

Cultural and Linguistic Problems in
Two Spanish Translations of
Dickens' *Oliver Twist*:
A Contrastive Analysis.

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1 Introduction

In this academic dissertation I have tried to explore and activate the competences that I have acquired during my degree in English Studies at the University of Zaragoza. Amongst these competences I would like to highlight two main categories: specific and generic. In the first category I would like to emphasize how I think have been able to conduct a deep analysis of translation methodology thanks to my knowledge of the subject (methodological and critical) together with my ability to critically develop my own ideas in formal and correct English. The generic competences that I have acquired while writing this dissertation, among others, are the required ability to organize and plan, together with the development of critical thinking and self-criticism as well as the improvement of my ability to solve arising problems.

In this dissertation I would like to explore contrastively two Spanish translations of Charles Dickens' debut novel *Oliver Twist* (1837): the translation done by Enriqueta Sevillano (1978) and the one done by Josep Marco Borillo (2004). The main objective is to contrastively analyze how these translators have solved certain translation problems which arise as a result of the linguistic characteristics of the source text, as well as other features which are related to the cultural context in which the source text emerged. I will narrow the topic of my dissertation by focusing on the translation of some aspects which are related to the Victorian Era, the time in which the original novel was written, i.e. the dialectal translation of the Cockney variety, and how the characters are depicted through their use of the language. First, in the section in which I present the working framework, a brief introduction about some useful translation concepts and techniques will be explained so as to better understand the analysis. Second, in the same section, I

will introduce some significant aspects about Dickens' life which seem to be determinant for the production of *Oliver Twist*. Language varieties will also be presented for a better understanding of the analysis, followed by a discussion of how the author was received by the Spanish audience when the novel arrived to the country. Third, the corpus will be presented in order to provide an accurate description and understanding of the texts used. Then, a detailed analysis of some relevant aspects in both translations will be offered followed by a conclusion, which will put an end to this dissertation. Finally, I will include the bibliographical references that I have used to carry out my academic piece of work and some appendixes that I consider essential for the presentation of my work.

2 Context and framework of analysis

Before moving on to the analysis of the translation, it is necessary to briefly introduce some theoretical questions regarding translation. The first question that should be tackled is 'What is translation?'. Several definitions have been given throughout history, as it is a field that has changed and developed a lot along time.

In the Oxford Dictionary of English (2005: 1632), the term 'translation' includes both the terms 'process' and 'product' (referring to the product obtained after the process of translation), both of them the object of study in this dissertation. According to Hatim and Munday (2004: 25), the appearance of the word 'process' in combination with the word 'product' in the definition of translation seems to be interesting as translation itself may be interpreted as encompassing these two different perspectives,

both referring to the process of translating together with the product obtained after that process had occurred.

My study is framed within the field of **literary translation**. Even though literary translation is seen as a daily matter, Landers (2001: 7) claims that literary translation faces notorious difficulties, amongst which I would like to highlight the one mentioned by the author in first place: “resistance by the public to reading literature in translation”, as some kind of innocence is lost. This is a clear burden that the literary translator must overcome by using the adequate strategies and techniques.

Nowadays translation is seen as a tool of communication rather than a vehicle for transmitting a message in an appropriate and accurate way. In my opinion, the quality of translation products in general has decreased lately. Because of globalization, the need for immediate translation is a factual thing: grammatical mistakes can be spotted everywhere and, most importantly, cultural issues are not dealt with as thoroughly as in the past, which provide the final product with a leak for the target readership, understanding by ‘leak’, mainly, an informational and cultural gap in the target audience.

2.1 Charles Dickens: Life and distinctive features

Charles J. H. Dickens (1812-1870) is one of the most representative writers of the Victorian Era. He has been claimed to be one of the best portrayers of Victorian society, of class gender roles and of the notorious clash between classes; he is considered a

master of evoking images of the early Victorian period in the city of London, a time full of contrast within society. Boundless research has been on this author, reaching the conclusion that Dickens' personal life had a great impact on his writings.

Two main things are going to influence Dickens' writings regarding his personal life. In agreement with Arrando Barberá (2014: 73), the first one was education. He attributed the prominence of education – or lack of it – in his novels to the debts John Dickens was unable to face. The author's father was imprisoned because of his financial incompetence and inability to cope with these debts; Charles would be forced to leave school at the age of 12, having to work at a warehouse labelling pots. Hence, Dickens' aspirations of having a proper education at Cambridge University were diminished by his father's financial problems.

