Memes: the untranslatability of otherness?

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Abstract

The paper aims to discuss some cultural aspects of translation, particularly the untranslatability of the otherness of memes. What is a meme? It's a humorous picture, sentence, video, or photo spreading rapidly and forming a real phenomenon on the network. So how can we ensure that certain aspects embodied in it, which have to do with local elements rooted in the history, education, and daily life of a given country, are understood by receivers of different latitudes? This is a request for thinking through humor, academia, philosophy, networks, information technology, and effective communication (or less).

Keywords : memes, otherness, translation, viral, culture

Introduction

It is difficult to put into words what we process at the level of thought. Let's imagine the difficulty of translating thoughts into words, decoding, and recoding them into another language... But what does translation into another language involve? We're not talking about ojectiv refrences.

We are not talking here, about objective references, we do not (for now at least) even refer to the problem of the absence of identity in translation... the question is even more complex, it transcends morphological and syntactic structures, indeed, it does not concern how much the quantity of words and the structure of the source language must be respected, but it points to "What is expressed?" "What does it mean in the language and above all in the source culture?"

The crucial question is… how would a meme translate from one language to another? Looking at memes in Spanish... you think, what will the "Argentine equivalent" be like? Because then, it is not just the problem of switching to a language, the issue is rooted in the

transition to a language inserted within a certain culture. The Spanish of Argentina obeys cultural, historical, economic, philosophical and traditional realities that are different from the Spanish of Spain, Peru, Paraguay, etc. Here the different diatopic realities turn relevant

Furthermore, within every society the different social classes are also producers of cultural elements, and here diastratic analysis comes into play in relation to the social condition of the speakers.

Memes are intimately linked to local phenomena, however, them tied to certain **"cultural universals"** (referring to the Western world), which at least the entire Western world could understand, thanks to the global world. This aspect is linked to a sociolinguistic analysis that points to the **Saussurian diachronic variety** [1], linked to a generation that can understand certain signs produced by mass media culture.

Untranslatability consists in the impossibility of finding an equivalent of a written or oral text when translated into another language... does this happen with memes? Yes, sometimes it is practically impossible to translate the meaning, and sometimes, the meaning can be understood, but it does not coincide with the use or choice of the poster.

Memes are transferors of meaning within the largest network that has ever existed: the internet. By a **diaphasic analysis**, we aim to study the linguistic variations in relation to the function of the message and the situation where it is located, even if memes can be present in other media, such as TV, however, they are originally a network product.

The translator's understanding of these sociolinguistic categories is fundamental in carrying out his functions. In fact, according to the latest trends, the translator is assimilated to a cultural mediator, who builds bridges between different cultures, as affirmed by Jean Delisle (2013) "*La connaissance d'une langue étrangère équivaut à posséder une seconde paire d'yeux ou d'oreilles. Elle élargit nos horizons personnels et permet de mieux comprendre nos semblables. Pour la première fois, notre existence est mise en perspective*."

2. MEMES

2.1 What are memes?
Memes are undoubtedly web 2.0 productions whose aim is to semiotize the relationship with reality. We are submerged in a society in which narration is almost the only process that

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[1] The research focuses on the way in which the signs of words change, the appearance of new ones and how other terms become archaic.

creates and recreates the reality. The stories compete with each other. All media have become "social", and memes allow us to carry forward our "being social" through the culture of commentary: sharing productions, commenting on others and circulating information continuously.

We comeback to "narrative" society as affirms Albin Wegener *"on pourrait parler d'apparition d'hypercontes, soit de récits qui, comme tout paradoxe postdigital, sont à la fois ancrés dans le réel et dans l'imaginaire (...)"*. These stories are connected to each other as in computing through mental connections similar to hyperlinks, we are faced with hypertexts. It must be said that, *"nell'ipertesto, alla logica deduttiva subentra una logica associativa. L'ipertesto ha un carattere eminentemente dialogico[2]"*. Characteristic that memes present given that due to today's comment culture, the dialogue is open all the time (except when the user who posts does not allow it). Memes are viral[3], another consubstantial characteristic of hypernarrative: the fuel that allows hyper accounts to circulate, as Albin Wagener (2022) argues. This virality is due to the way in which different contents interact with a large number of references, and then this last report also allows the snowball effect and the continuation of sharing. In fact, the term refers to the phenomenon of the rapid diffusion of contents and/or concepts among network users: starting from an existing copy (of a known and circulating image) which is used as a "template[4]" that comes close to idea of "architext", as Albin Wagener (2022) argues.

