

Undergraduate Dissertation

Trabajo Fin de Grado

The Translation of Euphemism: A Comparative
Analysis between the Mexican and the Peninsular
Spanish Translations of *Politically Correct Bedtime
Stories* (1994) by James F. Garner

Author

Marta Salomé Castelló Logroño

Supervisor

Ramón Plo Alastrué

FACULTY OF ARTS
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1. INTRODUCTION

a. Literal and figurative language

Language may be described as a system by which members of a social group and culture express themselves and communicate. However, communication is not the only function of language; according to the definition provided by Crystal and Robins (2019, n.d.), language may perform many other functions such as “the expression of identity, play, imaginative expression and emotional release”.

Hence, we sometimes have the need to interpret meanings which are not denotative or those found in dictionary entries for a certain word. Apart from its denotative meaning, the same word can acquire different connotations –depending on the culture, the context of use, or the speaker’s purpose– thus creating two categories of language named ‘literal’ and ‘figurative’ language (*Fu Jen English Literature Databank*, 2018). The aim of literal language is communicating information in an accurate, univocal way and so it is generally associated to explicit and consistent meanings regardless of the context of interpretation. In figurative language, on the other hand, context becomes crucial because words are “equated, compared, or associated with normally unrelated meanings” (*Ibid*, 2018) and therefore they require an act of interpretation to reveal the full meaning including the ‘emotional weight’ associated to them.

One of the reasons for using figurative language is artistic; metaphors, similes and other literary devices are often based on certain hidden patterns or common characteristics that are not commonly perceived by the audience. Thus, their interpretation entails a process of discovery and their final resolution and understanding produces a pleasing effect on the reader/listener. On some other occasions, the denotative or explicit meaning of a word is associated to something negative. The

emotional weight of this negative characteristic is projected from the reality it describes into the word used to denote it. As a consequence, we try to tone down or soften the reference either by avoiding that word (e.g. taboo) or by using a more neutral term or a word which requires an interpretation (e.g. understatement, euphemism). In these cases, what we have after is not a pleasing process of discovery but just the opposite: the author has followed a process of hedging or hiding the reference whose main function is to introduce subtlety into a discourse which must be now ‘calibrated’ by the reader/listener to understand its full meaning.

Subtlety in everyday discourse is, without doubt, a feature heavily influenced by the socio-political, ideological and historical contexts of that discourse. All these factors determine what is considered “acceptable” at a certain moment. One of the main fields where this process has become manifest in history is the generalization of the so-called ‘politically correct’ language, which is the main focus of this dissertation.

2. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

2.1. Politically Correct Language: Historical Overview

Even though it is difficult to trace the exact origin of this term, it was in the late 1980s when the consolidation of the term Politically Correct (PC), as we know it nowadays, took place. The first recorded use in the *Oxford English Dictionary* was in 1986. However, Santana (1997, para. 3) identifies a use of the term relatively close to the current sense back in 1975 when the President of the NOW (National Organization for Women - United States), pointed out that “the organization was eventually moving in the *politically correct* and intellectual direction” (emphasis added).

The 1980s was an age of political and ideological change. Movements advocating the rights of minorities characteristic of the previous decades (e.g. women liberation, anti-war demonstrations and measures against discrimination on the basis of gender, race or sexual orientation which were popular in the 60s and 70s) found now that many countries embraced a new conservatism made evident in the policies of Ronald Reagan (US) and Margaret Thatcher (UK). This new tension found also his way into language. The term ‘Politically Correct language’ gained popularity mainly in left-wing academic groups from universities and the journalistic sphere as well. According to Santana, it alluded to an “ideological stance and its linguistic manifestations”¹. It was based on the idea that language should stand up for “an attitude based on tolerance, sensibility and respect to the members of the so-called minorities”² (my translation) and also, and more importantly, the common-held view that reality might be changed through language use. Thereby, the defenders of PC language focused on the idea of changing words perceived as discriminating against minorities and attempted to make them more

¹ “(...) a una postura ideológica y a sus correspondientes manifestaciones lingüísticas” (Santana, 1997, Antecedentes y trasfondo social de lo políticamente correcto, para. 3)

² “Una actitud de tolerancia, sensibilidad y respeto hacia los miembros de las llamadas minorías” (Ibid.)

technical and acceptable or simply substituted them by neologisms considered more adequate.

The term PC sprang into existence among the general public thanks to the role of the American media, especially television. Press and TV analysed, criticised and discussed the topic of ‘correctness’ in many fields, but they also adopted and contributed to generalizing some lexical features of politically correct and inclusive language which became common in everyday speech.

The pervasive presence of the notion of political correctness till these days has to do with a multicultural, interracial, intersexual and tolerant academic environment which draws on the underlying principles of “postmodernism and postmodernist literary theory and criticism, deconstruction, the curriculum and literary canon reformation, and in general, any other idea or initiative that strives for the integration of traditionally marginalised groups and the decentralisation of the perspectives and the respect for the specificity of each group”³ (my translation).

