

ZOMBIES LOST IN TRANSLATION. THE TRANSLATION FROM ENGLISH TO SPANISH OF (DE)HUMANIZING PRONOUNS

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Abstract: *The present paper analyses which strategies are used in order to express the personal/inanimate pronoun contrast that serves the function of (de)humanizing zombies, when passages containing this linguistic feature in English are translated into Spanish. English has two sets of pronouns/adjectives, the ones that express PERSONHOOD (he/his/him, she/her), and the INANIMATE ones (it/its). The explicit use of these pronouns is obligatory. Spanish on the other hand, has one set of pronouns (él, ella, su, lo, la) that are used both to express PERSONHOOD as well as with INANIMATE references. The Spanish subject pronouns are normally used only when there is a need to highlight the subject or contrast it with another subject. Consequently, translators from English to Spanish face a challenge with regard to the translation of the (de)humanizing effect the pronoun contrast adds to the texts in English. The corpus contains examples of the English pronouns being translated with noun phrases, verb phrases, noun clauses, and pronouns, while in some cases the pronoun contrast is omitted, and therefore lost in the translation.*

Keywords: *English to Spanish translation, pronominalization, pronouns, dehumanization, fictional creatures, zombies.*

1. INTRODUCTION

In Standard English, there are two sets of third person pronouns and possessive adjectives: the ones that express PERSONHOOD (*he/his/him, she/her*), and the INANIMATE ones we use for inanimate objects and to a certain point, in reference to animals (*it/its*). The explicit use of the subject pronouns along with the verb is obligatory, and the two categories of pronouns and possessive adjectives are normally distinct, i.e., in most contexts they cannot be used interchangeably (Biber *et al.*, 1999:328). With regard to the use of the inanimate pronoun *it*, Joly (1975:260) states that it “clearly means that the referent is *excluded* from the sphere of humanity. [...] Consequently, the referent is refused the full status of human personality.” This means that the inanimate pronoun can be used in order to dehumanize creatures, especially those creatures whose status as human/animal/monster is not clear cut. In fictional narratives, the prime example of this kind of creature is the zombie. Zombies, in most texts USED TO be human, occasionally someone close to us, like a friend or a family member, but the nature of their human/animal/monster status has then become ambiguous. This ambiguity is noticeably reflected in the use of pronouns referring to zombies, where frequent shifts between personal and inanimate forms are the norm (Flores Ohlson, 2018, Flores Ohlson, in press). This vacillation is, on the one hand, a reflection of the ambiguous nature of the zombie as a (non-)human creature. On the other hand, the change from one pronoun to another plays an important role in the creation of this creature. Translators from English to Spanish, of texts containing passages in which the contrast between personal and inanimate pronouns referring to zombies plays an important role, face a challenge with regard to the translation of the (de)humanizing effect the pronoun contrast adds to the texts.

This is due to the fact that, in Spanish, in contrast to English, the verb normally does not need to be accompanied by a subject pronoun. The pronouns are only used when there is a need to highlight the subject in order to distinguish it from another subject, or to emphasize it. When the pronoun does not serve the function of distinguishing or emphasizing, its use is redundant, and should be avoided (García Yebra, 1997:524-525). Moreover, the sets of third person singular personal and possessive pronouns/adjectives also differ substantially

To cite this article: Flores Ohlson, L. (2019). "Zombies Lost in Translation. The Translation from English to Spanish of (De)humanizing Pronouns". *Revista de Lingüística y Lenguas Aplicadas*, 14, 91-103. <https://doi.org/10.4995/rilya.2019.10749>

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from the pattern found in English. Basically, there are only two subject pronouns (él/ella), as well as two direct object pronouns (lo/la) and these are used in reference to human beings as well as animals and inanimate objects. The third person singular possessive adjective (suyo/suya/su)¹ is used for masculine and feminine humans and animals, as well as for inanimate objects.

Several studies have been carried out on the untranslatability of pronouns of address, for example of English *you* and Spanish *tú* and *usted* (Anderman, 1993), Russian *ty* and *vy* (Lewis, 2004:290), and French *tu* and *vous* in relation to Swedish *du* and *ni* (Künzli, 2009). In contrast, with regard to the English third person pronouns used to express personhood, and the inanimate pronoun, in relation to the Spanish counterparties, the process of translation has only been briefly mentioned in earlier studies. García Yebra (1997:528, 540), for example, states that *it* as a subject pronoun referring to inanimate objects and frequently animals is normally omitted in the translation. However, since *he/she/it* are generally not interchangeable, the fact that these pronouns are typically not translated at all in translation of English texts into Spanish does not generally lead to any loss in semantic content.

Clark (1992) discusses the use of pronouns in reference to animals in English, and notes that there is great inconsistency in their use. She argues that “[i]f the basic categories are indeed “personal” and “inanimate”, then such inconsistencies may not be only explicable but inevitable, in so far as subjects which are animate yet non-human fit uneasily into the pattern” (Clark, 1992:636). Clark further states that “[a]lthough choice of generic pronoun in reference to a particular species is not always consistent even within a single work, variation is not necessarily either random or unmotivated” (Clark, 1992:639), and she concludes by noting that “[t]he grammatical vacillation in fact mirrors the profound ambivalence characterizing all human attitudes towards animals” (Clark, 1992:644). Hence, in the case of animal pronominalization, one could argue that when the pronoun is not translated from English into Spanish, it could imply a loss in translation since the pronoun itself can add a certain meaning to the text. Nevertheless, in Clark’s examples, even though one and the same animal is referred to both with personal and inanimate pronouns within the same text, and sometimes even within the same sentence, the fact that the animal in question is a non-human creature is always obvious. That is, the choice of personal or inanimate pronouns says something about the ambivalence in the relation or attitude the speaker expresses towards the animal, but nothing about the nature of the animal in question.

