

**Indexing a Gender Identity in Fictive Dialogue:  
Bucholtz and Hall's Identity Principles in Translation**  
**La identidad de género en diálogos ficticios: los  
principios de identidad de Bucholtz y Hall aplicados a  
la traducción**

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**Abstract:** The framework for the analysis of identity construction proposed by Bucholtz and Hall (2005) has proved a useful heuristic tool for the study of identity formation in interaction. The aim of this article is to tentatively apply the model to fictive dialogue in translation and test its validity in two ways, firstly, as a framework for the descriptive analysis of identity formation in translation, and secondly, as a tool that can aid the translation of fictive dialogue.

The case study is Janice Angstrom, wife of the eponymous Harry Angstrom, in Updike's «Rabbit» books. Using Bucholtz and Hall's model, the descriptive analysis will compare source and target texts pairs which are representative of the discursive mismatches that distort the intersubjective construction of Janice's identity in interaction. The discursive information yielded by the application of the model will then inform the proposed alternatives, guided by the principles of the model.

**Keywords:** Literary translation, fictive dialogue, sociolinguistics, identity, John Updike.

**Resumen:** El valor heurístico del marco analítico que proponen Bucholtz y Hall (2005) para analizar la mediación de identidades interaccionales queda demostrado en su aplicación en estudios recientes. En este artículo el modelo se aplicará a un diálogo ficticio y su traducción con el fin de (1) explorar la viabilidad del modelo como marco teórico para analizar la construcción de identidades en la traducción y (2) investigar su rendimiento como herramienta para facilitar el proceso de la traducción de diálogos ficticios.

El caso práctico de este estudio es Janice Angstrom, esposa de Harry Angstrom y protagonista de la serie «Rabbit» de John Updike. El análisis

descriptivo hará uso del modelo de Bucholtz y Hall para comparar el diálogo del texto de origen y el texto meta y para identificar discordancias discursivas en fragmentos del diálogo que distorsionan la construcción intersubjetiva de la identidad de Janice en la traducción. La información desarrollada a través de esta primera fase del análisis formará la base discursiva a través de la cual se ofrecerán alternativas que se atañen a los cinco principios del modelo.

**Palabras clave:** Traducción literaria, diálogo ficticio, sociolingüística, identidad, John Updike.

#### INTRODUCTION

When Bucholtz and Hall (2005) proposed a set of *identity principles* as a framework for the study of language and identity, they provided a model that sharpened the sociolinguist's lens on identity to reveal something rational but sparsely represented in the literature at that point: identity is not something that is fixed and stable, «located primarily in the individual psyche» (2005: 585), but rather a discursive, intersubjective construction that can be located in language. The model has been of great benefit in studies of identity formation in real-life interaction (c.f. Del-Teso-Craviotto, 2008 and Mango, 2010). The aim of this article is to extend the use of the model and apply it in a comparative study of identity construction in literary translation, where identities are twice created in the source dialogue and the target dialogue.

The case study is Janice Angstrom, the female protagonist of John Updike's «Rabbit» books and a character that charts the development of middle-class women in the US between 1960 and 1990 (de Bellis, 2000: .23). Although Janice has been praised as a metonym of the progress made by women in US society in the second half of the twentieth century, (de Bellis, 2000) she has also been criticised as a «dull» and «bovine» character (Gordon, 1991: 18). The question is, can the application of Bucholtz and Hall's model reveal two different gendered identities in the source and target dialogues respectively? And if so, can the model itself provide the knowledge needed to (re)create a character in translation whose gender identity aligns more closely with the original?

I will proceed by making a case for using Bucholtz and Hall's model to analyse identity formation in fictive dialogue, followed by a comparative analysis of the American English originals and their Spanish translations. The analyses in sections 3 and 4 focus on source and target text pairs which have been identified as salient to the fictive representation of Janice's linguistic identity, and which are representative of the overarching translation issue explored here.

The «Rabbit» saga comprises four books, but only three are directly relevant to this study: *Rabbit Redux* (1971), *Rabbit is Rich* (1981) and *Rabbit at Rest* (1990). Their Castilian Spanish translations, «El regreso de Conejo» (1993), «Conejo es rico» (2002) and «Conejo en paz» (1992), were each published in Spain by Tusquet Editores.