Nevertheless, new conservatism and the social and ideological tensions it brought about can also be seen in some recent changes of attitude towards Politically Correct language defendants. Many skeptics considered this movement to be superficial or even pointless as “the negative associations simply transferred to the new term” (Crystal, 2012, p. 230) while social conditions remained the same; that is, reality was not changed (as initially expected) by language use. In words of Ben O’Neill, “the problem with this drive for politically correct language is that it attempts to deal with the problems of negative semantic change by outlawing accurate descriptors rather than

³ “El postmodernismo, la teoría/crítica literaria postmoderna, la desconstrucción, la reforma del currículo y el canon literario y, en general, cualquier idea o iniciativa que promueva la integración de los grupos tradicionalmente marginados junto con la descentralización de las perspectivas y el respeto de las especificidades de cada grupo.” (Santana, 1997, Antecedentes y trasfondo social de lo políticamente correcto, para. 7)

by trying to rehabilitate them or to use them with proper context and tone.” (2011, p. 288)

As Crystal (2012, p. 231) suggests, the political right tried to undermine the work progressives were doing by focusing on extreme attitudes and specific stories covered by the media and which, in some cases, were not even real. At the same time, some PC activists thought their objective was finally at hand and denounced racial prejudice behind, for example, all uses, connotations and compounds of the word *black* (e.g. *blackboards* or *black sheep*)”.

These tensions, not only between different world views but also those surrounding the level of ‘explicitness’ or of ‘relatedness’ between the significant and the signifier considered socially appropriate (the difficulty to separate the literal and the figurative -or even ironic- meaning behind these expressions) is the context of creation of *Politically Correct Bedtime Stories* (1994) and the main source of humour in this work. But, let us focus first on some lexical features characteristic of Politically Correct language.

2.2. Lexical aspects: taboo and euphemism

Narrowing our point of view seems logical at this stage because political correctness has been described as an almost entirely lexical phenomenon (Santana, 1997, para. 1). One recurrent realization of PC language is mainly the use of euphemism, a form of figurative language. According to Crespo-Fernández, both the taboo term and the euphemism that substitutes it are ‘parasynonyms’ and “the euphemistic choice constitutes a stylistic option caused by contextual and pragmatic variables”(2005, p. 80)⁴.

The use of euphemisms is then determined by the need of neutralising and substituting taboo subjects in a specific situation and context, or as Casas defines it in an, “unforbidden reality” (2012, p. 47).

The word ‘taboo’ was adopted in the English language in the 18th century as a loan from Tongan. Originally, it described a conduct believed to be “dangerous to certain individuals or the society as a whole” (Burridge, 2012, p. 67). In fact, primitive societies conceived words as something dependent from the thing they referred to; there was a kind of magical connection between them that forced people to be superstitious about the way words were used. Even though there is still a number of societies holding these beliefs, nowadays this close ‘word’ (signifier) -- ‘object’ (signified) identification is no longer shared in other cultures and has been commonly described as ‘arbitrary’ in modern Semiotics. In spite of the arbitrariness of this relation, the existence of taboo words does not depend on the fear to name the signifier, but on the negative connotations and associations the word might bring with it. Every unwanted meaning attached to the word is left aside by means of the euphemism, which is presented as a

⁴ “Desde un punto de vista lingüístico, el eufemismo y el tabú al que sustituye son parasinónimos. (...) La elección eufemística constituye una opción de estilo, motivada por variables contextuales y pragmáticas.” (2005, p. 80)

substitute for the term although it can just modify or modulate it as well. As Burrige claims, “the taboos of social convention in the Western world rest on traditions of etiquette and are therefore set by social parameters such as age, sex, education, social status and the like” (2012, p. 67). Hence, the existence of taboo terms rests on potentially offensive ways of treating subjects such as morality, physical appearance, social class, scatology or sexuality among others.

However, these categories are not invariable but depend on social, ideological and cultural values which evolve simultaneously with language. Before the decade of the 1980s taboo words were mainly associated to themes such as blasphemy and sexual obscenity and then shifted towards themes related to racism and sexism. Thus, another characteristic of euphemisms important for our work is that their use is clearly identified as characteristic of a certain period and then they may either be incorporated as a common term into everyday language or, when those conditions demanding the use of the term change, simply disappear.

2.3.The difficulty of translating euphemisms

If univocal meaning and accuracy are two of the main aspects to consider in the translation of denotative language (e.g. scientific terms), the translation of fictional texts may become more complex due to the number of idioms, cultural references, double meanings and other devices associated to figurative language.

The use of euphemisms in the context of Politically Correct language is defined by Burridge as “a form of public action” which, by drawing attention to itself, “forces us to sit up and take notice” (2012, p. 70). Hence, the translator is faced with a challenging task that implies taking into account both meaning and form, or in other words, keeping the same idea by using a sweeter-sounding word. However, what could be seen as offensive in the source language might not have the same values in the target language. On the other hand, the translation of humour is heavily dependent on the use of language in a specific cultural context which is difficult to convey into the target text so sometimes, the use of strategies such as adaptation, modulation or explicitation becomes necessary. To emphasize the extent to which not only language but cultural context may have an influence on the translation of these terms, I have focused in this dissertation on the translation techniques applied to translate euphemisms belonging to the original text in American English into two different varieties of the same target language (Spanish) but with different cultural contexts (Peninsular and Mexican Spanish). My initial hypothesis is that the different ways of conveying the same information might be meaningful in a contrastive analysis. Let us then start by giving some basic information about the original source text.