The second determinant factor is women, who played a significant role throughout the whole life of the writer. Yildirim (2013: 114) claimed that Dickens' personal experiences with women had 'also played a major role in the formation of his female characters'. I would like to highlight three events that seemed to be significant in relation to my analysis. First of all, the fact that he had ten children with Catherine Hogarth appears to be meaningful for the analysis of *Oliver Twist* as it both concerns women and children, which will be approached as features of study as the paper moves forward. Then, the death of his sister-in-law has been pointed out as one of the saddest moments in the life of the author: her absence provoked on the author a deep void he would never replace again. Finally, it is very significant the involvement of the writer in a foundation which provided a home for the homeless women, also known as 'Fallen Women'.

Before moving on to the next section it is important to briefly mention the presence of religion in Dickens' works, which is going to be influenced by the ideologies of the author, which is labelled as a professing Christian. Walder (1981: xiii) defined the author's ideology as a 'liberal Protestant with radical Romantic learnings', which are going to be expressed in their works, being a determinant influence along the life of the author.

2.2 Language varieties in *Oliver Twist*

Oliver Twist is a novel in which social class goes hand in hand with the use of language. As has been previously mentioned, the Victorian Era was a time marked by contrasts and differences, and this is going to be recollected by the author, who is going to trace these differences by the different uses of the English language made by the characters. In Dickens' work two different varieties of the English language can be identified: the Cockney variety (mainly used by the poorer classes) in contrast with RP English, which is going to be used by the upper classes in the city.

This association between class and language appears to be interesting as it will arise as a real problem when translating the original text into Spanish. Soto Vázquez (1993: 280) argued that the established dichotomy between Standard English and dialectal English in Dickens' novel appears to be impossible to translate as this distinction is usually associated with striking cultural and socio-economic differences. In his work, Soto Vázquez (1993: 282) proposed some solutions to fulfil this dialectal gap,

being the most successful one the introduction of Spanish vulgarisms and a poor use of the Spanish grammar on the characters speaking Cockney in the source text.

In my opinion, and taking into consideration the research that has been done to complete this dissertation, this informational and cultural gap between the two social classes has not been clearly established. There is not a mark of dialectal difference between classes in any of the translations; on the contrary, the translators have opted for translating the Cockney dialect into Standard Spanish, and the only aspect that could be considered as a successful approach to this social, cultural and dialectal difference is the use of certain vulgarisms when characters speak the Cockney variety in the original text, as the analysis of section 4.1 will show.

2.3 Dickens' reception by the Spanish audience

It is well-known that Dickens' works have been widely accepted, as they have reached a world-wide audience. Here, I am going to focus on the reception that the author achieved in Spain and the effect that he created on the Spanish audience with his writings.

Alberich (1994: 65) stated that the 20th century was the determinant period for the expansion of English literature in Spain. He states that by the early 20th century, illiteracy amongst the population was diminishing extraordinarily and the publishers' productions were notoriously increasing. It was this moment when Dickens started to be known in Spain and, more importantly, when the author started to be read in our

country. A remarkable year was 1883, when the first translation into Spanish of the novel arrived in our country thanks to Enrique Leopoldo de Verneuil, a translator who published this novel in Barcelona, with the help of 'Francisco Pérez Editorial'. After this first translation was introduced in Spain, Dickens began to be an important and well-known writer in the country; a high number of translations of the novel came after this publication and the novel is still translated nowadays, being the most recent one the translation made by Josep Marco Borillo in 2016, in which he corrected small mistakes appearing in the translation which is analyzed in this dissertation.

