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## GOLLUM'S LINGUISTIC PRECIOUS. THE USE OF IDIOLECT IN THE DEPICTION OF THE IDENTITY OF FICTIONAL CHARACTERS AND ITS TRANSLATION FOR DUBBING

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### Abstract

The aim of this article is to reflect on the nature of the idiolect and its treatment in translation through the language of Gollum, one of the most notable characters in *The Lord of the Rings*. Idiolects have historically received little attention from both linguistics and translation studies, probably because of their individual and unsystematic essence. Nevertheless, it is important to know the implications of this phenomenon for translation, since it is a fundamental element in the depiction of characters' identity in works of fiction. This study is devoted to analyze a selection of samples from Gollum's idiolect obtained from the film adaptation of the Trilogy and to observe how his linguistic idiosyncrasies were dealt with in the Spanish dubbed version.

### Resumen

El objetivo del presente artículo es reflexionar sobre la naturaleza del idiolecto y su tratamiento en la traducción mediante el lenguaje de Gollum, uno de los personajes más reconocibles de *El señor de los anillos*. Tradicionalmente, el idiolecto ha recibido poca atención tanto desde el punto de vista lingüístico como del traductológico, quizás debido a su esencia individual y asistemática. Sin embargo, es importante conocer las implicaciones de este fenómeno para la traducción, puesto que es un elemento fundamental en la configuración de la identidad de los personajes en las obras de ficción.

En este estudio analizamos detenidamente una selección de muestras del idiolecto de Gollum obtenidas de la adaptación cinematográfica de la Trilogía y observamos el tratamiento que han recibido sus idiosincrasias lingüísticas en la versión doblada al español.

**Keywords:** Idiolect. Translation. Dubbing. Gollum. Language variation.

**Palabras clave:** Idiolecto. Traducción. Doblaje. Gollum. Variación lingüística.

## 1. Introduction

Unlike other forms of language variation such as geolect or sociolect, which are indeed analyzed in linguistics and translation, idiolect has received little attention from both disciplines, probably due to its individual and unsystematic essence. Following the distinction of Corrius & Zabalbeascoa (2011), we think that idiolect can be considered as a third language (L3), different from the source language (SL or L1), and the target language (TL or L2). We consider its study relevant for translation, since it is a fundamental element to identify characters in works of fiction. Ignoring its singularities could result in it being treated inaccurately.

This paper aims to delve into the nature of this form of language variation and its treatment in audiovisual translation. We focus on one of the quintessential examples of idiolect: the language of Gollum, a character from the *The Lord of the Rings* trilogy known for his particular way of expressing himself. We analyze the extended version of the last two films in the series (*The Lord of the Rings: The Two Towers*, Peter Jackson 2002, and *The Lord of the Rings: The Return of the King*, Peter Jackson 2003), which account for almost all the interventions of the character, identifying his characteristic idiolectal features and observing how they were translated into Spanish in the corresponding dubbed versions (*El señor de los anillos: Las dos torres* and *El señor de los anillos: El retorno del rey*, respectively). Given the space limitation and the usual tendency of subtitles towards neutralization of varieties and registers (cf. Rosa 2001), we will only analyze the dubbed versions. Even if these solutions may not necessarily be extrapolated to other works and translation modalities, we believe that the study of a case as marked as that of Gollum could contribute to reflection on this phenomenon.

The methodology followed consists of five stages: 1) a brief definition of audiovisual translation, and more specifically of the dubbing modality; 2) a bibliographic review of the concept of idiolect and its implications for translation; 3) the collection of samples of Gollum's idiolect from the original version of the films; 4) the analysis of Gollum's linguistic idiosyncrasies and their

interrelationships, and 5) the comparison with the Spanish translation for dubbing of these idiosyncrasies.

## 2. Audiovisual translation: dubbing

According to Bartoll (2015: 41), audiovisual translation is the translation of audiovisual texts, which are the ones that transmit information in a dynamic-temporal way through the acoustic channel, the visual channel or both at the same time. Audiovisual texts are offered in different genres, such as fiction, documentary, advertising, etc. Although only dubbing will be covered in this study, audiovisual translation is carried out using various modalities such as subtitling, voice over, simultaneous interpretation, consecutive interpretation, remake, intertitling, audio description, written summary, narration or commentary (Bartoll 2015: 63-65).

Since the information in these texts is transmitted through this double channel, both acoustic and visual, and fictional audiovisual products often try to reflect reality, their language offers many elements characteristic of orality. Even though it is a prefabricated or pretended kind of orality (Chaume 2001; Baños-Piñero & Chaume 2009), it seeks to be credible, at least to the same extent as the audiovisual product as a whole. Despite being a non-spontaneous text prepared by screenwriters, it presents elements of orality such as colloquial constructions, puns, relaxed pronunciation, and figurative expressions.

Every audiovisual translation must aim at maintaining, as far as possible, the degree of realism of the source text (ST). It is necessary for the translator to detect those elements that are characteristic of the fictional dialogue and to look for strategies to transfer them to his/her language (García de Toro 2009: 138). In addition to this, the target text (TT) must fit the image and avoid inconsistencies or contradictions, although the restrictions vary depending on the modality. In the case of dubbing, Chaume (2012: 68) explains:

Synchronization is one of the features of translation for dubbing that consists of matching the target language translation and the articulatory and body movements of the screen actors and actresses, and ensuring that the utterances and pauses in the translation match those of the source text.

Chaume (2012: 68) establishes three types of synchronization: phonetic or lip synchrony, kinetic synchrony or body movement synchrony, and isochrony or synchrony between utterances and pauses. Failure to comply with these principles could break the so-called “willing suspension of disbelief” (Coleridge & Shawcross 1907) and disrupt the viewing experience.

Dubbing consists of three stages: the translation of the script, the adaptation of the translation to the lip movements mentioned above, and the

interpretation of the resulting dialogue by voice talents (Chaume 2003: 17). Perhaps not everyone involved in the process knows the SL, so the translator must foresee difficulties and anticipate them, offering alternatives for the adapter or adding indications about the characters, etc.

### 3. Idiolect and translation

#### 3.1. Language variation

Mayoral (1999: 13) defines language variation as “the expression of potentially similar meanings through different strategies that give rise to different textual segments.” Catford (1965: 86) points out that, apart from their specific features (be they phonetic, phonological, graphological, grammatical, or lexical), which he calls *markers*, varieties of the same language necessarily share other traits that constitute a common nucleus.

