Przekładaniec, special issue, "Translating Genre Literature" 1/2022, s. 70–92
doi:10.4467/16891864ePC.22.004.16518
www.ejournals.eu/Przekladaniec

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GREASY SCUMMY SUMPS: TRANSLATING SPECIALIZED TERMINOLOGY IN DETECTIVE FICTION*

Abstract

Fictional texts containing specialized terms pose a challenge for literary translators. Rooted in raw factual accuracy, such terms can nevertheless be used in very expressive ways. Raymond Chandler, for example, used oil industry terminology (*bull wheel*, *derrick*, *oil field*, *scum*, *walking-beam*, and especially the term *sump*), in his first novel *The Big Sleep* (1939) within intentionally artistic phraseology, involving alliteration, parallel structuring and repetition. The novel was (re)translated into Spanish a number of times (*El sueño eterno* 1947, 1948?, 1958, 1972 and 2001), enabling an analysis into how different translators met this challenge. Though the published translations reveal a lower frequency of repetition in all cases, as well as inconsistent co-textual use of the terminology and usage of non-terms, omissions and errors, these instances are often qualitatively compensated for with creatively reproduced alliterative elements and added literary devices. This study of a seldomly explored aspect of literary translation shows how professionals are aware of the importance of language for specific purposes in literature and how effective balances between technical accuracy and literary expressiveness can be attained. For theorists who consider that literary and technical translation are separate fields, the results show that literary translators tend to bridge this gap proficiently with both accuracy and literary flair.

Keywords: alliteration, literary translation, specialized translation, technical terms, terminology

* Originally published in Polish in "Przekładaniec" vol. 40/2020. Open access for this publication has been supported by a grant from the Priority Research Area Heritage under the Strategic Programme Excellence Initiative at Jagiellonian University.

Introduction

Prose fiction texts can contain specialized terms that reinforce the mock realism of fiction, establish the authority of the narrative voice and serve the purpose of character building. For example, Herman Melville's *Moby-Dick* (1851), Jules Verne's *Vingt mille lieues sous les mers* (1870) and Patrick O'Brian's *Master and Commander* (1969), are rich in terms concerning nautical navigation and marine biology. Specialized terms in literary works can be used in uniquely expressive and lyrical ways, different from how such terms, together with other aspects of language for specific purposes (LSP) are used in non-fictional, specialized texts.

Thus, specialized terms are important in translated literary texts, as they can establish comparable effects of realism, narrative voice, and character building. However, literary translators often face the difficult choice of having to decide whether to translate such terms accurately, perhaps losing expressive effects, or to translate them expressively, perhaps losing tangible precision. Translators can, of course, strike varying balances between the accurate rendering of specialized knowledge and the deployment of lyrical devices.

Detective fiction is a literary genre where specialized terms are used frequently and in significant ways. Detective characters, whether they are police detectives, private eyes or amateur sleuths, delve into other characters' lives, professions and vocations, immersing themselves in simulated worlds of politics, finance and manufacturing, and also in clandestine underworlds of liquor running, drug smuggling and gambling. For example, a novel such as Dashiell Hammett's *The Maltese Falcon* (1930) contains specialized terms for historical artefacts, together with details about how they are manufactured and their current values. Indeed, the classic detective fictions of Dashiell Hammett and other authors such as Raymond Chandler, Ross MacDonald and Chester Himes, have entered the canon of American literature, valued for their realistic portrayal of U.S. cities, the people that inhabit them and the society in which they live.

The nature of this challenge for literary translators is an issue which has been addressed in translation studies research. A number of previous studies exist which discuss the translation of specialized terms in literature, mostly by translators/scholars who themselves have undertaken the task of translating literary works loaded with specialized terms (Barros Ochoa 2001;

Coates 2001; Fortea 2007; Navarrete 1996; Velasco 2008). They discuss their remarkable efforts of erudition in the search for accurate term equivalents (Coates 2001; Navarrete 1996), even mentioning how they corrected previous translators' mistakes (Velasco 2008). They also focus on the broader theoretical issue of whether translating specialized terms in literary texts is, or should be, considered a different type of task with respect to specialized non-literary translation (Barros Ochoa 2001; Fortea 2007).

Of particular interest in the area of literary translation of specialized terms is the research undertaken by Ursula Wienen (2011) and Eva Schmitzberger (2012). Both German scholars have examined specialized language in literary texts from a descriptive translation perspective and underscored the multiple functions that specialized terms in literature can serve, including the establishment of historical authenticity, local color and character-building. Not only can these terms be informative, as in non-fiction texts, but, as they note, their functionality also encompasses such things as the creation of suspense and the use of humor.

Wienen's arguments regarding the potential use of specialized language in literature for poetic effect (cited in Schmitzberger 2012: 69) is especially relevant here. She posits that the strategy chosen for translating interspersed technical language in literature can significantly modify the effect of these terms upon the reader (2011: 827). Wienen claims that specialized terms in literary texts can go beyond the illustrative and informative construction of a plausible narrative background and credible character-building, creating such features as humor, suspense and poetic effect (2008: 69, cited in Schmitzberger 2012: 142). She also notes that in the French and German translations of two of Jules Verne's *Voyages Extraordinaires* novels, interspersed technical terms are often translated as more general hypernyms, which weaken contrasting effects such as humor, irony and polyphonic expressive language (Wienen 2011: 821).