It has been proved that the most determinant fact that contributed to the acceptance of Dickens' literature in Spain was the way in which the work was originally published. The novel was firstly published in the English press as serials between the years 1837 and 1839. Marco Borillo (2004) stated that what has been peculiar about the publication of this novel is that it was published in the source language as a whole novel prior to its serialization, that is, Dickens himself could experience the success of his novel¹. Pérez Gállego (1964: 111) emphasized that the strategy of publishing the work in sets of chapters had a great impact on the reception of Dickens' literature in the Spanish press, especially the press in the capital. Besides, this strategy had proved to be highly successful in England as it kept the reader addicted to the narration; therefore it was as well used when the work was published in Spain. In my opinion, even though Dickens has been and still is a reference author, *Oliver Twist's* reception in Spain would

¹ Marco Borillo (2004), in his translation of the novel *Oliver Twist*, included some information at the end of the translation – in a section entitled "Notas al texto" – in which he made some personal conclusion and where he added some information that has been considerably useful for this dissertation.

have been considerably affected if it had been published as a whole novel. The reader may have been tired of reading such a vast text, whereas reading it as serials did not just keep the reader engaged with story, but it also created a feeling of expectation and even anxiety towards the next publication.

3 Corpus description

In this section I am going to describe the corpus that has been used to carry out this academic piece of work. First, I consider worth mentioning the fact that Dickens himself launched several editions of his novel *Oliver Twist* (a serial in its beginnings, as has been previously mentioned). The work was initially published between 1837 and 1839, in sets of two chapters per month, approximately. However, the author contributed to the revision of the later publications of the work in 1846, 1850, 1858 y 1867. In this dissertation I will be working with the edition of 1846 as it is widely considered the most definite translation and the most stable one given the fact that it was the version the author revised in depth².

Furthermore, I would like to refer to the two different translations that I have chosen for my contrastive analysis of the novel's translation into Spanish. First, it should be accounted the appreciation made by Soto Vázquez (2014: 146) which places the translation done by Josep Marco Borillo as one of the best translations of Dickens' novel

² In his translation, Marco Borillo (2004) added at the end a section entitled "Nota al texto", in which he included this relevant information.

Oliver Twist. This is the main reason why I have selected the translation by Marco Borillo (hereinafter also referred to as **Target Text 1** or **TT1**). This translation was published in 2004. Although he was the translator of the novel, it is important to mention that, for doing so, he worked hand in hand with a research team at the Jaume I University (Castellón). Secondly, for comparison purposes, I have used the translation by Enriqueta Sevillano (henceforth also referred to as **Target Text 2** or **TT2**) published in 1978. Before further details about TT2, I would like to highlight the difference in publication times between both translations, as I consider TT1 as an example of improvement in comparison with TT2. Soto Vázquez (2014: 148) argues that Sevillano had opted for ‘the easy way’ by avoiding the use of excessive vulgarisms as well as for the use of Standard Spanish along her whole translation, making no difference between classes or language use. This is the main motive why I have chosen this translation so as to contrast it with the one previously mentioned. The reason why two texts have been selected for this analysis is to provide it with a contrastive evidence so as to reinforce the study and the conclusions derived from it regarding the aspects being explored which are the main concerns of this paper – especially the translation of dialects and the linguistic treatment of social conventions.

4 Analysis

As I have mentioned above, Dickens was a Victorian author, and so it is his debut work *Oliver Twist*. The Victorian Era was a period characterized by contrasts, by huge differences and injustices between different social classes. It was a very good time for

those who were rich, but a terrible period for those living in poverty. Dirtiness, insanity, gender discrimination, violence and denigration were quotidian experiences at the time. Moreover, this period was a determinant one as many prolific literary works were written, together with the peak of English theatre, which also occurred at this time. However, even though it has been a determinant period in British history, it should be mentioned that the translation of Victorian texts has seemed to be a really complicated task given the enormous amount of research that has been done on this time of history. In my study I will analyze a few cases in depth, but I will include further identification of cases at the end of my dissertation, in the section entitled '7. Appendix'.

Here, I am going to focus on the main difficulties of translating a Victorian work into Spanish. The first aspect worth mentioning is the translation problems derived from the cultural context which the ST depicts. The Victorian Era was a very important time in British history, but it was not that important for the Spanish audience, which is a main source of potential misunderstandings and it means a big cultural – and informational gap – when dealing with the target audience. All these problems will be analyzed in detail below. First, an introduction to the 'Cockney' variety of English will be offered, together with its main features and how the translators have managed to convey or not a similar meaning from that proposed by Dickens in his version of the text. In the same section I will offer some solutions that I consider appropriate to overcome the problems that arise when translating this dialectal variety. Then, I will move on to the analysis of the characters in relation to the use they make of the language, focusing my analysis on three main aspects: social class and hierarchy, the female characters in Dickens' novel and, finally, how children are depicted.

