

# The reader as translator: cognitive processes in the reception of postcolonial literatures

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*Heterolingual literatures use a colonial language (matrix) and indigenous languages (embedded). They may be read by bilingual or monolingual readers, the latter being those who can only understand the matrix language (e.g. English) and therefore have to negotiate the gap offered by the embedded language. This is also applicable to the translation of heterolingual postcolonial works into a third language (e.g. Spanish), as long as the source text's "rhetoricity" is kept in the target text. Despite the indigenous authors' use of several strategies to convey the meaning of the segments in an embedded language (in-text translation, paraphrasing, glossaries) the focus here is on texts that do not offer such overt solutions, so that monolingual readers engage in cognitive activities similar to those of translators. To support this hypothesis, I propose a cognitive model influenced by structural semantics and the use of short-term memory and metalinguistic knowledge. This is framed by Homi Bhabha's third space and Turner and Fauconnier's blended space, following the cognitive reformulation of them proposed by Hernández.*

*Keywords: blended space, cognitive translation operations, heterolingual literatures, third space, reception of postcolonial literatures*

## Introduction

She spent most of her time at the faifeau's house serving matai on Sundays. Laulau le sua. (Figiel 2008: 1)

This is an excerpt from the very first page of Sia Figiel's novel *Where We Once Belonged*. It illustrates the phenomenon of heterolingualism in indigenous literatures, that is, the combination of at least two languages in the same work. In the example above the reader finds a combination of English and Samoan words. This is a common feature of postcolonial

literatures in which indigenous authors write mainly in the colonial language (e.g. English) but include their indigenous language (e.g. Samoan) in different ways and to different degrees.

According to Anthony Pym, “*generating* possible translations” and “*selecting* a definitive translation” can be complex operations, “yet translators are doing precisely that all the time, in split seconds” (2010: 1). It may be that “monolingual” readers of postcolonial heterolingual literatures operate in a similar way. By “monolingual readers” I mean those readers who can only understand one of the languages involved in the heterolingual work. Therefore, on the one hand, they *generate* possible meanings for the segments in the unknown indigenous language and, on the other hand, they *select* plausible meanings on a temporary basis (using their short-time memory). These meanings may later be stored in their long-time memory. This will depend on factors such as the translation devices found in the text or paratexts, the contextualization of the embedded segment, or the number of occurrences of the same word/segment in different contexts (the “drilling effect”).

If you do not know Samoan, you are a monolingual reader of the above fragment. How do you deal with the meaning gap that the Samoan segments are offering? This is a challenge, and the primary way to negotiate meaning must be by guessing. Consider this sentence:

(1) I went to Sina’s fale to visit her.

You may have several ideas of what *fale* means in this particular context. If you find a second context for this word, your guesses might be perceived as correct or wrong, using the trial and error method:

(2) I lived in the smallest fale of the village.

In the first example you could have considered the words *house*, *shop*, or *school* as an equivalent for *fale* (and pick up *house* as the most likely to be “fale” in the language you can understand). In the second context, you have the verbs *visit* and *live*, which makes it easier to choose *house* and disregard the other options. In a word, and *a priori*, the more contexts you have for a word in the embedded language, the more opportunities you have to confirm, discard or refine your guess.

Eventually, with further reading, monolingual readers can fill out the picture of the referent. In the case of a *fale*, it is in fact a house, particularly a traditional Samoan house that is made of wood pillars and has no walls.

Readers might thus engage in a process like the one sketched out in Table 1.

Memory plays an important role in the monolingual reader’s process of vocabulary building in the embedded language. In fact, contextual items

such as paratexts, co-texts and images (e.g. on book covers) as well as metalinguistic knowledge can help build up their short-term memory repertoire. Eventually, finding different contexts for the same segment, a long-term memory range of words and concepts in the indigenous language and from the indigenous culture can be established in the monolingual reader's inventory.

**Table 1:** Process of monolingual readers building meaning from segments in embedded language

<i>'Fale' found in different contexts</i>	
<i>Context #</i>	<i>Cognitive activity</i>
1.	<i>Generating</i> multiple options: Place (workplace, house...)
2.	<i>Selecting</i> provisional plausible meaning(s): House.
3.	<i>Refining</i> meaning: Samoan house, without walls...

However, the lack of scaffolding or paced progression in the introduction of segments in the indigenous language might result in the monolingual reader's failure to bridge the gap. There is a threshold motivation/frustration related to the reader's success in the negotiation of meaning. It is a matter of overall perception rather than the actual nailing of the meaning each time: if readers feel they can manage with the presence of Samoan segments they will carry on reading; if they feel they cannot, they will stop reading, losing track of the novel or interest in the culture. Perceiving these segments as challenges rather than obstacles will keep readers motivated; otherwise they risk terminating the reading. I try to quantify this motivation/frustration threshold in the experiment survey you can find in the annex. Let us first, though, define the concepts with which we are dealing.

## **Frameworks and Heterolingualism in Postcolonial Literatures**

Several theories can assist the study of heterolingual literatures and their reception. In this case I take the background of Translation Studies, Postcolonial Studies, Cognitive Linguistics, and partly of Foreign Language Acquisition to explain the way readers cope with heterolingual texts.

Translation Studies provides a framework able to account for processes involving the coexistence of two (or more) languages in a single text, the devices that authors or editors provide in the originals such as glossaries or notes to convey meaning of the passages in the embedded language, and the way readers seek equivalents in the matrix language. The issue becomes more interesting when the heterolingual work is translated into a third language (e.g. Spanish), in which case translators often face the task of

translating fragments from an unknown language. Their decisions tend to define their ideological position, or the position of their publishing house.