Memes are also post-digital productions, which allow us to be in a continuous and evolutionary interaction, which makes use of its own language: they are what Saussure called metasigns[5].

2.2 The untranslatability of certain cultural aspects: the otherness of the meme

We can start from this affirmation posed here as a question: Does **translatability** mean that between this phrase or word, and the one that "expresses" it, something inexpressible, untranslatable is produced that we charitably skip over when we translate? Why? Perhaps

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[2] PONZIO, Augusto "*Testo come ipertesto e traduzione letteraria*", Casa Editrice Guaraldi, rima edizione: novembre 2005

[3] People are emotionally stirred by productions, which prompts them to repeat, retransmit, or alter in order to postpone.

[4] Combination of qualities that characterize a group or genre of texts

[5] They are signs that allow other signs to be explained, the connotation is important.

because we apply a **universal pragmatics**[6] which in any case does not satisfy us philosophically but is functional to the dynamics of relative effectiveness of communication.

The big dilemma here is that language consists of a dictionary (lexicon): semantic and functional elements, and rules that serve to combine them (grammar), and all of that together constitutes an abstract and profound structure (Zwolski: 2005). The big dilemma here is that language consists of a dictionary (lexicon): semantic and functional elements, and rules that serve to combine them (grammar), and all of that together constitutes an abstract and profound structure (Zwolski: 2005).

 So how can we match this arbitrary and abstract conventional structure with another with the same dynamics? The translator will always face difficulties of translating, which he should know how to manage, and as **Fiola** claims, "*Cela signifie, en outre, que l'on puisse reconnaître tout risque d'interférence aux plans typographique, lexical, syntaxique, stylistique ou **socioculturel**, ainsi que les cas où il convient d'appliquer les règles relevant des techniques de rédaction pour éliminer une répétition abusive, par exemple, ou d'alléger le texte d'arrivée par la suppression d'une proposition relative (...)*".[7]

According to Levinas, (1905-1995) otherness is not only not a negative value, but it is the highest ethical value. And we live immersed in a world that increasingly highlights diversity and the need to keep ourselves different and unique. Now, with regards to translation, we translators must throw ourselves into finding certain universals that allow us to translate, or really, give ourselves the title of real cultural mediators and transform the message of the commercial into a message understandable for the recipient of the prospectus. It's certain that "*À l'étape de la reformulation dans la langue d'arrivée, le traducteur cherche à s'appuyer sur des ressources documentaires qui l'aideront à produire un texte idiomatique dont la terminologie correspond au plus près aux usages ayant cours dans les milieux concernés*"[8], however, it is no less certain that this research is not limited only to the linguistic aspect, but goes beyond: it also aims to translate cultural aspects and make necessary adaptations.

Let's take this example that the Latin American community will understand perfectly, applying a diatopic analysis:

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[6] An expression that Jürgen Habermas considers to be on par with the idea of "communicative competence". It is named universal because it refers to the same foundation of reason and intersubjective understanding that underlies and guides every act of language-based communication, in contrast to an empirical and specific practice that would correspond to a particular language.

[7] FIOLA, Marco A*., La traduction raisonnée. Manuel d'initiation à la traduction professionnelle de l'anglais vers le français* 3e édition, page 93.