#### 1. THE LANGUAGE-IDENTITY NEXUS

Dialogue appears in novels as language that characters speak spontaneously, yet it is judiciously crafted by the author and represented graphically on a page. What is inescapable is the social nature of dialogue and the discursive continuity it creates between characters and the real world. The study of fictive dialogue translation is not exactly uncharted territory, the recent collection of articles in Brumme and Espunya (2012), for example, addresses the issue of fictive dialogue in translation in innovative and informative ways, but none of the contributions deals specifically with the language-identity nexus in dialogue. Sidiropolou (2004) explores the topic of identity in translation but across genres rather than as an intersubjective phenomenon located in dialogue. The topic of gender (and more generally, feminism) has garnered a lot of interest in translation research (Simons, 1983; Simon, 1996; von Flotow, 1997; Santaemilia, 2014). This article follows in this spirit by exploring the nuances involved in the translation of a character's gendered identities in fictive dialogue.

Brumme and Espunya (2012: .23) say that «there is no better way to build a character than letting him or her speak in his or her own voice», before also sounding the warning that «in translation, changes may affect precisely this aspect of communication». Thus it logically follows that a character whose identity is discursively grounded in a second language may be constituted in a significantly different way to the original. The aim of this article is to explore this proposition, but first, it is necessary to explore how language can create, shape and mediate identities through dialogue, beginning with a definition of the textual space where authors create the illusion of communicative immediacy by removing themselves as proxy. Brumme and Espunya (2012: 20) call this the *variational space* in dialogue:

Fictive dialogue is the type of discourse where the social, historical and personal background of the narrator and of the characters can be constructed through the interplay of standard and non-standard varieties of a language. Variation may signal the social distance separating one character from the others, and the narrator from the characters; it may either foster the reader's sympathy for a character or completely alienate that character. Furthermore, the symbolic association between the language variety spoken and the

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behaviours and values the speakers stand for has ideological consequences.

Characters use language in this variational space to achieve a communicative aim, but also to situate meaning in a social discourse, which then opens up the possibility of associating linguistic attributes with character traits. As Joseph (2004) observes, even though language does not offer a complete picture of an intangible self, it does play a significant, and perhaps vital, role, and this may be especially the case for fictional characters:

Perhaps the people whose identity we feel we most fully comprehend are the great literary characters, the Lear and Emma Bovarys and, closer to earth, the Harry Potters. Their authors have captured something even more remarkable than the inner essence of an actual human being – persons in a sense more real than any actual individual. (Joseph, 2004:1)

There is a clear difference between analysing the speech production of a real person in a naturally occurring interaction, and that of a fictive character whose interaction in dialogue is scripted. The artificial nature of scripted dialogue has the benefit of language that is not burdened by the inherent ambiguities of spontaneous speech, but it also suggests an essentialist element to its very construction. However, as Livia (1998: 146) says, there are certain advantages to exploring gender and language in «pre-planned scripts» that create the illusion of immediacy because they «allow us to see [the] expectations speakers have of patterns of speech appropriate for each sex». In an earlier collaboration that presaged the model they would later propose, Bucholtz and Hall – who subscribe to Foucauldian/Butlerian definition of identity, only broader (2005: 586) – make it clear that not all research that uses essentialism as a tool is invalid by default (2004: 473). Thus, if fictional characters are created with an identity that, under the thumb of the skilful writer, coheres in a handful of scenes, it is probable that Bucholtz and Hall's model will provide a useful tool to extrapolate the discursive construction of identity in fictive dialogue.

## 2. IDENTITY PRINCIPLES

The model proposed by Bucholtz and Hall is, first and foremost, interdisciplinary in nature, relying to various degrees on sociolinguistics, cultural anthropology, semiotics, and psychology. Taken together, the principles orchestrate a conceptualisation of identity that is emergent, relational and partially revealed in interaction. What follows is a horizontal expose of each principle, defined alongside an explanation of how each relates directly to Janice Angstrom's fictive identity. The aim here is two-

pronged: to give account of the framework, and to foreground the discursive knowledge that informs the comparative analysis that follows.

The *emergence principle* posits the view that identity is an emergent product of language, not a psychological mechanism for self-identification but a partial manifestation of the self which surfaces through linguistic performance in interaction. Identity is in some way determined by spontaneous «semiotic practices» which are a «cultural phenomenon». According to Bucholtz and Hall (2005: 588), «nearly all contemporary linguistic research on identity takes this general perspective as its starting point». A close reading of the «Rabbit» books reveals that a new identity emerges for Janice not just intratextually from scene to scene, but also intertextually, from one book to the next. Indeed the young Janice Angstrom the reader meets in the first book, *Rabbit, Run*, is significantly different to the mature woman of the last book of the saga, *Rabbit at Rest*. Her development is a lineal progression from a character that merely served as foil for her husband's hedonistic approach to life, to finally usurping him as head of the family forty years later (de Bellis, 2000: 23). Janice begins the search for a «valid identity» in the second book, *Rabbit Redux*, by exploring her own emergent sexual identity, taking on a lover and adopting his language to establish distance from her marriage.