By contrast, this is not the case when it comes to the zombie. An omission of the contrast between personal and inanimate pronouns in reference to this fictional creature in a translation into Spanish of an English text would most certainly involve a loss of semantic and/or pragmatic content in the translation. However, as stated by Toury (2012:116), “[i]t simply cannot be taken for granted that whenever a feature occurs in an SL text, be its position ever so high in the latter’s internal hierarchy, this feature will be picked by translators and retained in the translation.” Hence, in the present paper I ask the following question:

- Which strategies (if any) are used in order to express the personal/inanimate pronoun/adjective contrast that serves the function of (de)humanizing the zombie, when passages containing this linguistic phenomenon in English are translated into Spanish?

One could argue that the modern zombie was born in George A. Romero’s motion pictures from the 1970’s and 1980’s² (ZRS, 2010). Hence, this creature is originated on the silver screen and in English. It should be noted, however, that the number of written zombie texts has increased dramatically in the last decades and currently the written genre is possibly even more productive than the audiovisual narratives. Although the number of zombie texts written in other languages is also increasing, the English language is still the primary source of zombie literature and motion pictures. Consequently, within the Spanish-language literature, the translated narratives, written or produced originally in English, can be considered to occupy the primary position within the POLYSYSTEM hierarchy of zombie narratives.³ Even-Zohar (1990:46) argues that translated literature is not merely “an integral system within any literary polysystem, but [an] active system within, [and] it is by and large an integral part of the innovatory forces”. In the present analysis, I will comment on an example that could serve as an indication of English originals and their translations occupying the primary system of zombie narratives in Spanish.

The extracts analyzed in the present paper come from a corpus of 21 written and audiovisual zombie narratives. The titles, retrieved from sites on the internet that list the best and most popular zombie narratives, were selected due to their accessibility in the English original and the Spanish translation. However, due to the enormous number of zombie narratives published in the last decades, the selection was also to some extent random in nature.

The zombie represents one out of many different fictional creatures that could have been analyzed for the purposes of this study. In Flores Ohlson (2018), I study the pronominalization of the creatures in Guillermo del

¹ The forms *suyo/suya* are used after the noun while the short form *su* is used before the noun.

² *Night of the Living Dead* (1968), *Dawn of the Dead* (1978), *Day of the Dead* (1985).

³ The polysystem analyses the socio-semiotic phenomena, such as culture, language, and literature, as “networks of relations that can be hypothesized for a certain set of assumed observables” (Even-Zohar, 2005:1).

Toro's fictional work, which are trolls, fairies, and vampires. However, although interesting, the relation between the human characters and these creatures is not as complicated and ambiguous as in the case of the zombie. Furthermore, the popularity of the zombie in the last decades has been enormous. Cohen (2012:398) claims that zombies "thoroughly saturate pop culture, and assures that the "future belongs to the rotting, groaning, lumbering, hungry, herdlike walking dead." Spooner (2015:183) states that the modern zombie is used to explore a variety of themes directly related to humankind such as capitalist consumption, viral pandemic, environmental disaster, military irresponsibility and celebrity culture. Additionally, even though fairies, trolls, vampires, and other fictional creatures exhibit human characteristics, distinguishing them from humans is generally uncontroversial. With regard to the zombie, on the one hand, Boon (2011:50) argues that the "proliferation of zombie mythology into mainstream culture during the past three decades has established the zombie as the predominant symbol of the monstrous other". On the other hand, the zombies can at the same time be interpreted as a symbol of ourselves:

if you think about a monster like the vampire or the werewolf, you can see them as aspects of human behavior magnified and embodied; i.e. the vampire's connection to various kinds of (taboo) eroticism has been explored ad infinitum, while the werewolf's link to animal violence has also been recognized. With the zombie, what you get is *us*, pretty much as we are, maybe with a little damage, and we consume one another. No eroticism, no animal violence, just a single, overwhelming appetite. (Adams, 2008:77-81)

In analyses of zombie movies and literature, several writers observe that humans sometimes exhibit the same or similar characteristics as the zombies. Weinstock (1999:8), for example, in his discussion of *The Night of the Living Dead* (Romero 1968) notes that "there is little to distinguish the living from the dead" since some of the living characters are "as vapid and unemotional as the zombies they mercilessly pick off, one by one." It should be noted that some of the survivors in zombie narratives even become cannibals, which is one of the most striking characteristics of the 21st century zombie. In fact, in the words of the character named Cassandra in *Z Nation*, humans can be "worse than Zs" (Engler and Schaefer, 2014-2018:season 1, episode 3). The nature of the zombie as a non-human or human creature, as the monstrous other or as a symbol of ourselves is thus highly ambiguous. This is clearly reflected in the pronominalization in reference to this creature. My previous studies of pronominalization of zombies in literary texts in English show that there is great inconsistency, both between different texts, and commonly also within one and the same text (Flores Ohlson, 2018, Flores Ohlson, in press). Hence, there is clearly no obvious choice of pronouns referring to the zombie. The use of the inanimate pronoun *it* excludes the zombie from the sphere of humanity and dehumanizes it. Dehumanizing a creature has great moral implications since, when a creature is not categorized as human, killing it generally does not imply committing murder, and there are fewer moral issues to be concerned about. Pifer (2011) reflects on one of numerous examples of this, found in the motion picture *Shaun of the Dead* (Wright, 2004):

when Ed hits a pedestrian with Pete's car, Shaun is racked with guilt, cautiously calling out to the body in the street. When the corpse reveals its snarling zombie visage, Shaun says, "Oh, thank heavens for that," and we can all breathe a sigh of relief. We thought for a moment that our protagonists had killed someone. (Pifer, 2011:169)

