TEXTUAL NORMS IN SOURCE
AND TRANSLATED TEXTS*

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TRADITIONALLY THE LABEL *GENRE* HAS BEEN USED to distinguish different sorts of literary texts. Alongside this use it is currently employed to group together sets of texts that show certain common properties of general organisation. It seems that the notion, whose definition and range are still the subject of much controversy, belongs to a higher rather than to a purely internal linguistic level. As Halliday puts it:

> The generic structure is outside the linguistic system; it is language as projection of a higher-level semiotic structure. It is not simply a feature of literary genres, there is a generic structure in all discourse, including the most informal spontaneous conversation (Sacks et al. 1974). The concept of generic structure can be brought within the general framework of the concept of register, the semantic patterning that is characteristically associated with the 'context of situation of a text' (...) (Halliday 1978:134)

As my main concern in this article is the literary text, I will consider exclusively literary genres. From a broader linguistic viewpoint the traditional categories of literary genres should perhaps be considered as subgenres. Nevertheless, in order not to introduce new labels where they are not strictly necessary I will use throughout the whole text the concept of literary genres. I will, following

the tradition, classify the texts under two headings: prose and po-
etry, with a graphological criterion, which has the supreme advan-
tage of being practical: a text written in lines is poetry, otherwise it
is prose. I subdivide prose further into fiction, essay and prose poem.
This latter category is somewhat fuzzy, but there is an established,
if recent, canon at least since Baudelaire's *Petits poèmes en prose*.
A typical prose poem is a short piece of text where narrative struc-
ture and argument, if present, are subordinate to some sort of poeti-
cal patterning.

The classification above is sufficiently clear and exhaustive for
my purposes, even if it is easily subject to criticism. Indeed, Borges
is considered by many as a typical postmodernist, precisely because
he blurs the received generic boundaries. He does so mainly by
incorporating specific features of essay-writing into the other gen-
res: fiction, poetry, prose poem. In doing so he is at the same time
following and leading a general trend in Western literature, as Fowler
stresses:

> (...) here there has been a further, postmodernist revolu-
> tion. For in the avant garde prose pieces (stories? medita-
> tions?) of Guy Davenport and others, the digressive essay
> has returned in disguise. Anticipated by such works as Vir-
> ginia Woolf's *A Room of One's Own* (1929), this tendency
> now owes much to the brilliant example of Jorge Luis Bor-
> ges' stories. Nevertheless, it could also be seen as an ob-
> lique apotheosis of the essay. (Fowler 1987:342)

The fact that Borges' texts subvert the traditional literary genres
through the incorporation of typical essay features into his fiction
and poetry, creates a problem which is not confined to literary texts:
if generic norms are social, to what extent can a writer, and indeed
a speaker, depart from them and innovate? It seems that there is a
coexistence of different and even opposite norms in every culture
and in Western culture in particular. Alongside a dominant norm
there exists a series of other norms and new norms develop continu-
ously, depending upon the degree of dynamism of the culture in

question. So a particular writer, and a particular speaker, may at the same time obey some norms and contribute to the development of other new ones. In an increasingly interrelated world certain literary norms tend to be more and more international. Borges' case typifies this situation since he has been more influential abroad than in his native country, native language and culture. Although there are now many people in the English-speaking countries who can read Spanish, one may assume that most English-speaking readers of Borges, including leading writers, must have read him in translation.

Among the many English translators of Borges only a handful are regarded as important writers in their own right, and they have translated only his poems (for example John Updike). On the other hand, there is some consensus among critics that the main Borgesian contribution lies in prose, fiction as well as in essay. What are the linguistic consequences of this? One might suppose that a recognised writer, as an experienced textualiser, would be better able to discern the idiosyncratic usage of the writer he intends to translate than a normal translator and would also dare to present a less orthodox text.

Generic norms are certainly present behind linguistic realisations in text. The problem is to identify them and that for two main reasons: norms themselves are far from clear-cut, are semantic in nature and appear under many different linguistic guises.

According to Halliday genre is one of the three main constituents of text:

> These three factors — generic structure, textual structure (thematic and informational) and cohesion — are what distinguish text from 'non-text'. (Halliday 1978:134)

The above factors would be responsible for texture at different levels. The symmetry, though, is not perfect since there is some overlapping: thematic and informational structure do seem to have an overall textual effect when presenting any kind of recursivity,

and cohesion also plays a role, albeit minor, at the clausal level:

> clausal level: thematic and informational structure
> macrotextual level: cohesion
> supratextual level: genre

However, at macrotextual level cohesion is manifestly not enough to cover what Sinclair (1991:8) terms "the intricate patterns that knit a text together". These patterns, formed by sounds, letters, words, strings or blocks, are narrative, argumentative and poetical patterns.