In the case of Postcolonial Studies, concepts such as hybridity and the third space proposed by authors like Homi Bhabha are central to the understanding of the hybridity of codes in indigenous postcolonial literatures. Many indigenous authors chose to write in colonial languages such as English, French or Portuguese after the independence processes of their territories. Nevertheless, the inclusion of their indigenous languages for the sake of mimicking street conversations, representing their people, or respecting their cultures is very common and opens a third space of communication between the two poles (colonizer/colonized). In fact many authors are or feel themselves to be in-betweens, and can be seen as mediators (actually as translators) between two conceptualizations or cultures.

Cognitive Linguistics must also inform our study. The way we process what we read and turn it into content, image, thought or referent is what is at stake. What happens when the signifiers, the words we read, do not open any drawer in our vocabulary chest because they are in a language we do not understand? What is the author's creative activity when mixing different languages? Here we refer to the "blended space" proposed by Turner and Fauconnier (1995) and linked by Rodríguez to Bhabha's "third space".

A further frame is provided by foreign-language acquisition. While they might operate like translators in generating and selecting meanings, readers are also acting as learners of a foreign language, using strategies such as trial-and-error. For this reason, I find scaffolding theory useful to define the reader's threshold of motivation or frustration. Readers need a cumulative progression of knowledge to build up their awareness of the new culture or language: a text that is too dense in foreign expressions might result in a blockage of the learning process. The right scaffolding gives monolingual readers a context or motivation from which they can understand the new information in the embedded language.

In summary, a small set of concepts can help frame our research:

- *Heterolingual literatures*: those literatures that combine at least two different languages in the same text consistently. Example: English and Samoan in Sia Figiel's oeuvre.
- *Matrix vs. embedded languages*: the former is the main language used by the author in the heterolingual work, while the latter is the one that interrupts.
- *Bilingual vs. Monolingual Readers*: When reading heterolingual literatures, bilingual readers are those who can understand both languages (e.g. English and Samoan), monolingual readers are those who can only decode from one of them (e.g. English).

- *Density of embedding*: I propose a density formula to quantify the percentage of the embedded language within the matrix language in a particular text:

$$X = \frac{\text{tokens indigenous lg} \times 100}{\text{total tokens (matrix + embedded)}}$$

*Total tokens*: the total number of running words in a certain corpus; if there are 1000 words in the first chapter, there are 1000 tokens.

*Total types*: the total number of different words in a certain corpus; in a corpus many words are used more than once, so there will be fewer types than tokens.

There will be different degrees and levels of language comprehension, e.g. a reader who is learning Samoan would pick up some words or an English native speaker might not know the meaning of a word or a particular saying, or dialectal variation in their own language. I insist on the operational nature of these labels, since readers might be perfect polyglots in other languages as well.

### **Cognitive and Postcolonial Studies: Blended Space in the Third Space**

Middle spaces are important in both Postcolonial Studies and Cognitive Science as sites of mediation and negotiation of meaning and perspectives. In Postcolonial Studies, Homi Bhabha has formulated the idea of a third space to explain the hybridity found in postcolonial contexts, where both colonizer and colonized define and construct their identities mutually. We must not forget, though, that there are imbalanced power relationships involved. Here is where the so-called Subaltern Group deconstructs the central/periphery (subaltern) binarism. The third space, then, is an in-between space of exchange, as well as the site of resistance and artistic creation (for more information on subaltern theories see Niranjana, Spivak, and Bhabha).

Cognitive linguistics, on the other hand, considers metaphor to be a mode of human conceptualization and part of the field of thought and reasoning. According to Lakoff (1993: 208), metaphor is not just a matter of language, but also of thought and reason: the language is secondary and the mapping is primary. Fauconnier and Turner work on this to propose a conceptual “blended space”, and Rebeca Hernández makes the connection between the postcolonial third space and the cognitive blended space to propose a combined framework to explain heterolingual literatures, providing examples from postcolonial Lusophone literature. Hernández

introduces Fauconnier and Turner's blended space, supported by Lakoff's previous research, as a matter of conceptual projection and middle spaces. The third space created in the middle of the other two is labeled a blended space, where each previous space projects part of their features:

To blend two spaces is to project them onto a third space, also partially structured, in such a way that the first two partial structures map coherently onto the third. [...] A blend in this sense is neither a union nor a blur. It is a space structured in its own right, onto which two initial spaces are projected. (Turner and Fauconnier 1994: 12)

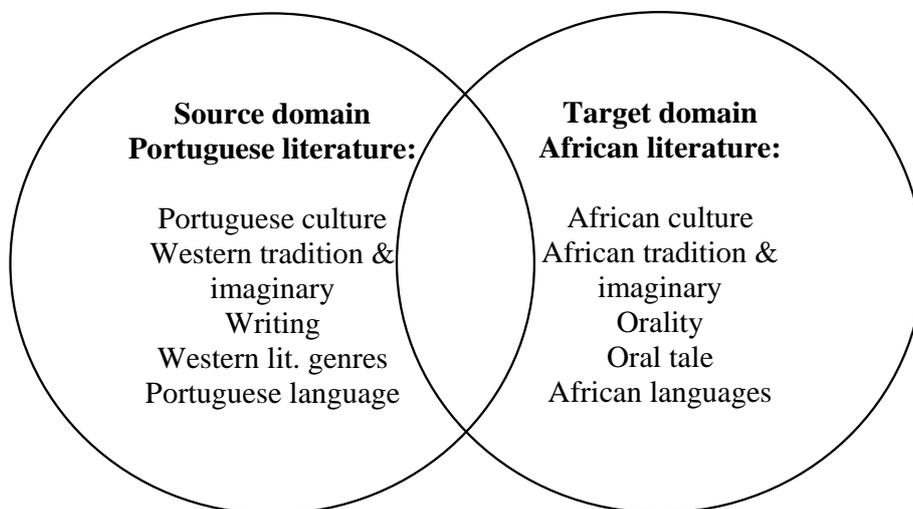
In her research, Hernández highlights the way Fauconnier and Turner take metaphor beyond the limits of the literary device: the metaphor normally takes an abstract concept in terms of a specific object. This is, in fact, what happens in our cognitive system. Metaphor is thus a cognitive operation that allows us to refer to an abstract object, an event or a phenomenon, with a specific one. In this way, it is not the signifiers (the words) but the mental image that is at stake.

