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SPANISH-ENGLISH TRANSLATION AND DIASPORA: RECONSTRUCTING THE BASQUE IDENTITY

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Abstract (EN)

This thesis reflects on the role of translation as a means of reconstructing identities in the context of diaspora, with a focus on Basque communities living in the English-speaking world. By examining the content and structure of the most significant diaspora organisations as well as other works written on the topic, I argue that translation often allows the basis of diaspora being largely built on a language different from that spoken among the members of the group that was originally displaced. This does not only apply to the Basque diaspora, but also to other minority cultures that have been undermined by a dominant group whose culture and language overcome those of the minority group. This could potentially give rise to a biased reassembling of their attributes and cultural elements, ultimately producing idealised representations of their identity. Spanish has been notoriously used as a source language to make Basque culture visible, frequently presenting a stereotyped vision of the status it holds in the world. Many ethical principles indirectly contribute to forging these ideals, which in turn function as ideological material that translators, on acting as cultural mediators, could infer from a limited knowledge of the source culture and then embed into the discourse of diaspora.

Keywords: translation, diaspora, identity, Basque language, culture, discourse

Abstract (ES)

En este trabajo reflexiono acerca del papel de la traducción como instrumento para reconstruir la identidad en el contexto de la diáspora, centrándome en las comunidades vascas que residen en países de habla inglesa. Tras examinar el contenido y la estructura de varias obras y organizaciones vinculadas a la diáspora, planteo que la traducción a menudo permite que la diáspora se desarrolle en gran medida en un idioma distinto al que hablaban los miembros del grupo de origen. La diáspora vasca no es el único ejemplo de ello, y se podría llegar a conclusiones similares observando las realidades contextuales de otras diásporas de culturas minoritarias. Esta situación puede dar lugar a una recopilación sesgada de sus atributos y elementos culturales, generando en última instancia representaciones idealizadas de su identidad. El castellano ha sido ampliamente utilizado como lengua de partida para visibilizar la cultura vasca, presentando a veces una visión estereotipada de la posición que esta ocupa en el mundo. Algunas cuestiones éticas e identitarias contribuyen de forma indirecta a forjar estas concepciones, que a su vez funcionan como material ideológico que el traductor, al ejercer como mediador cultural, podría inferir de un conocimiento limitado de la cultura de origen y después plasmar en el discurso propio de la diáspora.

Palabras clave: traducción, diáspora, identidad, euskera, cultura, discurso

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2. INTRODUCTION

The premises on which the translation process is based can be of great significance on reconstructing identity in the context of diaspora. Understanding the mechanisms and ideological foundations of translation activity can allow us to objectively assess whether the discourse of diaspora remains faithful to its source culture. This is particularly relevant when dealing with minority groups, given that their members, now scattered all over the world, are oftentimes not familiar with the culture and language(s) that their ancestors could not effectively pass on to them. This is the case of the Basque diaspora, whose members may only retain a Basque surname as a vestige of their heritage. In order to illustrate this, this thesis will be focusing on the Basque-American diaspora. More specifically, on the English-speaking communities and the expression of their identity. Among the many reasons behind this cultural dissociation may be the lack of educational institutions where younger Basque-Americans have the opportunity to learn *Euskara* (the Basque language), the pressure exerted on them to assimilate into American culture and the fact that they might not have the means to access books or other contents in the language.

Basque immigration to the Americas is not a recent phenomenon, although technology has breathed new life into the topic of diaspora. There are a handful of sources on the Basque diaspora that users can resort to, namely NABO (North American Basque Organisations), that provide their English-speaking readership with comprehensive knowledge on the history and culture of Euskal Herria. Among the information one can find on the Basque diaspora are also descriptions given by the descendants of Basque immigrants that reflect on their identity and heritage, often romanticising given aspects of Basque culture. One of the theories on which my thesis is based is that the potential audience of the texts that are produced and translated in this cultural setting will most likely belong to the diaspora community, whereas the translators might merely reside in Euskal Herria and could be unaware of the reality of those displaced.

After having analysed the content and structure of these sources, one might have the impression that the Basque language takes on a secondary role in the process of representing the Basque identity, with other elements being favoured at its expense. In this thesis, I argue that this may be caused by the influence of a dominant culture (in this case, that of Spain) on the process of translating and reconstructing Basque attributes and cultural elements. Spanish has been largely used as a source language to speak of and

represent other minority cultures, including those of colonised peoples such as the Aztecs, leading to possibly inaccurate characterisations owing to language differences. The fact that the discourse of diaspora may be built on Spanish rather than on Basque could potentially lead to the creation of idealised or adulterated representations of what it means to belong to this minority group.

These ideas constitute a simplified perception of the displaced group and have the power to become ideological material that the translator then embeds into the discourse of diaspora. I have allocated an entire section to consider the ethical principles and underlying ideology of these rewriting processes, where I pay special attention to the formulation of idealised identities in the context of the Basque diaspora. Translation contributes to the (sometimes mis)representation of identities, but it can also constitute a revitalising tool that allows for their members to have a voice when it signals the cultural differences and nuances that would otherwise be lost in the process of transferring knowledge. I argue that it is desirable to bring the cultural differential to the surface and gravitate towards a nearly independent production of material concerning the source culture so as to break with the idealised boundaries that translators might be constrained by.

Oftentimes, a text is largely shaped by the expectations on how the final product is supposed to be structured, the language it is envisioned to have, or the feeling it should awaken in the target reader. When dealing with diaspora, it must be considered that the displaced members or their descendants believe to be part of the source culture to some extent, which leads to their disposition and attitude towards the text to be essentially different than that of someone who accesses these sources from an external stance.

