is related to the notion of equivalence, is characterised by three aspects which are fundamental when it comes to translations: the semantic aspect, the pragmatic aspect, and the textual aspect.

The semantic aspect refers to “the relationship of reference or denotation” (House 2015: 21), that is to say the correspondence between linguistic units and symbols and their referents in any world the human mind is able to construct. It is the relationship between signifier and signified, to use a proper linguistics terminology.

The pragmatic aspect, which is opposed to the semantic aspect, is focused on the purpose and effect of the language used in the real world, specifically within specific contexts which may require a particular language usage. Pragmatics is the study of speech acts, that is the meaning of language manifested not through linguistic forms and symbols, rather through the situational context. According to Austin and Searle (1962; 1969 in House 2015: 22), as developers of the *theory of speech acts*, the pragmatic meaning refers to the *illocutionary force* of an utterance: by *illocutionary force* the scholars refers to the use of an expression on a specific occasion, which often does not coincide with its propositional content, that is, the semantic meaning. The term *utterance* is particularly adequate when talking about translation, since it denotes “units of discourse characterised by their use-value in communication” (House 2015: 22). There are cases in which the pragmatic meaning takes precedence over the semantic meaning, requiring the

translator to carry out an apparently incorrect translation. Obviously, a careful read through will clarify that this is not the case.

The textual aspect of meaning stresses that translation is a textual phenomenon: sentences are related to each other, thus making the text a whole and coherent unit. The translation of a text is considered adequate when it preserves the function of the ST. After this brief explanation of the concept of meaning, I will proceed to evaluate the three retranslations. I will divide the evaluation into two sections, one for the linguistic factors and the other for the extra-linguistic factors.

3.4.1 The linguistic factors

I would start by stating that as a detective story *A Study in Scarlet* can be defined both as a content-focused text and a form-focused text. The retranslation phenomenon particularly affects literary texts. The literary ST, according to Berman (1990) will remain forever young, while its translations will age, hence the need for retranslation. This last statement cannot be applied to content-focused texts (meaning texts in which content is of primary importance and the form is somewhat overlooked): STs such as technical texts, new reports, instructions manuals and so on need to be constantly updated, so a retranslation would be pointless and invalid. However, in the case of literary texts, despite the need to produce an updated version of the TT, the retranslator needs to keep in mind that the form is more relevant (especially in poetry) than the content, so figures of speech such as metaphors and play on words have to be translated, whether literally (if the meaning does not change and if the same figure of speech or wordplay makes sense in the TT) or through an equivalent.

Since *A Study in Scarlet* is a novel, the content plays a role almost as important as the form. Moreover, it is a novel which has been retranslated a large number of times, although in this thesis I have analysed only three retranslations. The fact that it has been retranslated throughout the course of the 20th, and also the 21st century so far, indicates that it has become a classic, and therefore the

content of the TT cannot change, both with respect to the original versions, both between the various retranslations.

As far as the 1958 retranslation is concerned, we have seen that it is the most “different” one out of three of them, on a lexical level. It is very likely that this is a consequence of the period of time in which it has been produced. Although not so far away from 1979 (1979 is actually closer to 1958 than to 2020), in 1958 many important historical events had not occurred yet. Events such as the Italian economic miracle which, according to historians, started exactly in 1958, the same year in which the European Economic Community started³¹. This period of economic growth has been possible thanks to the European Recovery Program (also known as Marshall plan), the economic assistance plan received by some European countries following World War II³². This would probably sound quite odd in a thesis regarding translation, but we should keep in mind that language is the reflection of every single event occurring in a country, be it historical, economic, sociological, cultural, etc. However, even though this period of growth started in 1958, the year the first retranslation was published, its effects had not yet appeared, and this is evident from a general lack of borrowings and transfers: apart from the proper names and cities which still do not have an Italian equivalent, everything has been translated into the TL through the use of the various translation procedures. As a further support of this statement, in the 1958 retranslation, on more than one occasion, the retranslator used words that are no longer common in current Italian: I have already given the example for the translation of *trousers*, which has been rendered as *calzoni*. This obviously does not affect the meaning, since the average Italian (native) speaker knows what this word means even though he/she would never use it in spoken language, because it is a word pertaining to a different period of time.