Under the heading of genre we may consider the central question of what the Russian Formalists labelled *literariness*, that rather elusive feature which causes a text to be considered literary. What separates literature from non-literature? Apparently there is no simple linguistic evidence which would be responsible for literariness. What is or is not literary depends chiefly upon cultural and social conventions, and standards vary greatly according to place and time; what in one period is considered literary can be considered as non-literary in another period and vice-versa. In that respect, as in many others, Borges seems to be an innovator since in his writings and in the anthologies he has edited he seems to be able to find literariness everywhere, from crime fiction to history, philosophy, theology and even sociology. It is for this reason that he considered Gibbon, Schopenhauer and the sociologist Veblen creators of literature. For many theorists a central aspect of a literary text is the uniqueness of its verbal organisation, as Halliday remarks:

> A literary text is a text that is valued in its own right, which
> must mean that it differs from all other texts.
> (Halliday & Hasan 1989:42)

This seems, however, to be more a definition of a good literary text rather than a definition of a literary text in general. In fact, to be really comprehensive such a definition should also cover more or less good and more or less bad texts. A trivial poem or an ordinary

novel must share with their better counterparts some relation of similarity which differentiates them as a whole from, say, a legal document or an academic paper.

A literary text may acquire its literariness from a set of features, which, nevertheless, need not always be present in every instance: narrative patterns, poetic patterns, style. The combination of these elements varies greatly according to genre, culture, time, writer, and individual works. Borges, unlike most of the writers and literary critics of his time, had an all-embracing conception of literature, going far beyond the limits imposed by the dominant canon of the day. So he was able to find literariness almost at every point in space and time.

According to the categories mentioned above his apparently eccentric choices may turn out to be soundly based. Some examples from one of the many collections of seemingly disparate works he has edited will illustrate the point that I am making:

Edward Gibbon - *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*
   narrative and argumentative patterns, style

Sören Kierkegaard - *Fear and Trembling*
   narrative and argumentative patterns, style

Apocryphal Gospels
   narrative patterns, poetic patterns, style

Attilio Momigliano - *Essay on Orlando Furioso*
   argumentative patterns, style

Thornstein Veblen - *Theory of the Leisure Class*
   argumentative patterns, style

William James - *Varieties of Religious Experience*
   argumentative patterns, style

Normally these works are classed (for instance, in a library)

respectively as works of history, philosophy, religion, literary critique, sociology and psychology. In editing them in a collection consisting mainly of works of literature, Borges stresses the literariness he finds in them as an important feature - at least the one which interested him most. According to my classification these works present one common feature: style. This could lead us to conclude that style is *the* feature of literariness and it is so in this case but not always. As many critics have observed, great works of fiction like *Don Quixote* and the novels of Dostoyevsky hardly possess a distinctive style at all and according to many they are quite simply bad in stylistic terms; their literary force must then come from another quarter, namely narrative and argumentative patterns.

What are the consequences of the previous considerations for translation? Depending on the special generic blend of a literary text there would appear to be more or fewer translation problems. A generic blend like the Dostoyevskyan or Dickensian novel, whose main strength seems to reside in narrativity and argument, would transcend language barriers more easily and with less loss of information than a poem by Keats or indeed the books by Gibbon. If genre represents more an ideational rather than a textual constraint, this constraint varies a great deal according to each subgenre.

As regards Borges' texts, genre, as usual, imposes some constraints on the translators. His stories and essays are, to a general perception, highly structured; his poems less so, at least if one follows the usual norms of modern Western poetry. However, Borges seems to abide only rarely by generic injunctions or by contemporary textual and stylistic rules. At a macrotextual level he excels in the use of narrative and argumentative patterns and his style is particularly rich in distinctive features, idiosyncratically packed.

One may posit that generic shifts are prone to occur in translations of Borges' works, since his particular blend of genres seems to have represented a novelty in world literature and, one assumes, it could conflict with existing national norms.