However, when it comes to a minority culture whose members are scattered far apart from each other, the perspective and procedures towards the attributes of the source culture appear to be influenced by the approach that the dominant culture has long taken to the minority group in its own geographical environment. The Basque region is a clear example of this, since it is enclosed by two powerful European states whose languages are spoken all over the world. This has unavoidably led to the Spanish and French languages functioning as tools to learn about the Basques and their cultural elements, consequently moulding the discourse of diaspora. As a result, the language used by many diaspora organisations lacks an essence of its own and resembles that of the sources which

were written within Spanish and French borders. The target audience, comprising both insiders and outsiders, is therefore treated as a homogeneous group.

In the following sections I elaborate on all these aspects, naming the sources I have worked with to formulate my arguments. Apart from a few books, they are mainly online sources, since I thought the best way of understanding the current state of affairs was to analyse sources which were widely available for all users and members of the Basque diaspora who may not be able to access printed documents on the topic. Surprisingly, there was a great number of articles and pages dealing with diaspora, so I tried to mention those that stood out.

3. TRANSLATION AND DIASPORA

Translation, as an act of cultural mediation, can be observed in the context of diaspora and may have different purposes depending on the relationship that is developed between the original group and the scattered members that desire to be in touch with their heritage. I chose the Basque diaspora as an example to illustrate the main argument around which my bachelor thesis revolves, namely that cultures can be misrepresented owing to an asymmetrical power relation between the minority and dominant group that struggle for their languages to become vessels for identity. A great power is conferred on translators, given that they might be the only participants who are familiar with both source and target cultures, and can therefore choose a stance and sometimes furtively deceive the parts involved. This manipulation is not always devised with a malicious intent and may rather be the result of a "translation procedure" that has been established between the pair of languages in question (Munday, 2007, p. 207). When the members of a particular diaspora are no longer familiar with their ethnic language, translation plays a significant role and so does the selection of languages in which the communication will be established between the homeland and those displaced, and this is precisely what will be addressed in this chapter.

Some of the observations I have made on researching this topic, which will be presented and discussed throughout the next subchapters, can also be applicable for diasporas of other minority languages. For reasons of simplicity and instead of choosing a less defined, although perhaps more encompassing approach to the relation between Translation Studies and diaspora, the reflections I believe could be applicable to other

languages will be introduced as general remarks, albeit without making any direct reference to specific diasporas.

This section is divided into two subchapters that deal with the topic of the Basque diaspora and the process of accurately representing culture in this context, respectively.

3.1. The Basque diaspora

Basques first arrived in America in the 15th and 16th centuries, although it would not be until the Gold Rush that they would emigrate in higher proportions (Lasagabaster, 2008, p. 66) and settle in the United States as well as in many South American countries. Totoricagüena mentions the French Revolution and the two Carlist Wars as some of the major conflicts that led to the Basques immigrating to the Americas (2005, p. 15), although there were possibly many other factors that attracted Basque communities and made them leave their homeland behind to find the freedom and status that they might have lacked in Europe. She also points out that Basque immigrants in America often knew about one another and married other Basques (p. 19), thus establishing small but enduring communities with a common heritage to preserve and pass on to their offspring.

It is perhaps also important to note that most Basque immigrants and their descendants came from Hegoalde (the Spanish side of Euskal Herria), which remains more relevant in numbers than Iparralde, its French counterpart whose immigrants mainly travelled to Canada and the Caribbean islands to work as fishermen or whalers (Douglass, 2013, p. 2). Taking this into consideration, it is not surprising that many Basques chose Spanish-speaking countries as destinations, since they already spoke the language and could more easily adapt to their ways of life (Totoricagüena, 2000, pp. 2, 106). However, many Basques also emigrated to the United States and had to learn a different language to communicate with locals.

There are over 57,000 people of Basque ancestry registered in the 2000 census of the United States, with California (20, 868), Idaho (6,637) and Nevada (6,096) being the main states in which these Basque-Americans currently live ("U.S. Basque Population", n.d.). Washington and Oregon follow closely with about 2,600 ethnic Basques each. These numbers confirm that most of the descendants of the first Basque immigrants that arrived from Europe largely stayed in the same areas and possibly knew other Americans

of Basque ancestry. This notion can help us better understand why the Basque diaspora, despite constituting such a small community in the cultural mosaic of the United States, has a documentary presence and is made up of members that actively participate in its development.

As mentioned above, NABO's website is possibly one of the best resources for Basque-Americans to learn about their heritage and be acquainted with other members of their community. It is also one of the first results that a quick Google search will yield when entering the words "Basque diaspora", which means that a lot of internet users are expected to click on it and treat it as their main source of information. It is perhaps noteworthy that the page is entirely written in English and has not been translated into Basque, nor into any of the second languages that European Basques usually speak (that is, Spanish and/or French).

After reading through the page's different sections, we could argue that the Basque language is actually paid less attention than other cultural elements. It should be mentioned, however, that there is a section on how and where to learn Basque in the United States ("NABO Euskara Classes", n.d.), although it only provides the contact details of several independent teachers along with a link that takes you to another page about BOGA and Aisa ("Learn Basque Online", n.d.), platforms developed by HABE where users from all over the world can learn the Basque language for free. This goes to show the lack of recognised educational institutions that allow Basque-Americans to learn *Euskara* without having to resort to online lessons. Apart from this, the NABO website has only allocated a fairly brief subchapter for the language on their Culture section ("Euskara: The Basque Language", n.d.) whereas other sections appear to include very detailed information on rather specific cultural items such as the *joaldun*, a traditional carnival character from the villages of Zubieta and Ituren whose subchapter is surprisingly longer ("Joaldunak", n.d.) than that of the Basque language. The overall tone of these and many other subsections conveys a somewhat romantic idea of Basque culture and history, given that it avoids speaking about politics or any controversial topic that could potentially damage the idealised image at which the page is aiming.