Hence, the zombie that was hit by the car was clearly not human (a *someone*), but rather a thing (a *something*).⁴ Greene and Mohammad identify three general justifications for killing zombies:

a) they are (or are very close to being) braindead; b) because of their radically altered life goals, what personality is left lacks the same personal identity as the original individual, releasing us from prior obligation; and c) after zombification they are usually homicidal cannibalistic killers. (Greene and Mohammad, 2010:28)

These justifications can possibly mean that the zombie could be considered a non-human, or a no-longer-human being. As we will see in some of the examples analyzed below, killing a *he* or a *she* is certainly not the same as killing an *it*.

Jakobson (2012:129) observes that "[l]anguages differ essentially in what they *must* convey and not in what they *may* convey", whereas Livia (2001:12), in regard to literary uses of linguistic gender, notes that, "because different languages have different structures that create different sets of oppositions, members of one linguistic community will not experience the world in the same way as members of another." In the case of the discrepancies between English and Spanish in the structure and use of personal pronouns, a simple change of pronoun in an English text, such as *I killed him/it*, would normally not be captured in the Spanish version (*Lo maté*).⁵ The use of *him* or *her* in reference to the animal in order to express what Clark (1992:640) would call a "fellow-feeling" with the animal, would not change the content. I.e., it is still obvious that it was an animal killing and not a human murder.

⁴ Another clear example of this is found in Stephen King's *Cell* (King, 2006) where one of the main characters insists that burning a large group of zombies "wouldn't be murder, not really. It would be extermination."

⁵ The contrast human/non-human could be reflected with third person singular pronouns in Spanish in texts that exhibit the pronoun phenomenon called *leísmo*. *Leísmo* happens when indirect object pronoun *le* is used instead of direct pronoun *lo* in regard to human masculine singular referents. A speaker of a variety of Spanish that exhibits this phenomenon would say *Le vi* (I saw him) and *Lo vi* (I saw it), while a non-*leísta* speaker would use the direct pronoun *lo* for both references. *Leísmo* is common among well-educated and prestigious speakers and writers of Spanish, therefore a phenomenon accepted by the Spanish Royal Academy (Real Academia Española 2005).

Accordingly, in the Spanish version, there would be no doubt whether *lo* meant the killing of an animal or the murder of a human. However, it will be argued here that in the case of zombies, this type of pronominal shift has direct implications for the perception of its human/animal/monster status.

In my previous work of fictional creature pronominalization in written and audiovisual texts in English, two main types of pronominalization were identified, by closely analyzing pronoun use in reference to zombies, vampires, trolls and fairies in a corpus of around 20 narratives. The most common type is when there is a vacillation between personal and inanimate pronouns that cannot be interpreted as conveying an explicit meaning of (de)humanization of the creature in question, as the following example shows:

He brought the light up, right into its face, and the vampire flailed [...]. Fet ducked him and got behind his back, stabbing the body guard in the back of its thick neck before shoving him hard down the stairs. (del Toro and Hogan, 2009b:102)

The pronoun use in the extract above can be interpreted as showing that the human character has an ambivalent attitude towards the vampire he is fighting against, hence, it is not clear to him whether this creature is human or not. However, in comparison with the following example, the contrast between the personal and inanimate pronouns in the example above is not used as a clear linguistic tool.

I tried to put her, it out of my mind. (Brooks, 2006:221)

In this example, the human character corrects herself, changing from the personal to the inanimate pronoun as she refers to a zombie girl. This correction is in line with the argument she has expressed about the importance of not thinking about zombies as humans. Hence, the contrast between the two pronouns explicitly conveys a certain meaning to the text since the pronoun contrast itself is used as a linguistic tool in order to dehumanize the zombie. For the purpose of analyzing the strategies used in the translation of pronouns in English zombie texts into Spanish, I consider the last type the most interesting. When a specific linguistic feature, such as pronominalization, conveys a certain meaning to the text, it should not be overlooked in the translation since an important message would be lost. Examples from the last category will therefore be analyzed in the following. A few comparisons with examples from the first type will also be briefly discussed.

As we will see in the analysis, one of the instances of pronominalization in my corpus can be interpreted as an example of FORMAL EQUIVALENCE TRANSLATION, a type of translation which “attempts to reproduce several formal elements, including: (1) grammatical units [...]. The reproduction of grammatical units may consist in: (a) translating nouns by nouns, verbs by verbs, etc.” (Nida, 2012:149). Other examples in my corpus are more associated with DYNAMIC EQUIVALENCE TRANSLATION, which is “the closest natural equivalent to the source-language message” (Nida, 2012:151). This type of translation:

involves two principal areas of adaptation, namely, grammar and lexicon. In general the grammatical modifications can be made the more readily, since many grammatical changes are dictated by the obligatory structures of the receptor language. That is to say, one is obliged to make such adjustments as shifting word order, using verbs in place of nouns, and substituting nouns for pronouns. (Nida, 2012:151)

Four out of the seven cases analyzed in the present paper could be argued to be examples of dynamic equivalence translation.