Wienen and Schmitzberger have discovered cases where specialized terms have been expurgated, stripped of their specificity, or erroneously translated, all of which weaken the literary effect of the specialized terms on the readership. Schmitzberger found that the establishment of historical authenticity, local color, character-building and the development of comedic effect in the German-English translation of Daniel Kehlmann's *Die Vermessung der Welt* (2005)/*Measuring the World* (trans. Carol Brown Jayneway, 2007) is marred by such mistakes and the repetition of terms, rather than the use of a wider variety of synonymous terms (2012: 142). In the first case,

Schmitzberger found an example of "hydrometer" used incorrectly for a device that measures humidity, instead of the correct "hygrometer" (147–148). Secondly, she found that the common technique of using a variety of synonyms in source literary texts, a feature which is less frequent in non-fiction texts, was not reproduced in the target text (Sternwarte and Observatorium were both translated as observatory, and Fernrohr and Teleskop were both translated as telescope) (150–151).

Raymond Chandler's first novel, *The Big Sleep* (1939), is an interesting case study because he uses specialized terms from the oil industry, of which he had extensive first-hand knowledge, and he does so using artistically foregrounded repetition, parallel structuring and alliteration. Because there exist five into-Spanish versions of the novel (1947, 1948?, 1958, 1972, 2001), this case study offers a window into the solutions taken in real translation contexts by five different translators over the course of seventy years. In what follows, I will examine the into-Spanish translations of *The Big Sleep* and describe how the specialized terms were rendered. I am interested in determining whether the specialized oil industry terms were rendered accurately, thus possibly ignoring more expressive literary vocabulary choices, or whether they were rendered in an esthetically pleasing way, though perhaps sacrificing terminological precision. The main focus of analysis will be the scene in chapters 31–32 where detective/narrator Philip Marlowe is shot at by Carmen Sternwood, the daughter of his client, in an intense, climactic moment where the reader believes that the detective has been killed.

Specialized non-literary translation vs. literary translation containing specialized terms

Hartwig Kalverkämper notes that the intermingling of both poetic and technical language in literary texts is a phenomenon that should be of keen interest for Translation Studies scholars (1998: 721). Literary texts can be heavily laden with terms, though what is most common is for writers to embed varying amounts of professional and technical language throughout the creative text (Kalverkämper 1998: 721).

However, scholars within this discipline tend to hold polarized positions regarding the nature of non-literary and literary translation. Is translating specialized, non-literary texts the same as translating literary texts which contain specialized terms? On the one hand, scholars and translators such

as Maria Barros Ochoa and Carlos Fortea believe in the common nature of all texts, together with the essential similarity of both undertakings. Barros Ochoa states that the "erroneous distinction" between the two is an overemphasis on the importance of subject-matter in defining translation: "Traditionally, the skills a translator needs to possess are mastery of the source and target languages and knowledge of the subject-matter. The excessive importance of the latter has originated the division of translation into two kinds" (Barros Ochoa 2001: 31). Fortea, who holds the same unifying view, states that "for the true translator, there can be only one attitude when facing a text (…). The only thing that changes are the requisites needed for the completion of each task and the nature of the specific challenge of each text we face" (Fortea 2007, my translation). The scholars/translators cited above discuss novels which contain references to tunnel-building in New York (Colum McCann's *This Side of Brightness* in Barros Ochoa 2001), zoology in French-speaking Africa (Ahmadou Kourouma's *Waiting For the Vote of the Wild Animals* in Coates 2001), autopsies in Germany (Thomas Hettche's *The Arbogast Case* in Fortea 2007), underwater navigation and marine life (Jules Verne's *Ten Thousand Leagues under the Sea* in Navarrete 1996) and sailing ships, navigation and whaling (Herman Melville's *Moby-Dick* in Velasco 2008). Yet the way these authors/translators envision their task and their vocation and allowing for the fact that the presence of specialized terms even in non-literary texts often amounts to less that 5% of the vocabulary in a text (Newmark 2004), these translators nevertheless see the task of literary vs. non-literary translation as fundamentally similar.

Fortea describes the nature of literary translation from his unifying point of view: the translator must inhabit the lives of the literary characters whose surroundings are often rife with specialized knowledge and terms. Fortea states: "The problem for the literary translator who becomes immersed in a specialized field is not the specialized field itself, but the need to slip into the shoes of a character who experiences that specialized field *as something natural* [in his or her context]" (my translation, 2007). Fortea recognizes that "translated literary texts consciously infringe one of the golden rules of non-literary translation, in that it can neglect the informational function of the communicative act. (…) What is most important is to transmit a world of sensations in a specific form (…) and lead the reader where we want him or her to go" (Fortea 2007, my translation).

On the other hand, scholars such as Peter Newmark believe that the tasks of non-literary and literary translation are essentially different in nature.

From the differentiated side of the theoretical street, Newmark recognizes that "literary texts may be translated differently from non-literary ones" (Newmark 2004: 8). Discussing the differences between "the art of literary translation and the science of non-literary translation", Newmark establishes a number of dichotomies: literary translation is about "the world of the mind and the imagination", where people and words are equally as important as the content, whereas non-literary translation is about "the world of reality, of facts and events", that is to say objects and key words for specific concepts (Newmark 2004: 10). He states that "literary and non-literary translation are two different professions, though one person may sometimes practice them both" (Newmark 2004: 11). Additionally, Newmark points out that the majority of professional translators work with non-literary texts, while most Translation Studies scholars have to date focused on literary translation.

Newmark describes how the texts resulting from non-literary translation can differ from the texts resulting from literary translation:

> In fact translation, striving as it does to reveal the truth, to be above all accurate, can only be approximate at best, if it is seeking to reproduce the full meaning of the original. In non-literary texts, since it may only be pursuing the facts rather than their precise quality as well, it can be fairly accurate. In literary translation, it can only be accurate to a certain degree, since it is looking for the connotative as well as the denotative meaning, which has many aspects, of which it can only capture a limited amount; and it uses two languages as its tools, each of which are unevenly and variably equipped with words, have different sounds and grammars and different word-orders, as well as different lexical gaps and deficiencies (Newmark 2004: 8).