The Basque Cultural Institute, otherwise known as EKE, is also among the very few organisations whose pages offer information on diaspora in Basque ("Euskal diaspora, zortzigarren probintzia", n.d.). Their webpage has been translated into English, Spanish and French in order to reach the widest possible audience. The fact that this

institute was founded in Iparralde might explain their awareness of the linguistic diversity and cultural mosaic of Euskal Herria, hence why they have decided to make their page accessible to any potential readers that might be interested in the topic. It should be noted that, after all, about 40% of people living in Hegoalde cannot speak Basque ("Use of the Basque language", 2016) and communicate in Spanish or other languages instead. However, it could be said that *erdaldunak* (those who speak a language different from Basque) lack a sufficient representation in the imaginary of diaspora.

The Basque diaspora and its agents are inevitably influenced by what happens back in the homeland. Translators that experience or are familiar with this reality have the power to design specific strategies to either bring it to the surface or conceal it under the assertion that it is not desirable for the naïve Basque-American reader to break with the idealised image that their ancestors or peers have created of Euskal Herria.

3.1.1. Reflections on belonging and the Motherland

Identity and the sense of belonging become key factors in diaspora since they largely shape the translation activities and the attitudes towards the motherland that are expected from the target readers. Identity must always be understood as a construction and a result of a dialogical process whereby one is confronted by other identities and finds something that appears to characterise them; in other words, discourse is at the core of identity (Morley, 2019, p. 5) and precedes or influences the national sentiment one may have. In order to understand the premises of the extraterritorial identity of diaspora, it is necessary to analyse the language and concepts that first-generation Basque-Americans use to refer to their homeland, given that the responsibility of either leaving their ancestors' legacy behind or to embrace their heritage and pass this knowledge on to their children mostly relies upon them.

Some testimonies and stories written by Basque-Americans appear to be more conscious and reveal more about the writers' self-image and their idea of Basqueness. An interview with Robert Laxalt, a first-generation Basque-American from California, is particularly illustrative for the way in which he speaks about his ancestry and relationship to the motherland. Throughout the interview, he mentions that he considers Basque his first language although he had to give it up at an early age because none of his peers at school could speak it and being ethnic was not as "fashionable" then as it is now (Río,

1996, p. 125). The interviewer then mentions some of the Basque words that Laxalt had used in one of his books, among which are rather archaic or atypical expressions that modern speakers of Basque would possibly not recognise as natural-sounding, such as "*nola zida* [*sic*]" or "*gaichoa* [*sic*]" (129), equivalents for the now more usual '*zer moduz*?' ('how are you?') and '*gaixoa*' ('poor').

On the contrary, his descriptions of the Basque character and ways of life are fairly vivid. He claims that he felt the Basque Country had never left his "folk memory" and that he could barely hold back his tears when he arrived in Garazi (126). The overall tone of the interview allows the reader to quickly realise that his identity is actually based on an idealised image of Basque traditions and rural communities that does not necessarily correspond to what Euskal Herria has become throughout the last decades. He even comments on his children, pointing out that one of them is more Basque in her demeanour than the other two (130). In a way, we could say that for many Basque-Americans, being Basque is a somewhat abstract concept that derives from the own conception and the idealisation of their ancestors.

These notions on Basqueness and Euskara essentially originate from an idealised image of Euskal Herria and the Basques, and they can be found in a number of sources. The following are only a few examples:

> The old man's red sash told me he was a Basque. […] He was a very voluble old fellow, and for half an hour he told me words and phrases in the mysterious and little-known Basque tongue. No foreigner, I believe, has ever learned to speak it well, and one must be born a Basque to fathom its complexities. (England, 1929, as cited in Cormier, n.d.)

> Obviously living in a mountainous and demanding environment for almost certainly thousands of years has developed great endurance capabilities among the Basque people. […] The remarkable deep roots of the Basque nation in terms of language, genetics, etc is undoubtedly reflected in their running traditions. (Milroy, n.d.)

> From a young age I knew that my last name would always require some explaining. […] It seems as though my unique name conceals an existence outside of my own, one that my father told stories about but never fully explained before his death. […] The Basque Country: that place that was not quite French or

> Spanish, existing along the Pyrenees; Euskara, the language my father spoke so well; and, the dancing and cuisine I always encountered at Basque picnics. All of it amounted to half of my existence[.] (Ihidoy, n.d.)

> The jagged peaks hid the sun from his view as a light rain fell around him. He turned and studied the house where his dad and his dad's dad had been born. It was a large house, made of solid, sturdy stone, much like the people who lived in this land. (Uberuaga, n.d.)

The fact that Basque-Americans do not feel any less Basque for not being able to speak the language might appear to be a surprising phenomenon, but it has already been dealt with in the context of diaspora (Totoricagüena). After all, this could also apply to many of the European Basques who cannot speak Basque (also referred to as *erdaldunak*) but do not believe that their identity and heritage are in any way compromised by it. As for their American compatriots, this realisation might have been a more conscious process. When confronted with the question of whether their Basqueness depended on the language they spoke or their country of origin, Basque-Americans of many different countries decidedly answered that it did not (Totoricagüena, 2000, p. 14). This mindset highlights that their idea of Basqueness is that of an innate trait that one rather inherits from their parents.

The belief that it is in rural communities where we can find the purest form of the Basque essence (Río, 1996, p. 129) might stem from an apparent threat that the industrial revolution and other forms of societal change pose for the ethnic reality of the ideal culture in question. It is precisely when we feel our traditions are at risk and when we develop our cultural awareness as belonging to a distinct group that our perspective shifts to a proactive discourse to safeguard our heritage (López Adán, 1976, p. 20). What used to be a mere appreciation of culture becomes a distorted and selective assumption of a reality that perhaps only survives in the tales and memories that one's ancestors brought from their motherland which has inevitably progressed since then. The translator needs to make a conscious effort to assess whether this image of the Basques as rural fishermen and shepherds that live in *baserriak* ('farmhouses') and remain isolated from the hustle and bustle of the outside world ought to be questioned.