The *positionality principle* adds nuance to the traditional schemata used to analyse identities: race, education, socioeconomic status, sex, etc., without reducing the relevance of these fixed schemata, identities are also construed as temporary roles defined by power relationships, or «interactional positions that social actors briefly occupy and then abandon as they respond to the contingencies of unfolding discourse» (Bucholtz and Hall, 2005: 591). The key to the positionality principle is that interactional roles can shape the language use of the speakers. This is particularly relevant to Janice in the last two «Rabbit» books, where she takes up considerably more authoritative interactional roles due to her economic prosperity. Her emergent identity here is constructed in apposition to her husband's demise: «If Rabbit is rich, it is only because Janice is rich [...]. Hence Janice is the source of his wealth, while his [Rabbit's] fidelity to her is the "price" he pays for his position» (Boswell, 2001: 141).

The *indexicality principle* pins down the semiotic processes involved in the construal of a language-identity nexus. Based on CS Peirce's index-sign, the principle extricates language from its semantic straight-jacket, and allows the analyst to associate linguistic expression with affective stances, acts, social meanings (Ochs, 1992: .336). The primary concern in the analysis that follows is gender – or how gender can be constituted with index-signs, a social process which cannot be reduced to, as Ochs (1992: 337-340) explains,

«mapping linguistic form to social meaning of gender» because «few features of language directly and exclusively index gender». Women may use a *non-exclusive strategy* to index their gender. Ochs (1992:340) gives the example of women's use of prestige forms of language, which is a resource available to both men and women (hence, non-exclusive), but which women can use to symbolically redress the balance of power in interaction. Women do not use prestige forms *because* they are women, but prestige forms can be constitutive of an identity in interaction, where speakers index a social meaning to reflect their position. By the same token, men may also use prestige forms, but what they are «doing» with language, what they hope to index, would be constitutive of an identity that could not be grounded on the basis of their difficulty accessing power.

The *relationality principle* frames identity formation as a relative phenomenon – that is, an identity gains value in contradistinction to other identity positions, and «calls into question the widespread but oversimplified view that identity relations as revolving around a single axis: sameness and difference» (Bucholtz and Hall, 2005:598). By moving beyond the fallacy that identity operates along a single axis, this principle sheds light on the «understanding of the discursive construction of social subjectivity» (2004: 470). Bucholtz and Hall substitute the traditional sameness/difference axis with a series or pairs of relations, or what they term *tactics of intersubjectivity*. The first pair is *adequation* and *distinction*, «processes by which subjects construct and are constructed with social sameness and difference» (Bucholtz and Hall, 2004: 494). The second pair is *authentication* and *denaturalisation*, where the former «concerns the construction of a true or veridical identity positioning» and the latter «foregrounds untruth, pretense, and imposture in identity positioning» (2004: 498). The last pair, *authorisation* and *illegitimation* relate to the distribution of power. Authorisation is the «use of power to legitimate certain social identities, while illegitimation is the revoking or withholding of such validation» (2004: 503). Janice Angstrom's emergent identities are performed on a discursive ground where she disrupts and subverts the traditional role she was assigned in the first book. In *Rabbit Redux*, Janice denaturalises her ostensibly seamless identity by introducing new vocabulary to her lexicon, at once *adequating* her identity to her cultural milieu (the US of the 1960s) and making it distinct to her husband, therefore creating a symbolic space between her and her marriage to begin her quest for a «valid identity». The practice of extrapolating an identity from an interaction necessarily operates on the assumption that the identity in question is located somewhere between pairs of relations<sup>1</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> For a more detail discussion see Bucholtz and Hall (2004)

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The final principle is the *partialness principle*. If identity is emergent and relational then it logically follows that any instance of identity formation can only be partial, «produced through contextually situated and ideologically informed configurations of self and other» (Bucholtz and Hall, 2005: 606). Indeed, a speaker can index a number of stances, aligning with any number of discourses at any one time, but the notion that an identity is neatly delineated and, moreover, readily accessible in its totality through language, is a fallacy. The partialness principle applies to real-life speech events because interactions are negotiations by nature, sometimes a conscious, but not always, co-construction of identity situated in a particular discourse and guided by ideological constraints. The key to this principle is understanding that the formation of an identity in interaction is not a product of agency (understood solely as conscious decision-making), but rather a linguistic accomplishment (Bucholtz and Hall, 2005: 605).