[8] FIOLA, Marco A*., La traduction raisonnée. Manuel d'initiation à la traduction professionnelle de l'anglais vers le français* 3e édition, page 74
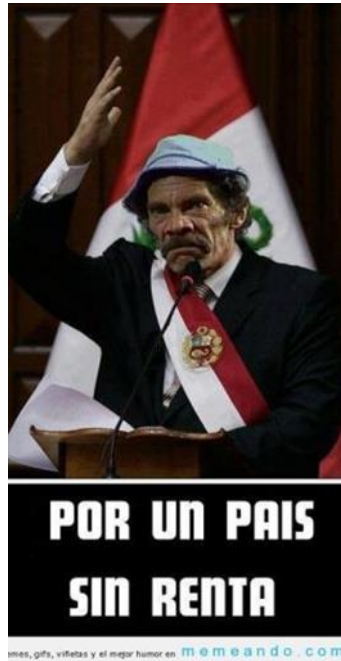
This Meme evokes the character of "Don Ramón". It would appear that here, he is running for office and his campaign theme is aimed at eliminating rent payments.

Don Ramón was a jobless man, a bit of a slacker, who had a daughter to support, a single father who could never pay the rent and when the manager arrived, he hid. This Mexican TV program, "El Show del Chavo", was broadcast throughout almost all of Latin America, and many generations grew up watching it… could this MEME be translated? The answer is no. A literal translation of "Per un paese senza affitto" ("For a country without rent") with the image of Don Ramon behind it would mean nothing to an Italian. And then? What is the point of just finding linguistic equivalents? The answer is no. A literal translation of "For a country without rent" with the image of Don Ramon behind it would mean nothing to an Italian. And then? What is the point of just finding linguistic equivalents? To nothing! Translation becomes impossible given that, following Bauckhage (2011), the meme has a social nature and a pluri-referential aspect, and is about bringing together individuals who share experiences, and furthermore, these elements that lead to the identification of individuals make it viral. It would seem that compared to memes that refer to a local, national, restricted reality in other words, the translation would not make sense in the target language, given that the sociolinguistic references would have been lost in the translation process.

Memes truly deserve special attention given that, as Albin Wagener (2022) argues, they have the status of language, composed of metasigns, and constitute different systems of signs,

cultural references and social representations. At this point precisely, appear the limitation of translation.

3. Culture, memes and translation.

3.1 Do linguistic universals... and cultural universals exist?

Let's start from the statement that language and culture are two absolutely inseparable concepts. According to Zhu (2018) language is a container in which all types of cultural information are placed and plays an important role in its transmission. However, we can find some universal cultural references. Certain expressions or situations that are repeated in most cultures (at least Western) and which allow the reuse of iconic images from memistic databases. There is no dispute about the fact that memes are intertextual and interdiscursive elements. The success of these depends on the publications and make them popular and modifiable to be applied to other situations and other cultures. On the one hand we find the image element which can be reused more easily, on the other, the clearly linguistic element, where the translator will encounter difficulties in some cases. Let's see the following example:

In this case, the message transmitted seems to be universally valid…, and could be translated into different languages (*Me dijiste que no tomabas refers to not ingesting alcohol),* but the use of the verb TOMAR in Spanish does not coincide with the use of the verb PRENDERE (take) in Italian one hundred percent in this situation:

Literal Translation: *"Mi avevi detto che non bevevi" "Buone decisioni"*

Translation With the verb "prendere" ("to take"): *"Mi avevi detto che non prendevi l'alcol" "Buone decisioni"*

In the first translation the verb is changed, and the original meaning in Spanish is lost and in the second example of translation the impossibility of maintaining the meaning persists, even

if using the verb "prendere", which could be used as in Spanish with the noun UNA DECISIONE , but the omission of a linguistic element here does not produce the same effect. However, in the first part of the meme, the addition of alcohol as a direct object makes it impossible to connect the two ideas.

In short, in this case from Spanish to Italian, it is impossible to use grammatical linguistic equivalents to translate the idea. We need to change completely the text, and perhaps, think about the uses of the verb "prrendere"... choosing may be the pronominal verb "PRENDERSELA" which means to get angry with someone:

Possible translation that would change the meaning: *"Mi avevi detto che non te la prendevi…"* *"Nemmeno una buona decisione"*

Let's look at the following meme, but doing the exercise in reverse, from Italian to Spanish.