By challenging what has already been established in the discourse of diaspora, the translator has the sufficient influence to present the target readers with a refreshed insight

into Basque culture and society. This would require the translator to be familiar with the diaspora reality, regardless of whether they actually belong to this community or merely work as external agents. The strategies to either make the Basque language more accessible in target texts or to avoid making it visible will also largely depend on the reactions which with these texts are gradually met by older or well-versed members of the Basque diaspora.

3.2. Accurately representing culture

In order for a culture to be represented accurately, there needs to be a prior observation of the items and features that characterise it, as well as a presumably unbiased disposition to describe it to both its members and outsiders. That being said, probably no one has the ability to undertake this task better than the actual members of the group to be presented[1]. The process by which one develops an awareness of their own culture and reflects on what makes them belong to a particular group is inevitably enhanced by travelling and becoming familiar with how the world is perceived somewhere else. Mores and traditions are usually fluid and malleable when they materialise for the first time, and change over time to later become fixed elements that appear to define a group of people (Sumner, 1906/2008, p. 78) when compared to the elements of another.

The fact that Basques moved overseas and encountered a society that was, although perhaps similar in its structure, vastly different to that of Euskal Herria, likely accelerated the ideal construction that these Basques would then have for their motherland and pass on to their offspring as a frozen image of the past. These idealised notions, as any other story that a society safeguards from the threat of time by ensuring each generation forwards it to the next, are in fact very powerful tools and heavy chains to carry. They can partially or completely constrain the thinking of younger Basque-Americans since they are presented as an unalterable truth, something that has already been devised and should not be thought over (Sumner, 1906/2008, 79).

[1] This observation is, however, rarely made collectively so as to prevent a translator from taking on a given project, and spurs controversy when it is. A rather illustrative example would be "The Hill We Climb" by African American poet Amanda Gorman, which was deemed too big a task for a white translator (Holligan, 2021). Whether ethnicity and gender are factors to consider when hiring a translator is an ongoing debate.

We must not forget the role of the Basque language in this realisation process, and the feeling it awakens in whoever is trying to give Basque culture a voice in the context of diaspora. As is the case with many other non-Indo-European languages such as Hungarian or Finnish, Basque might be automatically perceived as being harder to learn and more complex in its structure than other languages that are spoken in its geographical space. The fact that we imprudently ascribe a language's complexity to the political views we associate with it and its speakers is really a matter of ideological manipulation (Moreno Cabrera, 2008, p. 204). More often than not, these stereotypes have nothing to do with the language actually being as unattainable or hermetic as it first appears to be. As for the Basque language, there are two main initiators that could be fuelling this false impression. On the one hand, it might be detractors who are trying to undermine the public opinion on Euskal Herria and its culture. On the other hand, it could be Basques who are trying to reinforce the idea that their language is in fact unique and unachievable. Whatever the case may be, we cannot deny that this stereotype is already deep-seated and possibly well extended beyond the borders of Euskal Herria, and that for many Basque-Americans, language may constitute a challenging cultural element for the nearly mysterious aura that surrounds it.

It could be argued that it is, as a matter of fact, impossible to portray a culture in an entirely objective and accurate manner. After all, stereotypes are simplified images that allow us to understand our reality (Lippmann & Curtis, 1922/1997, p. 79) and recognise ourselves in broader features that we share (or are expected to share) with those around us. In any diaspora, this cohesion and need to integrate can lead the members to assume these generalised attributes as their own so as to come to terms with their identity and place in the world. Accuracy can consequently be relegated to the unbalanced advantage of sentimentality, and the main goal of a text will then be that of prompting an emotional response among the readers, whose idealisations will be strengthened.

Finding similar voices with whom one can share memories and beliefs is particularly reinforcing when everything else around us seems to exist without acknowledging what we were given by our ancestors and carry inside us. It can be stimulating to not only hear the older generation of Basque-Americans tell stories of the past, but to also see how attention is being paid to diaspora from other spheres. There are increasingly more resources such as BOGA made available for English-speakers who are

willing to learn Basque around the world, and Basque culture is more frequently being promoted as something valuable for all to preserve.

There is even a Day of the Basque Diaspora that has already been held on the 8th of September for three consecutive years, in which the Lehendakari, the President of the Basque Government, has discussed this topic and several *dantzariak* (traditional dancers) from Salt Lake City, Boise and Chile, among other places, have also participated ("Euskal Diasporaren Eguna", 2020). The website of the Basque Government is still only available in Spanish and Basque, but the fact that Basque-Americans and other members of diaspora are represented in a constitutional act and their position is being validated by the Lehendakari himself is surely an important step towards the recognition of their identity. These events, perhaps for their symbolic nature, could be possibly more significant and inspiring to first-generation Basque-Americans and their descendants than other unofficial representations of their community back in Euskal Herria. By giving them an opportunity to join their European counterparts and celebrate their Basqueness, they are being openly invited to contribute to Basque culture and break with their past-bound role.

3.2.1. The role of translators

Translators are responsible for selecting the information that they consider the most relevant for the target group. It must be taken into consideration that the potential audience, as part of the Basque diaspora, will not react to the target text as external readers and will therefore have an impartial opinion on how the text portrays *their* culture. The translators themselves, on the other hand, might sometimes not belong to the diaspora but to the homeland community, which could contribute to inaccurate cultural representations. The language and ideas that are embedded into the source discourse and resulting translation will be commonly influenced by the style and function of previous texts of their kind, but they can potentially introduce notions capable of turning the state of affairs upside-down and give rise to new trends. This becomes a necessity when we are dealing with an outdated perspective and a rather idealistic image of the motherland that must be defeated in order for younger Basque-Americans to have a stronger bond with their home culture that outshines any romantic (albeit unrealistic) epitome of Basqueness they may still have.