Bucholtz and Hall's model can be applied holistically to a corpus but also in a more concentrated fashion, favouring some principles over the others. Nevertheless, because the five principles represent interrelated, but also discrete, categories, an analysis that converges in one principle does not necessarily disregard the remaining parts, as any account of one principle will necessarily involve the other four. As the next section will demonstrate, all five principles have a role to play in the comparative analysis of identity formation in translation.

### 3. INDEXING A «VALID IDENTITY»

The original «Rabbit» books reflect the rich cultural landscape of the United States in the second half of the twentieth century. Contextualised and situated by the prevalent social discourses of its time, the multicultural nature of the characters is revealed in the contrasting and distinctive forms of language use in dialogue. However, as per Toury's (2012: 304) *law of growing standardisation*, this linguistic richness has been flattened out in the Spanish translations of the «Rabbit» books. The standardisation of some linguistic varieties is more understandable than others; the translation of the African-American English spoken by three characters in *Rabbit Redux*, for example, defies translation because of the inherent difficulty of transposing a vernacular with a distinct and culturally-bound lexico-grammatical profile. But the case of Janice is different. As the analysis will show in this section and the next, the impoverished target dialogue results in a significant loss at the level of identity creation, losses which can be best characterised by employing Bucholtz and Hall's model. Moreover, the losses are avoidable in translation if we take into consideration the discursive knowledge yielded by the application of the model.

Janice Angstrom's identity in *Rabbit, Run* is defined by her role as a domestic housewife – and, in the eyes of her husband, a «dumb mutt» (*Rabbit, Run*: 22). However, her emergent identity in the sequel, *Rabbit Redux*, signals an important change in the direction of the character. Janice's husband, Harry, is the one who stays at home, and in his own words, «is laying down to die» (*Rabbit Redux*: 103-104) while Janice is «full of vigour, sexual and otherwise» (Boswell, 2001: 91), and «searching for a valid identity» (*Rabbit Redux*: 104). This quest for a new identity and its intersubjective construction is relational – that is, it acquires «social meaning in relation to other available identity positions and other social actors» (Bucholtz and Hall, 2005: 598) - to the identities of her lover and her husband.

The two key terms in this translation process are, at first glance, innocuous enough. Janice's use of the terms «zilch» and «dig» (the latter used frequently in 1960s counterculture discourse) is only linguistically remarkable because the words belong to an informal register; but they become noteworthy when considered in their interactional context. Not only does Janice use these words to break away from her previous identity as a «dumb» housewife, but Harry, and the reader, hear the same words in Stavros' dialogue, a duplication which carries the implication that Janice and her work colleague, Stavros, are more than friends. It is a process which is not mirrored in the Spanish translation. The term «zilch» is replaced (and not compensated for elsewhere) with the term *nulo* (literally nothing, void) in the first instance, and in Stavros' dialogue the term is omitted altogether. The term «dig» is replaced with a Spanish term which also belongs to a formal register, *entender* (literally, to understand). The first time the reader encounters the word «zilch» in the novel, the reader is given a clue to its significance through Harry's inner monologue:

ST: 'Oh I know', she [Janice] sings on, 'I hate it too, it's just that with Mildred out so much we've had to go into her books, and her system is really **zilch**'. **Zilch**: he hears another voice in hers. (*Rabbit Redux*: 20)

TT: –Ya lo sé –canta ella–, no me gusta nada, pero con tantas ausencias de Mildred hemos tenido que meternos con sus libros, y la verdad es que su sistema es **nulo**. –**Nulo**: Conejo oye otra voz en la de ella. («El regreso de Conejo»: 22)

This interaction is the first piece of evidence that Janice may no longer be the Janice that Harry deserted ten years previously, marking the emergence of a new identity. Later in the story, the Angstroms are in a Greek restaurant having a meal when Stavros walks in the door and joins them. The time to settle the bill comes, and when Harry is getting ready to pay, «Stavros repeats that masterful small gesture of palm outward, “you owe me zilch. On

me» (*Rabbit Redux*: 51). Harry's inner monologue becomes cryptic and yet unambiguous in its assertion that «there can be no argument»: Charlie will pay for the dinner, there can be no argument, and Charlie is Janice's lover, of this there can be no argument either, a revelation which had remained hidden under the linguistic clue, «zilch». At this point it becomes clear to both the reader and Harry that Stavros is the other voice in Janice. In the published translation, the indexical properties of Janice's language use are effaced, not only because of the failure to mirror her linguistic behaviour, but because Stavros' unwitting revelation is also neutralised:

Stavros repite el ademán magistral de la palma hacia fuera.