2.4. *Politically Correct Bedtime Stories*

Politically Correct Bedtime Stories: Modern Tales of Our Life and Times (1994) is a book written by the American author James Finn Garner. Originally, Garner started his career as a playwright and *Politically Correct Bedtime Stories* ' evolved from one of the pieces from his "Theatre of the Bizarre." This play turned into fiction soon became a best-seller with more than 2.5 million copies sold only in the US. (Wikipedia).⁵

Basically, the book consists of a satiric re-written compilation of fourteen traditional fairy tales. Garner subverts the archetypal characters found in fairy tales as well as the traditional endings of these stories by means of unexpected plot twists or by the reinterpretation of a dialogue framed in an updated and moralizing narration. As a result of these changes, the book encapsulates and illustrates the general notions of modern political correctness. The reinterpretation of the tales included in this book also reveals how discriminatory classical fairy tales are and therefore they contribute to making up a new version of the story "updated to account for modern political sensibilities".

(*Publishers weekly*, 1998, Abstract section para. 1)

But Garner also subverts the conventional notions of classical tales from a stylistic and purpose-based perspective. The reinterpretation also shows an emphasis on humour and parody. Focusing on language, traditional popular expressions are substituted by buzzwords and by contemporary concepts drawn from the Politically Correct repertoire. These changes emphasize the 'biased' ideology transmitted through common uses of language and through these well-known forms of narrative in an age when infant

⁵ After such success Garner published other similar books: *Once Upon a More Enlightened Time: More Politically Correct Bedtime Stories* (1995) and *Politically Correct Holiday Stories: For an Enlightened Yuletide Season* (1995) and also *Apocalypse Wow: A Memoir for the End of Time* in 1997 and finally, a compilation of his first three books entitled *Politically Correct: The Ultimate Storybook* (1998). (www.jamesfinngarner.com/bio)

schools have removed some fairy tales from their library shelves on the grounds of their discriminatory nature. As summarized in *Publishers weekly*, these adaptations “satirize and sanitize the sexist, racist, nationalist, ageist, sizeist, ethnocentrist, and phallocentrist biases of classic bedtime stories”.

Thus, Garner reveals and undermines the traditional stereotypes of gender, race or some other discriminated-against minorities usually portrayed in folkloric tales but he does so by means of humour and irony. Language becomes much more cautious and complex and it is targeted to an audience able to understand and interpret the cultural and hidden meanings interspersed throughout the text. At the same time, however, there is a satiric tone underlying the texts which is conveyed through the ‘overuse’ of politically correct expressions; so the book acts as a double-edged sword: on the one hand, the updated tale makes us aware of the discriminatory nature of certain attitudes. However, it is by including all sorts of –isms or forms of ideological discriminations and by parodying, overusing PC language and taking it to extremes where the real purpose of Garner’s revised tales fluctuates between the didactic and the merely parodic.

I find this ambiguous or double nature of the tales interesting for our analysis because there is always a margin of personal interpretation left to the readers. A similar duality is found in the way translators have approached and adapted to their own context each version of a book which so far has been translated into 20 languages.

In our opinion, apart from the analysis of euphemisms in the original text, this work may be enriched by establishing a contrastive analysis between the two Spanish editions (Peninsular and Mexican) and the solutions each translator has come up with to solve the

same problems. This analysis aims to identify the relevant aspects and differences found between both translations as well as providing a quantitative chart that reflects the translation techniques that have been mostly applied during the translation process.

2.5.Mexican and peninsular Spanish editions

As stated above, there are two different editions of the book translated into Spanish; one of them was translated by Guadalupe Pineda into Mexican Spanish under the title of *Historias para dormir políticamente correctas: cuentos infantiles clásicos para adultos modernos*, and published in 1995 by the editorial company Edivisión, S.A. (Mexico). The other one was translated by Gian Castelli Gair and published as well in 1995 by CIRCE Ediciones, S.A. (Spain) under the title *Cuentos infantiles políticamente correctos*.

The Mexican translation of the title remains closer to the original. Its first part is a literal translation of the source title, while the second part has been modified by means of the technique of modulation. The use of the adjective ‘modernos’ applied now to the audience, introduces an interesting difference because there is a shift in meaning from the original “*Modern Tales of Our Life and Times*”. Here, the title refers to the contemporary context of the 1990s, but the addressee is not specified. The Spanish text, however, seems to address a concrete group of adults who are fond of “recently developed ideas, methods or styles” (*Cambridge Dict.*). So I think it could refer to those people living in a specific historical moment and also those who are familiar with and enjoy the notions of political correctness.

The peninsular Spanish title, on the other hand, has omitted the second part of the title, but the first part has been modulated as well. The translator chose the adjective *infantiles* instead of *para dormir* but referring now to the contents and not to the

audience. In any case there is no alteration of meaning as bedtime stories are usually told to children before they go to sleep.

The way both titles have been translated already indicates the level of intrusiveness on the part of each translator, a characteristic which will be discussed at the end of the analysis.

3. FOCUSING ON TWO TALES

3.1. “The Three Codependent Goats Gruff” and “Cinderella”

This part of the dissertation will be focused on the analysis of the most representative examples of euphemisms that I have found throughout two of the tales included in *Politically Correct Bedtime Stories*, titled “The Three Codependent Goats Gruff” and “Cinderella” respectively. I have chosen these two tales, firstly, due to the relevance for their plot of the use of euphemistic expressions. Secondly, because I found particularly interesting the techniques the translators have used in order to convey the meaning and maintain this euphemistic purpose. Sometimes both translations are quite similar, but some others they totally differ from one another and so we can see how dependent on their cultural context and the skills of the translator the translations may be.