Experts classify varieties in multiple ways, although most according to Catford's (1965: 84-85) basic distinction between those varieties that are related to the permanent characteristics of the speaker and those that are transitory, related to the immediate context of the utterance; what Hatim & Mason (1991) later called “user-related” and “use-related” varieties. The first group includes the geolect (geographical variety), the chronolect (temporal variety), the sociolect (social variety), the standard, and the idiolect (individual variety), and the second group includes concepts such as field, tenor, or mode.

#### 3.2. Idiolect

Research on idiolect is scarce compared to other varieties, as it is an individualized phenomenon (Sánchez Iglesias 2005). Several experts propose various definitions for this concept, starting with Sánchez Iglesias (2001: 704), who defines the term *idiolect* (from the Latin *idiolectus*, ‘individual speech’) as “the set of language uses characteristic of a specific person.”<sup>1</sup> The author complements this definition with the following reflection:

The notion of idiolect implies that there are variations not only from one country to another, from one region to another, from one town to another, from one social class to another, but also from one person to another.\*

Idiolect is “the indissoluble result between a particular perception of the world and the linguistic form that such perception contains” (García López 2004:

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1. For the sake of textual coherence, we have translated all quotations into English. Translated quotations are indicated with an asterisk (\*).

57).<sup>\*</sup> The connotative value that the speaker assigns to a word or expression prevails over the denotative one. For Coulthard (2004), each native speaker has his/her own individual version of the language he/she speaks and writes, with an active vocabulary built up over the years. This is shown in texts with distinctive and idiosyncratic choices. It is expected that idiolect should also depend on the communicative situation and evolve over time, reflecting the personal experience and development of the speaker (Gregory & Carroll 1978; Mayoral 1999).

Based on Alcaraz Varó & Martínez Linares (1997), Sánchez Iglesias (2001) compiles the linguistic elements where idiolect is observed: on the phonetic-phonological level, the features that constitute the dynamics of the voice, as well as the idiophones (name used for identifiable sounds in the speech of a certain person); on the syntactic level, the constructions used with more or less frequency, the text structure, the information distribution, and the proportion and constitution of nominal and verbal sentences; and, finally, on the lexical-semantic level, the recurring use of certain units: all those linguistic habits that distinguish the individual. According to Sánchez Iglesias (2001: 709):

Idiolect acquires identity insofar as it is a constant that the recipient can identify, and to which he/she can attribute functionality, merely that of individualizing the sender.<sup>\*</sup>

This author suggests the possibility that the repeated use of idiosyncrasies constitutes some form of cotextual reference, which would also affect the cohesion of the text.

Regarding the relationship of the individual variety with the other user-related varieties, Hatim & Mason (1997) do not consider that idiolects are peripheral, as might be deduced from the scientific literature. Implicitly, they place them in the center of language variation, by recognizing that they present features from all other lects. This duality between the individual and the collective causes confusion, as pointed out by Mayoral (1999: 101), who proposes to distinguish between two planes:

- a) the individuality resulting from the sum of all the situational features of the speaker, which as a whole may be unique, even if the individual features are not;
- b) the sum of the idiosyncratic individual features.<sup>\*</sup>

Hatim & Mason (1997) establish a typology of idiolects according to two complementary scales: the scale of recurrence (from transitory to long-lasting) and the scale of functionality (from non-functional to functional). They believe that long-lasting and functional idiolects —Gollum's case— are of greater interest to the translator.

Other authors consider it necessary to make a distinction between idiolect and style. For García de Toro (1994), the former corresponds to unconscious linguistic habits, whereas the latter is intentional and refers to motivated choices. O'Donnell & Todd (1980: 62) define *dialect* as “the kind of variety which is found between idiolects”, as opposed to *style*, which is “the kind of variety found within idiolects.” Sánchez Iglesias (2001: 708) proposes that idiolect should be used in a text with stylistic intent. Thus, idiolectal elements would constitute “a stylistic feature to which the sender attributes a specific intention.” These are theoretical considerations that, for practical purposes, do not influence how to approach these elements in translation. After all, according to Mayoral (1999), there is no way of determining which of them are voluntary and which of them are not.

### 3.3. General aspects of the translation of idiolect

When dealing with idiolectal texts, the first step is to recognize that there is an idiolect and, more importantly, to establish the role it plays in the textual framework, which will condition the translator's approach (Sánchez Iglesias 2005). For Catford (1965), idiolectal features should only be preserved if they allow us to identify a specific character, in which case the solution adopted by the translator is supposed to be an “equivalent” idiolectal trait. On the other hand, if the identity of the speaker is irrelevant, it can be disregarded in the translation.

The function of the text may condition the translator too. Newmark (1988) proposes to maintain idiosyncrasies in the writings of important authors, especially in the presence of dialogue, where variation is particularly prominent, as Costa (2012) suggests. However, Newmark (1988) does not deem it necessary to preserve them in texts where the referential function is predominant. The author has an extreme conception of idiolectal phenomena, which he attributes to “poor writing”, and generally opts for normalizing them. This stance is opposed to that of Sánchez Iglesias (2005: 181), who believes that not translating idiolects is equivalent to neutralizing characters:

Neutralizing, which almost means to silence them, because we deprive characters of their voice, of their most characteristic element.\*

In the case at hand, where the expressive and poetic functions predominate and Gollum's speech constitutes an important means of characterization, these considerations suggest that his idiolect should be taken into account.

López Rúa (1997: 158) agrees with Sánchez Iglesias that neutralization discolors the translation and deprives the original “of part of its intention and

meaning.” As an alternative to this omission, he proposes three strategies to translate the lexicalized structures of idiolects: 1) the literal translation, not recommended, because it implies a correspondence of structures between the two languages that is rarely found; 2) translation by equivalence, using a lexicalized structure in the TL with a different form but with the same meaning, and 3) translation by modification, consisting of a paraphrase of the original, if no equivalent is found in the TL. For García López (2004), “equivalents” are those TL solutions that allow the translation to achieve the same communicative effect in the target polysystem as the original in the source polysystem.