In the first part, the girl, in the midst of a crisis, accuses the cat of being a failure according to what her mother has expressed. The cat replies that he did something, given that he won a championship playing on the PlayStation, making a very local reference: the Pistoia area. This is the Unione Sportiva Pistoiese founded in 1921, an Italian football club based in the city of Pistoia, currently playing in Serie D, the fourth division of the Italian championship. Without a doubt a literal translation would not make sense, so if you want to translate it and **adapt** the original idea you should look for the name of a local team: for example:

Adapted translation: *"Tu vieja dice que sos un fracasado"* *"Vos que a los 42 años ganaste la Liga Nacional con Aldosivi jugando al FIFA"*.

Without a doubt, as a translator I have applied cultural equivalences and adaptations here. I also made some modulations that could respond to the diaphasic and diastratic varieties.

Translation	Method/Process	Translation	Method/Process
Madre/Vieja	Diastratic modulation / diaphasic	Pistoiese/Aldosivi	Transposition / equivalence / cultural adaptation

The difficulty in translating involves in the fact that memes are subjected to the systemic mechanisms of hyper narrative[9] that allude to human attention and emotions, as Wagener (2022) indicates. These references and evocations make them viral and allow their circulation.

The second part of the following meme also refers to very local cultural aspects, mentioning the name of Paolo Fox, an Italian astrologer, television personality and publicist. It refers foreign element to an Argentine reader who doesn't watch Italian TV. The first sentence refers to a reality shared worldwide, where certain generations (those between 25 and 40 years old) do not have children and prefer not to form a family, a situation highly criticized by mothers belonging to other generations with a different concept of the family. To give meaning to a meme of this type and transform it according to our reality, we should make a cultural adaptation of the term Paolo Fox... Ludovica Squirru? How about? Horangel perhaps, but he wouldn't respond to the exact speed and relevance of the memes, because he passed away a year ago. The lexicographer **Ménage** theorized on these problems using the term "**Les belles infidèles",** which arose in France between the 17th and 18th centuries. The translations made in France in those years were characterized by the fact that they adapted the contents of classical texts to French "buon gusto" ("good taste"), and to achieve this they omitted words or changed some words that could harm the purity and beauty of the French language. According to Steiner, therefore, the perennial question we continue to discuss is "What is the optimal correlation between text A in the original language and text B in the target language?" (1975, tr. it.: 253). But here we go beyond linguistic limits, we have to work on linguistic aspects but also on cultural aspects.

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[9] Anche detto iper-racconto: letteratura moderna che usa il computer come mezzo comunicativo, c'è una collaborazione fra lettore e autore, in cui lo scrittore fornisce al lettore delle pagine web collegate tra loro e il lettore decide l'ordine di lettura.

The following meme evokes a situation in love life, which is combined with a mathematical problem, a mathematical formula to be precise. The translation in this case would not present major complications...

"Mi ha chiesto tempo e distanza" "Credo voglia calcolare la velocità"

So in this last case, we ask ourselves whether we are faced with linguistic universals and also with cultural universals (I repeat, at least in the Western world). In this case we find equivalents in the source language and in the target language, and concepts that are expressed in the same way in the world of mathematics. Furthermore, the cultural evocations that form

the basis of life in society are similar and comparable to situations that are given on graph paper.

The following meme could be extendable to other situations and does not present problems when translated, which seems to be able to be realized in literal/linear form and without the need for **interpretation**:

"Chi siamo?" "Il coro" - "E cosa vogliamo?" "Fare le prove" - "Quando le vogliamo fare?" "Martedì - Venerdì - Sabato" - "Martedì ho lezione" "Sabato non posso" "Io venerdì non posso" "Sabato sera?"

There are practically no changes compared to the source text, complexity and nothing. As per Delisle's translation manual "*certaines allusions seront plus faciles à transposer dans le texte d'arrivée, car plus universellement connues (...) lorsqu'il existe une équivalence attestée dans la langue d'arrivée et que les connotations qui s'attachent à une allusion sont communes aux deux langues et aux deux cultures, la traduction littérale est certainement la solution à privilégier. L'intervention du traducteur est alors minimale.*" (2013 : p.580).