From a grammatical and stylistic point of view, this version is very similar to the other two retranslations: there are no relevant differences between the three

³¹ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/European_Communities

³² https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Marshall_Plan

of them, they are all quite faithful to the ST. As for the grammar, too little time has passed between the retranslation and the ST. Differences in syntactical and morphological structures occur over centuries: works written in the Middle Ages are very difficult to read and understand for their respective native speakers, since the language used is completely different from the current ones, both on lexical and grammatical levels. From a stylistic perspective, the register, even between the two protagonists, is very formal; they call themselves by their last names and they address each other formally, using the personal pronoun *lei*: this is not noticeable in the original version, since the formal pronoun in English is *you*, but the context makes it evident ³³.

The 1958 retranslation is the one in which we find the largest number of omissions and additions. As I have specified more than once in the previous chapter, they do not affect the transfer of the message, since the retranslator has omitted elements (words, phrases, and sometimes entire sentences) that are not relevant, and has added other elements to further clarify some passages that were already clear enough. The 1979 and the 2020 retractions are quite similar, although being farther in time than the 1958 and the 1979 versions. On the lexical level, they are both current, so much so that the 1979 version does not look like a 40+ year old translation. Granted, this could be because it is the translation of a 19th century book, so, maybe, the 2020 retranslation is the one which seems older than what it actually is if compared to the other two.

3.4.2 The extra-linguistic factors

I would say that the time and the place are the principal extra-linguistic factors affecting both the SL and the TL. As I have already said, the register is mainly formal, even though every now and then we can read some expressions that are not quite swear words, but rather interjections, which are typical of the 19th century

³³ This same register is used also in films and TV series based on the character of Sherlock Holmes, except for the BBC TV series *Sherlock*, in which the register is much more informal: this is due to the fact that, unlike the other renditions, this one is set in modern-day London (it was broadcasted from 2013 to 2017).

language: just to give an example, Watson exclaims *By Jove!*, which is not a common interjection in the current SL. The same can be said about the translations of this expression: in the 1958 version it has been translated as *Perdiana!* and in the other two as *Per Giove!*: both translations are not common in the current TL lexicon, and when reading an expression such as this one, both the ST reader and the TT reader immediately realise that they are reading a text which has not been written in recent years. Another example of typical 19th century language can be found in the usage of slang. There are entire paragraphs in the fourth chapter where Holmes and Watson question the constable who had found the first body, who speaks in a very informal way and using slang expressions, such as *never anyone so cryin' drunk as that cove*, where *cove* here is used with the meaning of *fellow*.³⁴ In the second part of the book, the one set in America, John Ferrier and Jefferson Hope use a similar language, with many informal expressions which are typical of the time period the plot is set.

As far as the place factor is concerned, the first thing we think of when talking about Sherlock Holmes is London: this is one of the cases in which the character is strictly related with the location, just like Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet* makes us think of Verona. The location is part of the storyline, and therefore it would have been impossible, and incorrect, to change it with an Italian city which could have been more familiar to the target reader. The city name has been rendered in all three retranslations with its recognised translation *Londra*, but for the addresses the only solution was to use a transfer procedure, keeping them in the SL. This same strategy has been used for the rendering of an organisation such as *Scotland Yard*, but could not be used for the translation of the Mormon community name and their administrative building. The Mormon community has its Italian equivalent, therefore its translation did not present any issue. On the other hand, the administrative building, which is called *Endowment House*, does not have a proper recognised translation: the most adequate translation is in the

³⁴ <https://www.collinsdictionary.com/it/dizionario/inglese/cove>

2020 version, where it has been rendered as *Casa delle Investiture*, as is indicated on the *Latter Day Saints* official website. The 1979 version retranslator could not find a solution on a website, and therefore he chose to translate with a descriptive equivalent which does not designate the actual function of the building, while in the 1958 version it has been translated with a functional equivalent, which can be considered acceptable, although not semantically correct: this retranslation does not interfere with the transfer of the message as the 1979 retranslation does, since its translation denotes a completely different idea.