Before developing her own blending of the postcolonial and cognitive perspectives to explain the production of heterolingual literatures, Hernández supports her theory by mentioning "domain" (from Lakoff) and "mental space" (from Fauconnier and Turner). The former defines semantic memory with metaphors that are perceived as universal (in the methodology they are expressed in capital letters); the latter revisits the term "domain" and inscribes it within a bigger picture, where processes are more dynamic and memory is not semantic but episodic:

- *Domain* (Lakoff): permanent and systematic metaphorical projections, stable metaphors, universal, central, basic. E.g. LIFE AS A BURDEN; JOURNEY; DAY. Source and Target domains. Semantic memory.
- *Mental space*: "We suggest that direct, one way and positive projection from source to target is only a special aspect of a more robust, dynamic, variable and wide-ranging assortment of processes" known as "episodic memory" (Turner and Fauconnier 1994: 4).

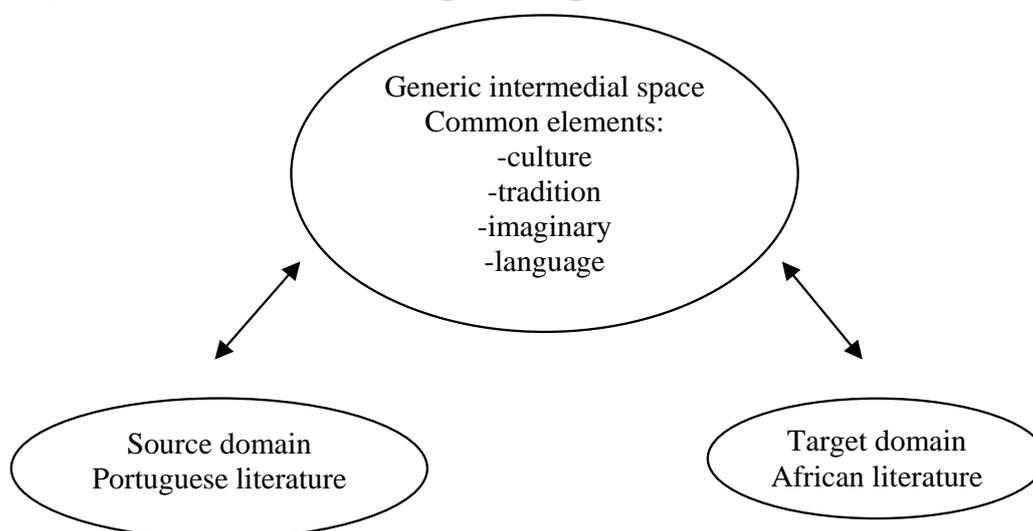
Rebeca Hernández's reformulation of the third space is illustrated with case studies in which Portuguese (the matrix and colonial language) is combined with indigenous (embedded) languages. As we are used to in Translation Studies, she uses two spheres to represent the source and the target domains of both Portuguese and African literatures (Figure 1):

**Figure 1:** Portuguese and African literary domains (adapted from Hernández 2007: 87)



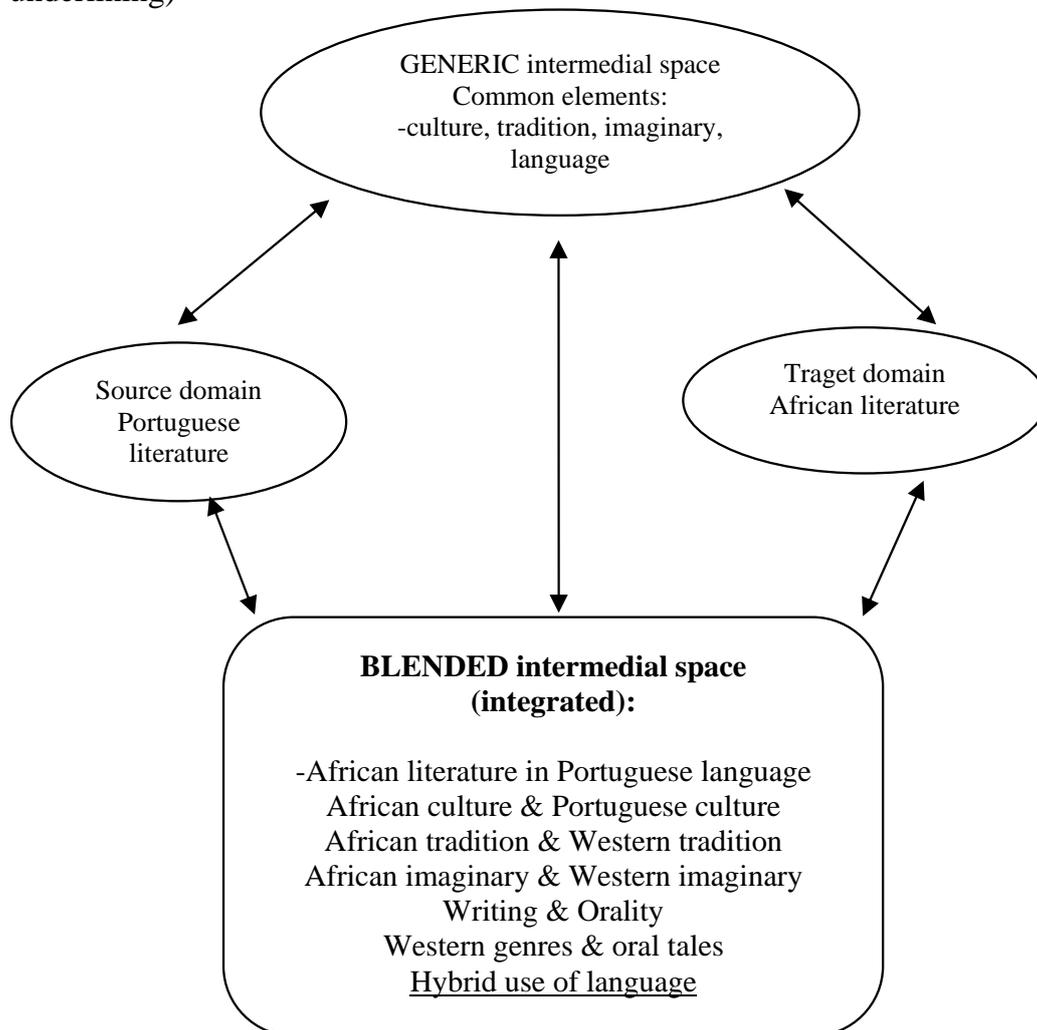
Both domains have a range of common elements (culture, tradition, imaginary... without the geographical actualization) that are projected to a middle space, a third space: it is like the carcass of shared characteristics between them. It is what Hernández labels “generic intermedial space” (Figure 2):