Perhaps the greatest difficulty in translating idiolect derives from the combination of features from other varieties (Sánchez Iglesias 2005). This is not the case of Gollum’s idiolect, whose nature frees the translator from having to place the character in a known geographic, social, or temporal context, although he does pose other problems, such as the one noted by García de Toro (1994: 95):

To ensure that the proposed solutions are homogeneous (that is, for example, using repeated elements), so that the implicatures that emerge are always the same and that the reader recognizes [certain] phrases as belonging to the discourse of [a given] character.\*

Since it is not always possible to maintain the idiolectal characteristics in the same position where they appeared in the ST, the translator may resort to compensation in other passages to mitigate the loss. Thus, a certain recurrence can be identified in the TT, albeit in the form of “idiolectal marks of the translator” (García de Toro 2009: 145). However, as stated by Sánchez Iglesias (2005), the lack of homogeneity when treating idiosyncrasies is usually the norm rather than the exception.

## 4. About Gollum and Middle-earth

### 4.1. *The author*

John Ronald Reuel Tolkien was a British scholar specialized in Middle and Old English. His writings are characterized by the use of constructed languages that he himself invented and by an extraordinary command of the English language. Among his numerous works stand out *The Silmarillion*, *The Hobbit* and *The Lord of the Rings* (see The Tolkien Society 2017).

### 4.2. *The Trilogy*

The *The Lord of the Rings* trilogy (1954-1955) is set in a prehistoric time in Middle-earth, a world invented by Tolkien and inhabited by a multitude of fantastic races such as elves, dwarves, hobbits, trolls, and orcs, as well as



humans. *The Lord of the Rings* tells the odyssey of the hobbit Frodo Baggins and his companions, who must carry the One Ring, the enemy's most powerful weapon, to the boundaries of the continent in order to destroy it. Only in this way will they be able to get rid of the evil that threatens to take over Middle-earth, personified in the figure of Sauron. If the Ring fell into the wrong hands, the Dark Lord would return.

Both Tolkien's constructed languages and English chronolects play a differentiating role in characterizing the identity of the fictional races of Middle-earth. This shows the importance of linguistic aspects in the book, which Tolkien took care of down to the smallest detail, to the point of writing a guide with advice and instructions for translators (Tolkien 1975).

#### 4.3. *The film adaptation*

The film adaptation of the Trilogy, directed by Peter Jackson, came out between 2001 and 2003. The action was divided into three parts, according to the original segmentation of the books: *The Fellowship of the Ring* (Peter Jackson 2001), *The Two Towers* (Peter Jackson 2002), and *The Return of the King* (Peter Jackson 2003). Gollum's character is hardly relevant in the first movie, so this study is based exclusively on the other two. In them, Gollum guides Frodo, the bearer of the Ring, and Sam, his most faithful companion, to Mordor, the land of the Dark Lord, where they must destroy the Ring. According to Eldoblaje.com (2017a, 2017b), Nino Matas was the translator behind the dubbing of the three films, which took place at the Sonoblok recording studio under the direction of Miguel Ángel Jenner, who was also in charge of adapting the translated script.

#### 4.4. *The character*

Sauron is defeated by Isildur, the king of men, who has the chance to destroy the One Ring but decides to keep him for himself. Not long afterwards, Isildur is killed in an assault and the Ring falls to the bottom of the Great River. There it remains forgotten for more than two millennia until the hobbits Déagol and Sméagol find it by chance while fishing. The Ring immediately takes over the will of Sméagol, who murders his friend to keep it. After this event, Sméagol is banished to the mountains, where he survives alone for centuries thanks to the power of the Ring. During this period, he forgets his identity and turns into a wild creature the other characters of Middle-earth refer to as Gollum (see section 5.1). In the words of Nagy (2006: 68-69):

The Ring stands as a demarcation line between his old identity and the impoverished, erased, lost subjectivity.

Arrizabalaga (2007: 267) describes Gollum as follows:

Gollum, or Sméagol, the name that the creature still retains from its days prior to the discovery of the Ring, is the degraded version of a being that has remained in the past. [...] Now he suffers a deforming metamorphosis that condemns him to cope with an underground life and remain hidden from the rest of the creatures on the surface.

Gollum is constantly torn between good and evil. He is a round, complex character, with a fundamental role in *The Lord of the Rings*, as “[h]e demonstrates what happens to the subject when it cannot exert any control over the forces and processes that determine it” (Nagy 2006: 59). Peter Jackson himself acknowledges in the commented version of the film that, due to Gollum’s symbolic value, a weak portrayal of his character would have affected the credibility of the entire series.

## 5. The translation of Gollum’s idiolect

The films of *The Lord of the Rings* reveal that Gollum’s quirks are not limited to his character, but are reflected in his idiolect. The internal world of the character is externalized in a unique and characteristic way of speaking. Nagy (2006: 59) explains the following:

The most remarkable thing about Gollum is definitely his language. He speaks with a general phonetic and syntactic simplicity [...]. He is often termed a ‘schizophrenic’ character, meaning that his language and behavior [...] are sensed to be divided and shifting.

Arrizabalaga (2007: 267) highlights his faulty and ungrammatical use of language, which he learned in his previous life on the surface and which he barely preserves “in the monologues of his hermit life.” The translator faces the challenge of reconstructing in the TT that fragmented and forgotten language, vital to characterize the identity of the character.

### 5.1. *The precious and Gollum*

It is necessary to clarify two fundamental points about the character: what *precious* really represents and what how it relates to the nickname *Gollum*. According to Nagy (2006: 60):

The word ‘precious’ acts as central signifier in Gollum’s language. It comes up functionally integrated into sentences, but also as a sort of interjection, something which does not have any further meaning than being used in certain positions and situations in speech. In fact, “precious” is the *addressee*

of Gollum's language: it is both himself and something else which at least superficially seems to be the Ring.

Gollum's famous *precious* is known as (*el*) *tesoro* in the Spanish translation of the Trilogy. In an entry from El Trujamán (2005: January 25), Julia and Manuel Sevilla Muñoz (2005) praise this solution, originally used in the translation of the books:

Both versions express the emotional value that something or someone represents by using an expression that, at the same time, can be used to make a purely materialistic assessment.\*

The power of the Ring (and, by extension, Sauron) over Sméagol is such that it comes to manifest itself in his speech through his guttural sounds. These sounds, transcribed as *gollum*, end up renaming the character (Nagy 2006). As Alsina (2012: 149) explains, the use of proper names as a characterizing element is a resource with a long tradition in the English narrative. Interestingly, of the two identities, Gollum's is the only one that emits that sound, but never to refer to himself.