“The Three Codependent Goats Gruff”, as the rest of the stories, is based on a traditional fairy tale. This one was originally titled “The Three Billy Goats Gruff”. Although the characters remain the same and the storyline starts in the same way, the climax and ending are different. The plot begins with a goat aiming to cross a bridge over a wide chasm and finding a menacing troll who wants to eat it. The goat asks for permission to go find his older sibling and this one does the same with the oldest one. When the oldest arrives, the troll becomes afraid of him due to his size so it starts apologising for having been so selfish. Unexpectedly, the goat feels an absolute sympathy for the troll and declares that they are ready to be eaten. After a dialogue full of apologies and regrets the situation changes completely: the goat ends up insulting the troll and they start fighting and eventually make the bridge buckle, falling all together.

Similarly, Cinderella’s storyline follows the same pattern as the traditional fairy tale. However, the character is not presented as the naive young woman from the

original and neither does the character of the fairy godmother. Just as in the other tale, the plot is very similar to the original but, again, climax and ending completely differ from it. After Cinderella arrives to the fancy dress ball, every man starts fighting against each other until they all die. Women, by contrast, agree to live peacefully in sorority and forget about the uncomfortable, old-fashioned clothes they were forced to wear to please men and now they decide to found a cooperative store producing practical and comfortable clothes.

In my opinion, the main change both tales share can be seen in the psychological traits of the characters, which are not archetypal; that is, plain and foreseeable or embodying just one main characteristic. Also the endings provide a twist from the traditional and immovable finale symbolized in the cliché “and they lived happily ever after” of these classical folk tales.

3.2. Chart Analysis

The most relevant examples found in both tales are shown in the classification chart shown from page 20. The chart is divided into six boxes corresponding to different aspects of each euphemism. The purpose is to analyse a sample of representative cases which can provide some support for our intuitions and interpretation of the texts.

The first box contains the euphemism itself, that is, every euphemism I have been able to find throughout the texts in the original version and considered representative of a certain category. The second and third boxes show the Mexican and peninsular Spanish translations of this euphemism.

In the fourth box I have included the rhetorical device represented in each case – this box will be solely focused on the original euphemism and will not analyse the linguistic device each translator could have applied in their respective works. With that purpose in mind I will use the classifications provided by scholars such as Burrige (2012), Chamizo (2004) and Santana (1997) among others, choosing the category which best fits each example considering its characteristics.

The fifth box corresponds to the function the euphemism performs but this section will be solely focused on the original text as well. I have decided to do it this way because sometimes the linguistic devices and functions are altered when translated, and trying to cover all the resulting aspects would be beyond the scope of this dissertation. In order to provide a working classification, I am taking as a main reference for this part Burrige's article (2012) and Crespo's doctoral thesis (2005) on the subject. Each of them provide a number of functions that euphemisms may perform.

Finally, the last box is devoted to the translation techniques used in the process of translating the euphemistic expression. The techniques applied to translate the

Mexican Spanish version will be marked by an (M) in brackets and the ones used by the peninsular Spanish translator will be preceded by a (P). The source of reference in this case is going to be a combination of the techniques provided by López Güix and Minett Wilkinson (1997) and that of Chesterman's (1997) compiled and extracted from Bardaji's dissertation (2003).

Every chart will be followed by a comment aimed at analysing what I consider to be the key aspects in each example.

The order in which the euphemisms are presented is determined by their function and not by the order of appearance in the texts.

3.2.1. Title

The Three Codependent Goats Gruff

First of all, I will focus on the title as it has some interesting aspects I would like to remark.

ORIGINAL TITLE	MEXICAN SPANISH	PENINSULAR SPANISH	TRANSLATION TECHNIQUES
1. The Three Codependent Goats Gruff	Los tres chivos ariscos codependientes	Las tres cabras interdependientes de la familia Gruff	- Adaptation (M) - Modulation / Calque (P)

Unlike some other tales included in the book, the title of this one has been modified from the original, which was ‘The Three Billy Goats Gruff’. I think the decision to avoid the term *billy goat* allows the author to suppress gender and being neutral. However, this is not possible in any of the translations due to the lexical characteristics of Spanish. The Mexican version translates it for a masculine grammatical gender word while the peninsular one goes for a feminine gender word. Both words are included in the Real Academia Española (RAE) and the choice responds to an ethnolinguistic principle. Thus, the possible original aim for gender neutrality is lost.

Another relevant issue concerning the title has to do with the use of the word *codependent*. In the psychological field, co-dependency refers to a modern theory not recognised by the American Psychiatric Association (APA) whose definition remains ambiguous and differs among the experts. Some of the aspects mentioned when trying to come up with a definition are ‘frantic efforts to avoid being alone’, ‘manipulation’ or subordinating one’s own needs to those of the person with whom one is involved’. (Johnson, 2014, n.d.) By following the events taking part throughout the plot this adjective seems coherent to define the submissive attitude of the goats. Nevertheless,

the peninsular edition modulates the term and translates it as *interdependientes*. The RAE defines “interdependencia” as a reciprocal dependency, so both translations differ at a semantic level. Even though the term *codependent* is not admitted by the RAE, it is popularly associated to self-help books thus drawing on a connotative value that is lost in the peninsular Spanish version.

We can find another significant difference regarding both translations. This has to do with the anthroponym *Gruff*. While the Mexican edition adapts the name and turns it into a common noun, the peninsular one decides to leave it as the original by means of calque. The former, as a consequence, translates and adapts it so that the reader can capture the semantics implicit in the name. The latter, on the other hand, is maintained and paradoxically the connotations that *gruff* has in the source language (i.e. rough, harsh, hoarse) are lost in the target one.