**Figure 2:** Generic intermedial space (adapted from Hernández 1997: 87)



From this intermedial third space we jump to the blended intermedial space, where the content features of both source and target domains are projected and blended, creating the hybridation of domains (Figure 3):

**Figure 3:** Blended intermedial space (adapted from Hernández 87, my underlining)



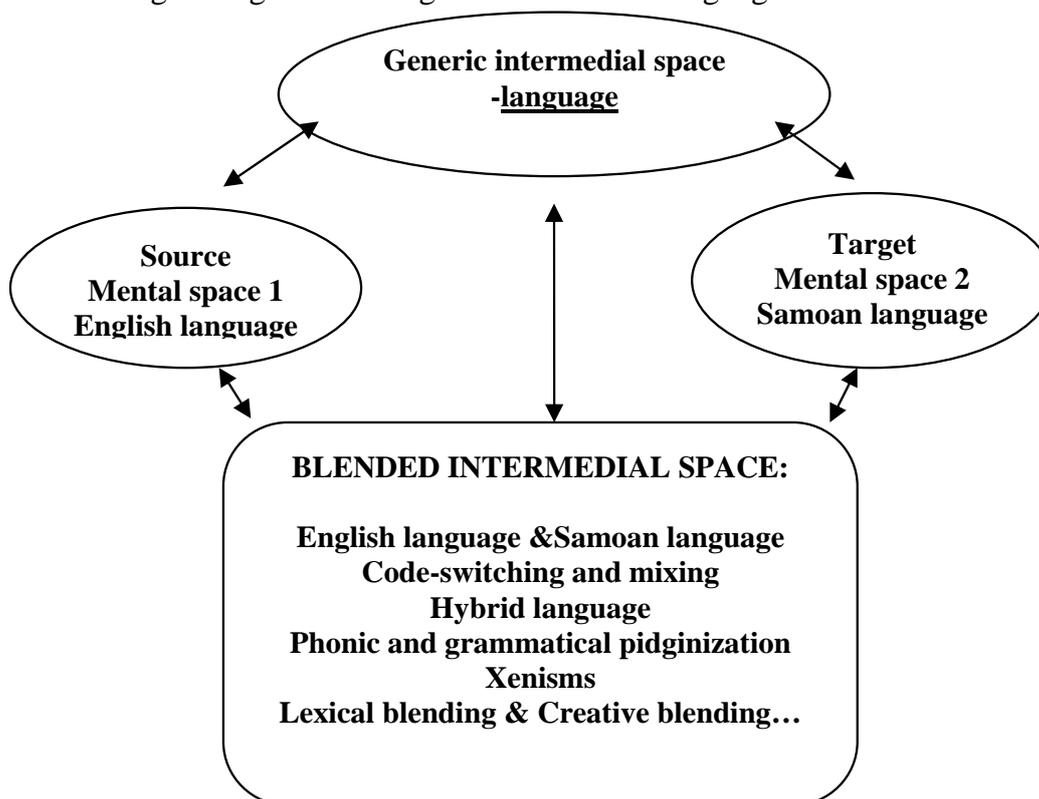
The concept of blended intermedial space explains the phenomenon of language hybridation in postcolonial African literatures that use Portuguese as their matrix language (in Figs. 2 and 3 language appears in the generic intermedial space as one of the common generic features). In Figure 4, I have adapted her model (which used Portuguese and African languages) to the case of Pacific literatures that use English as the matrix language and indigenous languages such as Maori or Samoan as the embedded ones.

Hernández's reformulation proves useful to explain heterolingual phenomena in postcolonial literatures. In our case study, Sia Figiel works with two mental spaces, one operating with the English language and the other with the Samoan language.

We take one of the common elements in both frames, language (generic third space) that projects onto the blended space, the creative site where the author combines both languages. This is performed through a whole range of

devices. Hernández (2007) highlights the following in her research: code-switching and code-mixing, hybrid language, phonic and grammatical pidginization, xenisms, and lexical and creative blending (cf. Bandia, Burcet, Suchet and Zabus).