The amount of source material one can find about Euskal Herria is actually vast, contrary to what would be expected for such a small region in Europe and also considering the fact that Basque remains a minority language, in some cases even within its cultural borders. It then becomes particularly important to choose the information carefully, to have a clear target audience and anticipate its reaction. In pages such as that of NABO, and as I have previously mentioned, it could be argued that the information that they display has been chosen seemingly arbitrarily, given that we can find little information on aspects such as language and the geography of Euskal Herria, but very exhaustive descriptions of culture-specific items such as the *joaldunak* which are perhaps not as central or representative of modern Basque culture. Then again, an observant reader could also interpret this as a deliberate attempt to cherry-pick certain elements of culture and, by that, to prevent conflicting accounts and interests from surfacing.

So to speak, the act of translation works as a tool to establish a canon of texts and ideas and as a means by which ideologies can emerge and persist (Hermans, 2014, p. 241) in the imagery of diaspora. In this respect, it is precisely the translator, an agent who is expected to be knowledgeable about the source culture, who will inevitably manipulate the information to a certain extent and create a discourse in its own right that can be analysed as existing relatively independently of any source texts from which it derives.

Although it can be inferred that this course of actions is characteristic of any kind of translation, I believe that there is an external factor intervening in it when it comes to the Basque diaspora: the fact that Spanish has long overthrown the Basque language in the latter's geographical setting (Cid Abasolo, 2002, p. 16, 26). This spatial interaction between both languages ought to be examined further so as to determine whether the fact that *Euskara* is a minority language is due to an internal restructuring of the nation or because Spanish has come to be the dominant language in Euskal Herria in the same way as English has at the expense of Irish (Cronin, 1995, p. 87). In order for a translation to be as loyal to the source culture as possible, it should ideally be based on the unfiltered knowledge and beliefs that exist in the culture's subconscious. When a language is relegated by another, an additional step appears in the translation process, leading to a cultural triangle in which the stereotypes and biases of the newly incorporated component can filter and even caricaturise the original culture. If this happens, translators could be acting as predators, taking what they desire from the minority language without contributing to its development (Cronin, 92-93). As mentioned above, the image of

Basque culture that prevails in Spanish could be analysed as being potentially impregnated by a colonial discourse, brought by the incorporation to the Crown of Castile back in 1521 and after which Spanish was introduced as a socially dominant and influential language, and thus presented to the world as more convenient, both politically and literary speaking (Núñez Astrain, 2003, p. 53, 61). This could ultimately be leading to the Basques being mistakenly regarded as having an ancestral culture that is currently marginal and destined to vanish.

If it is remotely possible to change this situation given that the situation is often not more promising for Basque in Europe either, a big step towards a new reformulation of Basque culture in diaspora could be led by younger translators whose mother tongue is Basque and who might be interested in providing an updated account of the current position of Euskal Herria in the world. By being able to access original texts in Basque and knowing their actual reach and relevance in modern Basque society firsthand, they can act as direct mediators and give Basque-Americans an opportunity to rediscover their heritage. Other researchers in the field of diaspora have also discussed how relevant it is that younger members of a greater Basque community introduce new concepts of their reality in the context of diaspora so as to overcome the obsolete idea that the Basque culture is stuck in time (Totoricagüena, 2000, p. 42). I firmly believe that apart from these incentives, the focus should be shifted towards Basque for it to become a communicative tool that can foster a secure and enduring connection between Basque-Americans and their cultural relatives back in Hegoalde and Iparralde.

In a similar fashion, translators could participate more actively in the creation and restructuring of webpages and articles dealing with cultural items and the Basque diaspora, providing accurate translations of the information that is displayed in them or adding pertinent references that allow the readers to come in contact with the language. Ideally, any paternalistic approaches should be avoided, given that the potential readers will mostly be members of the Basque diaspora and/or learned on the topic and therefore likely expect the knowledge to be as unfiltered as possible. Should language be a hindrance, efforts could be made towards larger projects such as putting together multilingual dictionaries that could then be made available online, since machine translators are far from being able to provide users with grammatically correct and natural-sounding translations from and into Basque as of now.

Generally speaking, the approaches taken by the homeland to include and interact with the diaspora do not necessarily have to be founded on a hierarchy nor condescending towards this community (Asscher, 2020, p. 6). On the contrary, these approaches as well as the translation activities that result from them can incorporate the findings and voices of diaspora and ultimately merge both identities into a whole. So to speak, translation is a negotiation between the homeland and the diaspora culture that involves a dual relationship based on "acceptance and dismissal, competition and solidarity, challenges and affinity" (p. 12), and it is this dialogue that allows for diaspora to become more and more visible and for its members to come to terms with their identity. Translators play a fundamental role in this particular context, considering that their contributions to the creation of a discourse in diaspora can determine the accuracy of the homeland's portrayal and the faithfulness by which the attributes of the national identity will be then reassembled.

4. NATIONALISM AND IDEOLOGY IN TRANSLATION

Ideology can be defined as "any system of values based on ideas and prejudices and cultural and social assumptions which amounts to a pervasive, unconscious, world-view" (Wales, 2011, p. 210). When speaking of diaspora, nationalism and ideology are especially relevant for their ability to create a sense of belonging that endures any geographical distance there may be between an individual or community and their homeland. In order to fully understand the ideological grounds of the Basque diaspora, it is essential to analyse the socio-economical process by which its world-view came to being, as well as the translatorial action that is currently carried out to keep it alive.

Basque nationalism, as a reaction to the aggressive centralism of the Spanish State, was ultimately influenced by industrialisation and a perceived threat to the *fueros* (Solozabal, 1975, p. 308) among the population. The fact that tradition came to be recognised as part of the Basque essence is also important to note, given that nationalism feeds from idyllic conceptions of the nation's past and significance. Sabino Arana would then contribute to the materialisation of these ideas and become one of the founders of the Basque nationalist movement as we know it today. Before he wrote his works, there was already a sentiment of extinction of the Basque essence (326), which drew on aspects such as religion or language.