Cinderella

ORIGINAL TITLE	MEXICAN SPANISH	PENINSULAR SPANISH	TRANSLATION TECHNIQUES
2. Cinderella	Cenicienta	Cenicienta	Equivalence

“Cinderella”, however, has been translated in both versions according to the culturally accepted name provided in Spanish in the traditional tale, *Cenicienta*, showing cultural equivalence.

3.2.2. Main Functions of euphemisms.

a) To shield and to avoid offense

The examples below have been classified according to their main function: in this case aiming to shield and avoid offense. This type of euphemisms, also defined by Burrige (2012, p. 67) as “the protective euphemism”, are characterised by “avoidance language and evasive expression” and act as a hatch in a context where the speaker does not want to mention certain things which might be offensive.

ORIGINAL EUPHEMISM	MEXICAN SPANISH	PENINSULAR SPANISH	LINGUISTIC DEVICE	FUNCTION	TRANSLATION TECHNIQUES
1. The least chronologically accomplished	El que había nacido el último	La menos desarrollada cronológicamente	Circumlocution	To shield and to avoid offense	(M) Modulation (P) Transposition
2. More chronologically advanced	Mayor que el primero	Más avanzada cronológicamente	Circumlocution	To shield and to avoid offense	(M) Explication (M) Literal Translation
3. The least superiority in size	El más pequeño de tamaño	La que menos superioridad dimensional	Circumlocution	To shield and to avoid offense	(M) Explication (P) Literal translation
4. Socially dysfunctional	Socialmente disfuncional	Susceptible de producir disfunción social	Circumlocution	To shield and to avoid offense	(M) Literal Translation (P) Amplification
5. Immense cosmetic augmentation	Extensa sesión de cosméticos	Colosal intensificación cosmética	Meiosis	To shield and to avoid offense	(M) Modulation (P) Transposition

I have classified the four first euphemisms as examples of circumlocution, a linguistic device involving the use of more words than needed in order to reconfigure the original expression, and a common feature associated to the attempt to sanitize and create distance between signified and signifier. The last example adopts the form of

meiosis which results in an expression softened or made up of lighter words that tones down a meaning considered problematic. The resulting pattern, recurring in the original text, is common in the creation of noun compounds and is characterized by its lexical density, a feature which does not exist in Spanish where the use of prepositions becomes necessary in the two translations.

The first and second examples aim to cover something tabooed related to age. In modern times, aging has become a taboo concept (i.e. *agism*). Not everyone feels comfortable when talking about growing old, and the role of the media has not been positive either; daily advertisements showing remedies against aging prove that current beauty standards are crystallised around childlike parameters.

However, age discrimination works the other way too. Young people may be treated as unexperienced, for instance, within a working environment, which has negative consequences for them too. So PC language and its use of euphemisms seeks expressions with pleasing connotations instead. In terms of translation techniques, Pineda translates the first example by means of modulation while Castelli chooses a transposition to convey the meaning. Both translations keep the euphemistic purpose of not referring to the character as “the youngest”. However, I would say the translation that works better is Castelli’s because it uses a sweeter-sounding expression that enhances the expressive faculties of the euphemism while hiding the reality it points to and the hierarchies or discriminations often created by ranks such as seniority.

The Mexican version of the second and third examples shows two expressions constructed through ‘explicitation’. I do not think they keep the euphemistic purpose as they merely explain what the original expression is trying to cover. By contrast, the peninsular ones maintain a similar aesthetics that helps to keep the same effect.

In the fourth example, I would say both versions achieve to preserve the euphemistic purpose at a semantic level despite the variations at a morphological level. The term refers to a quarrel that takes place in the climax of the plot and acts as a substitute for an expression that could be something like “serious consequences” or “disastrous impact”. Violence is one of the concepts that pertain to the undesirable reality and so becomes euphemised. Similarly, the last example subtly covers an expression that could be derogatory, something like wearing ‘excessive make-up’. I do not think this expression needs to cover a taboo expression though, but the writer finds an alternative to describe what the sisters would need in order to be physically attractive, another of the concepts (beauty standards) frequently associated to women discrimination.

b) To redefine the traditional binary conception about sexes

ORIGINAL EUPHEMISM	MEXICAN SPANISH	PENINSULAR SPANISH	LINGUISTIC DEVICE	FUNCTION	TRANSLATION TECHNIQUE
1. A young wommon	Una joven mujer	Una joven	Morphological remodelling	To redefine the traditional binary conception about sexes	(M) Adaptation (P) Adaptation
2. Womyn	Mujeres	Mujeres	Morphological remodelling	To redefine the traditional binary conception about sexes	(M) Adaptation (P) Adaptation

Cinderella follows the traditional construction of gender categories so she is presented as a woman. However, Garner chooses one of the proposed alternatives to

that noun to avoid referring to a specific sex and avoid undesirable dualisms. The word has suffered a remodelling consisting of “cutting out any formal aspect that may be related to the masculine by another one suggesting the feminine, even though if it is not a morpheme but just a casual formal sequence” (my translation)⁶. In her work, Burridge describes remodelling as “adjusting the pronunciation of words”. (2012, p. 77) As every euphemism analysed in this paper has been taken from a written sample, if a remodelling takes place the changes need to be visual rather than aural, so I have decided to add the category of *morphological*.