**Figure 4:** Hybrid use of language, adapted model from Hernández 2007 and substituting Portuguese for English and African languages for Samoan



I will now move on to illustrate how some of these translation devices operate in the work of four Polynesian authors.

**Means of translation used in heterolingual source and target texts**

Given the presence of at least two languages in heterolingual literatures, translation devices can sometimes be found in the original works. Indeed, there are cases where different editions of the same novel use different translation devices.

When these heterolingual works are translated into another language, we have a situation in which a Source Text (ST) contains two languages (matrix and embedded languages) and a third code, the target language, comes into play in the Target Text (TT). The translator, as mediator, has to decide what to do with the segments in the embedded language, for which, perhaps, he or she is not able to translate from directly. In this respect, Gayatri Spivak (in

this volume) insists that translators should be able to at least know somehow part of the indigenous languages they are dealing with in their translation work.

In this section I will summarize the main translation solutions (concept as understood by Pym 2011) that we can find in both STs and TTs of Polynesian works that combine English (as the matrix language) and Maori or Samoan (as embedded languages), and which have sometimes been translated into Spanish or Catalan. This is part of my ongoing research on Pacific heterolingual literatures. These strategies can be categorized as follows:

1. Paratexts: (i) glossaries, (ii) notes, (iii) prefaces (among others)
2. In-text translation
3. Contextual translation
4. Zero translation

My research focuses on four Polynesian authors: Witi Ihimaera and Patricia Grace, from Aotearoa/New Zealand, who write in English and Maori; and Albert Wendt and Sia Figiel from the Samoan archipelago, who combine English and Samoan in their work. Even though they might use all of the devices stated above, their predominant use of one or another characterizes their production, at least during certain periods of their oeuvre.

### *Paratexts*

Paratexts are texts that can be found attached to the body of the literary text in a literary work. We can find notes by the author, editor or translator, prefaces and postscripts, and glossaries in this category.

Albert Wendt is the most prolific author as far as *glossaries* are concerned in the STs: most of his early works include a Samoan glossary (sometimes including words from other Polynesian languages). Paloma Fresno's translation of his short story "Declaration of Independence" (2011) includes explanations of some Samoan concepts in her introduction and provides *footnotes* that clarify the meaning of the word that, at the same time, is formatted in italics and flagged by a superscript number. This practice has declined over the last decade or so but as we see, some translators still find it useful in their translation of heterolingual works of this kind. For instance the footnote in example 3 (no footnote of this kind was used in the source text):

- (3) El señor Paovale Iosua [...] se estaba afeitando relajadamente una mañana en la ducha que había detrás de su fale<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> El término fale hace referencia a las viviendas tradicionales de Samoa. [...] [a description of these houses follows]

### *In-text translation*

In-text translation refers to those translations that are explicitly present within the body of a literary work. The word or expression in the indigenous language may be marked (e.g. in italics) or unmarked. The equivalent expression in the matrix language may precede or follow the embedded segment, and either one or the other can be written in parentheses or without them.

Witi Ihimaera is the author who is most fond of this kind of solution. As we mentioned above, different editions of the same ST sometimes have modifications in the presentation of the segments in indigenous language, and this is the case of Ihimaera's *The Whale Rider*. If we compare the 1980s original edition (published in New Zealand) and the 2003 American version published after a successful film version, we notice the following changes: *omissions* (Maori words have been erased), *substitutions* (Maori words have been replaced by English equivalents), *additions* (Maori words are kept and English equivalents have been supplied next to them) and *format changes* (Maori words have been italicized) (see Burcet, 2010).

### *Contextual translation*

In the case of contextual translations there is no explicit equivalent in the matrix language of the segment written in the embedded language, but the author provides a *supporting co-text* that helps the reader understand the meaning of the expression in the indigenous language. Patricia Grace masters this technique in her short stories and novels. Michelle Keown (2005: 151) has also highlighted Grace's skill in introducing *grammatical incursions* of Maori morphology and syntax into English linguistic structures in the direct speech of her characters, as in *Potiki* (1986) or *Baby No-Eyes* (1998).

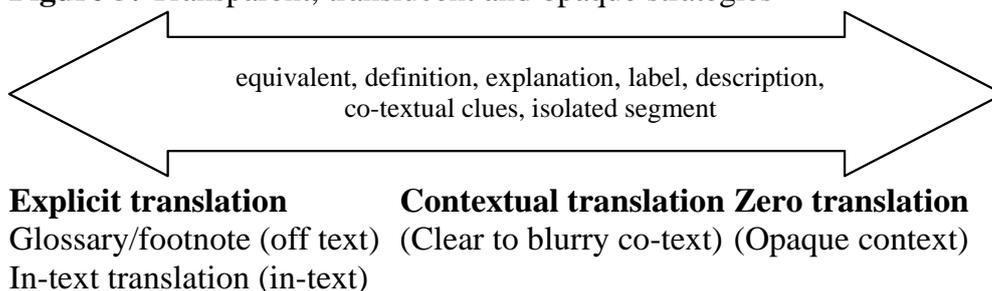
### *Zero translation*

When there is no explicit or implicit equivalent, explanation or description of the segment in the embedded language, neither *in* nor *off* the textual body of the literary text, the monolingual reader confronts the segment in the indigenous language without any clue. The same applies to the translator who is not able to (fully) mediate from the embedded language/culture into the target one. Sia Figiel, the author of the excerpt that opens this chapter, provides many Samoan expressions with this kind of zero translation.