The observation that an external menace to the Basques was slowly but surely settling in Euskal Herria (or Euzkadi, as Arana referred to it), led various spheres of society to advocate for these nationalistic ideals, regardless of whether they were actually opposing their class interests. There is an underlying racial component in some of Arana's writings (334) that would somehow manage to survive until this day, albeit in a modest way, that we can also perceive in the testimonies of many Basque-Americans such as Laxalt, who speak of a Basque character or heritage that one may exhibit in their demeanour.

Nationalism, for the manner in which it defines us as opposed to the other, has enough power to outbalance any historical incoherencies that may originate from the fact that it is built upon elements and ideas of all stages of the nation (Gurrutxaga, 1990, p. 54). Translation and literature are often quick to assimilate these ideas and word them in ways that may allow them to survive longer and extend far beyond the community where they arose. An example we could analyse within the scope of the Basque diaspora could be the aforementioned conception that the true Basques are those living in isolated rural communities, a misconception that has managed to be passed from generation to generation and is surprisingly present in the minds of many citizens of Euskal Herria. If we were to examine this further, we could possibly arrive at the conclusion that this notion is the source of the popular (and rather pessimistic) belief that the genuine Basque language was that spoken in *baserriak* and that *euskara batua* (standard Basque) was forcefully introduced at its expense, probably causing its extinction. This myth, although worthy of notice from a translator's point of view, will not be discussed in this thesis, given that it would deserve a chapter of its own.

However, the vagueness that nationalism might entail in the delineation of a nation in its historical context often results in an inability to explain and accurately represent diversity and change. In Euskal Herria, the most remarkable example of an element that has not been assimilated into the national conceptualisation is that Spanish and French are in many cases both the mother tongue of many Basques and therefore the common language that will be systematically used for communication purposes. A truly plurinational state is one whose administration and self-conception include and recognise those aspects that play a social part (Setién Alberro, 2003, p. 39), language being one of them. Not embracing this reality could possibly mean that the population feels forced to choose sides, either assembling their identity based on features that they were born with

(or methodically learned) or resorting to an identification with the larger nation, in which one expects not to be judged.

In pages such as the ones that have been mentioned throughout this thesis, as well as in the accounts of Basque-Americans like Laxalt, it is rare to find any information or mention of the fact that Spanish and French belong to the cultural mosaic of Euskal Herria and that they could also constitute a learning target for English-speakers that are willing to study or make a living there. This contrasts with the use of Spanish as a source language in diaspora in a curious manner. We could say that Spanish is being used as a tool to translate and make Basque culture more accessible, and by this we would expect it to be regarded as such and recognised as having a value in diaspora. Rather, we actually find this process to be considerably unidirectional and the Spanish language being relegated as a merely convenient means of carrying information about a culture in which it is thought to have no power of its own compared to the ancestral Basque language, even if the translators in question are not even be able to speak in the first place.

Contradictions like these reveal the latent ideology in the Basque diaspora and highlight the need to work on an all-encompassing approach to the topic that looks at both culture or language and the position of translators in the process of mediation. By acknowledging the linguistic reality and circumstances of the agents in translation and diaspora, it will be possible to construct a new space where other aspects can also be discussed, and abstract ideas of Basqueness can progressively be replaced by active voices. The interaction between the older members of the Basque community and the younger participants can also bring about ideas that have the potential to be transformed and inspire independent material so that diaspora is no longer destined to live in the Motherland's shadow.

4.1. On idealised identities

Throughout this thesis, it has already been mentioned that the Motherland and the ways of life of its inhabitants can be more easily idealised in diaspora, since this geographical distance may enhance the image that the displaced community holds of their nation and ancestors. When speaking about ideals, some very illustrative examples are the beliefs that displaced Jews uphold of their history or the value that African Americans place on cultural aspects such as music or garments, regardless of whether they are personally

familiarised with these elements. The relevance of these features relies not on the extent to which members of the diaspora practice them, but on what they symbolise in their imaginary.

To a certain extent, it could be argued that idealisation is in fact necessary in order for a diasporic worldview to be able to weather the storm of time and continue to be meaningful even after the reality it is based on no longer exists. Ideals, when treated as an end towards which action should be taken, might be desirable (Sumner, 1906/2008, p. 201) in a given society. This can also have a lot to do with diaspora and translation if we consider that the production of material is one of the aspirations of younger Basque-American translators that are willing to create texts based on what has already been established. Conversely, these ideals may also be regarded as outdated misconceptions that ought to be systematically addressed or tackled so that new opinions and voices can find their place in their respective diasporas.

The idealisation of Euskal Herria, similarly to that of other regions that were culturally subjugated by the Kingdom of Castile, made it possible for Basques to develop a national conception, often rooted in aspects such as traditions or mythology that allowed for the establishment of a "heroic past" (Vázquez Fernández, 2013, p. 20). This enhanced national history is somewhat characteristic of diaspora, and, in cases where there has been a dominant culture taking over the minority one, it often entails a certain degree of victimisation (Totoricagüena, 2005, p. 392). Nevertheless, this reflection on colonisation is not enough to break the perceived greatness of the nation apart, which remains as unambiguous and unshakeable in the collective memory of the diaspora group as when the first Basques emigrated to the Americas.

In a way, these idealised notions can be easily identified as such by the inhabitants of the region since they know its social reality and how these nearly fictional ideas differ from it. This does not necessarily mean that they are destined to crumble and become less and less valuable, but that their worth will be mostly understood from a symbolic point of view and usually strengthened when an external threat to the nation is perceived. In diaspora, the probability that most members have a sufficient knowledge of their homeland's society is significantly reduced given that many of them do not have the opportunity to be there and discover it for themselves. It is this imbalance between fact and fiction that results in a discourse whereby idealisation becomes dangerously unquestionable and increasingly inaccurate. As has been previously hinted at, it would be

beneficial for the members of a diaspora that a sort of enculturation process is devised and that they are encouraged to question what they know about their heritage, including language-related issues. This would enable them to realise the extent to which holding onto these idealised convictions is permeating their self-image, as well as to see their identity in a different light.