In these examples, both the Mexican and peninsular Spanish translations adapt the text and maintain the noun *mujer* or its plural form in the translation of *womyn*. The decision of using a non-euphemistic noun may occur for different reasons; firstly, there is no equivalent expression in Spanish, secondly, because there is no “male” reference in *mujer* so it would be pointless trying to remodel the word if we take into account the reasons that might lie under this decision.

In any case, the effect the original nouns have on the reader is lost in both translated versions.

ORIGINAL EUPHEMISM	MEXICAN SPANISH	PENINSULAR SPANISH	LINGUISTIC DEVICE	FUNCTION	TRANSLATION TECHNIQUE
1. Your fairy godperson	Tu hado	El responsable de tu patrinazgo en el reino de las hadas	Blending	To redefine the traditional binary conception about sexes	(M) Modulation (P) Amplification
2. Individual deity proxy	Deidad personal	Tu representate	Circumlocution	To redefine	(M) Linguistic compression

⁶ “Se efectúa normalmente mediante la substitución de cualquier rasgo formal que pueda relacionarse con lo masculino por otro que sugiera lo femenino, incluso si no es un morfema sino una casual secuencia formal” (Santana, 1997, Términos que potencian la referencia sexual section, para.1).

		sobrenatural privado		the traditional binary conceptio n about sexes	(M) Modulation
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Paradoxically, in the first example, the Mexican translator has assumed the character of the fairy ‘godperson’ is a male. Garner uses a noun that follows the politically correct language tendency towards eliminating any reference to sex in its own structure. Blending “is seen as a morphological resource of composition.” (Casas, 2012, p. 58) In this case, he takes the neutral noun *person* and blends it with the first element of the traditional *godmother*.

In the Mexican version there has been an attempt to subvert the traditional genre of fairies by changing it for its male opposite, but the effect of the original is not achieved. However, the peninsular Spanish version accomplishes this purpose. By means of amplification, Castelli finds an equivalent gender-neutral expression. Even though there is a masculine determiner, I think it could be understood as a neuter determiner due to *responsable* does not refer to any particular gender.

The second example has been probably easier to maintain as “deity” and “proxy” have gender-neutral translations into Spanish language. The expression appears in the text as an alternative way of saying the previous “your fairy godperson”, the character introduces itself with these two formulas, so they act as synonyms. Pineda chooses to compress the expression and suppresses the term “proxy”. This way, the character is not presented anymore as a representative of a trade union, so I would say it does not fit so well as Castelli’s because the context has to do with social rights and this sense has been misplaced.

c) To dignify

- A profession

- Other species
- Non-traditional gender expression and identities

ORIGINAL EUPHEMISM	MEXICAN SPANISH	PENINSULAR SPANISH	LINGUISTIC DEVICE	FUNCTION	TRANSLATION TECHNIQUE
1. Horse-Slaves	Caballos esclavos	Esclavos equinos	Personification	To dignify a profession	(M) Literal Translation (P) Literal Translation
2. Unsuspecting silk-worms	Confiados gusanos	Inocentes gusanos	Personification	To dignify a profession	(M) Transposition (P) Transposition
3. Hard-working, defenceless oysters	Afanasas e indefensas otras	Laboriosas ostras indefensas	Personification	To dignify a profession	(M) Literal Translation (P) Literal Translation
4. Non-human animals	Animales no humanos	Animales no humanos	Personification	To dignify other species	(M) Literal Translation (P) Literal Translation
5. Hairy, dirt-accomplished and odor-enhanced	Tenía vello por todas partes, mugre de los pies a la cabeza y despedía un penetrante hedor	Peluda, higiénicamente limitada y olfativamente sobrecargada	Meiosis	To dignify other species	(M) Amplification (P) Transposition

As well as in other spheres, animals have also “received the protection of political correctness” (Santana, 1997, para. 10). This chart contains four examples of personification of animals where they are presented as workers. Garner goes even further and portrays them as victims of labour exploitation.

Like the previous examples, the issue of labour rights is present here but also combined with an ecologist approach. Animals have become personified and presented

as a collective of exploited workers who apparently do not know how to fight for their rights. The prevention of human cruelty towards animals is one of the fashionable topics commonly discussed in terms of political correctness. Garner mixes the socio-economic problems that working class people have suffered under the command of the privileged class and identifies them with animals to equate this situation to the history of human abuse over animals using them at their will.

I have included two different functions on the same chart due to the similarities both share; one of them is focused on dignifying unappreciated professions and the other one on dignifying non-human species.

The last example has been included in the same function as number four even though there is not a real species defined as *troll*. Trolls are just a myth or literary invention. However, Garner tries to mitigate the traditionally negative, beast-like description of monsters by means of *meiosis*, a linguistic device characterised by the use of softer words. This expression is a construction which “is not necessarily delicate in tone, but which nevertheless can be taken to be an evasive expression constructed out of awareness that the referent in question is taboo”. (Warren, 1992, p. 134)

ORIGINAL EUPHEMISM	MEXICAN SPANISH	PENINSULAR SPANISH	LINGUISTIC DEVICE	FUNCTION	TRANSLATION TECHNIQUE
1. Cross-dressing tendencies	Tendencias travestis	Tendencia al travestismo	Meiosis	To dignify non-traditional gender expression and identities	(M) Literal translation (P) Literal translation