Dialect and Register

A proper theory of language should be able to describe and analyse every text in every language. As Hjelmslev points out:

> (...) we require of linguistic theory that it enable us to describe self-consistently and exhaustively not only all given, but also all conceivable or possible Danish texts, including texts that will not exist tomorrow or later, so long as they are texts of the same kind, i.e., texts of the same premised nature as those heretofore considered. (...)
>
> (Hjelmslev 1961:16-17)

But linguistic theory must be of use for describing and predicting not only any possible text composed in a given language, but, on the basis of the information that it gives about language in general, any possible text composed in any language whatsoever.

Nevertheless, linguistics has been somewhat shy in the exploration of texts in general, and of complex texts (as literary texts are) in particular. In this field the impressive successes of phonological description have not yet been matched and one doubts this will happen in the future. In literary texts (but in conversation also, if we take a comprehensive view of conversation) all the complexities of language are on display and most disturbing is the multiplicity of semiotic functions realised through linguistic forms. In phonology it seems that every neat description encapsulates a neat explanation. In a sentence, and much more in a text, grammatical description is at the same time less uncontroversial and has a lesser explanatory force. One of the aspects of the complexity of texts is what has been called variety in language and, in order to explain it, many concepts have been proposed. Among three of the most accepted are *dialect*, *register* and *level of formality*.

Dialect is a concept which comes from the past century and is widely accepted as covering variation of language according to user. The main dispute is about the extension of the concept. For my

purposes I will consider every departure from the so-called stand-ard language as being dialectal. In Borges' writings, with the ex-ception of his first books, dialect does not play a major role.

Register is associated with functional grammar, especially with the work of Halliday, who reconstructs the history of the concept and provides its definition in the following terms:

> The term 'register' was first used in this sense, that of text variety, by Reid (1956); the concept was taken up and de-veloped by Jean Ure (Ure and Ellis 1972) and interpreted within Hill's 'institutional linguistics' framework by Halli-day et al. (1964). The register is the semantic variety of which a text may be regarded as an instance.
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> Like other related concepts, such as 'speech variant' and (sociolinguistic) code (Ferguson 1971, chs. 1 and 2; Gum-perz 1971, part I), register was originally conceived of in lexicogrammatical terms. Halliday et al. (1964) drew a primary distinction between two types of language vari-ety: dialect, which can be defined as a variety according to the user, and register, which they defined as a variety ac-cording to the use. The dialect is what a person speaks, determined by who he is; the register is what a person is speaking, determined by what he is doing at the time. This general distinction can be accepted, but, instead of charac-terising a register largely by its lexicogrammatical proper-ties, we shall suggest, as with text, a more abstract defini-tion in semantic terms.
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> A register can be defined as the configuration of semantic resources that the member of a culture typically associates with a situation type. (Halliday 1978:110-11)

The notion, especially in its early versions, has been largely criti-cised. So Coulthard (1985:39) finds "worryingly naive" the claim made in Halliday, McIntosh & Strevens (1964) that "some lexical items suffice almost by themselves to identify a certain register". Crystal & Davy reject the notion altogether arguing that "the term has been applied to varieties of language in an almost indiscrimi-

nate manner" and point out further that:

> (...) there are very great differences in the nature of the
> situational variables involved in these uses of English, and
> that is inconsistent, unrealistic, and confusing to obscure
> these differences by grouping everything under the same
> heading, as well as an unnecessary trivialisation of what is
> a potentially useful concept. (Crystal & Davy 1969:61)

A final, strong charge by Crystal & Davy is that register, like the related concepts of *tenor*, *field* and *mode*, is "of very little descriptive value".

Leech & Short (1981:80) take a more pragmatic stance and accept the concept of register as "the term commonly used for language variation of a non-dialectal type". However, they use it with parsimony, merely three times in a book largely dedicated to text analysis. More important still is the fact that in every case they use it in conjunction with level of formality or *tone* (see pp 106,110).

Unlike the concept of dialect, the concept of register in its original form, although attractive, can hardly be applied to literary texts. The very notion of binding the text to a situation seems to militate against a fundamental property of literary texts, namely that they strive to be unique and free from association with a particular context. The fact is recognised by Halliday himself, who admits that:

> the 'situation' of a written text tends to be complex; and
> that of a fictional narrative is about as complex as it is
> possible for it to be. (Halliday 1978:145)

An alternative concept, that of *style*, was proposed by Hymes (1974), representing the set of choices made by a speaker. It has the advantage of not being automatically bound to a given situation, but it presents the obvious disadvantage of employing a label which has a long and widespread usage in the analysis of literary texts. The thorny problems of identifying and classifying different styles remain unsolved (see Coulthard 1985: 39-41) in Hymes' scheme.