It is also relevant to note that when it comes to translation, the textual and cultural conventions one expects in the context of diaspora can result in a sort of "dethroning" of the source text (Du, 2012, p. 2193). This essentially means that the final product, be it an original creation or a translation, will be bound to include a given set of romanticised elements that come to be more important than the actual content. The expectations are then met not because the text presents new facts or information that is pertinent to the readers, but rather due to the language and style of what is discussed and how the idealised national conception is conveyed. In other words, the need to secure the foundations of the discourse that has been established by the idealisation of the Motherland appears to be a greater interest to the agents involved in the translation chain than communicating knowledge that remains unexplored in diaspora.

All in all, an idealised heritage, as a form of symbolic capital that is cognitively perceived by the individual and has the potential to become as powerful as economic capital when collectively shared and acknowledged (Bourdieu, 1987, p. 160; 1994, p. 161), can play a crucial role for the members of the Basque diaspora in how it manages to create a sense of unity with those still living in Euskal Herria, but can also evolve into a handicap if it is insufficiently addressed or misunderstood.

5. CONCLUSIONS

Languages, as vessels for identity, are not mere communicative tools to ensure an intercultural dialogue between peoples, but the expression of ideological material that either directly or indirectly influences the thinking of the target reader. In this thesis, I explored the role of language and translation in the diaspora of a minority culture, namely the Basque diaspora communities from the English-speaking world. The main argument on which my paper is based is that there is often a third language that has permeated from a dominant culture into the minority group. As for the Basque diaspora, the influence of the Spanish language has resulted in it becoming the main language to describe and

present Basque culture to the outside world, producing an inaccurate portrayal that was fundamentally anchored to an external impression rather than to an inside narrative. In terms of translation, it could be said that Spanish has long taken over as a more accessible source language for translators to work with, always at the expense of the Basque language and thus undermining its cultural significance. Even though translation may be contributing to this misrepresentation, it also has the power to revitalise diaspora by highlighting the cultural elements that could be ignored in the transfer of knowledge.

When analysing the means by which communication is established in the context of diaspora, taking language into consideration is a crucial step that allows us to better understand the underlying power relations between the homeland and the displaced members. To this end, there should be a careful evaluation of both the language in which diaspora culture is developed and the sentiment that has been encouraged towards the language spoken by the original group. At times, this sentiment might clash with the actual relevance that the language is given in its respective diaspora and the extent to which it is promoted as an integral aspect of culture. This could actually be the case of many diasporas of minority cultures, given that the language or languages spoken by the original group might have come to be viewed as less relevant or useful (perhaps even within the community itself) than that spoken by the culturally dominant group, since the latter usually has a greater number of speakers and a pervasive territorial influence.

Even the most comprehensive resources dealing with the Basque diaspora provide biased accounts of the homeland's reality, relegating Basque to a subordinate position. This can lead the reader to have the impression that being familiar with rather arcane elements of culture is decidedly more important than being able to speak the language of their ancestors, which is portrayed as a vague souvenir of the past and as possibly too obscure to learn as an adult. When learning about the image Basque-Americans have of their own identity, one may discover that their Basqueness does in fact not depend upon having strong ties with Euskal Herria or Basque as a first language, but rather upon an invisible patrimony that they have inherited from their parents, with some of them even claiming that being Basque is something that manifests in one's temperament and attitude towards the world.

In some accounts of the Motherland given by Basque-Americans, with Robert Laxalt's interview perhaps being the most representative source that has been mentioned in this thesis, this nearly spiritual notion comes together with a systematic (and often

conscious) idealisation of Basque rural communities and traditions. The process whereby Euskal Herria came to be idealised was the result of a series of historical events that culminated in industrialisation becoming a perceived threat to Basque culture and nationalism increasingly gathering momentum. The Basques that then moved to the Americas ineluctably took this national conception with them, thus giving it a new significance by communicating it in a new reality. Their descendants inherited and expressed this magnified discourse, possibly due to the fact that they never had the opportunity to discover their homeland for themselves and break with these idealised perceptions.

A great number of sources that we can find on the topic of diaspora are decidedly shaped by these convictions and expectations, which cause the final product to stick to a given structure and style and/or to evoke a certain feeling in the reader. It is also important to note that the target audience (namely, Basque-American readers) will mostly be familiar with the topic in the first place and possibly react to the text, be it an original work or a translation, in a way an external reader would not, since they believe to be part of the culture about which they are learning. That is exactly where translation comes into play, since treating diaspora culture as sufficiently distinct for it to engage in a process of cultural mediation could allow the diaspora community to shed the dead leaves of national remembrance and have a voice of its own that can then be heard by the homeland. To this end, efforts have to be made towards an accurate representation of the Basques in the context of diaspora, in which linguistic and cultural matters such as the current multilingual reality of Euskal Herria are mindfully discussed and made visible.

This course of action has the potential to result in translation being at the core of cultural mediation within and possibly also between diasporas. Any initiative towards the establishment of homeland-diaspora relations is a step forward that can enable receptive dialogues to be held and thus to move away from the merely diplomatic relationship that had been previously built up. As soon as the boundaries of idealisation are trespassed and an independent production of texts is encouraged in diaspora, translators will increasingly have more freedom to introduce concepts and bring new life into diaspora interactions.

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ANNEX 1: SUMMARY

In dieser Bachelorarbeit wird die Rolle der Übersetzung als Instrument zur Darstellung von Identitäten im Kontext der Diaspora diskutiert, wobei der Schwerpunkt auf baskischen Gemeinschaften liegt, die in der englischsprachigen Welt leben. Ich behaupte, dass die Prämissen, auf denen der Übersetzungsprozess basiert, von großer Bedeutung sein können, wenn es um die Rekonstruktion von der Identität geht.