In the following meme the translator sets himself up as an interpreter, as he should have done in some previous cases. The figure of Julio Iglesias is very well known in the world of Spanish and Argentine entertainment, however do not take his fame in the Italian peninsula for granted.

However, an Italian speaker could never make this association if he did not know Spanish, and here I believe that we are faced with a meme that is untranslatable from a linguistic and cultural point of view.

From a linguistic perspective, we start from the impossibility of equating the name Giulio with the month of July in Italian, whereas in Spanish both are the same: not only homophones but also homographs. On the other hand, the month of July in Argentina announces the cold, the arrival of frost, frost, frosts, ice, etc. In the case of Julio with the iced beers, would it work to say "*Arriva Giulio con le ghiacciate*"? " ("July arrives with the iced beers"?) Probably not; Doesn't the evocation of Julio Iglesias work, not even the frozen ones that would arrive in Italy in July? In this case the message remains completely unintelligible.

So in these cases, translation is impossible and impractical. Interlingual transfer often imposes limitations, as Darbelnet points out : "*Pour le traducteur, l'identification des nécessités, tendances, possibilités et impossibilités des deux langues avec lesquelles il travaille présente non seulement un intérêt théorique, mais aussi une utilité pratique. On attend de lui, en effet, qu'il traduise d'abord correctement (donc en respectant des nécessités et des impossibilités), mais en outre idiomatiquement (donc en tenant compte des tendances et des simples possibilités). Le respect de l'intégrité de la langue d'arrivée est à ce prix* (Darbelnet, 1978 : 136 ".

The call for gender equality is inextricably linked to the legal-political situation in Argentina given that on 15 July 2010 the "*Ley de Matrimonio Igualitario*". A new complication, how to mentally associate the month of July with Julio Iglesias, with the sanction of a very important law from the point of view of human rights and then the play on words of "género" in the sense of gender/sex and in the sense of fabric… As the great translator of the Bible Martin Luther expressed it, the text is king, while the translation is a humble and faithful servant

resolved to serve her master... however this servant tends to speak her own language... At this point, we face an impossibility in translating? According to Disler in his definition of untranslatability this is a"*Caractère d'un énoncé auquel on ne peut faire correspondre aucun énoncé équivalent dans une autre langue*" e continua un po' più avanti "*Il en va de même de certains jeux de mots ou de tout effet sémantique indissociablement lié à l'exploitation des particularités formelles d'une langue*". (Disler: 2013 p. 665 Glossaire).

However, here we focus on this question which has to do with the philosophy of translation, a question already posed by Derrida...

Why not translate: if there is something that really needs to be translated, it is the untranslatable thing, precisely that which remains inaccessible and incontestable due to its otherness?

The following meme, again using Julio Iglesias as a resource, refers to the inevitable association that an Argentinian would make with the number one and the Fiat Uno car manufactured and very popular in the middle class between the years 89 and 95. However, we find ourselves faced with the impossibility of forcing the association between Luglio, Giulio and Julio.

In the following meme the translation is very accessible. The South Korean fiction Squid Game which tells the story of 456 people who risk their lives in a series of survival tests. In the first chapter, participants must pass the first test: a robot doll supervises the good performance of the game, , *Un, due, tre, stella*, (One, two, three, star), sings in Korean: "*L'ibisco è sbocciato*"[10], ("The hibiscus has blossomed", and shoots those who move out of time. This character has given birth to countless memes and stickers, like this one below, which doesn't present any particular problems when it comes to translating:

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[10] in reference to hibiscus syriacus, the national flower of South Korea.