We already know that *A Study in Scarlet*, and the other Sherlock Holmes novels as well, is a detective story, so there is not really a specific field which is evident in the text. Holmes being a chemist, the author used some specific chemistry terminology in the first chapter, when Holmes explains to Watson the new method he has discovered to detect blood. Conan Doyle used terms such as *reagent*, *haemoglobin*, *pipette*, *corpuscles*, which have been correctly transferred in all three retranslations with their TL equivalents, thus preserving Holmes' degree of knowledge on the subject. A lack of knowledge on the subject on the part of the retranslators would have constituted a serious problem: although the episode is not relevant for the crime-related plotline, it is in this moment that Holmes and Watson were introduced to each other, and omitting this part would have had significant consequences for the entire story. As I have already mentioned at the beginning of Chapter 2, the character of Sherlock Holmes is explicitly inspired by one of Conan Doyle's university professors, who had similar observation skills besides a profound knowledge of chemistry and science in general, since he was a doctor. The author, although his medical career had not been a successful one, had received a scientific education, as it is proved in the text.

As for the audience, this text was not addressed to a specific readership. In fact, Conan Doyle fought for its publication, and it was first published on the Christmas issue of a periodical, so it could be read by literally anyone. We have seen that the audience addressed by a translation has to mirror the one addressed

by the ST, so the TT had to be translated in a way to be easily accessible by different types of readers, pertaining to different social or age groups, and educational stage. Indeed, this book could be read for educational purposes in high schools (and also in middle schools), as it can be read for recreational purposes as well.

This evaluation sums up what has been demonstrated in the analysis: the older of the three retranslations, the 1958 version, is clearly a domesticated translation: this is evident from the abundant use of translation procedures such as additions, omissions and equivalents, which are much more frequent than in the 1979 and the 2020 versions. The fact that the 1958 version is a domesticated translation is consistent with what has been postulated by Berman (1990) and, almost two hundred years before, by Goethe (1819): first translations, and more in general earlier translations, are characterised by a domesticating approach in order to make contact with a foreign culture which, with the passing of time, will be more and more accustomed to the reception of other translated versions of that same literary work, which will be more foreignised, and therefore more faithful to the ST.

All in all, despite presenting a great number of differences between each other, the three retranslations analysed in this thesis offer a more than acceptable rendition of *A Study in Scarlet*. The “mistakes” found in all three of them (alternately) do not prevent the transfer of the same message as the original version, which is the ultimate aim of any translation work.

Conclusion

After a detailed analysis of the differences found in each one of the three retranslations, it can be concluded that, in this specific case, the Retranslation Hypothesis would appear to be supported by the case study. It has been seen that many scholars consider the Retranslation Hypothesis as an oversimplification, as far as the reason as to why retranslation is needed is concerned. Some scholars such as Venuti, and Koskinen and Paloposki claim that time, in reference to the ageing process first translations undergo, is not the only reason which justifies the phenomenon of retranslation: other factors include changes regarding the addressed readership and the social context. However, this does not seem to be such a strong factor as regards the case study of this thesis.

It has been determined that the source audience bears a close correspondence corresponds to the target audience, which is the general reader: except for a very limited number of examples, the text does not contain any term pertaining to a specific field, allowing the reader to understand it without any issues. As for the changes regarding the social context, it is essential to bear in mind that a literary work, especially a novel, is a text in which both content and linguistic form are of primary importance. While transferring the same content as the source text, the literary translator has to make an attempt at preserving the same language used by the author of the source text, regardless of the social context in which the translation is being produced.

It can be concluded that the main factor causing differences among the three retranslations is the different period of time in which they were carried out. As it has been shown, the 1958 version is the most different one, displaying numerous examples of words and expressions which the current Italian speaker would not use nowadays. However, this does not constitute a mistake, since the story itself is set at the end of the 19th century, so the target reader, even in more recent retranslations, might expect to come across words and expressions which he/she would consider somewhat antiquated or even obsolete.

Another aspect in favour of the Retranslation Hypothesis is the domesticated approach applied in the 1958 version, demonstrated by the huge number of omissions and additions if compared to the 1979 and the 2020 versions. The application of a domesticated approach, according to the Retranslation Hypothesis, is typical of first, and generally speaking earlier translations, since they aim at introducing a foreign text to a culture which is not familiar with it yet, so the translator often chooses to omit (source) culture-specific references, or to add an explanation which is not contained in the source text.