In the preface to the Catalan version of Figiel's *Where We Once Belonged* (*L'indret d'on venim*, 1999), the author gives three reasons for the presence of the Samoan language in her work: 1) her inability to translate her thoughts or dreams into English, 2) her wish to keep the mystery of the other language and awareness of a different culture from that of the reader, and 3) her acknowledgement of the Samoan and Pacific readers, who will see their language respected and prioritized in another context (Figiel 1999b: 5-6). She assumes that "the very context explains the Samoan words and sentences if the readers read the narration carefully" ("el mateix context explica les paraules i les frases samoanes si els lectors llegeixen amb atenció la narració" (1999b: 5). The experiment in the following section tries to test whether the Samoan author's assumptions are accurate or need enhancement.

To sum up this section, we can place the different translation solutions on a continuum that runs from more explicit to less explicit translation procedures, and from more invasive paratexts to less invasive paratexts. Figure 5 shows a gradation from transparent to opaque devices found in heterologual works and their translations:

**Figure 5:** Transparent, translucent and opaque strategies



The right end of Figure 5 can be interpreted as two sides of the same coin: contextual translation can be a kind of zero translation with a clarifying co-text/context; zero translation can be an extreme blurry case of contextual translation. In any case, at the right end of this continuum the monolingual reader has to negotiate the meaning, overcome the gap, act as a translator: considering possibilities and selecting plausible options for the meaning. Of course, however, the reader is not obliged to choose just one solution, while the translator has to make a single decision.

### **Readers and their Cognitive Processes: Examples from Samoan Literature**

The actual processing of these solutions can be tested experimentally to a certain extent. Our experiment here (still ongoing, results at present are

approximate) is based on a questionnaire in which readers from different backgrounds read the first paragraphs of Sia Figiel's novel *Where We Once Belonged*, which has English as its matrix language and Samoan as its embedded language. The survey has been also carried out with speakers of Spanish and Catalan, who read translations of the novel into those languages.

The provisional results suggest some interesting findings. We have stated that Sia Figiel expects readers to grasp the meaning from the context. However, this might be difficult when readers have no clue onto which they can resort. Consider an example from the beginning of the novel:

- (4) She spent most of her time at the faifeau's house serving matai on Sundays. *Laulau le sua*. She knew the fa'alupega o Malaefou backwards, plus all the polite forms of chicken, pig, and other food. (1996: 2)

What is *faifeau*? What does *matai* mean? Monolingual readers are not helped here. What is clear is that the density of the embedded language within the matrix language is quite high: 8 Samoan tokens out of 36 total tokens. Here we can apply a density formula to quantify the proportion of indigenous language, which results in 22.2% Samoan in the passage. Readers thus face a reading threshold that may challenge their motivation and ability to decode the Samoan segments, or accommodate them in any kind of fluent reading.

Compare this passage in the English, Spanish and Catalan versions (my underlining; italics as in the originals):

- (5) a. She spent most of her time at the faifeau's house serving matai on Sundays. *Laulau le sua*. (1996: 2)  
 b. Se pasaba casi todo el domingo en casa del faifeau, sirviendo a los matai. *Laulau le sua*. (1999a: 10)  
 c. Ella passava gairebé tot el diumenge servint *matai* a ca la Faifeau. *Laulau le sua*. (1999b: 10)

How do monolingual readers interpret the Samoan segments? What cognitive processes are they activating to negotiate the meaning gap that the segments *faifeau*, *matai*, and *laulau le sua* are offering? In the case of translators, proactive readers of the source text, these questions are particularly important. They do not need to translate the Samoan segment but they do need to provide a suitable co-text that will condition reception by the target readership.

The first word *faifeau*, for example, is not kept in the same format in all versions. In the Catalan version the word is capitalized, indicating a proper name. The use of *ca la* preceding *Faifeau* denotes the "the house of somebody" (like in French "chez Pierre"), in this case the house of a woman

called Faifeau. The Catalan version here actually fails to transpose the original meaning: the *faifeau* is not a woman. In the three versions, however, it is clear that *faifeau* refers to a person. The English version retains the ambiguity about the genre of this person, but the Spanish one explicitates that the *faifeau*, in fact, is a man, thanks to the contraction ‘del’, and that the term is not the name of a person (the word is not capitalized):

- (6) a. ...en casa del faifeau...  
 ...in house of + the (MASC) faifeau...  
 ‘...at the faifeau’s house...’

Most readers show their guesses at words such as *faifeau* (the religious pastor) with some reasonable approximations. It is more or less clear that it is referring to a person who is the owner of a house. Componential analysis can help readers grasp its meaning (a process that might last split seconds in the cognitive system). The use of the s-genitive shows [+ human]; analyzing the co-text of the word, readers can find a clue in *Sunday* (with its subtle presence a network of meanings might be activated for some readers). The word *Sunday* then can trigger the [+ religious] component of *faifeau*. Of course, this is as subjective as the readers’ background and their previous knowledge, if any, of Samoan culture.

The case of the second Samoan word *matai* is also relevant. In the reception experiment, readers were asked to write the translation or explain what they understood of the twelve first Samoan words, expressions or cultural referents found at the beginning of the novel. English-speaking readers and Catalan readers interpreted *matai* as a direct object, as something to eat or to drink (like serving tea or pastries). The Spanish version, though, makes it clear that *matai* is an indirect object, with the direct object being elided:

- (6) b. ...sirviendo [algo] a los matai los domingos.  
 ...serving [something] to the matai the Sundays.  
 ‘...serving matai on Sundays’

Most Spanish-speaking readers thus get the meaning of *matai* (i.e. leader of the community) in an easier way than will the Catalan-speaking reader, even though the Catalan keeps the ambiguity found in the original.

The third expression, *Laulau le sua*, is less clear for the monolingual reader. The non-Samoan speaker’s resorts are less visible, making the context more opaque. I consider this an extreme situation since *laulau le sua* is an isolated phrase in the middle of an already complex heterolingual paragraph. This case would be placed towards the end of the zero translation continuum (Fig. 2), opposite to the in-text translation found in Witi Ihimaera

or the glossaries provided by Wendt, and further away from the contextual translation we have found in Patricia Grace.