Though Newmark is discussing meaning only here, I believe that his argument can be extended to include language forms such as vocabulary, as well as specialized terms used in literary texts.

Newmark talks specifically about the importance of "sonorous" features in literary texts vs. non-fiction texts (2004). Navarrete also remarks on how passages in Jules Verne which are loaded with terms for underwater flora are best read aloud in order to best appreciate their aesthetic allure; he cites a paragraph translated by himself in which the "biology undoubtedly serves esthetic purposes", and can be easily appreciated (Navarrete 1996: 91, my translation). Because Raymond Chandler uses the word *sump* repetitively and alliteratively in his first novel *The Big Sleep*, these observations are worth highlighting.

Terminological accuracy vs. literary expressivity

As noted earlier, Raymond Chandler's *The Big Sleep* (1939) makes an interesting case study for the translation of technical terms in literature, because it contains a number of specialized terms that are integrated into its literary expressivity. A former oil executive, Chandler uses specialized terms from the oil industry in order to describe an abandoned oil field in which the novel's climactic scene takes place. The classic, carefully crafted paragraph at the end the novel is admired for its haunting lament of the unnecessary death of character Rusty Regan, whose body lies at the bottom of a *sump*, a specialized term meaning a purpose-built shallow pool for collecting excess oil, chemicals, and wastewater during the drilling of a well (Gow 2005: 383).

> Example 1:
> What did it matter where you lay once you were dead? In a dirty **sump** or in a marble tower on top of a high hill. You were dead, you were sleeping the big sleep, you were not bothered by things like that. Oil and water were the same as wind and air to you. You just slept the big sleep, not caring about the nastiness of how you died or where you fell (Chandler 1995: 763–764, emphasis added).

Serious critical attention to this passage has neglected to highlight Chandler's use of the specialized oil industry term *sump*, or how he uses it in an aesthetically pleasing and skilled way. The conscious construction of the passage is clear: there is evidence of parallelism (*in a* dirty sump or *in a* marble tower; oil *and* water (…) wind *and* air), of intentional repetition (*dead*, *sleeping the big sleep*) and especially of alliteration (*tower on top of a high hill,* which contains both alliterative consonance (t, h) and assonance (o, i). Indeed, an integral feature of Chandler's writing is the insertion of technical terms within other carefully crafted passages such as the one above.

By the time readers have reached this final passage, the word *sump* has acquired immense significance, for it appears in chapter 3, a description of the oil fields in which the Sternwood family has amassed its enormous fortune, and especially in chapters 31–32, the scene in which Carmen Sternwood, the young daughter of his client General Sternwood, lures detective Philip Marlowe to one of the family's abandoned oilfields and tries to kill him next to a sump. In each one of its prior occurrences, the word *sump* is adjoined by alliterative word choices that generally involve /s/ or /z/ consonant pronunciations. Note the consonant alliteration of the /s/ in its first

appearance: *The Sternwoods, having moved up the hill, could no longer* ***smell the stale*** **sump** *water or the oil, but they could still look out of their front windows and see what had made them rich. If they wanted to. I didn't suppose they would want to* (Chandler 1995: 602–603, emphasis added). The aliterative appearances of *sump* thoughout the novel are located in passages containing both a proliferation of other technical terms from the oil industry and expressive usage of parallelism and repetition.

The five existing full-text translations of *a dirty sump* in the final passage of *The Big Sleep* in Spanish show how translators seemingly vacillate between the two extremes of descriptive terminological accuracy and literary expressivity. The earliest two used *un mugriento sumidero* [a filthy sump] (Chandler 1947: 215) and *una charca de agua grasienta* [a pool of greasy water] (Chandler 1948?: 217), choices which are in the first case terminologically accurate and in the other merely descriptive. In these two early examples it is the adjectives which add the most lyrical note. The three most recent translations use *un sucio sumidero* [a dirty sump] (Chandler 1958: 257; 1972: 247; 2001: 236), a choice that is both accurate and establishes alliteration, even though *sump* is not used here alliteratively in the source text. Here, translator behaviour ranges from descriptive accuracy to terminological accuracy without expressivity, to create scientific precision combined with lyrical literary language.

So, how do translators act when they are confronted with language for specific purposes in literary texts? How do they respond when these terms are used in an intentionally expressive way and need to be translated in a comparably accurate *and* expressive fashion? Knowing that they are translating literature and not specialized, non-fictional texts, do they behave differently when they encounter specialized terminology? How are they able to sustain the effects of term repetition, textual parallelism and alliteration over the entire length of a novel?

The inquiry which follows will examine exactly what into-Spanish translators of *The Big Sleep* do with segments containing *sump* and other specialized oil drilling terms in chapters 31–32. This scene is the novel's climax, a moment in which the reader believes that Marlowe's life is in grave danger when Carmen Sternwood tries to kill him. The specialized language used during the exact moment when Carmen points a gun at Marlowe, and the expressive alliterative embellishments of the oil-field terms embedded in the description, make this passage one of Chandler's most accomplished prose achievements. Below I shall examine the translation solutions which strike

various balances between the extremes of exactness of content vs. literary expressivity in the search for coherent and cohesive whole-text solutions.