To conclude, the evaluation attempt has found that all three retranslations are to be considered acceptable in the target culture. All the differences analysed in the second chapter do not prevent the transfer of the message from the source language to the target language. Despite some of them having been classified as “inaccuracies”, they are not so relevant, as with all the other types of differences, and therefore the message has been successfully transferred, thus accomplishing the main goal of any translation process.

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Riassunto

L'obiettivo di questa tesi è di confrontare tre diverse ritraduzioni del primo romanzo con protagonista il personaggio di Sherlock Holmes, *Uno studio in rosso* (*A Study in Scarlet*), scritto da Arthur Conan Doyle nel 1887. Per poter arrivare a un vero e proprio confronto, è necessario analizzare alcune tra le numerose differenze riscontrate durante la lettura delle tre versioni, facendo riferimento al testo originale, classificando ogni singolo esempio in base al tipo di processo traduttivo subito, e cercare di spiegare le motivazioni che stanno alla base di una determinata scelta traduttiva.

Il primo capitolo prende in esame l'aspetto più teorico della disciplina della traduzione. È importante comprendere cosa si intende con il termine *ritraduzione*, e per fare ciò partiamo dal concetto di *traduzione* e di *studi traduttivi* (*Translation Studies*).

Il termine *traduzione* denota il “trasferimento” di un qualsiasi tipo di testo da una *lingua di partenza* a una *lingua di arrivo*; si parla infatti di *testo di partenza* e *testo di arrivo*. Il linguista Jakobson, nel 1959, ha individuato tre tipi diversi di traduzione: la traduzione *interlinguistica* è il tipo di traduzione più conosciuto, e si riferisce appunto al trasferimento di un testo da una lingua di partenza a una lingua di arrivo; la traduzione *intra-linguistica* è un tipo di traduzione che prende in considerazione una sola lingua, quindi non esiste una lingua di arrivo, ma solo una lingua di partenza, che nel testo di arrivo apparirà in forma diversa rispetto al testo di partenza (per esempio per un cambiamento nel registro d'uso), motivo per cui è anche chiamata *reformulazione*; la traduzione *intersemiotica* è una traduzione che avviene sempre all'interno dello stesso sistema linguistico, ma attraverso l'utilizzo di mezzi di comunicazione non verbali.

A partire dagli anni 50 il concetto di traduzione è diventato una vera e propria materia di studio. La disciplina che studia la traduzione prende il nome di *studi traduttivi*, denominazione coniata dallo studioso americano Holmes in un saggio scritto nel 1972 e pubblicato nel 1988. Holmes aveva pensato a diversi nomi

da assegnare alla materia di studio, tutti troppo generici, anche perché non era ancora chiaro su cosa si sarebbe concretamente incentrata questa disciplina. Holmes la definisce come lo studio di qualsiasi attività di ricerca basata sia sul processo di traduzione che sul prodotto finale. Ci troviamo quindi in un ambito di pura ricerca, che viene diviso in *studi descrittivi sulla traduzione* e *studi teorici sulla traduzione*. I primi sono a loro volta divisi in base all'ambito di studio su cui si concentrano, ossia prodotto, funzione e processo. I secondi si occupano della formulazione delle varie teorie sulla traduzione.

Questo bisogno di studiare la traduzione come se fosse una vera e propria disciplina nasce dalla crescente importanza da essa acquisita negli ultimi 50 anni, con l'aumento del numero di corsi specializzati, la creazione di strumenti che facilitano il processo e la nascita di organizzazioni che raggruppano traduttori provenienti da tutto il mondo, che hanno fatto della traduzione una vera e propria professione, e non più solo un passatempo come era considerata in passato.

Quest'elaborato si concentrerà su un tipo di traduzione, quella letteraria, cioè la traduzione di testi letterari (nel caso specifico, romanzi). Nel 1931 Belloc ha stilato una serie di regole che il traduttore letterario è tenuto a seguire se il suo scopo è quello di produrre una buona traduzione. Per buona traduzione si intende un testo di arrivo che trasmetta lo stesso messaggio contenuto nel testo di partenza: deve quindi essere suo equivalente.