If we return now to the word *matai*, we find a build-in meaning process in the monolingual reader's experience (again, in this context, "monolingual" in the sense that the reader cannot understand the embedded language). As we have seen, readers may misinterpret *matai* in the context above as a direct object meaning a kind of food or drink. Nevertheless, when they find the word *matai* in a second context, their first perception should change:

- (7) When Elia, a *matai*, was playing volleyball. And jumped up to spike the ball. And his lavalava fell. (1996: 5)

This second context makes it clear that a *matai* is a person. Therefore, the *matai* in the first context needs to be updated with information from the second. The indefinite article, in addition, indicates that *matai* is a count noun. Compare contexts 1 and 2 for *matai*:

- (8) She spent most of her time at the faifeau's house serving *matai* on Sundays [...]  
 (9) When Elia, a *matai*, was playing volleyball. And jumped up to spike the ball. And his lavalava fell.

The possibilities for *matai* in the first context could provisionally accommodate both human and object features for the non-Samoan speaker: [+human] or [+object]; [singular/plural]; [count/non-count]. However, the second context is more constrictive: the object feature drops and only the human fits: [+human][-object] and [count].

This updating of knowledge in the encounter of new contexts is at the core of our research. Non-Samoan speakers can make sense of the first encounter with the word, updating their short-term memory, e.g.: "*matai* were served [something] on Sundays". Readers build up on the meaning of the words using their memory and their logic and making sense from the different contexts.

In doing this, the monolingual reader is actually processing the indigenous segments as a translator does: formulating options and choosing among them. Table 1 showed the progression of cognitive activities: 1. generation of possibilities, 2. selection and 3. refining of meaning (completion). We can also add a fourth stage: 4. connection of knowledge (see Table 2).

In this fourth stage, the reader connects previous knowledge to new segments, thus learning about the grammar of the embedded language. For example, number is not shown in the Samoan noun: *matai* lacks any

determiner in segment 1, where it is plural, while it is clearly a singular noun in segment 2.

**Table 2:** Adding connection to the cognitive activity

<i>'Fale' found in different contexts</i>	
<i>Context #</i>	<i>Cognitive activity</i>
1.	<i>Generating</i> multiple options: Place (workplace, house...)
2.	<i>Selecting</i> provisional plausible meaning(s): House.
3.	<i>Refining</i> meaning: Samoan house, without walls...
4.	<i>Connecting</i> knowledge: falesa (church), fale kai (kitchen), falenui (meeting house)

This knowledge might be conscious or unconscious, even unnoticed for some, but if it is retained in the reader's memory it might help when they come across further Samoan segments in the novel.

My experimental work on actual readers is still on-going, but the results look promising for the reception analysis of heterolingual literatures and also for the cognitive sciences. Bearing in mind the ground set in the semantic theory by Lakoff's considerations or Fillmore's scenes-and-frames semantics to explain better the encounter with unknown signifiers in a foreign language, I find it useful to use the metaphor of a window to access meaning (Tuggy): utterances (phonemes or graphemes) are handles that open windows to networks of meanings. *Dog* will open my whole knowledge of dogs, from the core meanings to the most vague associations. In the same way, each culture shares a common set of relationships in the networks of meaning, but each person's network differs. Communication only occurs if these networks of meanings are close enough.

**Table 3:** Cognitive process circuit: generating, selecting, refining, connecting.

CONTEXT 1: "... <i>serving matai</i> "
<b>Generating possibilities:</b>
- metalinguistic categories that fit: [something/someone] [singular/plural]
- semantic possibilities that fit: <i>drink, food...</i>
- connotations derived from co-text: <i>important person (who is served)</i>
<b>Preliminary selection</b> of more plausible meaning (intuition, guess)
CONTEXT 2: "... <i>Elia, a matai (...) his lavalava fell</i> "
<b>Selecting/discarding previous possibilities</b>
- [ <del>something</del> /someone]
- [+singular] [+plural]
<b>Refining knowledge:</b> coexistence of hypothesis
- Metalinguistic knowledge acquisition: there is no number for <i>matai</i> ('serving matai' [pl]; 'a matai' [sg.]
<b>Connecting knowledge:</b>
- No number mark: Can be extrapolated to other words? Check further contexts and further segments (e.g. one fale; all the fale).

If we come across a word that we cannot identify, like *matai*, this handle does not open the window to any knowledge. Nevertheless, contextual information might help readers build up their knowledge and start their network of information in the embedded language from scratch. This will develop a scaffolding process using the short-term memory and the metalinguistic knowledge acquired from the different contexts encountered, as shown in Table 3.

## Conclusions

We have introduced the concepts of heterolingual literatures in postcolonial contexts and have linked the third space with the cognitive blended space to explain this particular hybrid phenomenon both in the source and the target cultures. After looking at examples from Pacific Anglophone literatures we can reach several conclusions.

Monolingual readers of postcolonial heterolingual literatures *generate* possible meanings for the segments in the indigenous language and *select* plausible meanings on a temporary basis (short-time memory) in order to work out the meaning of the particular segment.

In addition, their guesses can be confirmed, refined or discarded eventually with the encounter of further contexts to that segment.

Furthermore, contextual items (paratexts, co-text and images) and metalinguistic knowledge can help monolingual readers build up this short term memory.

Eventually, through drilling of different contexts for the same segment, a long-term memory in the indigenous language/culture can be established.

However, a lack of scaffolding or progression might result in the reader's failure to overcome the gap. Each reader will have a particular threshold of reading motivation at a particular moment that will promote the continuation or termination of the reading.