-No debéis nada. Invito yo. («El regreso de Conejo», 47)

Where in the source text the revelation triggers Harry's deduction (Janice and Stavros are having an affair), in the target text, there is no revelation, yet Harry's deduction remains. More importantly, the co-construction of Janice's new identity, a shared interactional effort between Janice and her lover, is no longer there – the emergence of her new identity, revealed intersubjectively to Harry and the reader through the duplication of the marker, «zilch», is not available to Harry or the reader in the Spanish translation because the duplication has not been represented. The second example, «dig», evinces a similar dynamic. The reader encounters the word for the first time in Janice's dialogue:

ST: Women don't dig science (*Rabbit Redux*, p.36)

TT: Las mujeres no entendemos de ciencia. ('El regreso de Conejo', p.35)

The same word then occurs in Stavros' language use, reinforcing the idea that Janice's emergent identity is grounded in a shared language with her lover:

ST: I'm beginning to dig him (*Rabbit Redux*, p.46).

TT: Estoy empezando a entenderlo ('El regreso de Conejo', p. 43)

Although in this example the same term is repeated in Janice's and Charlie's dialogue, the co-construction of identity is nullified by the fact that term does not differentiate Janice's language with a term that Harry (and the reader) could not expect in her linguistic repertoire. In the source text, Harry and the reader participate in the intersubjective construction of Janice's emergent identity, shaped by the indexers of the discourse that denaturalises her identity as wife to Harry, but in the target text, no such disruption occurs, and if anything, her language authenticates the very identity she tries to denaturalise in the original. The contrastive analysis of these two terms is represented in the table below, with the source text terms placed under the

label for «distinctness» (differentiating her identity construction from traditional marital discourses), and the target text terms under «adequation» (assimilating her identity to traditional marital discourses):

|    | Adequation       | Distinctness |
|----|------------------|--------------|
| ST |                  | Zilch<br>Dig |
| TT | Nulo<br>Entender |              |

**Table 1**

There are two important properties to take into consideration if Janice's two indexers are to remain in the distinctness side of the axis in translation: (a) the terms used must have a distinct value themselves – this can only be achieved with colloquial terms that Janice would not normally use, or, at the very least, has not used before; and (b) the same words must be repeated by Stavros, who represents the discourse Janice indexes through her use of the terms.

The indexer «zilch» could be replaced with the similarly exotic word *kaput*, which is a Spanish loanword from German, meaning «to finish». The term in its first instance, when Janice uses it in interaction with Harry, could be reformulated in the Proposed Translation (PT) in the following way:

ST: [...] we've had to go into her books, and her system is really **zilch**.

PT: Hemos tenido que meternos en los libros de Mildred. Su sistema está **kaput**.

To mirror the second indexical process - i.e. its repetition in Stavros' utterance - the PT would have to re-thread a section of the interaction, as the original does not offer the opportunity for Stavros «to finish» anything. In the source text, Stavros uses «zilch» to express that Harry owes nothing for the dinner. In the PT, Harry insists once on paying, giving Stavros the variational space in dialogue to end the conversation with a term that indexes Janice's extramarital affair:

[Harry dice] –Janice, ¿tienes dinero? Charlie, dile cuánto debemos.  
 Stavros repite ese gesto magistral de palma abierta y dice:  
 -Invito yo.  
 -Insistimos, Charlie, no vamos a dejar que pagues todo.  
 -Se acabó la conversación. Kaput. No me debéis nada.  
 No queda nada por discutir.

The translation of the indexer «dig» poses no such difficulty, as the term *rollo*, a polysemous word whose meaning is heavily context dependent, can be used in both Janice's and Stavros' dialogue as a colloquial replacement for «dig»:

Janice: Las mujeres no entendemos de ciencia.

Charlie: Estoy empezando a entenderlo

The terms *kaput* and *rollo* in the PT would thus reflect the co-construction of Janice's emergent identity in interaction because (a) they are unusual enough for the reader and Harry to notice them as a deviation from her language use, and (b) index the extramarital discourse. If we recreate the figure from above but with the proposed translation solutions, Janice's language would now feature indexers that make her language distinct, and thus authenticate her quest for a valid identity in interaction:

|    | Adequation | Distinctness   |
|----|------------|----------------|
| ST |            | Zilch<br>Dig   |
| PT |            | Kaput<br>Rollo |

**Table 2**

It is important to note that the alternatives are not suggested in a prescriptive way, but to exemplify how a solution can be arrived at if Bucholtz and Hall's model is taken into consideration. The principles thus become the guiding mechanism in the translation decision making process. Where the published translation favoured a strategy that prioritised denotational meaning, the proposed translation was guided by the intersubjective nature of identity construction in dialogue. Other alternatives could be arrived at, but as

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long as these are guided by the identity principles, they would satisfy the same identitarian function.