5.2. Analysis of Gollum's idiolect and its translation for dubbing

5.2.1. Distinctive expressions and vocabulary

Lexical idiosyncratic features are easily recognizable and are the most representative of any idiolect. An unfortunate choice would affect the characterization and integrity of the character. As can be seen in example 1, Gollum uses a peculiar choice of adjectives. Adding the suffix *-able* to the onomatopoeic verb *crunch*, he creates a particularly graphic neologism. This is maintained in the translation, although with a more conventional adjective, *crujientes* ('crunchy').

Example 1. Peculiar adjectivization

ORIGINAL	TRANSLATION
No, no birdses to eat. No <b>crunchable</b> birdses. (2T, <sup>2</sup> min 43)	No, no pájaros que comer. No <b>crujientes</b> pajaritos.
We must starve! (2T, min 44)	¡Moriremos de <u>inanición</u> !

At the opposite pole, the use of an elevated term such as *inanición* ('starvation') clashes with the identity of the character and creates a feeling of contradiction in the audience, which Zabalbeascoa (2008) calls "displacement."

2. 2T = The two towers. RK = The return of the King.

As we mentioned in section 3.3, it is important that, once the translation for a certain word has been chosen, it is maintained throughout the text. It is a matter of consistency: Gollum has a limited vocabulary and uses the same words over and over, so there would be no point in translating them differently each time. In doing so, we would unjustifiably alter Gollum’s linguistic competence and eliminate the repetition that is so characteristic of his speech (see section 5.2.4).

Example 2. Limited vocabulary

ORIGINAL	TRANSLATION
Sneaky little Hobbitses. <b>Wicked</b> . <b>Tricksy</b> . <b>False</b> . (2T, min 95)	Sucios rastreros hóbbits. <b>Malos</b> , <b>traidores</b> , <b>falsos</b> .
<b>Wicked</b> Men. Servants of Sauron. (2T, min 100)	Hombres <b>malos</b> . Siervos de Sauron.
<b>Master</b> betrayed us. <b>Wicked</b> , <b>tricksy</b> , <b>false</b> . (2T, min 141)	<b>Amo</b> nos traicionó. <u>Perverso</u> , <b>traidor</b> , <b>falso</b> .
I told you he was <b>tricksy</b> . I told you he was <b>false</b> . (2T, min 141)	Te dije que era <u>tramposo</u> . Te dije que era <b>falso</b> .
<b>Master</b> is our friend. (2T, min 141)	<b>Amo</b> es nuestro amigo.

The terms *master* and *false* are translated consistently throughout the film, but not the adjectives *wicked* and *tricksy*, which have two alternative translations, thus breaking down “the requirement of recurrence implicit in idiolectal forms” (García de Toro 2009: 143) and diluting Gollum’s idiolect. In this scene, in particular, the character has his back to the camera, so none of the synchrony requirements associated with dubbing (see section 2) would explain this alternation.

However, in cases like the one in example 3, the change of solution could be due to synchrony. Although *nice* had previously been translated as *bueno*, its appearance in a scene in which Gollum speaks in the foreground could have forced the adapter to find an alternative solution that did not contain the bilabial phoneme /b/. The articulation of this phoneme, which is not present in the original, could have led to a flagrant lack of lip synchrony, so the word *rico* (‘tasty’) is used instead. This solution fits better with the image and already existed in Gollum’s idiolect. As a result, the change in the TT is negligible and only slightly affects the frequency of appearance of both terms.

Example 3. The translation of *nice*

ORIGINAL	TRANSLATION
We be <b>nice</b> to them if they be <b>nice</b> to us. (2T, min 12)	Seremos <b>buenos</b> con ellos si ellos <b>buenos</b> con nosotros.
What does it eats? Is it <u>tasty</u> ? (2T, min 43)	¿Qué come? ¿Está <u>rico</u> ?
No. Not very <b>nice</b> at all, my love. (RK, min 25)	No. No están muy <u>ricos</u> , desde luego, mi amor.

The translator may face the added problem that the chosen equivalence for a given idiolectal term does not work in all contexts of use of the ST. This is the case of example 4.

Example 4. The translation of *my love*

ORIGINAL	TRANSLATION
What’s it saying, my precious, <b>my love</b> ? Is Sméagol losing his nerve? (RK, min 24)	¿Qué insinúas, mi tesoro, <b>mi amor</b> ? ¿Sméagol pierde los nervios?
Give us that, Déagol, <b>my love</b> . (RK, min 3)	Danos eso, Déagol, <u>querido</u> .

*My love*, translated as *mi amor*, is the vocative that Gollum sometimes uses to address himself (that is, Sméagol). However, Sméagol also calls his friend Déagol *my love* in another scene, in which the translator opted for a different solution. As an alternative to *my love*, Gollum also uses the word *precious*, which, in addition to designating the Ring, also performs a self-referential function (see section 5.1). This nuance was overlooked in the translation, as can be seen in example 5, where the word *tesoro* does no longer work as a vocative due to the addition of the determiners *el* (‘the’) and *mi* (‘my’).

Example 5. The translation of *precious*

ORIGINAL	TRANSLATION
Yes, <b>precious</b> . False. They will cheat you, hurt you, lie! (2T, min 96)	Sí, <u>el</u> tesoro. Falsos. Te engañan, te sacuden, mienten.
Yes, <b>precious</b> , she could. (2T, min 103)	Sí, <u>mi</u> tesoro. Ella puede.

5.2.2. Self-referral forms

The most direct evidence of Gollum’s personality disorder is the multiple forms of self-reference that he uses throughout the films. As Arrizabalaga (2007: 268) points out:

When the creature addresses itself in monologues, the coexistence of Sméagol (the original being) and Gollum (product of the ambitious degradation of the Ring) is revealed in a conflicting oscillation between ‘we’, which includes both, and ‘it’, the pronominal form of the third person alluded to.\*

The moment in which Frodo refers to Gollum as Sméagol at the beginning of *The Two Towers* is a turning point in the plot, which is reflected in the fact that he resumes the sporadic use of the first person to refer to himself (Nagy 2006). This multiplicity of identities can be seen in the excerpts from example 6.