Carmen Sternwood shoots Philip Marlowe, private detective and narrator

In chapters 31–32, Carmen Sternwood asks Philip Marlowe to teach her how to shoot in one of the family's abandoned oil fields, which Carmen considers a good place to set up a target for shooting practice. Up to this point in the text, readers have only been exposed to the term *sump* once, yet here they will be barraged by ten occurrences. The detective and his client's daughter drive into the abandoned oil field and come to a stop at the end of the access road, where narrator Marlowe identifies the technical objects that appear there, among them a *sump* (these terms are highlighted in *italics* in the example below). Perspicacious readers may tune in at this point as they may begin to note the curious linguistic occurences surrounding the term *sump*. Note how, in the last line, the /s/ alliteration recurs 6 times (underlined in the example below):

> Example 2:
> Then the oil-stained, motionless *walking-beam* of a squat wooden *derrick* stuck up over a branch. I could see the rusty old steel *cable* that connected this *walking-beam* with a half a dozen others. The *beams* didn't move, probably hadn't moved for a year. The *wells* were no longer pumping. There was a pile of rusted *pipe*, a *loading platform* that sagged at one end, half a dozen empty *oil drums* lying in a ragged pile. There was the stagnant, *oil-scummed* water of an old *sump* iridescent in the sunlight (Chandler 1995: 754).

Still not convinced? Then note, in the example below, how the repetition of the term *sump* (4 times) and the consonant alliterative word choices that use /s/ act like a drum tattoo leading up to a finale in which the reader is served a volley of four *sump* occurrences, signaling that something thrilling is about to happen. Marlowe walks around to the opposite side of the *sump*, where he sets up a target in an area littered with discarded technical apparatuses: *I walked around the* ***sump*** *and looked into the* ***pumphouse****. There was some junk in it, nothing that looked like recent activity. Outside a big wooden* ***bull wheel*** *was tilted against the wall. It looked like a good place all right* (Chandler 1995: 754). On his way back from setting up the target, Carmen Sternwood lifts the gun, points it directly at him and swears,

a situation that leads readers to believe that Philip Marlowe's life hangs in the balance.

> Example 3:
> I went back around the *sump* and set the can up in the middle of the *bull wheel*. It made a swell target. If she missed the can, which she was certain to do, she would probably hit the wheel. That would stop a small slug completely. However, she wasn't going to hit even that.
>
> I went back towards her around the *sump*. When I was about ten feet from her, at the edge of the *sump*, she showed me all her sharp little teeth and brought the gun up and started to hiss.
>
> I stopped dead, the sump water stagnant and stinking at my back.
>
> "Stand there, you son of a bitch," she said (Chandler 1995: 755, emphasis added).

John Cawelti, in his seminal volume on the art of the detective story and other formulaic genre, describes suspense as

> the writer's ability to evoke in us a temporary sense of fear and uncertainty about the fate of a character we care about (…)]. The simplest model of suspense is the cliff-hanger in which the protagonist's life is immediately threatened while the machinery of salvation is temporarily withheld from us (Cawelti 1976: 17).

Note how other vocabulary choices, particularly *stopped dead*, also contribute to the scene's suspense. Having proven that Carmen had motive, means and opportunity to commit such a crime, the reader realizes at this exact point that it was Carmen who killed Rusty Regan on a previous visit to the same sump for the same purpose of a shooting lesson, and the reader now wonders whether Marlowe is also aware of this.

Thankfully, Raymond Chandler had already seeded the novel with clues that reveal how Marlowe had suspected that Carmen would try to shoot him; all of these clues have to do with the alliterative /s/ sound and not with the proliferation of technicalities. Chandler would have considered it dishonest towards his reader to have hidden the major clue in the midst of a barrage of specialist knowledge. In his "Casual Notes on the Mystery Novel", Chandler discusses just this point: "The reader expects to be fooled, but not by a trifle. He expects to misinterpret some clue but not because he failed to master chemistry, geology, biology, pathology, metallurgy and half a dozen other sciences at the same time" (Chandler 1962: 67). In "Twelve Notes on the Mystery Story", Chandler argues that "inferences arising from special knowledge (…)

are a bit of a cheat, because (…) if special scientific knowledge [is] necesssary to interpret the facts, the reader [does] not have the solution unless he [has] the special knowledge" (Chandler 1995: 1005). So Chandler places the clue not within the specialist terms for oil drilling and production but elsewhere.

The Californian author and former oil executive calls writerly deceptions such as this "subtlely dishonest", though necessary when using the first person. Always the highest authority on his own work, Chandler describes in "Casual Notes on the Mystery Novel" how "There must come a time when the detective has made up his mind and has not given the reader this bit of news, a point as it were (…) when the detective suddenly stops thinking aloud and ever so gently closes the door of his mind in the reader's face" (Chandler 1962: 68). In "Twelve Notes on the Mystery Story", Chandler specifically discusses how "the denouement [in *The Big Sleep*] is an action which the reader meets as soon as the detective", though regarding the all-important clue: "There is only a momentary concealment of the fact that Marlowe loaded the gun with blanks when he gave it to Carmen down by the oil sump. But even this is tipped off to the reader (…). [Marlowe] doesn't say why, but the action follows so quickly that you don't feel any real concealment" (Chandler 1995b: 1009).