#### 4. INDEXING POWER

If the second instalment of the «Rabbit» books portrays a sexually liberated Janice, in the third and fourth books she remains unshackled in this sense, but with two new dimensions added: she is mature and rich. The focus here is not on identifying these macro-categories of identity (age and economic status) but rather locating her status in her language use and how it is constitutive of her identity. The translations of both books fail in this regard in two important ways: firstly, they fail to establish Janice's subversive use of language – two examples are analysed here to demonstrate this; and secondly, they fail to make Janice's speech distinct from Harry's. That is, when analysing Janice and Harry's parts side by side, it becomes clear that the Harry of the Spanish translation speaks with formal language, whereas in the originals he uses informal language, a case of translational negligence that has far-reaching repercussions for the construction of Janice's interactional identity.

A micro-level analysis of Janice's dialogue in *Rabbit is Rich* reveals instances in the source text where her language use subverts her role as viewed by her mother and Harry – that is, Harry and her mother see her below them in the family hierarchy. An example of this is her confrontation with her mother (and matriarch of the family), Bessie Springer at the beginning of the novel. Harry arrives from work to find Janice and her mother quarrelling over a postcard sent by their son, Nelson. In the postcard Nelson informs the family that he has invited along a female friend, Melanie, to visit their home town but Bessie is offended by the suggestion that Melanie will be sleeping in her grandson's room. Liberated by her affair with Stavros in the 1960s, Janice is in favour of Nelson and Melanie sharing a room. Harry, however, takes Bessie's side. In similar circumstances in earlier novels, Janice would have backed down, but in her middle-age, «Janice stands up to him [Harry]», and, moreover, «speaks in a voice tightened to match her Mother's» (*Rabbit is Rich: 42*). Such conversations in *Rabbit is Rich* between mother and daughter carry the subtext of a hierarchical conflict: Bessie is getting older and her matriarchal grip on the family is loosening, whereas Janice is seen trying to reposition herself and ultimately usurp her mother. As Harry observes, «Janice is firm, younger, in control» when she pits herself against her mother (*Rabbit is Rich: 44*). When Bessie accuses Janice of being immature and selfish, and asks, «What will the neighbours think? », Janice answers the following in the source text, and, directly below, in the published translation:

ST: 'I don't care even if they care, **which I dare say** they won't  
(*Rabbit is Rich*: 44)

TT: Me importaría **un bledo** aunque les importase, cosa que dudo mucho. («El regreso de Conejo», 47)

In this voice she has «tightened to match her mother's», Janice uses formal language («I dare say»), but as Harry observes, it is language contrived to match Bessie Springer's stern tone. A new interactional role emerges for Janice in response to the contingency of the interaction with her mother. In pragmatic terms, Ma Springer's question and accusation is a Face Threatening Act (FTA), which, in the source text, Janice responds to with a positive polite strategy. She saves face by demonstrating that she will not be dominated by her mother. The same discursive action unfolds differently in the published translation. Accused of immaturity, Janice, a middle-age woman responds with a token that is constitutive of an immature interactional role, suggesting that Bessie Springer has succeeded in dominating her daughter. *Un bledo* is shorthand for something insignificant and is utilised in the published translation as a replacement for «I don't care», but the register shift means that in translation, Janice responds with negative politeness to her mother's FTA, a defensive strategy that authenticates a child-like identity. In a conversation between a middle-aged woman and an elderly woman, *un bledo* potentially indexes a discourse that contradicts the narrative construction of her middle-aged identity. Taking the information yielded by the analysis of the source text, the proposed translation offered here uses formal language to create an interactional identity coherent with the original:

-Dudo mucho que les importe, y aunque así fuese, a mí no me causaría ningún reparo.

In this alternative, Janice uses the conditional tense to reflect politeness which indexes an interactional role that is analogous to her role in the ST. In the ST and the PT (but not the published translation), Janice can be seen to use a positive politeness strategy as an intersubjective tactic. She adequates her language to her mother's, or, as Harry describes it, uses a voice «tightened to match her Mother's».