This satisfaction level in each reader's comprehension, together with the preferences of translation devices are measured in the questionnaire included in the annex and is part of my ongoing research.

There are some limitations in the study. For example, "monolingual readers" might have different levels of knowledge of the indigenous culture/language, so "monolingual" is a dynamic operational concept. Attention must also be paid to the way we quantify the density of indigenous segments, since my formula only takes into account different tokens, but qualitatively speaking a cluster of three tokens can form a single expression (e.g. *laulau le sua*). I would also like to make it clear that in no way do we want to associate "embedded language" with "indigenous language" as something inferior or less valued. On the contrary, we have seen how

indigenous authors can use their creative skills to take an explicit stand for their culture and people.

In conclusion, readers act as translators in their storing of different possible meanings for unknown passages in a language they do not know, but we have to take into account the different conditions of a standard (monolingual) reader and the translator as a reader: the former is under no pressure to select a single option while the latter, by the nature of their activity, must choose just one solution from among several. Readers confronting a language they cannot decode also react as foreign language learners in the sense that they try to make sense of the passages they read, even in an unknown language. There is a need to create an image, with the difference that the conscious deliberate goal is not to learn the language but to follow the story being told. My provisional claim is that there is a threshold of tolerance in the monolingual reader that moves from frustration to motivation in the encounter with an unknown embedded, and this threshold can be influenced by the reader's primary motivation to read the text (pleasure, compulsory reading for university, and so on).

My actual analysis has combined a very structuralist approach with a blurrier shared/third spaces concept, where cognitive processes are not so rationally structured. The componential analyses model the researcher's attempts to explain the possible and probable activity in the reader's cognitive system. However, there is an obvious need to allow more space for the reader's uncertainty. I believe that the application of Hernández's blended intermedial space can open a way to do so and foster further discussion in the fields involved.

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## Appendix: English questionnaire of Samoan heterolingual reading.

**Sia Figiel**

*Where We Once Belonged*

*Buzzing ... everywhere*

When I saw the insides of a woman's vagina for the first time I was not alone. I was with Lili and Moa. Lili's name was Ma'alili, but everyone called her Lili. Moa's name was Moamoalulu, but everyone called her Moa. Lili was seventeen and Moa was sixteen. They were older than me. They were already menstruating. (...)

I had lost the bet.

I was the last in our circle to catch the moon sickness.

\*

To all Malaefou teenagers, girls and boys, we were Charlie's Angels. Everyone who knew us called us by our TV names – Kelly, Sabrina and Jill. As is the custom in Malaefou, girls went around in groups. Some were glued to their own cousins. Others, like Lili, Moa and me, came from different households. Sometimes a girl would be a loner. Like Maka'oleafi-eye of fire—who not only was the goodest girl in the whole Malaefou, but also the meanest and the strongest.

She spent most of her time at the faifeau's house serving matai on Sundays. Laulau le sua. She knew the fa'alupega o Malaefou backwards, plus all the polite forms of chicken, pig, and other food. She proudly said them out loud enough for those of us who didn't know and struggled always to remember.

She never tried a cigarette—that is, no adult had ever seen or heard of her smoking. Didn't own a pair of pants—that is, she never wore one in Malaefou. And no stories ever lead to her—that is to say, she was not a faikakala. (...)

I suppose we, too, wanted to be good girls. (...) We were in-between ... that is to say we were not completely good and we were not completely bad. (...) We were in-between because we loved laughing, and laughed and laughed at the slightest things.

When Elia, a matai, was playing volleyball. And jumped up to spike the ball. And his lavalava fell. And he was not wearing underwears. We laughed.

We laughed when Mu's father wanted to borrow money from his palagi boss and told the palagi he needed it for Mu's funeral ... even though Mu was the healthiest of all his children.

We laughed whenever Sugar Shirley, the fa'afafige, walked around Malaefou with nothing but Tausi's panties and bra stuffed with coconuts. (...)

We jokingly referred to Mr Brown as Charlie.

Mr Brown was a palagi and worked for the Bank of Western Samoa.

### ENG ST

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Age: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Nationality: \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Native language(s): \_\_\_\_\_  
 Foreign language(s) (level & years): \_\_\_\_\_  
 Studies/Profession: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Postcolonial cultures/literatures knowledge: \_\_\_\_\_

**Indigenous segments (or references to the indigenous language). *Matai* and *Palagi* appear twice, register all meanings you thought (both the first time you read it and the second one)**

1. Moon sickness

2. Malaefou

3. Maka'oleafi\*

\*Maka'oleafi (parse: identify what is 'eye' 'fire'...)

4. Faifeau

5. Matai

6. Laulau le sua.

7. Fa'alupega o Malaefou

8. Polite forms of chicken...

9. Faikakala

10. Lavalava

11. Palagi

12. Fa'afafige

**Questions (you can use another page to write your answers):**

a. Would you continue reading the book (choose a number)? Why?

Definitely not    1    2    3    4    5    Definitely yes

b. What do you think of the use of Samoan (number)? What are the author's reasons?

Frustrating        1    2    3    4    5    Motivating

c. How do you bridge the gap of the segments you can't understand?

Order these translation strategies according to your preferences when you read a novel like this (number these five items from 1 to 5: 1 Best option; 5 Worst option). Mention the advantages of your best option and the disadvantages of the worst; e.g. X is more disrupting/challenging.

- |                              |    |                |
|------------------------------|----|----------------|
| - Nothing                    | 1. | Advantages?    |
| - Contextual translation     | 2. |                |
| - Direct translation in text | 3. |                |
| - Footnote                   | 4. |                |
| - Glossary                   | 5. | Disadvantages? |

If you have any other comment, feel free to include it. If you would like to receive feedback from this research, please tick the box.

Thank you very much for your help. Humberto Burcet