4.1 The 'Cockney' dialect: Its rendering into Spanish

By 'Cockney' it is understood a variety of English which developed in the South of England – more concretely in the city of London – between the 18th and 19th century, although Matthews (1972) dated the presence of the Cockney dialect since the 16th century. Matthews (1972: 41) argued that, already in the 19th century, Cockney was claimed as 'one of the chief dialect types' and it has already established his own place in Literature, as we may see with Dickens' novel *Oliver Twist*.

For many years, and even today, Cockney has been seen as a mark of vulgarity and a deviant use of what is considered as Standard English. This is important to know as this dialect is going to be an important indicator of class and the determinant factor in the novel *Oliver Twist* for noticing the clash between rich and poor. In this section, the distinctive features of the Cockney dialect will be approached, together with its implications and the problems in translating it.

Landers (2001: 117) uphold and claimed the impossibility of translating a dialect correctly, as they are 'inextricably rooted in time and space'. Even though I partially agree with the author, given the difficulty of translating a dialectal variety of English and how rooted this particular dialect was in relation to society at the time, I would like to confront his argument endorsing mine with the richness of the Spanish language and the multiple geographical varieties it has (Andalusian and Canary accent, amongst others). Soto Vázquez (2014: 95) complained about the omission – in most of the cases – of the dualism between Standard English and Cockney by the Spanish translators of Dickens. He backed up his argument by stating that this duality has been thoroughly

planned and established by the author to fulfil his clash intentions amongst the characters of the novel. In his work, Soto Vázquez (2014: 96) established some interesting and quintessential characteristics of the Cockney variety which I consider worth mentioning for a better understanding of this section. The most significant feature – and the one which is more repeated in Dickens' novel – is the suppression of unstressed vowels and syllables in initial position. This suppression is achieved by means of glottal stops or by the introduction of an intervocalic -t- or -r-. These two main aspects provided this vernacular variety of English with a characteristic high pace when speaking it together with a 'clipped' effect by the connection of syllables with this intervocalic consonants and glottal stops. The second characteristic I would like to mention deals with Cockney's grammar, which slightly deviates from the Standard English rules.

For a clearer approach of the Cockney dialect in this novel, I am going to provide this section with two significant examples of the source text and the translation proposed by both Marco Borillo and Sevillano, respectively.

First, on page 19 (ST) we could see '*spectable chimbley-sweepin'* *bisness*, which has been translated as *Negocio de deshollinador bueno y respetable* in TT1 (p. 19) and as *Un oficio provechoso y útil, como, por ejemplo, el de deshollinador* in TT2 (p. 20). Here, a clear loss of the main essence of the source text can be observed, in which the Cockney accent is quite prominent as it may be seen with the omission of syllables. In none of the translations does this difference in speech appear, which places the character saying this line at the same level as any other 'well-educated' character. Both translators have opted for the elision of this phonetical aspect, provoking a clear informational gap in the target audience.

The second example is very much related to what has been mentioned before: the provinciality of the Cockney accent and the predilection of their speakers for proverbs and idioms: *Toor rul lol loo, gammon smoked ham and spinnage, the frog he wouldn't, and high cockolorum* (ST, p. 109). TT1, in a considerably achieved attempt of imitating this provincial dialect, has opted for the use of some Spanish sayings, which, in my opinion, fulfill reasonably well the intention of the source text's author of setting the difference between his characters: *¡Gallo que no canta algo tiene en la garganta! Y ya sabes, ¡por la boca muere el pez!* (TT1, p. 109). Contrastively, TT2 shows the omission as the main strategy of translation: *Tra-lari-lará. ¡vete a ver si vienen!* (TT2, p. 88). In this case, there is no sign of any type of idiom or expression that could give the target reader a hint about the character that is speaking.

As could be seen above, and agreeing with Landers (2001: 135), it is easier to translate the discourse of well and high-educated people rather than the speech of peasants and illiterates, as the translator has to face difficulties that he or she may not be able to express in the target language. In my opinion, I consider that no deviant use of the Spanish language has been achieved either by TT1 nor by TT2. However, even though none of them have achieved what, in my opinion, the original text demands, Marco Borillo has accomplished a better translation as he has been able to introduce both idiomatic elements and some words and expressions which could be considered of a 'lowest' language level than the ones used by Sevillano.