The second example of how Janice uses language to subvert traditional roles also comes from *Rabbit is Rich*, when Harry is needling Janice with questions about Nelson's future. Harry wants his son to finish his university education, whereas Janice encourages him to drop out and return home to find a job. In the midst of this discussion, Harry intimates that he wants to invite Charlie (the same Charlie with whom Janice had an affair) to the house for dinner. The conversation ends with Janice setting a date for the dinner with the following utterance:

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'I'll ask him for next week,' she says, 'if that'll make you less bitchy'.  
(*Rabbit is Rich*, p.93)

The term «bitchy» is an example of a non-exclusive indexer because it can be potentially used by anyone of any gender. The indexical quality of the word, the social meaning it points to, is determined by the user. The word «bitch», according to Sutton (1995: 281) is a «prime example of a subclass of women-as-sex object terms, that of women as animals». If Harry had uttered the insult, it would have directly labelled Janice in a derogatory fashion. The metaphor relegates the recipient of the insult to the status of an animal by indexing traditional discourses of gender roles; but in Janice, the same label, also derogatory, becomes a direct indexer of a subversive act. Traditional gender discourses would traditionally assign the label «bitchy» to women. In Janice's case, the insult resonates with her husband's description of her in the first book, the «dumb mutt». But here it is not Harry who uses the word, it is Janice, taking up an interactional role to undermine typical gender roles. In the published translation, however, Janice's target language utterance does not carry the same semiotic value:

-Le diré que venga la semana que viene –dice-. Si eso sirve para que dejes de **chincar**. («Conejo es rico», p.91)

*Chincar*, a colloquial version of «to annoy», fails to encapsulate the subversive discourse used in the source utterance, and, moreover, is not an adjective equivalent to «bitchy». Much like «un bledo», the term is more in keeping with the speech of a younger, childish, person and not a middle-age woman trying to assert her independence (de Bellis 2000: 22). In order for the target utterance to mirror the original, the utterance must feature a target language term that would typically be reserved for the description of women. The difficulty here is that there is no obvious Spanish term that can encapsulate the subversion of the source text term; the issue, however, can be resolved with a strategy of amplification, adding new linguistic elements to make explicit the meaning of the original:

Le diré que venga la semana que viene –dice-. A ver si así dejas de provocar como una nena.

Although the amplification does not carry the same illocutionary force as the pejorative «bitchy», the crucial subversion of gender is in place with the comparative clause, *como una nena* (which backtranslates into English as «like a little girl»). If, as Bucholtz and Hall (2005: 594) recommend, «overt mention of identity categories and labels» ought to be considered for their indexical value, then the interactions in the original *Rabbit is Rich* and its translation create two different interactional roles for Janice. In the original, she subverts traditional roles with the label «bitchy» to position herself as the transgressor. The husband is now subversively cast as the «bitchy» one

because of the shift in power in the hierarchy of the family: she is rich, the bread-winner, and occupies the position traditionally held by her husband. But the Janice of the Spanish translation does not do this, and by evoking childish behaviour she takes up the position traditionally held by the subordinated wife. Not only this, but it reinforces the child-like identity in interaction that began to take shape in the previous example, which, viewed in terms of the saga as a whole, has far-reaching implications, as the Janice of «Conejo es rico» regresses to the «dumb mutt» of the first book, from whence she came to develop a «valid identity», which she succeeds in constructing in interaction in the original novels, but not in the translations.

Finally for this section, an example of an interaction between Janice and Harry from the last book, *Rabbit at Rest*, is analysed to demonstrate how macro-textual elements of interaction in fictive dialogue can also be distorted in translation. Dialogue is, by definition, a composite of two or more voices which must be orchestrated in order to reflect the intersubjective nature of identity formation in interaction. Thus, when Janice interacts with Harry, the unfolding discourse shapes both their emergent identities. The type of language that Janice uses after the second book, that is, in *Rabbit is Rich* and *Rabbit at Rest* can be characterised as excessively formal, which is significant for two reasons. Eckert (1989: 249) makes the point that associating conservative language use to women can be problematic, but she also agrees with Trudgill (1972: 182-183) in his hypothesis that women use formal language because they have been denied positions of power in society. The hypothesis rings true in the case of Janice because she satisfies both criteria: she has been denied access to power and she uses formal language. The second reason why Janice's use of formal language is significant is because in the original novels it contrasts with Harry's use of informal language. Thus, in a variational space inhabited by Janice and Harry, Janice's use of formal language is an attempt to position herself as a social equal to her husband:

|   |   |
|---|---|
| <p>'Fine, <i>fine</i>,' Harry says. 'I don't give a fuck where anybody sleeps,' [...]</p> <p>Janice says, 'Harry you musn't overexert yourself, the doctor said'.</p> <p>(<i>Rabbit at Rest</i>, p. 35)</p> | <p>- Muy bien, <i>muy bien</i> –dice Harry-. Me importa un rábano dónde va a dormir cada uno – [...]</p> <p>-Harry, no debes hacer esfuerzos excesivos, dijo el médico –le recuerda Janice.</p> <p>(«Conejo en paz», p. 36)</p> |
|---|---|