2. ANALYSIS

In the corpus of the present paper, consisting of written as well as audiovisual texts originally produced in English and then translated into Spanish, seven cases of pronoun contrast as a clear linguistic tool have been identified. In these cases, zombie pronominalization is used as a tool in order to express a specific meaning in the text, i.e., to humanize or dehumanize the zombie, or to reveal an ambivalent attitude towards the nature or status of the zombie as a human/animal/monster being. In these seven cases, five different solutions with regard to the translation of the pronoun contrast have been found:

- Noun phrase (*Z Nation, World War Z*)
- Verb phrase (*Dead Heads*)
- Noun phrase + Noun clause (*The Girl with All the Gifts*)
- Pronouns (*Zombie Fallout*)
- Omission of pronoun contrast (*Black Mirror, Cell, Dead Heads*)

In the following, each solution will be discussed together with its respective examples.

2.1. Noun phrase

In the TV series *Z Nation* (Engler and Schaefer, 2014-2018), there is a scene in which the young character, who calls himself *10 K*, is talking to the older Doc about the time when he had to kill his father who had been infected and turned into a zombie:

Doc: - What did you do?	Doc: - ¿Qué hiciste?
10 K: - I killed it.	10 K: - Lo maté.
Doc: - Damn kid, you had to put down your own dad?	Doc: - Maldición, ¿cómo pudiste hacerlo?
10 K: - I didn't kill him , I killed it.	10 K: - No asesiné a papá , fue a esa cosa .

(Engler and Schaefer, 2014-2018:season 1, episode 4)

In this dialogue, Doc does not seem to react to 10 K's first use of "it", since he directly responds with "your own dad". However, this is an example of non-explicit pronoun contrast. In the dubbed Spanish version, the object pronoun "lo" does not convey the same meaning, in as much as it could refer to a human as well as a non-human creature. As I have found in numerous cases, the meaning that the first "it" adds to the expression in this extract constitutes a use of pronoun contrast that would typically be ignored in the translation, as in the following example:

- You've seen him before. This thing. The Master.	- ¿ Lo has visto antes? ¿A esa cosa; al Amo?
- Yes.	- Sí.
- You tried to kill it.	-¿Intentase matarlo?

(del Toro and Hogan, 2009b:444) (del Toro and Hogan, 2009a:363-364)

The example above does not present a use of the pronoun contrast as a clear linguistic tool. Although it does show a vacillation in the pronominalization that reflects the characters' ambivalent attitude towards the creature they call *The Master*, the pronoun contrast is not explicit. In this extract, both "him" and "it" are translated with the expected masculine direct object pronoun "lo", and consequently, the contrast is lost in the translation.

However, in the last sentence of the *Z Nation* dialogue, 10 K stresses the two pronouns in order to emphasize the difference between killing his father and the zombie his father had turned into. That is, 10 K uses the inanimate pronoun in line with Joly's (1975:260) statement that reads that it "clearly means that the referent is *excluded* from the sphere of humanity." Consequently, 10 K did not murder the human being his father used to be, but the non-human creature he had turned into. As we can see, the pronouns "him" and "it" are translated with the noun "papá" (*dad*) and the noun phrase "esa cosa" (*that thing*).

The noun phrase *esa cosa* in reference to zombies is frequently used in zombie apocalyptic texts originally written in Spanish, as in the following extracts:

salieron dos brazos y la cabeza de esa cosa . Oh, eso de ahí no era Miguel, pero lo había sido hasta hacía muy poco. [...] había conseguido que esas cosas lo mordieran. (Loureiro, 2011:108)	Out came that thing's arms and head. It wasn't Miguel, but it had been. [...] Then one of those things had bitten him. (Loureiro, 2012:81)
Susana los observó con incrédula fascinación. Eran esas cosas . Eran ésos de la televisión. Eran gente muerta, o eso pensaba. Cosas muertas . Muertos vivientes. (Sisí, 2009a:19)	Susana watched them with incredulous fascination. They were those things . The ones on television. They were dead people. Dead things . The living dead. (Sisí, 2009b:16)

One could consider whether the expression *esa cosa* is commonly used to refer to non-human creatures in discourse other than zombie apocalyptic texts. A search for this noun phrase in the Spanish Academy's corpus of contemporary language (Real Academia Española, 2017), reveals 459 cases in 377 different texts. Of these cases, the noun phrase is used in reference to two fetus, one baby, three dead persons, two men, one woman, one langouste, one dog, two unspecified creatures, and one mermaid. In the remaining 445 cases, it is used in reference to non-living objects or abstract concepts. It is possible, therefore, that *esa cosa* in reference to "living" creatures is more frequent in zombie texts. Even-Zohar argues that when the translated literature

assumes a central position, in the process of creating new, primary models, the translator's main concern here is not just to look for ready-made models in his home repertoire into which the source texts would be transferable. Instead, he is prepared in such cases to violate the home conventions. Under such conditions the chances that the translation will be close to the original in terms of adequacy (in other words, a reproduction of the dominant textual relations of the original) are greater than otherwise. (Even-Zohar, 1990:50)

This is in line with my argument, based on the polysystem theory (Even-Zohar, 1990:46-47), that narratives translated from English occupy the primary position in the zombie narrative polysystem and therefore constitute the leading influence in the formation of new linguistics models for the target language, in this case Spanish.