The fact that the expression makes reference to the Prince, or archetypal male character of the classical tale, helps to project a new non-traditional archetype in the representation of this character. It breaks with the conventional masculine notions

associated to the prince in this type of stories. With regard to gender identity, political correctness aims to emphasise that it is something apprehended and socially constructed but not naturally given. According to Santana (1997, para. 2), the traditional distinction between two genders is considered by PC ideas “arbitrary and simplistic” and, consequently, there is a new non-dualistic classification of gender in which feminine and masculine are just the extremes of a range. This is supported by the “queer theory”, which has its roots in the 1980s and has been developing since then by theorizing on these aspects related to gender, identity and sexuality. Through the use of meiosis –in this case adding “tendencies” to the expression– the writer tones down the ‘problematic’ term.

d) Social tact

ORIGINAL EUPHEMISM	MEXICAN SPANISH	PENINSULAR SPANISH	LINGUISTIC DEVICE	FUNCTION	TRANSLATION TECHNIQUE
1. Mr. Troll	Señor Gnomo	Señor Troll		Social Tact	(M) Adaptation (P) Loan

This example is not exactly a euphemism, but I have decided to include it because there is a character traditionally associated with evilness and monstrosity treated in a very polite form, so I would like to mention some aspects I consider relevant about this contradictory use.

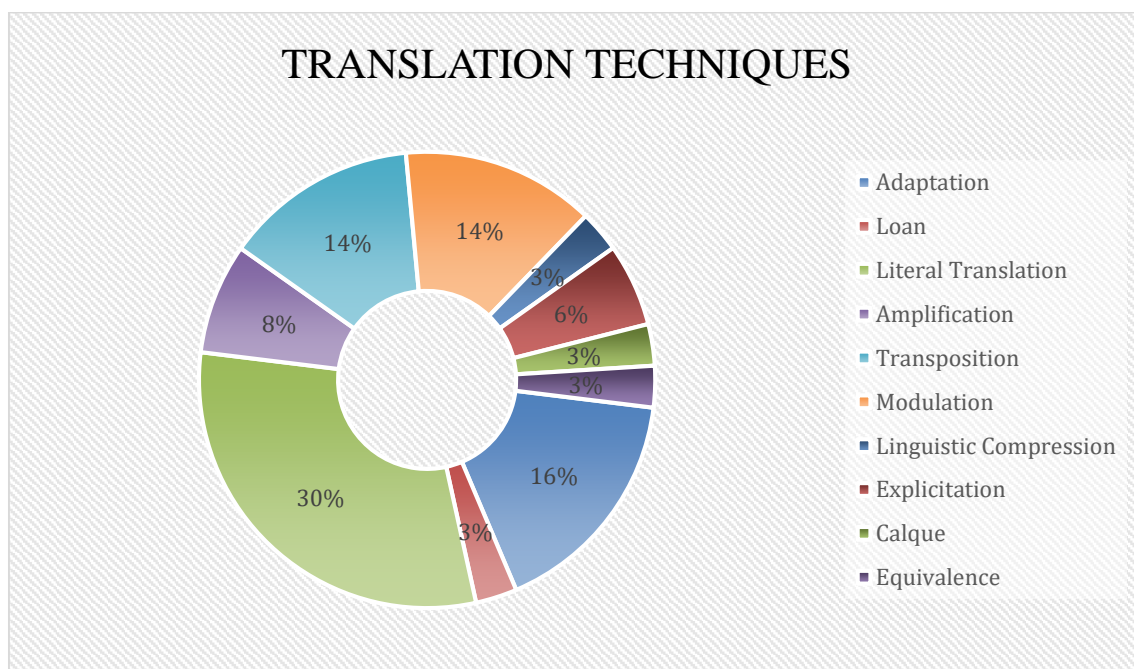
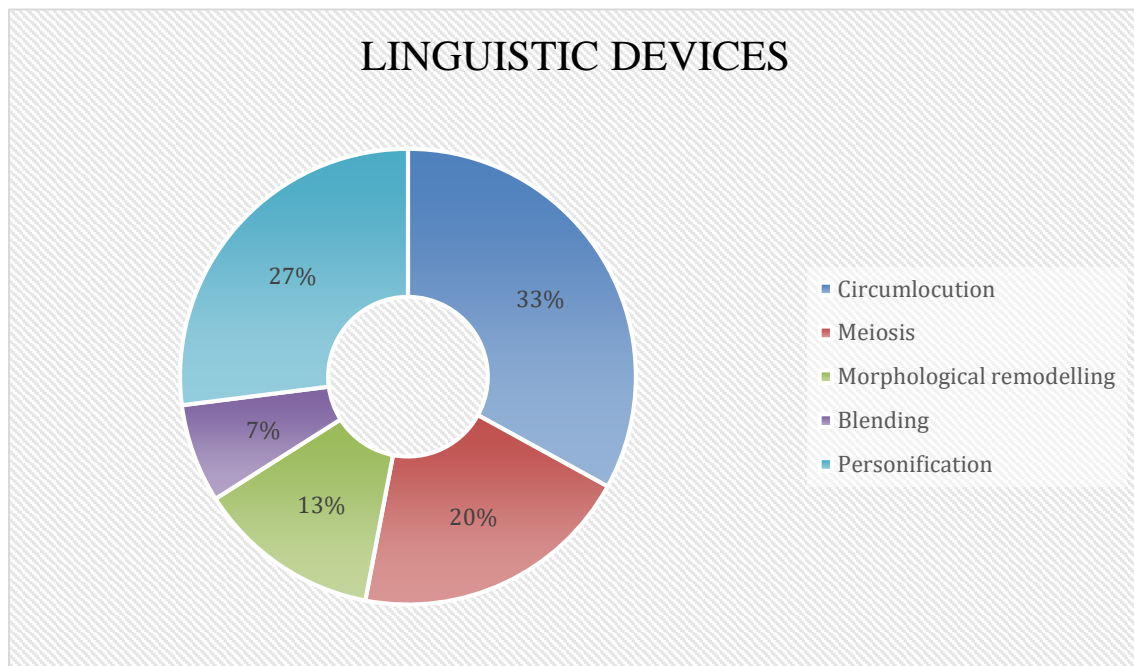
Referring to euphemisms and social tact, Crespo-Fernández describes them as “mitigating or apologetic expressions” (2015, p. 74). Here we find the juxtaposition of a title of respect that denotes politeness and protocol, associated to a creature related to wild nature.