"Io cercando coppia" - "Abita lontano" "è alto meno di un metro ottanta" "Bisogna una psicoterapia" "è mammone" "narcisista" "non dimentica l'ex" "non gli piacciono i cagnolini" "non ha responsabilità affettiva"

("I'm looking for a couple" - "He lives far away" "he's less than six feet tall" "He needs psychotherapy" "he's a mama's boy" "narcissist" "he doesn't forget his ex" "he doesn't like little dogs" "he has no emotional responsibility")

Yo buscando pareja	*Io cercando coppia*	Literal translation
Vive lejos	*Abita lontano*	Literal translation
Mide menos de 1.80	*è alto meno di un metro ottanta*	Modulazione (cambiamento del punto di vista), permuta (*medir* per *essere alto*) e addizione (di - alto)
Necesita terapia	*Bisogna una psicoterapia*	Addizione/ espansione (articolo una) - expansion (article una) - exchange (from a

		personal verb to an impersonal one)
Tiene mamitis	*è mammone*	Exchange (tener ad essere - noun to adjective) / modulation (the point of view varies: illness to the fact of being)
Narcisista	*narcisista*	Literal translation
No supera su ex	*non dimentica l'ex*	Modulation (change of point of view: *superare* e *dimenticare* indicate different things)

Being aware of our surroundings, there are also memes that reference the World Cup. Italy remained out of it, however there are Italian memes that refer to this global event. There are, and perhaps there are among you readers, flat earthers. In fact, conferences of supporters of these ideas are held. After the voyages of Christopher Columbus, the theory entered a shadow, only to re-emerge in the nineteenth century as a response to the spread of scientific rationality and in defense of the content of the word of God through the literal reading of the Bible. Precisely in the era of interstellar travel, this belief is fueled by conspiracy theories: they claim there is, as in the film The Matrix, a virtual reality in which we are immersed but which does not exist and is the result of manipulation. The emblem of this global tournament is the cup... and it has a world on top, however its architecture would change if it were designed by flat earthers and if it were used in a world that does not believe in the progress and evidence of science.

This meme would certainly have no problems when it comes to be translated it (which is clearly literal), the meta-signs and cultural references would be shared by a large number of nations:

Coppa del Mondo – Copa del Mundo // Coppa del mondo per i terrapiattisti – Copa del Mundo para los terraplanistas

However, in the following example the question puts us in difficulty, the presentation of the meme has a comparative table form:

On the one hand, the FIFA World Cup Trophy has been awarded since 1974 to the national football team that won the world championship. Conceived and designed by the Italian goldsmith and sculptor Silvio Gazzaniga, produced by the Bertoni Srl company of Paderno Dugnano which is located in the province of Milan, now GDE Bertoni, it has become the symbol of the greatest international football event.

On the other hand, Coppa Piacentina is an Italian cured meat made from pork with a protected designation of origin (D.O.P.), produced in the province of Piacenza, whose original recipe originates in the municipality of Carpaneto Piacentino. On the other hand, Coppa Piacentina is an Italian cured meat made from pork with a protected designation of origin (D.O.P.), produced in the province of Piacenza, whose original recipe originates in the municipality of Carpaneto Piacentino.

It is produced with meat coming from the neck of the pig and the processing can take place exclusively in the Piacenza area, while the meat can come from Emilia-Romagna or Lombardy. The finished product, after at least six months of maturation, has a cylindrical shape and weighs more than 2.5 kg. Its characteristic is its "sweetness", which requires a limited percentage of salt and the very calibrated use of spices which must not overpower the "perfume" of the cured salami.

Let's see how the translation of the meme would look:

*Ragioni per cui la **coppa piacentina** è meglio della **coppa del mondo** — Razones por las cuales la **coppa piacentina** es mejor que la **copa del mundo***

Since Coppa Piacentina would not have a translation due to the fact that it is a DOP product, it could not be translated and there is no equivalent, however