In apocalyptic zombie narrations, zombies typically pose an important threat to the survival of the human race, i.e., they are “usually homicidal cannibalistic killers” (Greene and Mohammad, 2010:28). Therefore, differentiating them from humans is imperative to survival. This fact is emphasized in the following scene from the bestselling novel *World War Z* (Brooks, 2006):

The first G I saw was small, probably a kid, I couldn't tell. Its face was eaten off, the skin, nose, eyes, lips, even the hair and ears [...].

It was stuck inside one of those long civilian hiker's packs, stuffed in there tight with the drawstring pulled right up around its neck.

[...] it was splashing around [...]. Its brain must have been intact [...] It couldn't moan, its throat had been too badly mangled, but the splashing might have attracted attention, so I put it out of its misery, if it really was miserable, and tried not to think about it. [...] don't try to imagine who they used to be, how they came to be here, how they came to be this.

I know, who doesn't do that, right? Who doesn't look at one of those things and just naturally start to wonder? It's like reading the last page of a book...your imagination just naturally spinning. And that's when you get distracted, get sloppy, let your guard down and end up leaving someone else to wonder what happened to you.

I tried to put her, it out of my mind. Instead, I found myself wondering why it had been the only one I'd seen.

(Brooks, 2006:220-221)

El primer monstruo que vi era pequeño, probablemente una niña, no estoy segura. Tenía la cara comida: la piel, la nariz, los ojos, los labios, e incluso el pelo y las orejas [...]. estaba metida dentro de uno de esos macutos de excursionista, allí atrapada, con el cordón que cerraba la bolsa apretado en torno al cuello.

[...] la cosa estaba chapoteando [...]. Debía de tener el cerebro intacto [...] No podía gemir, tenía la garganta demasiado destrozada, pero el chapoteo podía llamar la atención, así que la liberé de su desdicha, si es que la sentía, e intenté no pensar más en ello. [...] no intentes imaginarte cómo eran antes, ni cómo llegaron hasta donde están, ni cómo se convirtieron en lo que son.

Lo sé, ¿quién no se lo pregunta, verdad? ¿Quién es capaz de mirar a una de esas cosas y no empezar a preguntarse, sin quererlo? Es como leer la última página de un libro..., tu imaginación empieza a dar vueltas, sin más. Y es entonces cuando te distraes, cuando te vuelves torpe, cuando bajas la guardia y acabas dejando que otro se pregunte qué te pasó a ti. Intenté quitarme a la niña, al zombi, de la cabeza, y entonces empecé a pensar en por qué era el único que había visto.

(Brooks, 2013:244)

To the character in the extract above, it is clear that it is important to see the zombies as non-human creatures. She refers to them by the letter G, which is probably an abbreviation of *ghouls* (ZRS, 2010) and *Zack*, an anthroponomy used in military fashion, similar to *Charlie* as a reference to the Vietnamese in the war in Vietnam.⁶ Yamamoto (1999:4), states that “plurality sometimes weakens the sense of animacy [i.e., the level of humanness we perceive] because the identity of the referent can be blurred”. The level of dehumanization is also clear when we look at the pronouns used, which are, with a sole exception, the inanimate ones. It can be observed how the character reminds herself of the zombies' lack of feelings (“if it really was miserable”), and directly afterwards stresses the importance of not thinking about who they used to be when they were still human.

⁶ The Vietnamese army was named Viet Cong, abbreviated V.C., which in the American military alphabet was *Victor Charlie* (Moser and Drejer 1955).

A comparison of the English original to the Spanish translation reveals clear differences in the use of the pronouns as well as the possessive adjectives between the two languages. The obvious dehumanization of the creature in question by the use of *it/its*, is largely lost. On the one hand, this loss is due to the total absence of subject pronouns in the translation. On the other hand, with regard to the possessive adjectives, the striking feature is not so much that *his*, *her* and *its* are all translated into *su*, but rather that the pronoun is avoided altogether, in line with the general principle in Spanish when referring to body parts or personal belongings (Real Academia Española, 2010:352). It is hence, the natural way of using, or rather not using the subjective and possessive pronouns/adjectives in Spanish that leads to the loss in translation. In a text where the human/animal/inanimate nature of the referent is clear, presumably the most frequent case, this difference in pronoun/adjective use would not imply a loss in translation. It should be noted that according to García Yebra (1997:531), the subject pronoun should be expressed whenever its omission could produce ambiguity or complicate the comprehension of the text. However, ambiguity or difficulty in comprehension might not be the case here, and expressing the subject pronoun in the Spanish text would often render the text unnatural.

There is in fact one attempt to compensate for this loss in the translation, where “it was splashing around” is not merely translated into *estaba chapoteando*, but into “*la cosa* estaba chapoteando”. Nevertheless, there are three inanimate subject pronouns, and five inanimate possessive adjectives that are ignored in the same translation. Still, up until the last sentence in the extract, the pronoun contrast is not explicit.

If we now consider the second last sentence of the scene, it can be noted that the character corrects herself, and contrasts the object pronoun *her* with the inanimate *it*. This pronoun use reinforces the character’s argument with regard to zombies’ non-human status and the importance of remembering that zombies are not human any longer. This pronoun contrast is thus a clear linguistic tool. This is the second of two examples in the corpus of the use of nouns and/or noun phrases in the translation. That is, *her* is translated with the noun phrase *la niña* (the girl), and *it* with *al zombi* (the zombie).

In the last sentence, the inanimate pronoun “it” is repeated, as to reinforce the character’s argument and conviction of the zombie’s non-human status. In the translation, since the masculine form of *the only* (“el único”), instead of the feminine form (*la única*) is used, it clearly refers to “el zombie”, and not to “la niña”. Hence, the same effect is achieved.