Another label has been used to cover language variety: level of formality. The problem with level of formality is that it is very precise as a concept but has a limited range and does not cover the area which theoretically both register and Hymes' style would cover. For translation it is a very important point, since, for instance the philosophical item *ser* used by Borges in "Borges y yo" has been translated as *being* by one translator and as *being themselves* by the other. Neither choice can be satisfactorily explained by the notion of level of formality.

In the absence of a concept which would cover the area of variety other than dialect in language use two alternatives may be employed. The first solution is to couple the concept *level of language* with some other specification regarding topic, text-specific lexis, grammatical forms and idioms. The second solution is to use the label *register* in a more flexible way, without any automatic linkage with a given speech situation. This is what some dictionaries have been doing on a pragmatic basis. So the *Collins Cobuild Dictionary*, very systematic in many other aspects, uses an approximative scale to indicate the interpersonal overtones in the use of some words: literary use, informal word, etc.

Idiolect and style

In this section I will try to establish what characterises a text as belonging on the one hand to a given author, and on the other to a larger set of texts with common features; and what makes it be perceived as good. These distinctions correspond to the concepts of *idiolect*, *style as text variety* and *style as text quality*.

Idiolect

One of the main features of texts considered literary is the presence of style. There is no general agreement among linguists or literary critics on a definition of style, but the label is used mainly in two

senses: either to indicate that a given text has something special, or that it *is* somewhat special. In the first sense the word is very old indeed, appearing as long ago as the year 300 B.C. in the famous treatise *On Style* by Demetrius, and points to features which distinguish a given text from other texts. In the second, and fairly recent, sense the word refers to those features of a text which make it belong to a larger group of texts. We can say that in the first sense style is viewed as text quality and in the second sense as text variety. Before treating these two categories it may be useful to consider briefly the concept of idiolect, which refers to the special blend of language used by a particular person.

It could be argued that everyone speaks or writes in a particular way and that by the same token everyone produces texts (oral or written) which belong to different areas and are related to different contexts of situation; in both cases everyone participates in the production of style in the two senses referred to above. Although everyone produces texts that are distinct from others only a few manage to produce texts regarded by their listeners or readers as distinguished, that is to say not only different but better. So everyone produces a text that is a sample of his or her idiolect and that is inserted in a larger set of texts, but not many have style in the sense of text quality. Applying these distinctions to Borges' writings we can state that he has an idiolect of his own, that his writings belong to a larger set (Hispanic literature, literature in general) and that they have style. Borges' personal style is formed by features of style which he selected from various sources. They can therefore be found in other texts, including casual conversations, but in different combinations. Features typical of his idiolect serve rather to identify his writing than to give value to it, and features of text quality are among the elements which have earned him the status of great writer. In fact, a description of the different sets of features responsible for specific effects should be one of the chief tasks of linguistic stylistics.

One example of Borges' use of language can shed some light on the distinctions made above. Vargas Llosa (1988:110) alludes to the idiosyncratic Borgesian grammatical choice of the verb *fatigar* used

transitively. I find an instance of this choice in the story "Tlön, Uqbar, Orbis Tertius":

> En vano *fatigamos* atlas, catálogos, anuarios de sociedades geográficas, memorias de viajeros e historiadores: nadie nunca había estado en Uqbar. (Borges 1974:433)

According to Vargas Llosa this choice of Borges is so personally marked that its use by other contemporary Spanish-speaking writers betrays a Borgesian influence. It is interesting to note that, contrary to many characteristics of Borges' style, this personal mark has been transposed into English by two translators of this story:

> Fruitlessly we *exhausted* atlases, catalogues, yearbooks of geographical societies, memoirs of travellers and historians — nobody had ever been in Uqbar. (Borges 1965:19)

> In vain we *exhausted* atlases, catalogues, annuals of geographical societies, traveller's and historians' memoirs: no one had ever been in Uqbar. (Borges 1970:29)

The existence of certain idiolectal features can be revealed indirectly through comparison. One can take the idiolectal features and compare them with texts of a mainly communicative nature. In these, personal features tend to be irrelevant if not inappropriate, but style is not always absent. There are certainly leaflets and pieces of advertising better written than others and some may display highly valued stylistic features but probably no idiolectal features.

Style as quality implies the other categories I referred to. A writer who has style has necessarily at the same time a personal voice (idiolect) and produces texts which belong to larger series (style as variety).