In order to understand how the reader will already have received this interpretative clue, we must digress in order to examine Philip Marlowe's sexual refusal of Carmen Sternwood in chapter 24. This digression will momentarily lead us away from the discussion of language for specific purposes in literature, but it is essential that we do so. In that chapter, Carmen *hissed* (Chandler 1995a: 708) at Marlowe when he threw her out of his apartment, refusing her offer to have sex with him. Yet, by this mid-way point in the novel the reader will already have seen Carmen act like this before: in chapter 15, just before Marlowe takes away her gun when she is about to shoot a blackmailer, according to narrator Marlowe, *a hissing noise came tearing out of her mouth* (Chandler 1995a: 653). The connection between Carmen's *hissing* (twice in chapter 15 and six times in chapter 24) and her *starting to hiss* in the shooting scene in chapter 31 immediately becomes clear for the reader despite the wide gap of pages in between. When the narrative voice of Philip Marlowe now ominously says, "When I was about ten feet from her, at the edge of the sump, she showed me all her sharp little teeth and brought the gun up and started to hiss," the reader can clearly see the convergence of the two types of language, with the specialized term *sump* repeated four times in the same short passage, and the pulsing regularity of the occurrences of the

/s/ sounds subtly and aesthetically suggesting that another situation like those in chapter 15 and 24 is fast approaching. On the one hand, the specialized, technical language and, on the other, the literary devices now both come to a head in one fractionary moment in which the reader is left on a cliff-edge, not knowing whether Marlowe has been shot. However, having predicted what she would do given the opportunity, Marlowe has loaded Carmen's gun with blanks. When Marlowe says, in example 3, that Carmen *wasn't going to hit even that*, the reader now realizes what a neat trick the narrator has played.

Spanish versions of Carmen shooting at Marlowe next to the sump

The essential task for translators of *The Big Sleep* is to represent in another language the alliteratively rich text, while maintaining terminological accuracy and establishing co-textual relationships that stretch from the first mention of *sump* in chapter 3 to the mention of Carmen Sternwood's habit of hissing in chapters 15 and 24, to the barrage of sumps culminating in hissing in chapter 31, and finally to the last lamenting mention of *sump* at the very end of chapter 32.

Turning our attention first to the Spanish translations of example 3, which are listed in Table 1 below, we note that none of the Spanish translators use their equivalents of *sump* more than three times, while the term appears four times in the source text. The Spanish-language stylistic preclusion of repetition of the same word in the same paragraph, much less in the same sentence, is most likely the cause of this. The 1972 translation is missing the entire first paragraph of example 3 (*I went back around the* ***sump*** …) and thus uses *sumidero* only twice (Chandler 1972: 237). In a previous publication, I noted that this translation is a plagiarized copy of the 1958 translation with occasional replacements of single words with (nearly) exact synonyms which retains the fragments that had been censored by the Franco-era government censors (Linder 2001, 2004). These suppressed lines are almost certainly the work of a typist or copywriter who skipped over them. This translation was revised for publication in 1995 and many of the government-censored passages were restored, but this fragment was not reinstated (Linder 2014). Read example 3 without the first paragraph and try to "feel" the effect this missing paragraph might have had on the Spanish reader. Conversely, the 1981 edition of this text in Bruguera's Club del misterio collection, one of the most successful of all the Spanish editions of this novel, contains

an illustration of this scene by Edmundo Fernández in which the reader experience is enhanced through the depiction of Carmen pointing her gun at Marlowe amidst decrepit wooden oil derricks and several large wheels strewn about an abandoned oil field (Chandler 1981: 88).

In order to establish co-textual reference patterns, the translators need to be consistent in their anaphoric references to *sump* in chapter 3. The translators who use *sucio sumidero* in example 1 use *sumidero* consistently in their translations, though each repeat the term three, not four, times (1958: 245–246; 2001: 225). However, the 1947 translator uses the term *colector* [collecting pool] three times while *sumidero* is used in example 1. Likewise, the 1948? translator uses the non-technical terms *charca* (twice) and *charco* (once) in Table 1, while *charca* is used in example 1. *Charco* implies a larger and more utilitarian pool, while *charca* implies a pleasant country pool, perhaps fed by a stream. The co-textual use of a specialized, technical term (*colector*) and a non-technical term in two variants (*charco, charca*) in the translation has a rather negative effect on co-textual cohesion. Though these inconsistencies cannot be considered absolute indicators of a translation's quality, we can surmise that there is a likelihood that not all readers will have captured the essential connections between exact term forms that Raymond Chandler has embedded in earlier parts of the text. It is interesting to note how Schmitzberger detects the opposite tendency of using fewer synonyms in the translated text than in the source text (Schmitzberger 2013: 147–148).

Both the lesser term occurrence and the inconsistent translation of terms can weaken cotextual conceptual links and coherence. This is the sort of translated textual behavior Fortea discusses when he notes how important it is to consider the exact translation of specialized terms on their first appearance, no matter how brief these segments may be, because "passages like these can be the kick-off for a barrage of cross-references and variations on the same topic" (Fortea 2007, my translation).

For *hiss*, all translators use a version of *silbar*, *silbido* or *silbante*: *empezó a silbar* [started to hiss] (Chandler 1947: 206); *empezó a escaparse un singular silbido* [started to release an unmistakable hiss] (Chandler 1948?: 315); *empezó a hacer un ruido silbante* [started to make a hissing sound] (Chandler 1958: 246; 1972: 237); and *empezó a emitir un sonido silbante* [started to emit a hissing sound] (Chandler 2001: 225). In some of the examples which use *silbar* or *silbido*, the reader might be led to think that the sound is that of a whistle or wheeze, whereas in the examples that use *silbante* as an adjective the reader is more likely to think of the snake sounds

Chandler had in mind. None of the translators use the verb *sisear*, an appealing equivalent because it derives from humans who hiss in disapproval (*Diccionario de la Real Academia*).

Interestingly, the 1948? translator of example 3 adds *que yo recordaba bien* [which I remembered well] (Chandler 1948?: 315). This textual addition is important for it is the only evidence of explicitly added co-textual referencing used by a translator. The anaphoric reference leads the reader to think back to chapters 15 and 24 and thereby make the specific connection. Exceptionally literalist theorists and preclusive translation trainers may frown at additions of this type, but I believe these additions in literary translations are commendable, particularly in cases in which the target text choices are unlikely to trigger the pragmatic intentions of the author. What the translator has done is make what is implicit in the source text explicit in the target text, a technique called explicitation.