Example 6. The multiplicity of Gollum’s identities

CHARACTER	ORIGINAL	TRANSLATION
Gollum	Where would <b>you</b> be without <b>me</b> ? <i>Gollum, gollum</i> . I saved <b>us</b> . It was <b>me</b> . <b>We</b> survived because of <b>me</b> . (2T, min 96)	¿Dónde estarías sin <b>mí</b> ? <i>Gollum, gollum</i> . <b>Yo</b> nos salvé. Nos salvé. Sobrevivimos por <b>mí</b> .
Gollum	Sméagol. Why does <b>it</b> cry, Sméagol? (2T, min 141)	Sméagol. ¿Por qué llora, Sméagol?
Gollum (Sméagol)	<b>We</b> told <b>him</b> to go away. And away <b>he</b> goes, precious. Gone, gone, gone! Sméagol is free! (2T, min 97)	<b>Le</b> dijimos que se fuera . Y él se va, oh, tesoro. ¡Ido, ido, ido! ¡Sméagol es libre!
Gollum (Sméagol)	What’s <b>it</b> saying, my precious, my love? (RK, min 24)	¿Qué <u>insinúas</u> , mi tesoro, mi amor?

In the first excerpt, Gollum treats Sméagol as *you* and tells him that they both survived thanks to him (Gollum). The paradox of the situation is that *I, you and we* are the same being, but the plot requires this distinction to reflect the fragmented identity of the character. Later, Gollum also addresses Sméagol, though this time with the third-person pronoun *it*, normally reserved for animals and things. In the third excerpt, Sméagol is glad that *they* (only Sméagol, even if he uses the plural form) told *him* (Gollum) to leave, and ends up talking about himself in the third person (*Sméagol is free!*). This case is especially disconcerting, since it shows that Gollum’s disorder is not limited to the confusion between his two identities. After all, Sméagol uses the third person both for Gollum and for himself.

In any case, this idiolectal trait can be translated literally into Spanish and, in general, it is maintained throughout the story, with the exception of *it*, which is not always translated by means of the third person (e.g., *insinúas*). It is also important to point out that *gollum* (in lowercase) does not constitute a form

of self-reference, since it is the guttural sound that the character instinctively produces and lacks communicative intention (see section 5.1).

5.2.3. Deixis

Gollum shows a tendency towards ambiguity, and he speaks in a vague and unintelligible way, a characteristic that mirrors his dark personality. That effect is achieved mostly through an excessive use of exophoric references or deixis in his speech. In this section, we essentially analyze two aspects: the most recurrent idiosyncratic deixis, in general, and the personal deixis that he uses to refer to the hobbits that travel with him (see section 4.3), in particular. Let us look at example 7:

Example 7. Idiosyncratic deixis

ORIGINAL	TRANSLATION
No! We won't go back. Not <b>there</b> . Not to <b>him</b> . (2T, min 14)	¡No! No volveremos. No <b>allí</b> . No a <b>él</b> .
No! No, master! <b>They</b> catch you! <b>They</b> catch you! Don't take <b>it</b> to <b>him</b> . <b>He</b> wants the precious. Always <b>he</b> is looking for <b>it</b> . (2T, min 95)	¡No! ¡Amo, no! ¡Le cogerán! ¡Le cogerán! No se <b>lo</b> lleve <b>él</b> . <b>Él</b> busca mi tesoro. Siempre <b>lo</b> está buscando.
<b>She's</b> always hungry. <b>She</b> always needs to feed. (RK, min 25)	<b>Ella</b> siempre está ansiosa. Siempre necesita presas.

Curiously enough, despite the fact that third-person pronouns *he*, *she*, or *they* usually act as pro-forms (they have an antecedent present in the co-text), their value here is deictic, because they refer to an extralinguistic reality. However, these deixis are different. While *they* refers to the immediate context, since the protagonists are in a place riddled with enemies, *he/him* and *she* play a referential role, and their referent is always the same: Sauron, the main antagonist in the story, and Shelob (Ella-Laraña, in the Spanish version), the giant spider that Gollum admires and fears in equal measures. This phenomenon, a result of the close relationship between Gollum and these two characters, is constant throughout the Trilogy, and both references can be easily and unequivocally identified thanks to the knowledge about Middle-earth that the viewer acquires throughout the story. The same is true of the space deixis *there*, which in the previous example is equivalent to Mordor, the region inhabited by Sauron and his troops. The case of *it* is somewhat different, since it is used sometimes as a deixis of the Ring, without it being previously mentioned, and sometimes

as an anaphoric or cataphoric pronominal pro-form, as in its two occurrences in example 6.

Again, this type of references does not pose a great translation problem, since it can be kept as it is in the TT. However, what could pose a problem is Gollum’s way of addressing the hobbits. Let us look at the excerpts in example 8:

Example 8. Personal deixis referring to Frodo

ORIGINAL	TRANSLATION
No! No, master! They catch you! They catch you! Don’t take it to him. (2T, min 95)	¡No! ¡Amo, no! ¡ <u>Le</u> cogerán! ¡ <u>Le</u> cogerán! No se lo lleve a él.
What <u>does it</u> eats? (2T, min 44)	¿Qué come?
Master should be resting. Master needs to keep up <u>his</u> strength. (2T, min 48)	Amo debería descansar. Amo necesita recuperar fuerzas.
Look. Look. See what Sméagol finds? [...] Eat them. Eat them! (2T, min 97)	Mire. Mire. <u>Ve</u> lo que Sméagol encuentra? [...] Comedlos. ¡Comedlos!

Gollum addresses Frodo using both the second person (e.g., *They catch you!*) and the third person (e.g., *What does it eats?* and *Master needs...*). As Frodo is the master of the Ring and inspires a certain respect in Gollum, the translator systematically translates *you* as the polite pronoun *usted* and remains consistent with his proposal and does not resort to the familiar pronoun *tú* at any time. But this has a secondary effect on the translation due to the change of interpersonal tenor (Gregory & Carrol 1978) that occurs in the original: when Gollum addresses Frodo as *it*, in Spanish the verb is conjugated the same way as if the polite pronoun *usted* was being used and, given that the subject is elided in the majority of occasions, the distinction between the two forms of address is imperceptible (e.g., *¿Qué come [usted/él]?*). Perhaps for this reason, the translator translated the imperatives alternating between the pronouns of address *usted* (e.g., *mire*) and *vos* (e.g., *comedlos*), to compensate, as shown in the last excerpt.

On the other hand, in the translation, Gollum addresses Sam with the familiar pronoun *tú*. The translator must have considered it necessary to show the difference in treatment between the hobbits, precisely to demonstrate that Gollum does not profess the same respect for Sam as for the master.