6 kg	6 kg	Peso (weight)	Peso (weight)	Fra i 2,5 e i 3,5 kg	Entre los 2,5 y los 3,5 kg
No	No	**Commestibile** (Edible	**Comestible** (Edible(	Sì	Si
22	22	**Persone che possono sollevarla** (People who can lift it)	**Personas que pueden levantarla** (People who can lift it)	**Infinite** (Infinite)	**Infinitas** Infinite)
Ogni 4 anni (Every 4 years)	**Cada 4 años** (Every 4 years)	**Cambio di proprietà** (Change of ownership)	**Cambio de propiedad** (Change of ownership)	**Puoi prenderla sempre** You can always take it)	**Podés tenerla cuando quieras** You can have whenever you want)
Inesistente (Inexistent)	**Inexistente** (Inexistent)	**Profumo** (Smell)	**Perfume** (Smell)	**Inebriante** (Intoxicating)	**Embriagador** (Intoxicating)

Taking up the idea of Meschonnic's "illusions of transparency" from which the discussions on the impossibility of translating arise... and observing the following case we see that a literal

translation is impossible and that the explanations or notes that translators make on certain elements are more

that necessary. Another major theme during the 2022 World Cup was the involvment of referees and the referee bar during matches. Among the Argentinians it was said that during some matches, when the players (especially the attackers) began to do their part, the referee and the bar blew the whistle, notifying infringements to stop risky play. I think that the meme mentioned here can be easily translated to the target language without any issues with the relationship between text and image. "*Posso mangiarne un pezzo o mi fischerai fuorigioco?*"

The translation involved the following operations:

| Puedo comer torta I can eat cake	Posso mangiarne un pezzo I can eat a piece	Ewchange: I changed torta with the pronoun **NE** which refers to quantity. The construction with the modal verb is respected.
o vas a cobrar offside? or are you going to charge offside?	*o mi fischerai fuorigioco* or you'll whistle me offside	In the Rioplatense's view, a linguistic loan (offside) is the best option while the Italian needs to reformulate the translation to the calque style.

The Shakira song scandal is globally known, or at least it is a subject that has been discussed in the Western/Latin world, in Italy this story of betrayal and rhythmic responses on the part

of the victim has become known. Despite this, in the meme cited above we see that it refers to the IFE.

What could an Italian reader mean by IFE? Could he report to the city of Nigeria? Or to a suffix that we find in very few words such as "apocryphal" (plural of apocryphal)? We are very far away.

One could also think, following the ideas of Bertrand Russell, that "*nessuno può comprendere la parola formaggio, se prima non ha un'esperienza non linguistica del formaggio*"[11], and therefore those who do not live in Argentina and have not encountered the economic problems resulting from the pandemic could never understand the meme on their own. The IFE (Ingreso Familiar de Emergencia) was the economic incentive offered by the state to certain social sectors to be able to deal with the economic calamities resulting from the Covid-19 isolation. It is known that not all those who requested this aid received it... therefore for many Argentines, going forward in times of economic crisis and total closure was a hard blow.

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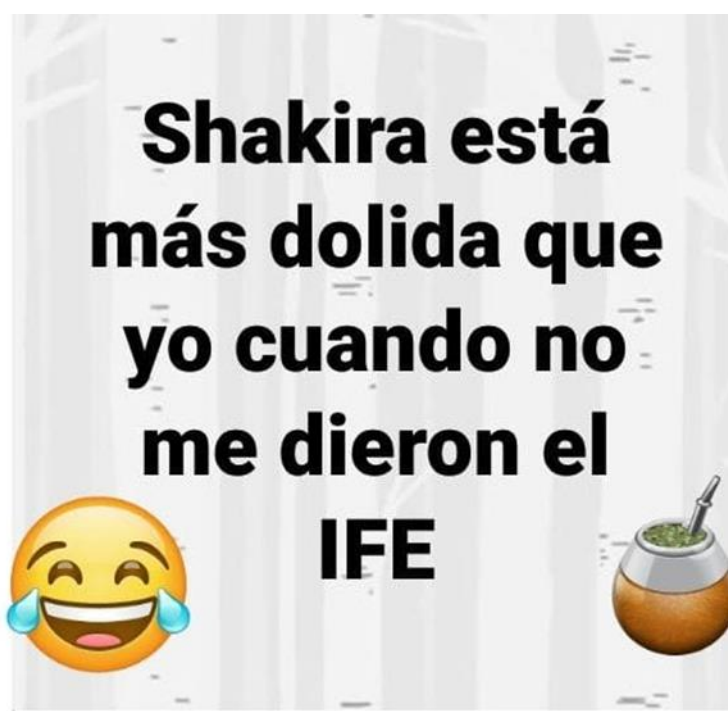
[11] Quotation in JAKOBSON, Roman "Aspetti Linguistici della Traduzione" in Teoria della Traduzione p. 51