Let us now examine how the Spanish translators deal with the alliterative occurrence of *sump water stagnant and stinking*, as seen in example 3 and analyzed in the previous section. There is clear alliteration in the first line of all translations, but none whatsoever in the second. Also note that most translators used *parar/detenerse* ***en seco***, literally *stop dry*, which contrasts interestingly with the backdrop of the water and scum-covered, oil- and water-filled sump.

Table 1. Spanish Translations of Example 3.

I stopped dead, the sump water stagnant and stinking at my back. "Stand there, you son of a bitch," she said. (Chandler 1995: 755)
Yo me detuve, con el agua estancada y hedionda a mis espaldas. —Párese, hijo de … —me dijo. (Chandler 1947: 206)
Me detuve en seco. El apestoso olor de la charca me circuía. —¡Quieto ahí, hijo de perra! —mandó Carmen. (Chandler 1948?: 315)
Me paré en seco, con el agua estancada y pegajosa del sumidero a mi espalda. —¡Quieto ahí, hijo de perra! —dijo. (Chandler 1958: 246)
Me paré en seco, con el agua estancada y pegajosa del sumidero detrás de mi. —¡Quieto ahí, hijo de perra! —dijo. (Chandler 1972: 237)
Me detuve en seco, con el agua del sumidero, estancada y maloliente, a la espalda. —¡Quédate ahí, hijo de puta! —me conminó. (Chandler 2001: 225)

Source: own study.

If we were to "count" the number of times alliteration is used in the source text we would have 7 instances of consonant alliteration (/s/) and 4 instances of assonant alliteration (/a/). There is some asonant (/a/, /o/) and some consonant alliteration (/s/, /k/) in the first line of 1947 (5, then 4 instances of /a/ and 3 of /s/) and 1948? (3 instances of /o/ and 3 of /a/), repectively. There is clear asonance (/a/) and consonance (/s/) in first line of 1958 (/a/, which appears 7, then 2 times, and /s/, which appears four times) and 1972 (/a/ appears seven times in succession and /s/ four times). In 2001, the use of the stacatto intrasentential interjective description, a hyperbaton typical of López Muñoz's translation gives literary expressivity to the text. Nonetheless, at the end of the first line the /a/ sound is repeated four times. With this first line of the example, it is very clear that Spanish translators exert themselves, even beyond the remit of source text reflection. However, no matter how much alliteration might appear in the translations of the first line of these examples, there is absolutely none in line two. Again, the enumeration of the number of instances in the source text compared to the corresponding number in the target text do not indicate with any certainty how good, or bad, or effective a translation is. However, such "counts" do provide some basis for judging the extent of translator effort and of likely reader reception.

So far, we have seen that all Spanish translators use repetition of the specialized term *sump* similarly, though with fewer instances of it. We have seen how several are inconsistent in their co-textual references as they do not use exact repetition but rather employ synonyms. We have seen how all Spanish translators strive to use both consonant and assonant alliteration, even (over)compensating for this.

Vivian Sternwood: Yes, Rusty Regan is in the sump

The post-shooting conversation with Carmen Sternwood's older sister Vivian is important in that it introduces specialized, technical terms entwined with literary alliteration **in the dialogue turns** rather than in the narrative. Whereas up to this point in the novel, the reader has been exposed only to Marlowe's private thoughts, since he tells the story as the first-person narrator, it is with the intelligent and knowledegable Vivian that Philip Marlowe inserts *sump* and the technical word *bull wheel* into the spoken conversation. Marlowe badgers Vivian with comments and questions about her knowledge of the old, abandoned oil fields until she confesses that she knows much more

about them than she pretends: she admits knowing that Carmen killed Rusty Regan. Vivian also admits that the body had been disposed of in the sump with the help of a mobster called Eddie Mars. Although Vivian did not love her husband Rusty Regan, her father adored him and so she and her sister needed to hire someone to dispose of the body and hide the reality from their father. As we have seen above, narrator Marlowe had "gently close[d] the door of his mind in the reader's face" just before Carmen attempts to shoot him, and in the dialogue with Vivian he brings everything out into the open. In example 4 below, from which the title's *greasy scummy sumps* is drawn, the technical words are cloaked in the literary devices of polisyndeton (expressive repetition of the conjunction *and*) and alliteration——the /s/ sound is repeated 4 times (consonance) and the /i:/ sound is repeated 3 times (assonance). Vivian, of course, understands exactly which place Marlowe means.

Example 4:
"So we went down there and the place was pretty creepy, all rusted metal and old wood and silent wells and *greasy scummy sumps*. Maybe that upset her. I guess you've been there yourself. It was kind of eerie."

"Yes – it is." It was a small breathless voice now.

"So we went in there and I stuck a can up in a bull wheel for her to pop at" (Chandler 1995: 757–758).

In what is one of the book's greatest challenges for translators, most use the acceptably accurate specialized term *sumideros*: *sumideros grasosos y espumosos* [greasy sumps] (Chandler 1947: 208); *sumideros grasientos* [greasy sumps] (Chandler 1958: 249; 1972: 240); and *sumideros grasientos y llenos de desechos* [greasy sumps full of debris] (Chandler 2001: 228). The 1947 term choice is consistent with the translation of example 1 but not with *colector* used earlier. The 1948? version, as we have seen above, uses a non-specialized term, *charcas*, which alternates with *charcos* co-textually: *charcas de agua grasienta* [pools of greasy water] (Chandler 1948?: 321).