Example 9. Personal deixis referring to Sam

ORIGINAL	TRANSLATION
Give it to us raw and wriggling. You keep nasty chips. (2T, min 99)	Dádnoslo vivo y coleando. Quédate con tus repugnantes papas.

As for the ways of referring to the two hobbits at the same time (example 10), Gollum uses both the second and the third person, although, unlike when he exclusively addresses Frodo, in plural he does combine the respectful form of address (*ustedes*) with the usual familiar form (*vosotros*). Somehow, this alternation compensates for the neutralization of the distinction between the second and third person, which occurs on multiple occasions (e.g., *cumplir su voluntad*).

Example 10. Personal deixis referring to the hobbits

ORIGINAL	TRANSLATION
We be nice to <u>them</u> if <u>they</u> be nice to us. [...] We swears to do what <u>you</u> wants. (2T, min 12)	Seremos buenos con <u>ellos</u> si <u>ellos</u> buenos con nosotros. [...] Juramos cumplir <u>su</u> voluntad.
This way, Hobbits. Follow me! (2T, min 14)	Por aquí, hóbbits. ¡Seguidme!
Come, Hobbits! Come! (2T, min 43)	¡Vengan, hóbbits! ¡Vengan!

5.2.4. Repetition

“Repetitiousness, the automatism of language, reflects Gollum’s deterioration into a state of control by corporeal drives and conditioned reflexes.” This reflection by Nagy (2006: 60) makes repetition a key element in the characterization of the character. Gollum’s idiolect is fundamentally marked by four phenomena of repetition that we have called *reduplication*, *reaffirmation* and *re-negation*, *polysyndeton*, and *narration*.

Reduplication is present in almost all of Gollum’s interventions and consists of the total or partial repetition of what he said immediately before. Generally, occurrences of reduplication are kept in the TT, although in some cases the translator substitutes them for colloquialisms, comic elements, and markers of orality. In other cases, such as the second extract of example 11, reduplication must be sacrificed to compensate for the expansion of the text occurring during translation and to maintain the necessary isochrony (see section 2).

Example 11. Reduplication

ORIGINAL	TRANSLATION
We swears to do what you wants. We swears. (2T, min 12)	Juramos cumplir su voluntad. Juramos, <u>sí</u> ...
Too risky. Too risky. (RK, min 23)	Mucho riesgo. Demasiado.

Reaffirmation and re-negation also abound in Gollum’s discourse and occur when the character affirms or denies the same statement more than once. We distinguish two kinds of reaffirmation: 1) one that is carried out with the adverb *yes* at the end of an affirmative sentence, and 2) one that is formed by repeating the subject and the verb as self-response. Something similar occurs with re-negation, which can occur with *no*, *not*, and its different forms. Both of them were translated by the adverbs *sí* and *no*, respectively.

Example 12. Reaffirmation and re-negation

ORIGINAL	TRANSLATION
We must go, <u>yes</u> . We must go at once. (RK, min 7)	Debemos ir, <u>sí</u> . Hay que seguir camino.
It’s ours, <u>it is</u> , and we wants it! (2T, min 10)	Es nuestro, <u>sí</u> , ¡y lo queremos!
<u>No</u> ! We <u>won’t</u> go back. <u>Not</u> there. <u>Not</u> to him. They <u>can’t</u> make us. (2T, min 14)	¡ <u>No</u> ! <u>No</u> volveremos. <u>No</u> allí. <u>No</u> a él. <u>No</u> pueden obligarnos.

Polysyndeton is a rhetorical figure that consists of the repetition of conjunctions. Its presence is important to the TT, because it reinforces the impression that Gollum speaks without planning his speech. Despite this, this feature is not always maintained in the translation.

Example 13. Polysyndeton

ORIGINAL	TRANSLATION
No. Ashes <u>and</u> dust <u>and</u> thirst there is, <u>and</u> pits, pits, pits. <u>And</u> Orcses, thousands of Orcses. <u>And</u> always the Great Eye <u>watching</u> , <u>watching</u> . (2T, min 14)	No. Ceniza <u>y</u> polvo <u>y</u> sed solo hay, <u>y</u> fosos, fosos, fosos. <u>Y</u> orcos, orcos a millares. <u>Y</u> siempre Gran Ojo <u>vigilante</u> , <u>vigilante</u> .
All dead. All rotten. Elves <u>and</u> Men <u>and</u> Orcses. (2T, min 45)	<u>Todos</u> muertos. <u>Todos</u> putrefactos. Elfos, hombres <u>y</u> orcos.

On the other hand, we observe that, in some situations, Gollum tends to explain what happened immediately before as an external narrator who describes the

action. In this case, it is an intersentential phenomenon that can practically be reproduced in a literal translation.

Example 14. Intersentential phenomena

ORIGINAL	TRANSLATION
To the Gate, to the Gate! To the Gate, the master says. <u>Yes</u> ! (2T, min 14)	¡Hasta la Puerta! La Puerta, ordena el amo, <u>sí</u> .
Master says to show him the way into Mordor. So good Sméagol does, Master says so. (2T, min 62)	Amo pide que le muestre el camino a Mordor y el buen Sméagol así hace, amo lo dijo.

5.2.5. Faulty syntax

Abnormal constructions abound in Gollum’s idiolect. Of all the ones we have observed, the most representative are hyperbaton and omissions, as exemplified below:

Example 15. Hyperbaton

ORIGINAL	TRANSLATION
And we are famished! Yes! Famished we are, precious! (2T, min 43)	¡Estamos hambrientos, sí! ¡Hambrientos estamos, oh, tesoro!
Dead? No, you cannot kill them. (2T, min 49)	¿Muertos? No, matarlos no puedes.

In the TT, there is a tendency to keep the hyperbatons where the character uses them in English, and even to include some that did not appear in the ST, which compensate for their loss at other points in the text. In the translation, three types of omissions are used: verb, argument, and article omission. The first two occasionally correspond to omission in the original version, but they are mainly used as a compensation strategy (see section 5.2.6). The third form of omission, on the other hand, is exclusive to the translation, and its sporadic use contributes to highlighting the linguistic deficiencies of the character:

Example 16. Omissions

ORIGINAL	TRANSLATION
Orcs don’t know it. (2T, min 43)	Ø Orcos no Ø conocen.
No. Ashes and dust and thirst there is [...]. And always the Great Eye watching, watching. (2T, min 14)	Ceniza y polvo y sed solo hay [...]. Y siempre Ø Gran Ojo vigilante, vigilante.