What is hidden or opaque in an original text often becomes transparent in translation and this is one of the chief reasons why translated texts can be helpful to the study of style in all its aspects. Through a careful observation of different translations we can gain

invaluable insights into how style arises, increases, diminishes or disappears altogether. In fact, style, as much as poeticity (with which it seems so closely related), is not infrequently what is "lost in translation". Walter Benjamin, one theorist who seems to view style as the most important thing in every literary text and indeed the main reason for its being translated at all, caustically remarked (1969:70) that a bad translation is "an inaccurate transmission of a inessential content".

Translation helps us to trace those features which could be responsible for the aesthetic effect felt by a trained reader. The presence of style is revealed in the act of reading only if the reader shows the appropriate "intuition and personal judgement" (Leech 1981:4), that is to say, if he or she has had "an additional practice in understanding" literary texts, a need stressed by Sinclair (1991:114).

Some writers, who are after all mainly and foremost textualisers, have not failed to note that a text could be textualised differently if the stylistic principles at work were changed. This operation is a common one in translation and it is perhaps no wonder that such exercises in re-stylisation have been often metaphorically labelled "translation". So Chesterton imagines how some lines of Tennyson could have been if they had been written by Browning:

> "It is perfectly true, for instance, that a really lofty and lucid line of Tennyson, such as -

> "Thou art the highest, and most human too"

and

> "We needs must love the highest when we see it"

> would really be made the worse for being translated into Browning. It would probably become

> "High's human; man loves best, best visible,"

> and would lose its peculiar clarity and dignity and courtly
> plainness." (Chesterton 1903:147)

A similar exercise has been undertaken by the novelist Anthony
Burgess with a passage by James Joyce (see Leech 1981: 27-8), but
then in the opposite direction, from more elaborated to less elabo-
rated style.

These exercises are less futile than they may seem at first sight,
since they - like translations - can unveil some properties of intricate
texts and can reveal also alternatives that were not exploited. As
Halliday observes:

> (...) a text is meaningful not only in virtue of what it is but
> also in virtue of what it might have been.
>
> (Halliday 1964:302)

Translations are precisely what a text might have been if cul-
tural, textual and stylistic norms as well as the textualising abilities
of the author were different.

Style as Variety and Style as Quality

I will define style, for the purposes of my description of Borges'
texts in English, as "a meaningful patterning of a text" (Sinclair
1972:251). This is a more accurate, if somewhat cumbersome, la-
bel to describe what the linguists of the Prague School called *aktua-
lizace*, translated into English as *foregrounding*. Foregrounding is
defined, alongside its correlative *automatisation*, by Havranek as
follows:

> What do we understand by the different automatisation and
> foregrounding of the devices of the language? Let me start
> with an example taken from the relationship between differ-
> ent languages where these differences are most conspicu-
> ous. If we, for instance, translate the common Russian greet-

ing formula *zdravstvuyte* into Czech by the phrase *bud'te zdrav* [be healthy], everyone who does not know the literal meaning of the greeting *zdravstvuyte*, but knows its use, will immediately note that such a translation is unsuitable; in Czech this greeting has a whole series of equivalents. Why is this? A common Russian greeting form has been translated into Czech by an uncommon form, that is, we have changed an automatised expression into a foregrounded one although, of course, the phrase *bud'te zdrav* for many other purposes, for instance at the end of a letter, in saying goodbye, and the like, will be a completely common and automatised expression.(...)

By automatisation we thus mean such a use of the devices of language, in isolation or in combination with each other, as is usual for a certain expressive purpose, that is, such a use that the expression itself does not attract any attention; the communication occurs, and is received, as conventional in linguistic form and is to be "understood" by virtue of the linguistic system without first being supplemented, in the concrete utterance, by additional understanding derived from the situation and the context. (...)

By foregrounding, on the other hand, we mean the use of the devices of the language in such a way that this use itself attracts attention and is perceived as uncommon, as deprived of automatisation, as deautomatised, such as a live poetic metaphor (as opposed to a lexicalised one, which is automatised).

(Garvin 1964:9)

It is perhaps no coincidence that Havranek has used a translation example to illustrate his concepts since in translation we see more clearly than in native texts inappropriate foregroundings as equivalents to ST automatisation, and inappropriate (and for many, regrettable) automatisation as equivalents to ST foregroundings.