Lastly, and putting an end to this section, I would like to propose an alternative use of the language which better captures what Dickens was trying to transmit with his work. According to Soto Vázquez (2014: 98), and utterly agreeing with him, this dialectal

difference amongst characters and its translation into Spanish could be attained by using the phonetic defect of lisping as attributing it to those users of Cockney. I would like to add to this solution the different dialects that we have in Spain; I would have solved this difference in language by providing the 'Cockney characters' with either an Andalusian or a Canary accent. The reason why I would have chosen one of these two varieties of the Spanish language is because they are the ones that could be perfectly understood by a speaker of Standard Spanish, but there is a clear geographical mark in the use of language, which could have differentiated one character from the others. However, I am aware that this differentiation in the use of language may be interpreted as offensive for those readers belonging to this speaking-community. Another possibility that, in my opinion, would fit in this differentiation of dialects would have been transcribing the Cockney language variety with orthographic mistakes in the TT, which would have provided the reader with the impression of the illiterate background that those characters have.

4.2 *Oliver Twist*: Characters' depiction through language use

This section is divided into three different parts as each one is worth analyzing independently. Dickens has been praised not only for his great use of language and his depiction of the Victorian era London, but also for his magnificent capacity of depicting characters through their use of the language. The author was able to describe characters (their personality and social class) only by how they manage to use the English language. Since the Cockney variety has already been introduced and analyzed, in this section I

would like to focus on how the use of language can categorize characters. First, I will mention the clash between social classes, that is, rich and poor people. Then, the role of women in Dickens' novel *Oliver Twist* will be explained as it is determinant for the understanding of the work as a whole. Finally, to conclude with this section, the depiction of children in this novel will be approached as it seems to be of great significance.

4.2.1 Class and hierarchy. Differences in class: High vs depraved classes

The clash between the rich and the poor is one of the most significant and prominent issues along the entire novel. I considered a good election to classify the characters in two main categories: those belonging to the high class and those who belong to the lowest outcast of the city of London. There is no in-between position, either they belong to a respectable class (such as the beadle, Mr. Brownlow or Mr. Grimwig), they are part of the depraved members of society (all the children appearing in the novel, the Jew and Sikes, amongst the most important ones).

To begin with this class division, it is interesting to start describing the setting of each of those. High class characters live in the outskirts of the city, far away from the bustling life of the center of London; their houses are described as detached ones, with front and back parts and in which there is even space for parking a car inside the piece of land; whereas the poorest ones lived in areas described as 'little frequented and dirty ways' (p. 146) in which 'the mud lay thick upon the stones, and a black mist hung over

the streets' (p. 179) and where 'the ground was covered, nearly ankle-deep, with filth and mire; a thick steam' (p. 202). Nevertheless, it is not just the spaces in which the respective characters live, but also the way in which they use the language. Rich characters, because of their wealthy position, have access to a decent education, which is reflected in their use of language: not colloquial, polite and making scarce use of idiomatic expressions. Contrastively, the poorest classes tend to use a contracted and economic use of language – namely, Cockney variety – and a wide use of idioms in their speech. The way in which the most depraved characters use the language is exemplified both in the section entitled '4.1 The 'Cockney' dialect: rendering into Spanish' and in the last section of this dissertation '7. Appendix'.

Regarding the translation of this contrast between rich and poor people, both TT1 and TT2 have achieved that distinction by means of description, but not by means of translating correctly the characteristic linguistic features of the Cockney dialect. The target audience gets a considerably reliable and accurate depiction of the rich Victorian London (through the brief description of the big mansions and detached houses) as well as of the poorest Victorian London (mainly through the depiction of the dirtiness and terrible conditions of the streets and the sewage system, and by appealing the senses when describing the disgusting smell of the streets and how difficult it was to breath in them).