2.2. Verb phrase

In the motion picture *Dead Heads* (Pierce and Pierce, 2011) there are two kinds of zombies: the traditional zombies that lack human conscience and do not speak, and the more humane zombies who resemble normal humans, except that their bodies are dead and decomposing. In the following dialogue, the humane zombie Mike wakes up to find his friend Bran playing with a more traditional zombie.

Mike: - The fuck is that ?	Mike: - ¿Qué coño es eso ?
Bran: - That? That's Cheese.	Bran: - ¿ Este ? Es Cheese.
Mike: - That's Cheese, ok. What's he doing here?	Mike: - Eh, es Cheese, vale. ¿Qué está haciendo aquí?
Bran: - I'm teaching him to play fetch.	Bran: - Estoy enseñándole a jugar.
[...]	[...]
Mike: - What are you doing? That's a zombie.	Mike: - ¿Qué estás haciendo?, es un zombi.
Bran: - We're zombies!	Bran: - ¡Somos zombis!
Mike: - Yeah, but we're good zombies.	Mike: - Pero somos zombis buenos.
Bran: - He's a good zombie.	Bran: - Es un zombi bueno.
Mike: - Does he know that? What are we supposed to do with it ?	Mike: - ¿Lo sabe? ¿Qué pretendes hacer con él?
Bran: - First off, that's not an it , that's Cheese.	Bran: - Para empezar, tiene nombre , es Cheese.

(Pierce and Pierce, 2011)

Although not a case of third person pronouns, the first line of this extract is nevertheless interesting. Mike says “The fuck is that”, presumably a short version of *What the fuck is that*. Thus, it could be interpreted as an immediate dehumanization of the zombie on part of this character, whereas *Who the fuck is that* would have humanized the zombie in question. This linguistic dehumanization is even more clearly expressed in the translation since “qué” (*what*) is used instead of *quién* (*who*), and “eso” (*that*) instead of *ese* (*he/that one*).

In the second line, it is interesting to see how the humanization of the zombie on part of Bran is actually more reinforced in the Spanish version than in the English original. This is due to the fact that, while “that” in English can be used in reference to both human and inanimate referents, the demonstrative pronoun “este” is used in this context in order to present a person, and *esto* would be used to explain what something is (*Este es Juan = This is Juan. Esto es un libro sobre Cervantes = This is a book about Cervantes*).

In the lines that follow, Mike seems to accept the more or less human status of the zombie, and both characters use the personal pronouns in their conversation about Cheese. I use the expression *more or less* because it could be argued that Bran treats the zombie more like a dog than a human, in as much as he gives the zombie a name more fitting for a pet than a human, he plays fetch with Cheese, and the expressions he uses are typical of communication with dogs (“come here boy, go get it boy, come on buddy”). According to Chen (2012:35), “dehumanization insults hinge on the salient invocation of the nonhuman animal”, which means that the treatment of Cheese as a dog could in its own be interpreted as a form of dehumanization.

In the part that has been omitted in the transcription, Bran tries to show Mike how he has been teaching Cheese to dance like Michael Jackson in the music video of “Thriller”. This is something Mike strongly disapproves of, and in the following lines he suddenly attempts to dehumanize Cheese again, by switching from “he” to “it” (“What are we supposed to do with it?”). This line, together with Bran’s answer, are the examples I interpret as the use of pronoun contrast as a clear linguistic tool. The expression “that’s not an it” clearly shows that Bran disagrees with Mike’s attempt to dehumanize the zombie.

Surprisingly, the attempt of dehumanization in “What are we supposed to do with it?” is not translated in the Spanish version. The subject pronoun “él” could refer to a human or animal referent as well as to an inanimate one. Hence, *Dead Heads* also appears in the list of cases where the pronoun contrast has not been translated. However, even though I interpret this example as a case of a clear linguistic tool, it does not show such an explicit contrast between the pronouns as the last line does. Instead of translating the inanimate pronoun with a noun phrase, such as *no es una cosa (it’s not a thing)*, a verb phrase is used (“tiene nombre” = *he has a name*). This is in line with the fact that Bran treats the zombie more like a pet than as a fellow human/zombie being. In other words, it would be more expected to talk about an animal not being an *it*, and having a name, than to talk about a human in such a way.

2.3. Noun clause

In a similar manner as in the motion picture *Dead Heads*, in the novel *The Girl with All the Gifts* (Carey, 2014), there are two different kinds of zombies. When the surviving humans discover the existence of the second kind (the more humane one who can learn how to speak and does not merely act on cannibalistic instinct), they decide to capture a few of them for examination. The humane zombies are children and the scientists order the soldiers to start by bringing one of them to the camp.

Bring us one of those kids. Let’s take a good
long look at him/her/it.
(Carey, 2014:78)

Traednos a uno de esos niños. Queremos
examinar a uno de esos críos, crías o lo que sea.
(Carey, 2015:76)

It is evident that the existence of the humane zombies challenges the previous dichotomy of human/zombie that the surviving humans had established. This fact is mirrored in the cited extract above. The humane zombies are obviously children, but are they to be considered human or not? In the Spanish version, the personal pronouns “him” and “her” are translated with the same strategy that we have seen in several of the previous examples analyzed: the noun. Since the Spanish noun *crío* (*child*) has a feminine version (*cría*), it works in the translation of “him” and “her”. What the expression in the English original conveys is exactly the idea of a creature whose nature as a human/non-human being is uncertain, and the use of the inanimate pronoun plays an important part in this message. Without it, the message would only come down to something like *let’s examine one of them, boy or girl, it doesn’t matter which*. The Spanish version of the expression uses the solution of a noun or relative clause: “o lo que sea” (*or whatever /it is*). At this point, we find the neuter pronoun “lo” which, among other things, is used in reference to unspecified objects. This noun, together with the subjunctive of the verb *ser* (*to be*), reinforces the meaning of reference to an unknown, unspecified object. Yet, it could also be interpreted in line with the English version without the inanimate pronoun: *let’s examine one of them, boy or girl, it doesn’t matter which*. To unmistakably convey the meaning of dehumanization, it would perhaps have been better to use the plural form of the verb: *o lo que sean (or whatever they are)*.