A crucial move is to isolate what is and what is not foregrounding since, as Halliday rightly observes (1973:112) "there are no regions of language in which style does not reside". At this point

it seems appropriate to introduce a distinction not always made nowadays but which was included by Demetrius in his *On Style*, namely style at sentential level and style at macrotextual level. The first type can occur by accident and it does occur in normal conversation as Mukarovsky noticed so perceptively:

> The aesthetic coloration of the utterance often arises by accident, without the previous intent of the speaker; it may come about by the unusual encounter of two phonetically similar words, or else by the accidental clash of two units of meaning (words, sentences) between which there flashes an unexpected semantic relationship, etc. All this, of course, may come about, and often does come about by sometimes unconscious, sometimes conscious, intent. In all of these cases, however, the aesthetic consists in the fact that the listener's attention, which has so far been turned to the message for which language is a means, is directed to the linguistic sign itself, to its properties and composition, in one word, to its internal structure. (Mukarovsky 1964:35)

So, a given translated text may present stylistic properties, or language in foregrounding, due rather to chance than to choice. In other words, the very fact of transposing a text into another linguistic code may cause a stylistic gain, even if the contrary is normally the case.

The distinction between style at sentential level and style at macrotextual level can be simply illustrated by a Shakespearean example. "To be or not to be", now almost universally known, is an instance of style concentrated in one string, whereas we may find that *Hamlet* presents a set of stylistic properties as a whole. A signal of style at sentential level is its great quotability; in fact the anthologies of quotations collect exactly those small stretches of texts believed to be particularly well constructed and to have a nicely packed short message (perception, insight or opinion). Even in brief texts the foregrounding seems to concentrate on a few items, sometimes in a specific word cunningly chosen. Because of this fact,

translation of highly valued texts can so easily spoil the aesthetic effect felt by readers of the original.

Less obvious is foregrounding at macrotextual level and its unveiling requires much more discernment and more delicate linguistic training. Some long prose texts seem to have no stylistic quality at all, but that can be misleading, as Mukarovsky notes:

> It cannot be said of the novel that here the linguistic elements are the aesthetically indifferent expression of content, not even if they appear to be completely devoid of foregrounding: the structure is the total of all the components, and its dynamics arises precisely from the tension between the foregrounded and unforegrounded components. There are incidentally, many novels and short stories in which the linguistic components are clearly foregrounded.
> (Mukarovsky 1964:23)

That the above holds true is demonstrated by Halliday in his in-depth analysis of *The Inheritors* by William Golding (Halliday 1973: 103-42), where he found that a grammatical feature, transitivity, organises the whole text and constitutes, in a sense, "the theme of the entire novel".

Textual Patterns

One could say that every text shows some kind of patterning, either by design or by chance. However, in order to understand this patterning we should perhaps engage in a three-stage operation. First we should detect and describe the patterns, then check a probable correspondence with semiotic patterning and finally decide whether they play any role in the total meaning of the text. The criteria we eventually opt for will greatly condition the degree of success or failure of the enterprise. Halliday, in a well-known essay, outlines the issue with clarity:

> My main concern, in this paper, is with criteria of rel-
> evance. This, it seems to me, is one of the central prob-
> lems in the study of 'style in language': I mean the prob-
> lem of distinguishing between mere linguistic regularity,
> which in itself is of no interest to literary studies, and regu-
> larity which is significant for the poem or prose work in
> which we find it. (...)
> It is no new discovery to say that pattern in language does
> not by itself make literature, still less 'good literature': no-
> thing is more regular than the rhythm of *Three Blind Mice*,
> and if this is true of phonological regularities it is likely to
> be true also of syntactic ones. (Halliday 1973:103)

Among these linguistic regularities we may distinguish *phono-
logical* and *graphological patterning*, *string* and *clause patterning*,
lexical patterning and *textual block patterning*. These linguistic
patternings form the basis for patterns at a higher level like poetic
patterns, narrative patterns and argumentative patterns.

   Phonological patterning is purely formal, although it can suggest
or highlight the meaning of an item, a series of items or whole
blocks of text. Since it does not by itself have a definite meaning it
is no surprise that it is most efficiently used in short texts. Tradi-
tionally it has been used mainly in poetry and in modern times more
in advertising. In both cases it functions also as a powerful atten-
tion-catching and mnemonic device.

   Clause patterning is lexicogrammatical in nature and can there-
fore carry a great deal of ideational and interpersonal information.
Winter (1974, 1977) and Hoey (1983) have demonstrated how it
can be paramount in providing sense to text particularly through
sequencing and matching relations.