Il concetto di *equivalenza* è un concetto cardine nell'ambito degli studi traduttivi, perché denota quello a cui ogni traduttore deve ambire. Lo studioso Nida, nel 1964, ha individuato due tipi di equivalenza: *dinamica* e *formale*. Si parla di equivalenza formale quando il traduttore prende in considerazione solo il trasferimento del testo da una lingua all'altra, senza tenere conto di nessun altro aspetto al di fuori della lingua. L'equivalenza dinamica è quel tipo di equivalenza che prende in considerazione anche le differenze contestuali tra i due testi, che quindi permette una maggiore libertà di espressione e la possibilità di sperimentare con la lingua.

Così come Nida, anche Pym, nel 2007, individua due tipi di equivalenza: *direzionale* e *naturale*. L'equivalenza direzionale fa riferimento all'unidirezionalità del concetto stesso: si è sempre parlato di equivalenza che va dal testo di partenza al testo di arrivo, quindi applicabile solo al testo tradotto. L'equivalenza naturale può andare in entrambe le direzioni, rendendo quindi meno evidente quale sia il termine di partenza e quello di arrivo. Anche Popovič ha individuato vari tipi di equivalenza: *linguistica*, *paradigmatica*, *stilistica* e *testuale*. Il concetto di equivalenza è il concetto chiave nella valutazione di una traduzione.

La ritraduzione è un'ulteriore traduzione di un testo, in linea di massima un testo letterario, già tradotto in passato. La nozione di ritraduzione, vista da un punto di vista accademico, è stata introdotta da Antoine Berman in un saggio contenuto in un numero della rivista *Palimpseste* del 1990. Nel saggio lo studioso enuncia l'*ipotesi di ritraduzione*, secondo la quale un testo ha necessità di essere ritradotto perché il tempo renderà la sua prima traduzione obsoleta. Solamente dopo una serie di ritraduzioni si potrà giungere a un'eventuale traduzione "perfetta". Nelle prime traduzioni è evidente l'applicazione di una strategia *addomesticante*, ovvero la tendenza di adattare il testo alle norme della cultura e della lingua di arrivo; questo avviene perché il traduttore deve introdurre un testo straniero al pubblico di arrivo, compito reso più facile se il pubblico lo percepisce come familiare grazie all'uso di determinate strategie di traduzione di cui parleremo in seguito. Man mano che un testo viene ritradotto, si rende sempre più evidente l'applicazione di una strategia *straniante*, cioè l'avvicinamento alle norme della lingua e della cultura di partenza, rendendo la traduzione più fedele all'originale.

Si può determinare se una traduzione è addomesticante o straniante in base a quali strategie traduttive sono state utilizzate. Quelle tipiche della traduzione addomesticante, dette *dirette*, sono il *prestito*, il *calco* e la *traduzione letterale*, l'*omissione* e l'*aggiunta*; quelle tipiche della traduzione straniante sono la *trasposizione*, la *modulazione*, l'*equivalenza* (descrittiva, funzionale o culturale) e l'*adattamento*.

L'ipotesi di ritraduzione è stata confutata da più di uno studioso: in particolare Venuti e Koskinen e Paloposki sostengono che una ritraduzione non è resa necessaria solo dall'obsolescenza causata dal passare tempo e dal conseguente mutamento della lingua. In più di un'occasione, più ritraduzioni di una stessa opera sono state portate a termine in un lasso di tempo troppo breve per far sì che siano state rese necessarie da cambiamenti a livello linguistico. Oltre all'invecchiamento delle prime (o precedenti) traduzioni, altri fattori che rendono necessaria la ritraduzione possono essere una variazione del pubblico a cui l'opera tradotta è destinata e cambiamenti riguardanti le norme traduttive e il contesto sociale. Vanderschelden individua cinque ragioni che giustificano la ritraduzione: l'ultima traduzione non è più soddisfacente; viene pubblicata una nuova edizione del testo di partenza che diventa la nuova edizione standard; l'ultima traduzione esistente è considerata datata; c'è necessità di ritradurre un testo per uno scopo specifico nella lingua di arrivo: il testo di partenza può assumere nuove interpretazioni.