In this meme, with highly cultural references that link two different times (the years 2020 and 2023), can we say that translation becomes impossible? Let's try to find an equivalent in Italy, since the first part could recall the same subject as Shakira. After the searches carried out I did not find an equivalent acronym word. Then translating a meme by making explanations would cause it to truly lose its essence, because as Johann Georg Hamann claims this has to do with the influence of language on the form of thinking, and what Johann Gottfried Herder stated regarding languages that consist of mental states with specific characteristics of the speakers, languages that merely reflect a certain "national mentality". If we still wish to go ahead with a translation of this meme, we will face with an alienating translation, where the characteristics of the issuing culture influence the language of the metatext: the translator writes a metatext that allows us to understand the culture of the transmitter and which leads to the reader towards the protest, the aim is to reproduce chronotopes. This meme must be adaptable to other Italian situations, which can make citizens angry about the State's decisions.

Yet another example of problematic translation that the next one poses for us, especially due to the image that serves as a cultural reference linked to the history of Argentine telenovels. Osvaldo Laport and Soledad Silveyra were the protagonists of the telenovel called "Amor en Custodia".

In a scene where the two protagonists are alone, he literally tells her "Ho bisogno di farti l'amore" ("I need to make love to you")... this sentence went viral after several years thanks to the creation of a YouTuber (Jorge Pinarello) and was used and reused in several memes in which something irresistible or an imminent need is shown. In this case, the fan, after a heat wave, begs to be turned off. The literal translation of the text could also be achieved by making some adaptations: "Ho bisogno di essere spento" "Ho bisogno che tu mi spenga" ("I need to be turned off" "I need you to turn me off") However, laughter is not something that happens automatically.

4. Conclusion:

Memes pose a challenge because there are aspects that are entirely untranslatable. Because as Juliane House (2016: 47) claims "*Any natural language is believed to have an 'inner form' peculiar to it, just as the 'external' (superficial) language structure varies widely among languages. This spiritual structure that languages possess corresponds to the thought processes of its users. In Humboldt's view, then, languages lie at the interface between objective reality and man's conceptualization of it. They act like colouredeglasses, forcing speakers to perceive reality in language-specific ways (see Brown 1957:116).*" The metatext often misses the equivalents of these correspondences between thought, language, objectivity and reality. I wonder if, as Humboldt said, for someone who interprets the meaning of a linguistic unit as a concept that resides in the mind of the speaker/listener, translation becomes impossible given that there is a final inaccessibility of that meaning, which gives it to us which lies outside the structure of language itself: culture, tradition, life in common in a specific time and space. In many cases the translation presents itself, as Glipper (1966) says, in a kind of spiritual metamorphosis.

Derrida said ""*L'imprudence fréquente des traducteurs (...) doit nous rendre très méfiants[12].*" (1967). But what do we do in the face of such certain impossibilities of translation... do we give up?

However, I must recognize that memes are not always translated literally, but change depending on the culture depending on the situation, the same image can be a text support for a community in a certain situation and only create meaning within it. Other memes can be reused in text and image within different groups, and others only use the text and others the image. And then following Derrida again we can affirm that"*la possibilité radicale de la substitution serait donc impliquée par le couple de concepts signifié/signifiant, donc par le concept de signe lui-même. Qu'on ne distingue le signifié du signifiant, avec Saussure, que*

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[12] DERRIDA, J. "L'écriture et la différence", Collection "Tel quel", aux Editions du Seuil, p. 65

comme les deux faces d'une même feuille, cela n'y change rien. L'écriture originaire, s'il en est une, doit produire l'espace et le corps de la feuille elle-même"? (Derrida 1967).

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