   Block patterning seems especially important in very long texts,
like novels and social sciences books. In fiction there is frequently
alternation between passages of descriptive, narrative and dialogical
nature.

   String patterning, a particular feature of Borges' texts, occupies
a transitional area between clause and lexical patterning. In reality,

some of the strings behave like single items and some like short-ened clauses. They seem to be particularly important for the inter-personal aspect of texts.

Finally, lexical patterning appears to play a far more important role in organising texts than was traditionally thought (see Hoey 1991).

For my present purposes it is essential to establish a link between linguistic patterns on the one hand and literary patterns on the other. It is also vital to investigate whether there are links between these patterns and the quality of text. In other words, it is not enough to unveil the patterns, it is vital to analyse their role in the general economy of a given text.

The combination of different patterns is one of the devices which, in principle, make possible the existence of an infinite variety of textualisations. In fact, most texts, even the supposedly original lit-erary texts, show more features in common with other texts than distinctive features of their own. Comparing the original and its translation allows us to ponder the relative importance of various kinds of patterning in the making of textual meaning.

Poetic, narrative and argumentative patterns, which belong to the semiotic level, make use of the above linguistic patterns in vari-ous forms and degrees. It is perhaps misleading to automatically identify linguistic and semiotic patterns, even when the link seems obvious or historically justified for a country or a group of coun-tries. So sound patterning, often associated with poetry, appears also in narrative and even in essays. By the same token, string, clausal and block patterns may have a higher importance in some types of poetry, at a given time, in a specific cultural tradition or in a particular author. Borges' works offer a good illustration of this phenomenon since their linguistic features do not always coincide with the ones present in the received literary patterns.

Transtextual Relations

Every text is only possible because of the previous and contemporary

existence of other texts. This means that even the most singular and highly valued text must have some connection with a set of texts in the present and in the past and, at least potentially, in the future as well. With some texts there will be a community of language and of genre, with others only of some type of textual organisation at macro or microlevel.

Most important is that beside the obvious external relations every text also shows, either openly or in a concealed manner, a relation with other texts which is internalised and encapsulated in its linguistic form. I shall call them transtextual relations (see Genette 1982:85-90). Transtextual relations can be divided into intertextual relations (see Kristeva 1986:438-65 and Worton & Still 1990:1-44) and lexical iconicity. Both point to external textual material: in the first case to lexicogrammatical strings, in the latter to lexical items. I shall use both concepts from a linguistic point of view and therefore will confine my observations to what is visible (or can be made visible) in the text and will not elaborate on their broader literary and cultural implications.

Intertextuality

Intertextual relations is in my interpretation a more restricted concept than transtextual relations. Intertextual relations happen when in a given text there are stretches which gain their fuller sense when compared with other stretches from other texts. Transtextual relations are the remaining relations, of any degree or level, which can be established between one text and other text(s), of any time and place. Intertextuality is linguistically best understood as an

> (...) example of matching [relations], but this time the reader
> is asked to supply the matched text (...) (Coulthard 1990:6)

Even short texts, such the titles of books, can be used as intertextual material, as in the following example provided by the title of

a recent article *(Personal Computer World* March 92:379): SENSE AND USABILITY. Obviously, the reader is supposed to know the title of Jane Austen's novel and to spot the changed item in the string.

Borges is rightly quoted by many theorists and analysts of intertextuality, since he practised it widely in his texts and made a conscious use of it in order to bring innovation to literature, challenging the modern notion of originality. As Worton & Still comment:

> The products of (meta) critical readings which convince him that tradition is a mere fictitious construct, his "fictional" writings testify to a belief in the creative and modifying power of re-enunciation. (...) in his complex writings of and on fictions, Borges challenges the doxa of writing as territorialism and demarcation of property, borrowing in order to subvert the concepts of authorial integrity and textual fixity. (Worton & Still 1990:13)

As happens with other textual properties, intertextuality is diversely decoded by different readers. One can posit as a rule that the fewer demands it makes on its reader's capability in decoding intertextual references, the more understandable a text will be. In fact, to have culture means, in textual terms, to be able to successfully proceed to intertextual operations instantaneously, that is, to possess a large and readily available memory of prestigious texts. A literary text, especially a complex one, often displays many intertextual references. One of the causes of the possibility of different and even contradictory interpretations of a literary text seems to reside precisely in the different decoding realised by the particular reader of intertextual clues. At this point an example from Borges may further clarify the matter.