Pym classifica due tipi di ritraduzione in base al tempo e al luogo in cui sono prodotte: le ritraduzioni *passive* avvengono a secoli di distanza e in zone geografiche diverse, di conseguenza non entrano in competizione tra di loro (per esempio la Bibbia); le ritraduzioni *attive*, al contrario, sono portate a termine nello stesso periodo di tempo (o in periodi di tempo vicini) e all'interno della stessa area geografica, e conseguentemente sono in competizione tra di loro.

Il secondo capitolo contiene l'analisi vera e propria, preceduta da una breve introduzione dell'opera oggetto di analisi e dall'elenco e spiegazione delle strategie traduttive individuate.

Come già sottolineato in precedenza, *Uno studio in rosso* è la prima opera che ha come protagonista Sherlock Holmes. Scritto nel 1887 da Arthur Conan Doyle, l'autore studia medicina a Edimburgo, ma come medico non ottiene il successo sperato. Per questo motivo nel suo tempo libero decide di dedicarsi alla scrittura, dando così vita al celebre personaggio, per il quale Conan Doyle si è apertamente ispirato a uno dei suoi insegnanti ai tempi dell'università, Joseph Bell,

sia nell'aspetto fisico sia nei modi di fare, inclusa la grande capacità di osservazione, tratto distintivo del detective.

Per comprendere al meglio gli esempi analizzati, si è scelto di raccontare sinteticamente la trama del romanzo. Il romanzo è suddiviso in due parti, che a una prima lettura sembrano completamente indipendenti l'una dall'altra, ma una volta giunti alla fine vengono collegate per formare una trama unificata. Nella prima parte, ambientata nella Londra di fine '800, si assiste al primo incontro fra Holmes e Watson (che funge da narratore) e, in seguito, al ritrovamento delle due vittime dell'assassino; alla fine di questa prima parte, Holmes rivela il nome del colpevole, ma le modalità degli omicidi e il movente verranno rivelati solo alla fine della seconda parte. La seconda parte è ambientata in America, nello specifico in Colorado e Utah, circa una quarantina di anni prima, e costituisce l'antefatto del crimine e ne spiega l'origine. Negli ultimi due capitoli si torna al "presente" e il colpevole spiega come e perché ha deciso di compiere il delitto.

Le varie differenze riscontrate nelle tre ritraduzioni sono state suddivise in base al tipo di processo traduttivo che si è verificato per ognuna di esse. Si è scelto di utilizzare la classificazione fatta da Newmark nel 1988 in riferimento alla traduzione degli elementi culturali da una lingua di partenza a una lingua di arrivo. Tra i processi riscontrati se ne possono individuare alcuni già menzionati in precedenza, mentre altri vengono introdotti nel secondo capitolo: *omissione*, *aggiunta*, *traduzione diretta*, *traduzione riconosciuta*, *transfer/trasferimento*, *prestito*, *equivalente funzionale*, *culturale e descrittivo*, *trasposizione*, *sinonimo*, *inesattezza*. Va sottolineato che gli esempi analizzati sono in numero molto ridotto rispetto alle differenze riscontrate durante la lettura attenta delle tre ritraduzioni: riportarle tutte sarebbe avrebbe reso l'elaborato lungo e ripetitivo; quindi, sono stati scelti alcuni tra gli esempi più rilevanti per ciascuna categoria. Inoltre, tutte le differenze riscontrate non costituiscono nessun tipo di impedimento per il trasferimento del significato dell'opera dalla lingua di partenza alla lingua di arrivo, visto che riguardano dettagli di poco conto a cui il lettore del testo tradotto presterà poca attenzione perché non rilevanti ai fini dello sviluppo della trama.