The translators all seem to struggle with *scummy*. The *Merriam-Webster Third New International Dictionary* descibes *scum* as "extraneous matter or impurities risen to or formed on the surface of a liquid often as a foul filmy covering"; the *Oxford English Dictionary* describes it as "a layer of dirt or froth on the surface of a liquid". The translators choose either to omit it (Chandler 1948?, 1958, 1972), explicate it (*llenos de desechos* [full of debris]; Chandler 2001: 228) or translate it, though in one case the choice is slightly off the mark (*espumosos* [foamy or bubbly] (Chandler 1947: 208).

When this example fragment is seen in a broader swath of text that includes the preceding segment *all rusted metal and old wood and silent wells*, the efforts of the two earliest translators to shape this technical text into something simultaneously literary is clearly visible. In the 1947 version, the translator intentionally chooses nouns and verbs ending only in the *–os*, and the two final elements, both adjectives, end with *-osos*, in a very satisfactorily sonorous way: *todo metal herrumboso y madera vieja y pozos inactivos y sumideros grasosos y espumosos* [all rusted metal and old wood and inactive wells and greasy and foamy sumps] (Chandler 1947: 208). In Spanish, the consonant alliteration of the /s/ occurs 10 times, perhaps too much, and the assonant alliteration of the /o/ occurs at least 8 times, overall surpassing the source text in pure redundancy of sound features. The 1948? version draws on a reinforced parallel structure that begins with the first element of the phrase, *lleno de* [full of], and continues with each element in the phrase, consistently introducing it with the polysyndeton *y* and preposition *de*: *lleno de metal herrumbroso y de árboles viejos y de pozos abandonados y de charcas de agua grasienta* [full of rusty metal and of old trees and of abandoned wells and of polls of greasy water] (Chandler 1948?: 321). Asonant alliteration is faintly perceived in the recurring /a/ and /o/ sounds but is not widely used in this segment. The other three translations are unremarkable when seen in this wider perspective.

Another important feature of this dialogue, a feature we will devote some space to here, is that Marlowe also introduces the specialized term *bullwheel* into this dialogue with Carmen's sister Vivian. A *bull wheel* had already been mentioned twice in chapter 31, in narrative passages, but when Marlowe speaks to Carmen he prefers to use the simplified *that big wooden wheel*: "I'll go over and set this can in that square opening in the middle of that big wooden wheel. See?" (Chandler 1995a: 755). For the reader, this change in usage is loaded with meaning: Carmen is a child with whom one must use childish language (*See?)* and simplistic description of specialized, technical items (Linder 2001). Now, in an open, non-narrative conversation, Marlowe uses *bullwheel* in the conversation with Vivian, fully expecting that she, like the reader, will understand the term.

This difference needs to be maintained in the Spanish translation so that the differential treatment of Carmen/child vs. Vivian/adult can be conveyed. However, only two of the translations achieve this. The 1958 and 1972 versions use *polea maestra* [master pulley] (Chandler 1958: 249; 1972: 240) vs. *esa enorme rueda* [that enormous wheel] (Chandler 1958: 245;

1972: 236). However, *polea maestra* is inaccurate. The *Routledge Spanish Technical Dictionary (Vol. 1: Spanish-English)* states that "polea maestra" is a "crown pulley", not a *bull wheel* at all (1997: 597). Technically speaking, the crown pulley, in the historical process of cable-tool drilling, is a part of an oil drilling derrick that hangs from the top and is used to thread the drilling cable through so that the string of drilling equipment can fall vertically into the bore. A bull wheel is the largest and strongest driving wheel of the machine which provides the force to an oil derrick's drilling cable from the base of a derrick (Walker, http://www.elsmerecanyon.com). Despite the fact that "polea maestra" is the term for another part of the oil drilling derrick, it is an attempt to translate the term accurately and it works contrastively when Marlowe uses a non-term for *bull wheel* with Carmen (*that big wooden wheel*).

The second case is the 2001 version, which uses *una gran rueda de giro hecha de madera* [a large driving wheel made of wood] (Chandler 2001: 224) vs. *la gran rueda de madera* [the large wooden wheel] (Chandler 2001: 225), which is accurate and sufficiently establishes the differentiation between Carmen and Vivian. The *Diccionario para ingenieros*, 2nd edition, a general scientific and technical dictionary for engineers, offers "rueda de giro" as an equivalent for *bull wheel*, specifically stating that this term is extracted from the petroleum industry (1997: 367). This dictionary also indicates that "rueda impulsora" [driving wheel] is another equivalent, showing that this is indeed the right terminological equivalent (1997: 367).

In all other cases, Marlowe is made to use the same term with Vivian as he did with Carmen: *una rueda de madera* [a wooden wheel] (Chandler 1947: 209; 2001: 228), or even more simply, *una rueda* [a wheel] (Chandler 1948?: 321). The reader cannot help but notice that Vivian is treated in the same manner as Carmen, when in fact Chandler intended Marlowe to address Vivian differently, as she is a cut above her sister in terms of intelligence and awareness.

If the two preceding narrative occurrences of *bull wheel* (see one of these in example 4) do not use a specialized, technical term that contrasts with the explanatory, non-term that Marlowe uses with Carmen, then there exists the potential to flatten entirely the differentiation Chandler intended. This indeed happens with the 1947 and 1948? Spanish versions, which use the non-terms *una gran rueda de madera* and *la gran rueda* [a large (wooden) wheel] (Chandler 1947: 205) and *una enorme rueda de madera maciza* and *la rueda* [an enormous solid wood wheel] (Chandler 1948?: 314). As we

can see, the entire intentional differentiation between the specialized and technical *bull wheel* and the general and explanatory *big wooden wheel* disappears from the foreign text in these two cases. We can perhaps surmise that late-1940s translators either did not fully perceive the differentiation or were unable to consult technical resource materials so as to resolve the terminology problem. In any case, these early translators (one of whom was based in Buenos Aires and the other in Barcelona, on opposite sides of the Atlantic) were unable to reproduce any co-textual relationship between *bull wheel* and *big wooden wheel*.