Concerning proper names, each translator has decided to use a different strategy. The Mexican version, on the one hand, adapts the source text by translating the name.

As a reader, I would say the semantic association that the reader gives to the character changes depending on each case. By looking up the RAE's entries for *gnomo*, both make reference to the height of this creature, which is usually portrayed as small and compared with dwarfs' –or as Garner would write, “vertically challenged”. Thus, I consider the Mexican translation to be further away from the source text in terms of semantic effects.

The peninsular version maintains the same name by means of a loan, remaining closer to the original. Nevertheless, the word *troll* has been naturalised in Spanish as *trol*, which is also admitted by the RAE. In literature, proper names are not always translated, what might lead to the loss of meaning in the target text, and as a Spanish reader may perfectly understand the concept of a *troll* because it has been adapted and included in our language, so I consider this decision to be appropriate. The resulting expression does not change the concept as much as the Mexican translation does.

3.2.3. Quantitative Chart



As shown in the quantitative chart, the translation technique that has been used the most is literal translation. This may occur because the main purpose of translator is probably to be faithful to the original meaning when conveying it in another language. As a consequence of the linguistic gap, nonetheless, many difficulties may arise when the translation activity is taking place. Hence, techniques such as adaptation,

modulation and transposition also acquire a very important role (more than 40 % of all uses) when it comes to express the meaning. Something similar happens with the relatively frequent use of personification in those stories written in the tradition of fables where animals acquire a leading role.

With regard to the euphemistic examples found in the two versions translated into Spanish, I would define Castelli's translations as more intrusive than Pineda's, but closer to the original at a semantic level; I think he manages to convey every meaning with accuracy. On the other hand, regarding the translation of some of these expressions in the Mexican edition I would say they may be considered too literal and explicit if we take into account the purpose, which is to convey the subtlety aimed at in figurative language.

CONCLUSION

All these examples of euphemisms have been analysed according to their linguistic features and their function in the context of politically correct expressions. They all attempt to erase those lexical aspects that carry negative or discriminatory connotations by re-writing these terms and choosing instead an inclusive vocabulary. All of this encapsulates the fundamental pillars of Politically Correct language and provide not only some good examples of what its defenders have been trying to do with language but also of the difficulty of translating them into another language.

Every book is written in a specific context and they are useful to learn about the past and to illustrate the differences between different socio-historical backgrounds. But when it comes to traditional tales, they have constantly been subject to reinterpretation. In their modern didactic role, fairy tales should encourage the display of positive images of minorities and specific social groups while perpetuated stereotypes and other negative images are rejected.

In keeping with that objective, Garner deliberately uses neutral terms and this leads the reader to interpret the meanings, or more specifically, to re-think about the messages that these traditional tales have been offering over time. Gring-Pembre and Solomon (2003, para. 1) claim “that some forms of humor may facilitate audience acceptance of the very ideas the satirist intends to disparage. In this case, Garner's use of satiric humor may have facilitated acceptance of moderate forms of political correctness”.

This aim may be especially relevant in the section that includes the euphemisms whose function is to dignify, where he provides positive representations that ennoble those characters and where circumlocution is the most widely used linguistic device.

This rhetorical figure is helpful when trying to create expressions that allude to the referent from a subtler and nicer perspective.

On the other hand, I would say that it is the overuse of these sort of expressions that creates a humorous tone that concludes in an overall satirical tone. According to Santana, the excesses committed by political correctness in the lexical domain might trivialise important topics such as “sexual and social relationships, power conflicts and relationships, class struggle, etc”.⁷

It is time then to go back to the question stated in the Introduction: is Garner clearly supporting political correctness and its influence over language or is he merely parodying its excesses?

In my opinion, it is just this sense of ‘going too far’ that Garner seeks to satirise through his work. I would say it is best exemplified in the attempt to dignify the monster of the tale; he neutralises the pejorative adjectives that have traditionally defined this character as if it were a member of a real minority that could have felt despised and underestimated. Thereby, it can be stated that while he satirises the excesses of political correctness, he is also satirising the traditional conservative values portrayed in classical bedtime stories.

⁷ “Esta misma crítica podría extenderse a los excesos cometidos por la corrección política en muchos otros ámbitos léxicos con la consiguiente trivialización de las relaciones sociales/sexuales, de las relaciones y conflictos de poder, de la lucha de clases, etc.” (Santana, 1997, Género section, para. 5)

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