It is interesting to remark the fact that both translators have accurately translated the polite language of the high classes – they have maintained the conditionals or the modal verbs when asking questions. In this sense, Soto Vázquez (2014: 225) spoke in favor of the translators as he argued that there is an enormous difficulty in translating a

language dialect which was so prominent as Cockney was. However, I think the real problem of the Cockney variety was not its prominence during the Victorian Era, but how this variety marked a clear differentiation between classes, which I consider is the real difficulty of translating this variety. The Cockney language, at that time, was not just a dialectal variety of English, but also an indicator of the social class each one belonged to; it is a linguistic problem but also a cultural one when trying to translate it, the reader should know the importance that this had at the time to fully understand its relevance.

4.2.2 Women in *Oliver Twist*

In the section entitled '2.1. Charles Dickens: life and distinctive features' I have mentioned the importance of women throughout Dickens' life. However, *Oliver Twist* is a novel in which female characters barely appear, which does not mean that they did not play a determinant role in the narrative, on the contrary. Even though Dickens was a gender-biased Victorian man (he utterly believed in the Victorian convention of the 'Angel in the House', a woman that should devoted her life to housekeeping and children upbringing, serving the others with no complaint), Yildirim (2013: 116) claimed that he was not indifferent to this classification and 'imprisonment' of women in the private sphere, at least not completely, and this little evidence of 'rebellion' may be clearly seen in three main female characters of the novel: Mrs. Mann, Mrs. Bedwin and Nancy. Although I am mentioning these three women, I will mainly focus on Nancy.

Before analyzing these characters, it should be remarked that the Victorian Era was full of contradictions. There were the highly rooted images of both the 'Angel in the House' and the 'Fallen Woman' (women who did not fulfill the conventions established in the society, proper of a good and decent woman); however, as Yildirim (2013: 117) stated, the 'Victorian society that condemned and humiliated women seeking a career outside home was not so harsh against prostitution'. And this one was, with no doubt, a prominent issue in Dickens' society. He dealt with this issue, especially, in the character of Nancy, which will be analyzed in the following lines.

To begin with, Mrs. Mann is a parochial delegate; she belongs to the lower class and she is continuously threatened by her boss, Mr. Bumble, the beadle. Both by her name (Mrs., she is subjected to her husband's surname, we do not get to know her name) and her position (delegate) the reader gets to know that she is a submissive character. This assumption is confirmed on page 8, when the reader realizes that she is submissive, polite, obliging and obedient. Then there is the character of Mrs. Bedwin, who is as well behind the shadow of her husband's surname. She is a housekeeper and since the very first moment the reader knows she is a kind, graceful, loving and a good-hearted old woman because of how she adopted Oliver with open arms (p. 102). Even though she belongs to the low class, she is treated kindly by her patron, which differs a lot from the woman mentioned before. These two women have in common that they are docile, and they respond quite accordingly to the conventions of the time and what is expected from them.

Nevertheless, there is a clear antagonist in the novel: Nancy. Here, I would describe her through a few examples of the source text and its translations, but further

cases can be found in the 'Appendix' (table 7.2). Nancy is a beautiful young prostitute; hence she belongs to the lowest social class.

Throughout the whole text there are no explicit references to her family, so it is assumed she is an orphan who has been adopted by the eldest villain of the novel – Mr. Fagin – and forged to be introduced into the world of prostitution and delinquency; she embodies the clear image of the 'Fallen Woman'. She is closely tied to the cruelest character of the whole narration, Bill Sikes, a despot and tyrant who abuses of every character in the novel, especially of Nancy. He treated her as his slave, justifying this treatment to the Victorian convention of the 'Angel in the House' by making comments such as '*she's a honor to her sex*' (p. 117) or in statements such as '*Nancy quickly laid the cloth*' (p. 199) and '*Nancy was busily engaged in preparing breakfast*' (p. 200). Besides this mistreatment and disrespect for the lady, it is also remarkable the horrid violence – both physical and verbal – that Nancy received, especially by Sikes, being the most relevant one the comments made by this evil theft: '*Stand off from me, or I'll split your head against the wall*' (p. 155) and '*Well, then, keep quiet [...] or I'll quiet you for a good long time to come*' (p. 153). She remains submissive and obedient during the first part of the novel; then, she rebels against her abuser as she started to talk back to him and face the villain to favor Oliver, forgetting about her own punishment and prioritizing the child's interests. In terms of the translation, this verbal violence has been translated literally, to accurately provoke on the reader the feeling of compassion for the young lady and to make clear that Mr. Sikes is the 'bad guy' of the narration; both Marco Borillo and Sevillano have opted for the literal translation with regard to this matter during the whole novel, as it is a quite direct and violent language.