2.4. Pronouns

In the novel *Zombie Fallout* (Tufo, 2010b), one could argue that the human character's metalinguistic comment sums up the basic functions of the most frequent zombie pronominalization, namely dehumanization in order to justify their extinction as a necessary and morally accepted procedure rather than a cruel murder.

"I know, we see it too". It amazed me that I was already able to call them "its", instead of "thems" to describe what was once human. But it was much easier this way.
(Tufo, 2010b:audio edition 01:06:50-01:07-04)

"Lo sé, nosotros también lo vemos", le susurré. Me asombró que ya estuviera llamándolos "ELLO" en vez de "ELLOS". "ELLO" parecía una palabra tan impersonal para describir lo que una vez fuera humano, pero era mucho más fácil así.
(Tufo, 2010a:552-559)

Although the extract presents a pronoun contrast, and a metalinguistic comment about the dehumanizing function of the pronoun *it* ("to describe what was once human"), it is not clear how the use of *its* and *thems* contributes to the dehumanization of the zombies, since *them* obviously can be used in reference both to animate and inanimate objects. In other words, *them* is not the personal counterpart of inanimate *it*. In consequence, to use *them* in reference to zombies does not necessarily mean that they are humanized. Furthermore, the inanimate pronoun *it* can be a subject and an object pronoun, and it is used in the singular, while *them* can only be an object pronoun and it is used in the plural.

As for the translation, it should be noted that the use of "lo" to translate "it" in the first sentence does not express the dehumanization found in the original.⁷ However, this example of pronominalization belongs to the category of non-explicit pronoun contrast, while the second sentence exhibits a case of pronoun contrast as a clear linguistic tool.

Similar to the fact that the contrast between "its" and "thems" in the original is not entirely successful in terms of its dehumanizing effect, the contrast between "ello" and "ellos" in the translation is equally ineffective. As stated by García Yebra (1997:537), it should be noted that *ello* is not a personal pronoun since it never refers to a person, but represents an action, a process or a state mentioned earlier in the text. This pronoun can therefore not be compared either in function or in frequency of use to the English inanimate pronoun *it*. Furthermore, "ellos" is used not merely in reference to living creatures, but to inanimate objects as well, especially after prepositions: *Vimos unos edificios grandes y entramos en uno de ellos*. (*We saw some big buildings and we entered one of them*) (Butt and Benjamin, 2013:132).

More importantly, however, the sentence "Me asombró que ya estuviera llamándolos 'ELLO' en vez de 'ELLOS'" (*It amazed me that I was already able to call them "its" instead of "thems"*), has no logical connection to what was previously stated, since the pronoun "lo" does not convey the meaning of dehumanization, in line with the discussion above. That is, the character is amazed or surprised about something that has no relation to what has previously been said.

However, what is especially conspicuous is the metalinguistic comment about "ello" added to the translation: "Ello' parecía una palabra tan impersonal para describir lo que una vez fuera humano" (*"Ello" seemed to be such an impersonal word to describe what was once human*). This additional comment could be interpreted as serving the function of emphasizing the intended dehumanization of the zombies through the use of *ello* instead of *ellos*.

2.5. Omission of contrast between pronouns

In the Netflix series *Black Mirror* (Brooker, 2011-), one of the episodes, *Men Against Fire*, is about pale, snarling, humanoid monsters called "roaches". These creatures could be interpreted as a kind of zombies. In the scene below, a soldier has been in a close fight with one of these creatures and is now talking to a psychologist about the incident. It should be noted that the Spanish translation has two different versions, the first one being the dubbed, and the second the subtitled version.

⁷ It would only be in a text that exhibits *leísmo*, that *lo* could be considered dehumanizing. That is, in the variety of Spanish where third person indirect object pronoun *le* is used for masculine human direct objects in singular, the use of *lo* would be interpreted as referring to a non-human direct object. However, the following extract proves that this is not the case with this text: "Pero aún Travis me miró con ojos suplicantes, sin poder creer que su propio padre lo pondría en peligro" (Tufo, 2010a:155). A *leísta* text would have written *le podría en peligro*.

Soldier: - He was on the ground with me.	Soldier: - El tío/Él estaba en el suelo
Psychologist: - He?	Psychologist: - ¿Tío?/¿Él?
Soldier: - Yeah, it was a he. [...] He was on top of me, struggling, couldn't reach my rifle so I had to stick him, ah stick stick it, with my knife. (Brooker, 2011-:season 3, episode 5)	Soldier: - Sí, era un tío. /Era un hombre [...] Sí, encima, forcejeando conmigo, no llegaba al arma así que tuve que pincharlo, pincharlo con mi cuchillo.