Conclusions

As the present research inquiry reveals, in the translation of specialized terms in Raymond Chandler's *The Big Sleep* (1939), there is a certain tendency toward quantitative loss of terms through lesser repetition (*sump* in all translations of example 3 appears fewer times than in the source text), use of non-terms as replacements for terms ("pool" for *sump* in example 1, and "large wheel" or "enormous wheel" for *bull wheel* in examples 3 and 4), omission ("scummy" is omitted from several translations of example 3), and error ("master pulley" for *bull wheel* in example 4). As mentioned above, the empirical tallying of the number of instances of these features is no sure-fire indicator of translation quality, but the ocurrences do offer some basis on which to conclude that translators may have been assigning less importance to the specialized terms than to the overall quality of the literary language in the target text. As a result, the effect of the language for specific purposes (LSP) in these translations on the readership may be diminished.

However, the losses of terms and of the specificity of the terms are offset by the use of qualitative compensatory techniques, particularly in the case of the important consonant and assonant alliterative patterns in which the source text terms are embedded. In this regard, the translators reproduce the alliteration effectively, in several cases exceeding the number of instances of alliteration in the source text. There are cases of clear gain in the translated texts when both assonant and consonant alliterative patterns are used with greater frequency in the target text with respect to the source text (*pozos silenciosos y sumideros grasientos*, as in the 1958 and 1972 translations of example 4) and when parallel structuring combined with alliteration is used intentionally (*grasosos y espumos*, as in the 1947 translation of example 4).

In a number of cases, other aesthetic devices are used in compensation (connotative vocabulary choices and the use of altered punctuation and word order).

Chandler's book ends with the memorable quote in example 1, which is of particular significance since it contains the book's title. In the following translation, extracted from the Spanish text of Frank MacShane's *The Life of Raymond Chandler* (1976), the translator, Pilar Giralt Gorina, offers an example of how the alliteration, repetition and parallel structuring of a passage can be effectively reproduced. In fact, this translator goes beyond Chandler's original effort and extends the alliteration from one instance in the source text (*high hill*) to three in the target text (*sucio sumidero, mausoleo de mármol, cumbre de una colina*), developing the term *sump* with this literary device when in fact this term contained many fewer such embellishments initially. As I believe the example below shows, integration of specialized terminology in translated texts is possible without sacrificing literary excellence, and it is even possible to enhance it beyond the expressivity of the source text.

Example 5:
¿Qué importa donde uno yaciera una vez muerto? *En un sucio sumidero o en un mausoleo de mármol en la cumbre de una colina*. Muerto, uno dormía el sueño eterno y esas cosas ya no importaban. Lo mismo eran petróleo y agua que aire y viento. Sólo se dormía el sueño eterno, y no importaba la suciedad de la muerte ni dónde ibas a parar" (Chandler 1977: 119, emphasis added).

A tactic used by one translator consists of adding explicit segments, thus helping the reader make appropriate co-textual connections which are rather subtle in the source text. A case in point here is the alliteration of the /s/ sound in *sump* and the *hissing* sound Carmen Sternwood consistently emits under certain violent, sexually vengeful situations involving men. In the novel's climax in chapter 31, the two features are intentionally brought together and the reader is expected to be able to interpret their meaning effectively. In the case of the 1948? Spanish text, the translator helps the reader along by inserting the additional *que yo recordaba bien* [which I remembered well]. I believe that in literary translation involving co-textual subtleties such as this, additions of this nature are ethical and skillful.

This study has provided an overview of a lengthy period (1947–2001, 54 years) of Spanish translations in which some diachronically important aspects have been observed. Such diachronic issues may have affected the 1947 and 1948? versions in that neither of them accurately translate the technical

term *bull wheel* and use non-terms instead. Regardless of the reasons why, the effect on the reading experience is significant: no co-textual differentiation between Marlowe's treatment of adult Vivian vs. childish Carmen is established in these texts. In the case of the translation of the vulgar *son of a bitch* expression (see example 3), there is a clear historical progression from full suppression of swearing *hijo de ...* (Chandler 1947: 206) to attenuation *hijo de perra* [son of a gun] (Chandler 1948?, 1958, 1972) to accurate depiction of this vulgarism: *hijo de puta* (Chandler 2001: 225).

A promising area for future study might be to examine the number of detective novels which also contain specialized oil industry terms used in a literary fashion and compare them with the results obtained in the present study. Such works include Ross MacDonald's *Sleeping Beauty* (1973) and James Lee Burke's *Creole Belle* (2012). A similar inquiry into non-genre literary works could examine the use of oil industry terminiology in Upton Sinclair's *Oil!* (1927), adapted into a film called *There Will Be Blood* (2007).

Though this is an infrequent area of scholarly inquiry, the translation of specialized, technical terms in literary texts reveals how professional practitioners are keenly aware of the pivotal role of these terms in the co-text of the works they deal with and in the effect these terms have on each work as a whole. In this situation, professionals are faced with making target text choices that range in their extremes between strict terminological accuracy on the one hand, and sensitivity to literary language on the other. For translation studies theorists and educators who might believe that literary and technical translation are separate worlds of translatorial action, requiring separate skill sets, the results of this study show that literary translators tend to apply overarching translatorial techniques that cater to the co-textual and overall effect of their literary translations and also to the accuracy of the terms they tackle.

Acknowledgement

I would like to express my sincerest appreciation to Belén Santana López, of the University of Salamanca, for reading an early version of this paper and offering insightful comments.

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