Let us take "Borges y yo". In the middle of this short text there is the sentence:

> Spinoza entendió que todas las cosas quieren perseverar en su ser; la piedra quiere ser piedra y el tigre un tigre.

The clause "todas las cosas quieren perseverar en su ser" is an unacknowledged quotation of Spinoza's *Ethics* (Book III, Prop. VII). The rest of the sentence is in a relation of matching compatibility with this quotation:

las cosas	quieren	perseverar	en su ser
la piedra	quiere ser	piedra	
el tigre	[quiere]	[ser]	un tigre
example	constant	constant	example

Naturally not every reader in Spanish will be able to locate the quotation from Spinoza, an author relatively well known but rarely read. Still the intertextuality is there and the reader who does identify the quotation and the Borges' variation upon it will certainly have more meaning at his disposal and probably also more intellectual pleasure. It should be noted that with "difficult" authors like Borges the critical editions and critics in general make the connections that the normal reader is not capable of. If the intertextuality cannot be readily detected, the translator will probably produce a text with much less information. This is unquestionably one of the most problematic areas of translating writers like Borges into English and indeed into every language.

Sometimes it is the whole text that plays with patterns of a previous text, supposedly known by its audience. That is the case of Borges' "El fin" (Borges 1968:132-42), which re-presents an episode of the Argentinian epic poem *Martín Fierro* by José Hernández, using the same characters with their own names. As Stabb explains:

> In this tale the brother of one of Fierro's victims, "The Negro", challenges Fierro to a duel and subsequently kills him. The background for the story — Fierro's knifing of the original "Negro" — is part of the *Martín Fierro*, but the brother's vengeance is purely Borges' invention. Much of the dramatic impact results from the fact that the death of Fierro, as depicted by Borges, is an exact replica of the

> original killing; except for the fact that the roles of victim
> and killer are reversed. Yet the Borges blending of appar-
> ently opposed identities can hardly be appreciated without
> some knowledge of the tale's literary background.
>
> (Stabb 1970:135)

Despite Stabb's assertion, it seems that the story can still be understood and enjoyed by a reader who is not aware of the intertextual play with Hernández' work. That is perhaps the case of most Spanish-speaking readers of most countries, except for Argentina and Uruguay, where *Martín Fierro* is taught at school and widely known. However, Stabb is certainly right in the sense that when read without the background of the intertextuality "El fin" can seem a fairly simple story and its literary status is diminished. The same is likely to happen with a translation of this story if some sort of explanation about *Martín Fierro* is not offered either within the text or in a footnote.

The presence of intertextual elements helps to increase, in fact, the number of possible textualisations in translation, since translators have a broad choice, which ranges from just ignoring them altogether to making various types of clarification.

Lexical Iconicity

Under this heading I will understand every transtextual relation that is not an intertext and that manifests itself in the form of isolated items rather than strings. So I will include cultural and historical allusions as they appear as proper names of people, places, institutions, etc.

Lexical iconicity is for many readers one of the annoying aspects of Borges' works, who feel rebuffed by the astounding quantity of unknown references. On the other hand, the same lexical iconicity gratifies more erudite readers who seem amazed at the fact that historical details can contribute to making a literary text interesting.

The demands that lexical iconicity places on the reader differ substantially from those of intertextuality. The reader is not asked to provide strings or chunks to match and make sense of the text, but to recall an indefinite amount of information gathered from different sources. For example, if the reader encounters the item *Cervantes* his or her reaction can vary enormously, going from a mere identification with "author of *Don Quixote*" to a recollection of detailed data about his life and works. In other words, to comprehend lexical iconicity it is necessary to access texts processed in the past, and that will depend heavily on the past reading experience of the reader, in short, on his or her personal *culture*.

Unlike intertextuality, which is by nature allusive, lexical iconicity can be instantly noticed. Its distinctive graphological feature is an initial capital letter. For the reader as for the translator the problem will be to retrieve the information in reference books, like encyclopaedias and specialised lexicons. Normal dictionaries do not as a rule carry proper nouns, except for the ones perceived by the· lexicographer as being of immediate cultural relevance, for instance the item *Buddha* in the *Collins Cobuild Dictionary*.

Finally, the importance of lexical iconicity in Borges' works is confirmed by the recent publication in English of two comprehensive dictionaries (Balderston 1986 and Fishburn & Hughes 1990) which cover most of the lexical iconicity present in Borges' writings, and therefore make their reading a less demanding and more rewarding task.

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