5.2.6. Faulty verb forms

Gollum’s verb paradigm presents, broadly speaking, four anomalies: 1) a lack of agreement between the subject and the verb, 2) an incorrect construction of conditional sentences, 3) an occasional omission of the auxiliary verb in some compound tenses, and 4) the use of perfectly grammatical, but contextually incorrect, verb tenses.

A lack of agreement between the subject and the verb is very common in Gollum’s idiolect. In some cases, it reflects a confusion in the subjects, because he has different ways of referring to himself (see section 5.2.2), but in most cases, it is because he irregularly applies the present form of the third person singular. This morphosyntactic peculiarity has a phonetic origin: Gollum’s predilection for the sibilant phoneme /s/ (see section 5.2.7). Its distribution in the text is uneven and its translation is especially complex.

Verb forms in Spanish are longer than in English, so the translator decided to elide the subject in most cases to reduce the length of the translation. Although in English the ellipsis of the subject is ungrammatical, it is common practice in Spanish. As a result of this elision, the subject is only revealed in the sentence through the conjugation of the verb. If another verb form were used to try to reproduce the problem of agreement between the subject and verb present in the original, the subject of the sentence would not be indicated. This limits the possibilities of the translator, who uses other resources such as omission to reflect this verbal irregularity, typical of Gollum’s speech.

Example 17. Lack of subject-verb agreement

ORIGINAL	TRANSLATION
Sméagol look after master. (RK, min 75)	Sméagol cuida del amo.
We swears to do what you wants. We swears. (2T, min 12)	Juramos cumplir su voluntad. Ø Juramos, sí...
But they knows. They knows. They suspects us. (RK, min 24)	Pero ellos Ø saben. Lo saben. Sospechan de nosotros.

As can be seen, the translator correctly conjugates all the verbs. In our opinion, there is no reason not to maintain the faulty agreement between the subject and the verb in the sentences in which, for reasons of synchrony or style, the subject appears, as it is the case with *Pero ellos saben*. Also, the form could be prioritized over the meaning and the second person singular, *sabes*, could be used as it also ends in *s*. Instead, two types of omission were used (see section 5.2.5) to recreate ungrammaticality in the TT: the omission of the verb, directly, or that of the argument (e.g., the direct object in *Pero ellos saben*).

Following with the second type of anomaly, which is illustrated in example 18, we see that Gollum is unable to construct a conditional sentence. This is clearly a case of first conditional, which, if formulated correctly, would be: *We'll be nice to them if they are nice to us*. But Gollum only uses the conditional conjunction and eliminates the verbal differences between condition and result, resorting in both cases to the infinitive. The verb omission in the second part of the translation attempts to evoke this effect, although it could be complemented with the use of the infinitive form, instead of the future form.

Example 18. Ungrammatical conditional sentences

ORIGINAL	TRANSLATION
We Ø be nice to them if they be nice to us. (2T, min 12)	<u>Seremos</u> buenos con ellos si ellos Ø buenos con nosotros.

The third verbal phenomenon was almost entirely eliminated in the translation. It is true that, if the verb form used in Spanish lacks an auxiliary verb (as in the simple future, for instance), the original effect cannot be reproduced, but the translator could have recreated it with some other resources; for example, with the present tense in the first excerpt, which would not entail a change of subject: *Y después cogemos el tesoro ¡y somos el amo!*

Example 19. Omission of the auxiliary verb in compound tenses

ORIGINAL	TRANSLATION
And then we Ø take the precious and we Ø be the master! (2T, min 102)	Y después <u>cogeremos</u> el tesoro ¡y <u>seremos</u> el amo!
But the fat Hobbit, he knows. Ø Eyes Ø always watching. (2T, min 102)	Pero el hóbbit seboso lo sabe. Ø Ojos Ø siempre <u>mirando</u> .
He took it! He took it. I Ø seen him. (RK, min 82)	¡Ha sido él! ¡Él lo cogió! Yo lo <u>vi</u> .

The same could have been done with the incorrectly used verb tenses, whose translations into Spanish show a tendency to overcorrection:

Example 20. Grammatical, but contextually incorrect, verb tenses

ORIGINAL	TRANSLATION
No, master! They catch you! They catch you! (2T, min 95)	¡Amo, no! ¡Le <u>cogerán</u> ! ¡Le <u>cogerán</u> !
Very lucky we find you. (2T, min 42)	Suerte que os <u>encontramos</u> .

The last sentence is somewhat curious, because the verb can be seen as if conjugated in the present tense (like in the original) or in the simple perfect tense (the correct tense), but the audience is unlikely to perceive the ambiguity in real time.

We can notice that the translation contains a verbal phenomenon that does not exist in the original: the alternating use of imperatives and infinitives. The addition of this ungrammatical element, common in Spanish, seems like a good solution to compensate, but we believe that the most coherent option for the character would be to always use one of the two forms.

Example 21. Imperatives and infinitives

ORIGINAL	TRANSLATION
Wake up! Wake up! Wake up, sleepies. (RK, min 7)	¡Despertad! ¡Despertad! Arriba, dormilones.
Eat them. Eat them! (2T, min 97)	Comedlos. ¡Comedlos!
Hide! Hide! Hide! (RK, min 54)	¡Esconder! ¡Esconder! ¡Esconder!

5.2.7. Phonetic features

In Gollum’s idiolect, the phonetic marker par excellence is the recurrent prolongation of the sibilant phoneme /s/, also known as *seseo*. Nagy (2006: 59-60) explains the origin of this phenomenon:

The sibilance of his phonology derives from a sort of physical conditioning: the lack of articulation (because his language for a long time did not function as communication, being only monologue for which no clear articulation is necessary) and the need for whispered and concealed speech.

This feature was already present in Tolkien’s books, where it was marked by the occasional duplication of the s, as in “We musstn’t rissk our neck, musts we, precious?” (Tolkien 1966: 638). In the TT, the prolongation of the sibilance was preserved, although it was frequently replaced by the fricative phoneme /ʃ/, a change that we cannot attribute to a specific phase of the dubbing process. In the original version, the plosive phoneme /t/ is also pronounced with a special emphasis in words like *it*, *stole*, or *did*, just like the /p/ in *precious*. These features, however, were either omitted from the TT or are not noticeable.