Sprachen haben nicht nur eine kommunikative Funktion, die einen interkulturellen Dialog zwischen den Völkern sicherstellen, sondern sind auch der Ausdruck von ideologischem Material, das entweder direkt oder indirekt das Denken des Ziellesers beeinflusst. Bei der Analyse der Mittel, mit denen die Kommunikation im Kontext der Diaspora etabliert wird, ist die Berücksichtigung der Sprache ein entscheidender Schritt, der es uns ermöglicht, die zugrunde liegenden Machtverhältnisse zwischen dem Heimatland und der Diasporagemeinschaft besser zu verstehen. Zu diesem Zweck ist sowohl die Sprache, in der die Diasporakultur entwickelt wird, als auch das Gefühl, das gegenüber der von der ursprünglichen Gruppe gesprochenen Sprache gefördert wurde, sorgfältig zu bewerten.

Um objektiv beurteilen zu können, ob der Diskurs der Diaspora der Ausgangskultur treu ist, müssen wir die Mechanismen und ideologischen Grundlagen der Übersetzungstätigkeit vollständig verstehen. Dies ist besonders relevant im Fall von Minderheitengruppen, deren Mitglieder, die auf der ganzen Welt verstreut sind, manchmal nicht wirklich mit der Sprache und Kultur ihrer Vorfahren vertraut sind. Dies ist in der baskischen Diaspora der Fall, da ihre Mitglieder manchmal nur einen baskischen Nachnamen als Erinnerung an ihr Erbe haben.

Die Baskeneinwanderung nach Amerika ist kein neues Phänomen, obwohl die Technologie dem Thema Diaspora neues Leben eingehaucht hat. Im Internet gibt es mehrere Quellen, die sich mit der baskischen Diaspora beschäftigen, insbesondere NABO, eine Organisation, die über die Geschichte und Kultur der Basken informiert. Außerdem kann man im Netz auch Erzählungen von den Nachkommen baskischer Immigranten lesen, und es ist sehr aufschlussreich zu analysieren, wie sie über ihre Identität und ihre Heimat reflektieren und dabei oft ihre Kultur romantisieren.

Nach der Analyse des Inhalts und der Struktur dieser Quellen könnte man den Eindruck haben, dass die baskische Sprache im Prozess der Darstellung der baskischen

Identität eine untergeordnete Rolle annimmt, indem andere Elemente zu ihren Lasten bevorzugt werden. Dies kann beim Leser den Eindruck erwecken, dass es deutlich wichtiger ist, sich mit eher geheimnisvollen Kulturelementen auszukennen, als Baskisch zu können, das als vage Erinnerung an die Vergangenheit dargestellt wird und als möglicherweise zu obskur, um es im Erwachsenenalter zu lernen. In dieser Arbeit stelle ich die Behauptung auf, dass dies durch den Einfluss einer dominanten Kultur (in diesem Fall der spanischen) auf den Prozess der Übersetzung und Rekonstruktion baskischer Attribute und kultureller Elemente verursacht sein könnte.

Die spanische Sprache wurde weitgehend als Ausgangssprache verwendet, um über andere Minderheitenkulturen zu sprechen und sie zu beschreiben, einschließlich derer von kolonisierten Völkern wie den Azteken, was zu möglicherweise ungenauen Charakterisierungen wegen Sprachunterschieden führte. Dass der Diskurs der Diaspora eher auf Spanisch als auf Baskisch aufgebaut ist, könnte potenziell zur Schaffung idealisierter oder verfälschter Darstellungen dessen führen, was es bedeutet, zu dieser Minderheitengruppe zu gehören.

Diese Ideen stellen eine vereinfachte Wahrnehmung der vertriebenen Gruppe dar und haben die Macht, zu ideologischem Material zu werden, das der Übersetzer dann in den Diskurs der Diaspora einbettet. Übersetzung, als ein Akt der kulturellen Vermittlung, trägt zur (manchmal falschen) Repräsentation von Identitäten bei, kann aber auch ein revitalisierendes Werkzeug konstituieren, das es ihren Mitgliedern erlaubt, eine Stimme zu haben, wenn es die kulturellen Unterschiede und Nuancen signalisiert, die sonst im Prozess des Wissenstransfers verloren gehen würden. Meiner Ansicht nach ist es wünschenswert, das Kulturgefälle an die Oberfläche zu bringen und sich auf eine nahezu unabhängige Produktion von Texten über die Ausgangskultur zuzubewegen, um mit den idealisierten Grenzen zu brechen, durch die Übersetzer möglicherweise eingeschränkt werden.

Nicht selten ist ein Text stark von den Erwartungen geprägt, wie das Endprodukt strukturiert sein soll, in welcher Sprache es verfasst sein soll oder welches Gefühl es beim Zielleser wecken soll. Beim Thema Diaspora muss berücksichtigt werden, dass die Vertriebenen oder ihre Nachkommen sich bis zu einem gewissen Grad für einen Teil der Ausgangskultur halten, was dazu führt, dass ihre Disposition und Haltung gegenüber dem Text wesentlich anders ist als die von jemandem, der von außen auf diese Quellen zugreift.

Wenn es sich jedoch um eine Minderheitenkultur handelt, deren Mitglieder weit voneinander verstreut sind, scheinen die Perspektive und das Vorgehen gegenüber den Attributen der Ausgangskultur von der Herangehensweise beeinflusst zu sein, die die dominante Kultur schon lange an die Minderheitengruppe in ihrem eigenen geografischen Umfeld hat. Die baskische Region ist ein deutliches Beispiel dafür, da sie von zwei mächtigen europäischen Staaten umschlossen ist, deren Sprachen weltweit gesprochen werden. Dies hat unweigerlich dazu geführt, dass die spanische und die französische Sprachen als Werkzeuge fungieren, um etwas über die Basken und ihre Kulturelemente zu erfahren und somit den Diskurs der Diaspora zu prägen.

Insgesamt bietet diese Bachelorarbeit eine neue Herangehensweise an die baskische Diaspora und an die Übersetzungsprozesse, die sie entstehen lassen oder aus ihr hervorgehen.