In this story the creatures are not really zombies but a community of people who live as outcasts and are rejected by the authorities. The soldiers who chase them have a neural implant that makes them see these individuals as terrifying monsters, which gives them the motivation and moral right to attack and kill them. No one in the story knows that the soldier in the extract above has a malfunctioning implant which allows him to see his victims for what they really are: ordinary humans. Therefore, the fact that the soldier first uses personal pronouns when referring to the individual he killed indicates some kind of problem, and the psychologist expresses his reaction both verbally and through his facial expression. The soldier seems to notice the psychologist's disapproval, and in the following he dehumanizes the creature by switching to the inanimate pronoun.

The translated versions reveal a semantic extension of the noun "tío" that exists in some varieties of Spanish, where the word is not only used with the original meaning of *uncle*, but also with the meaning of *guy* (Real Academia Española, 2012).

If we only look at the first three lines, the use of the pronouns could suggest that the point the psychologist reacts to is the gender of the zombie, i.e., male rather than female zombie. Thus, the soldier's dehumanization of the zombie by switching from the personal "he" to the inanimate "it" represents a crucial part of the dialogue. It is therefore conspicuous that the pronominalization in this important part of the dialogue has not been translated. In order to adapt the dubbed version to the original speech of the soldier, the same phrase is merely repeated with the direct object pronoun "lo" used twice. A strategy similar to the extract from *Z Nation* (Engler and Schaefer, 2014-2018) could have been used in so much as the first "pincharlo" could have been translated into *tuve que pinchar al tío/hombre (I had to stick the guy/man)*, and the second into *a la cucharacha*,⁸ for example. Consequently, as will be shown, this is one of only two examples in my corpus among the cases of pronoun contrast as a linguistic tool that fail in the sense that the human/inanimate contrast between the pronouns is lost at the point where it plays its most crucial role.

The creatures in King's novel *Cell* are a clear example of how fuzzy and ambiguous the line between human and zombie can be. At the beginning of the novel, the zombies are the typical braindead creatures acting on cannibalistic instinct. As the narrative progresses, however, the zombies start to communicate, to collaborate, and their violent behavior partly wanes.

The Raggedy Man stopped about ten feet from him. He - it - was standing on the Head's grave. (King, 2006:audio edition: 07:47:41-07:47:48)	El Hombre Andrajoso se detuvo a unos tres metros de él, sobre la tumba del director. (King, 2012:3903)
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In the extract above, we find the zombie that is referred to as *The Raggedy Man* by the human characters. He plays an important role in the story since he communicates with the human characters with some kind of mind reading/talking. As has been noted before (Footnote 4), one of the characters in the novel claims that killing zombies "wouldn't be murder, not really. It would be extermination" (King, 2006:audio edition: 05:21_42-05:21:46), and the change of pronoun that dehumanizes *The Raggedy Man* is an important linguistic reminder of the moral standards the human characters act upon. However, this contrast between pronouns is lost in the translation.

3. CONCLUSIONS

The answer to my research question concerning which strategies are used in order to express the contrast between personal and inanimate pronouns and possessive adjectives that serves the function of (de)humanizing the zombie in English could now be answered as follows. When passages containing this linguistic feature are translated into Spanish, several different strategies are used, such as addition of a noun phrase, verb phrase, noun clause, and pronouns. Furthermore, in some cases no strategy at all is used, and the pronoun contrast is omitted.

⁸ The English version's "roaches" is translated to "cucharachas" in the dubbed and in the subtitled versions in Spanish.

The cases where the pronouns have been translated with other forms, such as noun or verb phrases, are in line with Nida's (2012:142) view that "[o]nly rarely can one reproduce both content and form in a translation, and hence in general the form is usually sacrificed for the sake of the content." Even if Nida (2012:144) does not refer directly to linguistic forms, but rather to cultural patterns, one could consider the noun phrase, the verb phrase, and the noun clause solutions as examples of Nida's dynamic equivalence translations, which are translations that aim "at complete naturalness of expression."

With regard to the extract where the English pronouns *its* and *thems* are translated with *ello* and *ellos*, it could be interpreted as an example of formal equivalence translation (Nida 2012) since pronouns are translated with pronouns. It could also be seen as a case of what Toury (2012:122) calls LITERAL TRANSLATION, since the strategy of translating English pronouns with Spanish ones seems to be a solution "sought on a level which is lower than the one on which [it] would have been selected in the case of a pragmatically equivalence, or 'adequate' translation". The decision to use pronouns in the translation seems to have been determined mainly on linguistic grounds, while the last stage of Toury's (2012:121) translation process, i.e. "the resulting entity was checked against the TL lexicon [...] for its appropriateness and meaningfulness" has not been taken into consideration.

Although something is clearly lost in the translation in the three cases in my corpus where the pronoun contrast is omitted, it should be noted that:

[a] truly natural translation can in some respects be described more easily in terms of what it avoids than in what it actually states; for it is the presence of serious anomalies, avoided in a successful translation, which immediately strike the reader as being out of place in the context. (Nida, 2012:152)

Consequently, instead of creating a forced and unnatural translation of a pronoun contrast the Spanish language lacks, the dehumanization of the zombies is not expressed exactly in the same way as in the English original. However, an analysis of the translated texts as a whole, although outside the scope of this paper, would most likely show that other strategies are used in order to dehumanize the zombies.

Finally, as the translated zombie texts occupy the primary position in the polysystem, the translators have not felt constrained to follow Spanish literature models and in some cases they have broken conventions with regard to pronoun and noun use. The use of "cosa" as a translation of "thing" for a non-human monstrous being, not only in the translated texts but also in the texts originally written in Spanish, suggests that the influence of the English language on the Spanish translations has led to new models in original Spanish texts as well.

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