5.2.8. Atypical plurals

There are times when Gollum, to intuitively extend the sibilance at the end of words like *birds*, *eyes*, *jackets*, *Hobbits*, and *Orcs*, “applies a plural rule in ‘-es’ to terms that are already in the plural” (Arrizabalaga 2007: 267).\* This

morphological resource, which would result in words like *órcoses* and *hóbbitses*, is not reproduced in the Spanish version, in which all the plurals are formed according to the norm:

Example 22. Atypical plurals

ORIGINAL	TRANSLATION
Hurry, Hobbitses. (2T, min 42)	Prisa, hóbbits.
And Orcses, thousands of Orcses. (2T, min 14)	Y orcos, orcos a millares.
No, no birdses to eat. No crunchable birdses. (2T, min 43)	No, no pájaros que comer. No crujientes pajaritos.

In the last excerpt, the use of the diminutive *-itos* is observed, perhaps to compensate for the loss of the double plural, but there seems to be no reason for the omission of this idiosyncrasy, beyond the trend already observed by Goris (1993; see section 3.3).

6. Final remarks

If each person is a world, each idiolect is the particular and exclusive linguistic expression of that world, and contributes to the clear identification of a character. Therefore, it is not surprising that valid solutions for one individual are not applicable to others. The translation strategy adopted in each case will depend on various factors, such as textual typology, the relevance of the character, the role of the idiolect in the text, etc. This reasoning may lead us to think that the analysis of a character's idiosyncrasies is of no interest for research, but the truth is that its interpretation is extrapolated to all kinds of idiolectal texts. Far from providing universal solutions for the recreation of idiosyncrasies, what this paper intends is to offer the translator a global vision of the problem that allows him/her to tackle them knowingly and make informed decisions.

A close comparison of the ST with its translation confirms what some of the scholars mentioned in section 3 (see Goris 1993; Sánchez Iglesias 2005) already observed: although dubbing partially preserves Gollum's idiolect and its functionality, idiosyncrasies are often unjustifiably normalized. For instance, the constant sibilance, one of the most representative features of the character, is preserved in the TT, as are some idiolectal phenomena belonging to the syntactic level, but the morphological idiosyncrasies are completely neutralized. This shortcoming in the TT was mitigated thanks to the successful use of compensation. On the lexical level, the translator made a conscious and thoughtful

selection to recreate Gollum's vocabulary and repertoire of expressions, but he could have avoided alternating between solutions in certain situations.

Finally, we would like to point out that the translation solutions for the dubbing could be contrasted with other modalities, such as subtitling, or with the translation of Tolkien's books. This would increase our knowledge on the treatment of the idiolect in translation studies. Despite the partiality of the results, we believe that this article demonstrates that correctness does not always entail adequacy. We wish to make translators aware of the importance of knowing and mastering the fundamental theoretical notions about idiolect, and language variation in general, and its implications for the adequate treatment of idiosyncratic features present, not only in audiovisual products, but in all kinds of fiction. After all, what would become of Gollum without his precious?

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- The Lord of the Rings: The Return of the King* (El señor de los anillos: El retorno del rey, Peter Jackson 2003).

## BIONOTES /BIONOTAS

GUILLERMO PARRA LÓPEZ is an audiovisual translator and teaching assistant in the Translation and Language Sciences Department of the Pompeu Fabra University (UPF), in Barcelona. He teaches Translation and the Media and Fundamentals of Translation, for which he received the UPF Social Council Award for Teaching Quality in 2015. Guillermo holds a Bachelor's Degree in Translation and Interpreting and a Master's Degree in Translation Studies and is currently doing a PhD on the translation of disorderly speech under the supervision of Patrick Zabalbeascoa and Eduard Bartoll. He is the author of *Disorderly speech and its translation: fear and loathing among letters* (Parra López, 2016) and *'Mr Treehorn treats objects like women, man': A map of drug-induced language variation in cinema and its translation* (Parra López, 2019).

DR EDUARD BARTOLL is an audiovisual translator, mainly from English and German into Catalan and Spanish. He has subtitled more than 500 films and he translates theatre plays too, often for surtitles. He has worked at the university Pompeu Fabra, in Barcelona, where he was a lecturer in translation from German and English into Catalan and Spanish. He has also worked at the Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona, and at other universities, like Leipzig Universität, Heidelberg Universität, Universidade Federal do Ceará, etc.

In 2012 published a book in Catalan about Subtitling and in 2015 he published another book in Spanish about audiovisual translation. He has written several articles on audiovisual translation, especially on subtitling, and has attended many conferences, such as Media for All (1st, 2nd and 3rd), Languages and the Media (5th and 6th), etc.

GUILLERMO PARRA LÓPEZ es traductor audiovisual y asistente de docencia en el Departamento de Traducción y Ciencias del Lenguaje de la Universidad Pompeu Fabra (UPF), en Barcelona. Allí imparte las asignaturas de Traducción y medios de comunicación y Fundamentos de la traducción, por la que recibió el Premio del Consejo Social a la Calidad en la Docencia en 2015. Guillermo tiene un Grado en Traducción e Interpretación y un Máster en Estudios de Traducción, y actualmente está realizando el doctorado sobre la traducción del lenguaje alterado por las drogas en el cine bajo la supervisión de Patrick Zabalbeascoa y Eduard Bartoll. Es autor de las publicaciones *Disorderly speech and its translation: fear and loathing among letters* (Parra López, 2016) y *'Mr Treehorn treats objects like women, man': A map of drug-induced language variation in cinema and its translation* (Parra López, 2019).

DR. EDUARD BARTOLL es traductor audiovisual, sobre todo del inglés y el alemán al catalán y al español. Ha subtitulado más de 500 películas. También traduce obras de teatro, a menudo sobretituladas. Enseñó en la Universitat Pompeu Fabra de Barcelona, como lector en traducción del alemán y el inglés al catalán y al español. También ha trabajado en la Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona, Leipzig Universität, Heidelberg Universität, Universidade Federal do Ceará, etc.

En 2012 publica un libro en catalán sobre la subtitulación y en 2015 publica otro en español sobre la traducción audiovisual. Ha escrito varios artículos sobre traducción audiovisual, sobre todo subtitulación y ha asistido a numerosos congresos, tales como Media for All (1, 2, 3 y 6), Languages and the Media (5 y 6), etc.