Nel terzo capitolo si è tentato di valutare oggettivamente la qualità delle tre ritraduzioni, naturalmente confrontandole con il testo originale. Nella prima parte del capitolo si è scelto di affrontare la critica della traduzione da un punto di vista teorico. Il critico, per poter valutare oggettivamente (quindi correttamente) una traduzione deve prima di tutto capire il tipo di testo. Reiss individua diversi tipi di testo in base alle funzioni del linguaggio di Bühler (espressiva, conativa/appellativa e informativa): il testo incentrato sulla forma, quello incentrato sulla funzione appellativa e quello incentrato sul contenuto. Reiss aggiunge a questa classificazione anche il testo trasmesso attraverso mezzi audiovisivi. Il testo incentrato sulla forma è prevalentemente un'opera letteraria, in cui la funzione estetica della lingua prevale sulla funzione informativa. È un tipo di testo che dà al traduttore una certa libertà di scelta, permettendogli di mettere in mostra le sue capacità sia di scrittore che di traduttore. Dovrà essere in grado di saper scegliere l'equivalente ottimale tra tutti quelli "proposti" nella lingua di arrivo. Il testo incentrato sulla funzione appellativa è un tipo di testo che si può trovare nella pubblicità e nella propaganda politica. Attraverso un uso adeguato della lingua di arrivo, il traduttore deve ottenere lo stesso effetto di richiamo presente nel testo di partenza, di conseguenza sia la forma sia il contenuto perdono di importanza in favore della funzione. Nel testo incentrato sul contenuto il traduttore deve essere in grado di trasmettere le stesse informazioni del testo di partenza nel testo di arrivo. Testi di questo tipo sono i comunicati stampa, notizie di attualità, istruzioni di qualsiasi genere, saggi, tesi, letteratura specializzata. Il contenuto è l'aspetto più rilevante. Tuttavia, forma e contenuto non possono esistere l'una senza l'altro, quindi, in base al tipo di testo, entrambi sono fondamentali per la trasmissione del messaggio del testo di partenza, anche se il loro livello di importanza può variare.

Il tipo di testo influenza tutti i criteri, sia linguistici che extra-linguistici, che il critico deve tenere in considerazione. Tra i criteri linguistici troviamo elementi che agiscono a livello semantico, cioè che esprimono quello che l'autore vuole comunicare; in alcuni casi vengono utilizzati anche elementi extra-linguistici,

come si vedrà in seguito. Gli elementi semantici dipendono dal contesto, sia micro (dalla singola parola alla frase) sia macro (dal paragrafo al testo nella sua interezza). La correttezza della traduzione degli elementi semantici determina se una traduzione è equivalente al testo di partenza oppure no. Gli elementi lessicali determinano se una traduzione è adeguata. Il traduttore deve prestare particolare attenzione a elementi come termini tecnici, modi di dire, falsi amici, omonimi, parole intraducibili, nomi, metafore, giochi di parole: in sostanza tutto quello per cui una traduzione letterale potrebbe non essere la soluzione giusta. Gli elementi grammaticali determinano la correttezza di una traduzione. Questo criterio viene applicato per qualsiasi tipo di testo, e prende in considerazione sia gli elementi morfologici che gli elementi sintattici. Gli elementi stilistici determinano la completa corrispondenza o meno tra testo di partenza e testo di arrivo, soprattutto per quanto riguarda il registro utilizzato dal traduttore. Non sempre c'è completa corrispondenza tra un testo e la sua traduzione, ma in certi casi questa mancanza può essere giustificata dal tipo di testo, motivo per cui il tipo di testo è un fattore essenziale affinché un critico porti a termine una valutazione in modo corretto.

I fattori extra-linguistici costituiscono il contesto situazionale, che è l'insieme del contesto comunicativo e del contesto culturale. Tra questi fattori troviamo la situazione, che include elementi come le abbreviazioni, i colloquialismi, le interiezioni, che permettono di ridurre al minimo l'ammontare del materiale linguistico utilizzato perché il lettore comprenderà immediatamente grazie al contesto. Per quanto riguarda il campo tematico, il traduttore, e di conseguenza il critico, deve averne una conoscenza almeno basilare in modo da usare correttamente la terminologia. Il tempo, inteso come il periodo in cui è stato scritto il testo di partenza e quello di arrivo, influenza il tipo di linguaggio utilizzato. La traduzione di un testo letterario, anche se portata a termine decenni dopo la pubblicazione del testo di partenza, deve rispecchiare il linguaggio dell'epoca e allo stesso tempo risultare abbastanza attuale (questo vale soprattutto per i testi in prosa). Lo spazio è un fattore che include tutto ciò che è relativo alla lingua e alla cultura di partenza. In certi casi, un traduttore deve essere in grado di