Despite the environment in which she has been brought up and in which she has to live every day, there are traces throughout the whole novel that let the reader know that Nancy is a kind-hearted woman who has been corrupted due to her situation and her need of survival. One of the first examples is when she refers to Oliver as '*Nolly, dear*' (p. 195). This shortening of the name has been translated as '*Oli, querido*' (p. 195) in TT1, providing the TT with the tenderness and affection of the ST; and as '*Oliverio*' (p. 150) in TT2, in which the reader does not get any hint of affection. Other signs of Nancy's good intentions are when she helps Oliver in little things or giving him some advices throughout the whole text, or by talking to Mr. Brownlow (Oliver's 'adoptive father'), informing the old man about the plans that Sikes had so as to catch him red handed and have the chance to save little and innocent Oliver.

It could be said that, even though Nancy fits every convention of the time for being a 'Fallen Woman', the opportunity that Dickens' gave her of redeeming from her sins by doing good actions led me to the conclusion that maybe Dickens was somehow trying to challenge this convention of the time. I consider that, although he was a Victorian man with Victorian morals and ethics, he broke the conventions by allowing this girl to be freed from her sins and to be a better woman by doing so.

4.2.3 Children in *Oliver Twist*

Children, not just in *Oliver Twist*, but in most of Dickens' novels, play a determinant role in his writing. Albertsson (2016) attributed this devotion for children, as well as 'his

ability to feel compassion and his awareness of social injustices' (p. 3), as a rebound effect of Dickens' own childhood. I totally agree with this statement as the author had a considerably complicated infancy: he was forced to work on a factory, his father had significant economic debts and he was completely separated from his family. In this section I am going to deal mainly with orphan children, as they are the great majority of the novel. The main focus will be on how they were treated at the time, hence depicted in the novel, and the significance that their prominent appearance in the work has.

It should be mentioned the two different types of orphans that are presented in the novel: the defenseless, innocent and kind-hearted orphan (Oliver) and the swindler criminal orphan (the Artful Dodger; hereinafter the Artful). However, even though there is a clear differentiation between these two types of characters, both of them share three main basic features. The first one is their victimization and loneliness, which is an intrinsic condition given the fact that they are orphans. They are continuously exposed to verbal and physical violence if they are not submissive and obedient, and even if they are so they continue receiving mistreatments. Then, also related to their orphan-hood, the children are vulnerable and dependent on the others, especially on those who provide them with affection and some goodness. Oliver, for example, is dependent on Mr. Brownlow as he has been his benefactor and the only one who has given him a real opportunity to show the man how he really is. The Artful is dependent on Fagin, the Jew who had employed him and gave him food to eat and a place – and a bed – to sleep. The last common thing amongst the little creatures is their lack of identity and, therefore, their indefatigable search for it. This is very well exemplified when Oliver is living with

and working for Mr. Brownlow, where he really finds himself useful and where the little boy really feels confident and comfortable with what he is doing.

Pekařová (2014: 20) pointed out the fact that little Oliver, despite the conditions in which little Oliver has been raised up in the workhouse, he 'speaks proper English [...] and he is surprisingly eloquent', which are surprising characteristics for the child. This gives the reader from the beginning the idea that there is something remarkable in Oliver. This outstanding way which differentiates him from the others is described in Albertsson (2016: 12) as 'the principle of Good surviving through every adverse circumstance'³. The reader is constantly sympathizing with him, mainly because his innocence and how badly he is treated create on the reader a clear feeling of compassion and liking for young Oliver. As an antagonistic character to Oliver there is the Artful; he drinks alcohol, smokes cigarettes, smuggles and thieves, and he actually enjoys the life he is having, which he would not change. Another difference with Oliver is that the Artful does speak the dialectal Cockney, as it has been the only variety he has been listening to throughout his whole life. The reader does not feel compassion for him as he is presented as a quite crafty character who seems to feel comfortable with his situation. These two types of children embody how society was at the time, and how the crude circumstances of the Victorian Era continuously corrupted not just people in general, but innocent children more concretely.