**Table 3**

The translation of Janice's interaction is satisfactory here, as her formal use of American English is replaced with standard Castilian Spanish; the

crucial shift comes in the neutralisation of Harry's expletive, «fuck», which in the original contrasts with Janice's linguistic propriety, but in the Tusquet translation, by virtue of using a euphemism (*rábanos*, literally, «radish»), Harry employs a tactic of intersubjectivity that adequates his interactional identity to Janice. The issue is easily resolved with a similarly forceful expletive in Spanish, but the point here is not the analysis of a micro-textual detail, but to raise awareness of the macro-textual relationship among speakers and their language as constitutive of their interactional identities. If the previous examples (both in this and the previous section) demonstrate how applying Bucholtz and Hall's model can guide a comparative analysis, and how the information yielded by said analysis can inform the decision-making process, the example here raises an equally important element: identity is intersubjective and orchestrated by a plurality of voices, which must all be taken into consideration if characters are to constitute identities in translation that are coherent with the identities in the originals.

## 5. CONCLUSION

This article set out to test the validity of Bucholtz and Hall's model and to explore whether its application could be of use in the fictive translation process. With regards to the first aim, the analysis proves that the success of the model in real life interaction can be replicated in the analysis of scripted dialogue, which is of particular interest to translation because dialogue is written twice, once in L1 and then in L2, potentially creating two different interactional identities for speakers. The comparative analysis found source and target texts pairs that attenuated the intersubjective construal of Janice's emergent identities in the Spanish versions of the text. In «El regreso de Conejo», the translation of the second book of the saga, the social meaning indexed by two key terms is neglected, resulting in the erasure of the discourse that grounds Janice's quest for a valid identity. Similarly, in «Conejo es rico», the translation of the third book the saga, Janice's interactional identity is attenuated to the point where the Spanish version of her character fails to index the very discourses that allow readers to appreciate her new position in the family hierarchy, and, moreover, her clever subversion of gender roles is also absent. Perhaps the most interesting finding, and one which could only be possible with an epistemology that interprets identity as an intersubjective phenomenon, is that Harry's language in interaction is equally important to the construction of Janice's gender identity in dialogue. The neutralisation of his informal language, replaced with formal Spanish in the target dialogue, neutralises the indexical value of Janice's use of formal language.

The model was able to locate identity distortions in segments of the translation, but it also proved a valuable tool for the re-translation of the same interventions in Janice's dialogue. The alternatives offered in the analysis, guided by the information yielded from the application of the model (as opposed to the denotational criteria which seems to have guided the translations published by Tusquets), create a Janice that indexes in Spanish the extramarital affair that is constitutive of her quest for a valid identity in *Rabbit Redux*, and a Janice that stands up to her mother and subverts gender roles in Spanish versions of the third and fourth book in a way that is identifiable with the Janice of *Rabbit is Rich* and *Rabbit at Rest*.

Character identity ought to be a primary concern for translators when dealing with dialogue. The application of Bucholtz and Hall's analytical framework to the translation published by Tusquet Editores (which remain in circulation in Spain) reveals that the main factor guiding the decision-making process was the denotational value of Janice's language use, resulting in a distorted reflection of Janice's identity construction in interaction. A somewhat more sinister conclusion, but a point that needs to be made, is that the translator's application of this standardising strategy delegitimises Janice's identity. The suggestion here is not that the translator consciously expurgated the discourses that reflect Janice's authenticated identity, but the unreflective strategy that has been identified in the pairs analysed above are suggestive of a heteronormative discourse, potentially eroding the more rounded iterations of Janice's character. The intersubjective tactic of illegitimation is defined by Bucholtz and Hall (2005: 603) as a negative polarity in a relation of pairs, it «addresses the ways in which identities are dismissed, censored, or simply ignored by these same structures». Viewed in terms of this pair, then, the translation could be construed as the very institution that dismisses, censors or simply ignores Janice's identity. If the original characterisation of Janice has been described as «dull» and «bovine» (Gordon, 1991), where does that leave the translated version that censors her performance in dialogue?

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