trasmettere un significato/messaggio non presente nell'immaginario del pubblico di arrivo. Tra le strategie più efficaci per compiere tale impresa troviamo gli equivalenti descrittivi, i prestiti, i calchi, i trasferimenti, il mantenimento della lingua straniera con la spiegazione contenuta in una nota a piè di pagina. La globalizzazione ha reso il tutto molto più semplice, ma in certi casi il problema persiste. Altro fattore è pubblico a cui è destinato il testo di arrivo, che deve riflettere quello a cui era destinato il testo di partenza, quindi quello scelto dall'autore. Il tipo di pubblico determina l'uso di certi elementi quali espressioni idiomatiche e/o proverbi che il traduttore deve saper adattare al proprio contesto culturale per permettere al suo pubblico di capire. L'emittente include tutto ciò che ha o ha avuto un qualche tipo di influenza sul linguaggio usato dall'autore, come le sue origini, la sua educazione e l'epoca in cui è vissuto/a. Tutto questo si riflette sul testo, in particolare su quello incentrato sulla forma, manifestandosi a livello di grammatica, di stile e di lessico, così come le implicazioni affettive, ultimo fattore extralinguistico. Il critico deve valutare se il traduttore è stato in grado di trasmettere non solo lo stesso messaggio del testo di partenza, ma anche le stesse emozioni attraverso l'uso di strumenti come i suffissi diminutivi o le imprecazioni. Le imprecazioni, specialmente se includono l'uso di un nome di animale, necessitano di particolare attenzione, dato che molto spesso la connotazione cambia da lingua a lingua. È quest'ultima categoria di fattori che evidenzia il problema che affligge la valutazione della traduzione (intesa come disciplina), sottolineandone l'alto grado di soggettività causato da interpretazioni personali.

L'ultima parte del capitolo è dedicata alla valutazione delle tre ritraduzioni oggetto di analisi. Come tipologia testuale, il romanzo può essere considerato come un testo incentrato sia sul contenuto che sulla forma. Generalmente, la versione del 1958 è quella che si distingue in maniera più evidente dalle altre due, che in linea di massima sono abbastanza simili nonostante il numero di anni che separa il 1979 dal 2020 sia maggiore rispetto al numero di anni che intercorre tra il 1958 e il 1979. Il motivo di questo paradosso può essere di carattere storico: il 1958 è l'anno di inizio del boom economico, conseguenza di una serie di accordi

internazionali che porteranno alla nascita dell'Unione Europea e, nel lungo periodo, daranno il via alla globalizzazione. La versione del 1958 è la versione che presenta il più grande numero di omissioni e di aggiunte, e una generale mancanza di prestiti e trasferimenti: la tendenza è stata quella di tradurre quanto più possibile nella lingua di arrivo, utilizzando varie strategie di traduzione. Come visto in precedenza, questa tecnica è tipica delle traduzioni addomesticanti, che corrispondono alle traduzioni del passato. Le differenze più rilevanti tra le tre ritraduzioni riguardano quasi esclusivamente il lessico utilizzato; da un punto di vista grammaticale e stilistico non ci sono grandi variazioni, questo perchè tutte e tre le versioni sono state portate a termine in un intervallo di tempo di circa sessant'anni, e cambiamenti linguistici a livello morfologico e sintattico avvengono nel corso di secoli.

In conclusione, le tre ritraduzioni non presentano grandi problemi riguardanti il trasferimento del messaggio dalla lingua di partenza alla lingua di arrivo, che costituisce il fine ultimo di qualsiasi opera di traduzione. Sono tutte e tre perfettamente accettabili e comprensibili dal lettore italiano, nonostante l'uso di qualche termine e espressione non più comune nella lingua parlata al giorno d'oggi, ma presente nel bagaglio culturale del madrelingua italiano medio.