³ In Albertsson (2016) there is an allusion to Dickens' Preface in the 1841 edition of his book, p. xiii. Dickens, Charles. *Oliver Twist*. London: Penguin Group, 2012.

With regard to the translation of the children's language, in both translations Oliver is presented with very polite speech, differentiating himself from his other companions, who used a quite informal speech combined with swear words or a more vulgar discourse (this differentiation is clearer seen in Marco Borillo's translation, as Sevillano did not make any difference between ones and others, just marking Oliver with a more polite speech that he is expected to use). Although there are further exemplifications in section '7. Appendix', I have chosen the most significant ones. The little criminals used metaphoric expressions such as '*Toor rul lol loo, gammon smoked ham and spinnage, the frog he wouldn't, and high cockolorum*' (p. 109) in the ST, translated as '*¡Gallo que no canta algo tiene en la garganta! Y ya sabes, ¡por la boca muere el pez!*' (p. 119) in TT1 and as '*Tra-lari-lará. ¡vete a ver si vienen!*' (p. 88) in TT2; or using slang words to refer to the police as 'the traps have got him' (p. 111) in the ST, which has been translated in both TT1 and in TT2 as '*la ratonera*' (p. 120 and 89 respectively). This clearly contrasts with how Oliver expressed himself or thought, being his most remarkable speech the one he dedicated to his dead friend Dick: '*Yonder is the path across the fields [...] Oh Dick, Dick, my dear old friend, if I only see you now!*' (p. 517 in the ST), translated as '*Aqué! es el camino a campo traviesa [...] ¡Oh, Dick, Dick, mi querido amiguito, si pudiera volverte a ver!*' (p. 480) in TT1 and as '*Allá abajo está el sendero, a través de los campos [...] ¡Oh Ricardo, Ricardo, mi querido amigo de entonces, si yo pudiera verte ahora!*' (p. 382-3) in TT2.

5 Conclusion

This essay has aimed to explore how Dickens' novel *Oliver Twist* has been translated into Spanish taking into account some of the cultural and dialectal features that it includes, especially those dealing with the Victorian Era and its conventions and the Cockney dialectal variety of English.

Oliver Twist is a masterpiece and it has been translated to many languages and adapted for many audiences. As time passes by, improvements in translations into Spanish have been made; however, a translation which perfectly catches the main essence of the novel has not been achieved yet. This translation gap occurs because of the richness of the source text, both linguistically and culturally. As has been analyzed in this dissertation, continuous references to the Victorian Era are made throughout the whole novel. The appearance of the Cockney variety of English is also a determinant factor as it is not just a linguistic difference, but also a class barrier and classifier. In relation to this, social class has been proved to be another important issue in the novel; since the beginning of it we are given a clear distinction from one another, establishing a sharp barrier between wealthy characters and depraved ones.

This dissertation has tried to explain how women and poor children were depicted at that time – mainly as an outcast of society – and how this description has been translated for the target audience. This involves not only a mere textual translation, but also the adoption of a cultural approach, where these features are taken into account. Finally, this paper had analyzed how two Spanish translations of the novel have tackled these issues.

By contrasting two different translations of the novel dated in different times it has been appreciated how difficult it is to translate a dialectal variety as important as Cockney and how it goes beyond language and carries significant cultural traces. It could be concluded that, although none of the two translations chosen has fulfilled the task of utterly transmitting all the cultural implications of the novel, the translation made by Marco Borillo (2004) is considerably better than the one made by Sevillano (1978) as he could mark a difference between wealthy and depraved classes by means of subtleties in the use of the language of each of them and he was capable of transmitting the atmosphere of the Victorian era and its conventions with an ease which has to be highlighted. Along this dissertation, several solutions have been proposed as alternatives for these translations, being the most significant one that involving the introduction of a dialectal variety of Spanish as it could be the Andalusian.

It cannot be denied that *Oliver Twist* is a novel that has had a significant impact in literature. Its multiple translations and adaptations led me to the conclusion that it is not just a living novel – even though it was written long time ago – but also a novel which still is one big challenge for translators as its full and complete translation (both linguistically and culturally) has not been achieved yet.

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7 Appendix

This section is attached in an independent PDF document.