



Palimpsestes
Revue de traduction

29 | 2016
Les sens en éveil, traduire pour la scène

The Experience of Translating Ibsen's Plays into Spanish

Cristina Gómez-Baggethun



Electronic version

URL: <http://journals.openedition.org/palimpsestes/2345>
DOI: 10.4000/palimpsestes.2345
ISSN: 2109-943X

Publisher

Presses Sorbonne Nouvelle

Printed version

Date of publication: 1 January 2016
ISSN: 1148-8158

Electronic reference

Cristina Gómez-Baggethun, « The Experience of Translating Ibsen's Plays into Spanish », *Palimpsestes* [Online], 29 | 2016, Online since 17 May 2017, connection on 16 December 2017. URL : <http://journals.openedition.org/palimpsestes/2345> ; DOI : 10.4000/palimpsestes.2345

This text was automatically generated on 16 December 2017.

Tous droits réservés

The Experience of Translating Ibsen's Plays into Spanish

Cristina Gómez-Baggethun

- 1 As a classical author writing in a minority language, Henrik Ibsen constitutes a peculiar case. Somehow he managed to become world famous while writing in a language spoken by very few people. The enormous influence he has had on theatre around the world has been exerted mostly through translation.¹ Therefore, the problems relating to the translation of Ibsen into other languages are central to understanding the reception of his work.
- 2 The *Ibsen in Translation* project originated in 2008, when four literary translators of Norwegian into Chinese, English, Russian and Spanish were asked to investigate the available translations of Ibsen's *An Enemy of the People* (*En folkefiende*, 1882) and *A Doll's House* (*Et dukkehjem*, 1879) into their languages. The research done by Liyang Chang, Barbara Haveland, Olga Drobot and myself led to the conclusion that it was time to produce new translations of his plays. The project, coordinated by Professor Frode Helland at the Center for Ibsen Studies of the University of Oslo and by senior translator Ellinor Kolstad, has now grown to include eight languages and will produce translations of Ibsen's last twelve plays.
- 3 In this article I will share my experience of translating Ibsen into Spanish. But first I will present a short overview of the reception of Ibsen in Spain,² which may explain the kind of translation I decided to produce.³ This will be followed by a description of some of the problems encountered during the translation process, and some of the ways in which they have been solved.
- 4 Although I will not attempt to explore the theoretical discussions that revolve around the problem of translating theatre (the debate between making literal, philological translations or more free, oral and theatrical ones), this article may provide a useful example of how a translator of theatre, when dealing with actual texts, cannot completely avoid adopting a position on these issues. It will also show how my initial intention of making strictly literal translations had to be modified along the way because I

experienced the need to deal with sensitive issues concerning, for example, repetition and social variations in speech.

Ibsen's presence in Spain

- 5 Ibsen's initial reception in Spain (1890-1936) was marked by Italian and French companies touring the country. The first Spanish performance took place in Barcelona in April 1893. The play performed on that occasion was *An Enemy of the People*. Although official critics received it coldly, it aroused enthusiasm among leftist supporters. The labour movement, and especially the anarchists, were at the forefront of educational experiments in Spain at that time. They often looked to foreign authors for inspiration and they were especially interested in theatre. Ibsen was one of their favourites. Not alone did they translate and publish some of his plays, they also staged them. In fact the anarchist movement played a decisive role in the initial reception of Ibsen in Spain.⁴
- 6 In the rest of the country, where people spoke Spanish, it took longer for the Norwegian playwright to be accepted. Many discussions revolved around the question of why Spaniards were so indifferent to an author who raised such passions in other parts of Europe.⁵ Nevertheless, Ibsen had some influential supporters in the country. Great names of Spanish literature at that period, such as José Echegaray, Benito Pérez Galdós, Jacinto Benavente and Miguel de Unamuno, are often considered as having been influenced by Ibsen. Among the many translations that appeared during those years was that of Pedro Pellicena. His translation of Ibsen's complete plays was published in 1915 (Ibsen, 1915). Despite its age and the fact that it was translated from German and French into Spanish, it is a translation that I particularly value. *An Enemy of the People* was also the first of Ibsen's plays to be staged in Madrid by a Spanish company, in 1896. Ten years later another theatre in the capital produced *Ghosts* (*Gengangere*, 1881), premiered in 1906. However, the play's literary value was overshadowed by the description of the symptoms of syphilis, which drew most attention.⁶ A few other productions followed, but it was not until 1917, when Gregorio Martínez Sierra translated and staged *A Dolls' House*, that Ibsen really became known to the people in Madrid. Martínez Sierra worked in collaboration with his wife María Lejárraga and their work also had significance for the early Spanish feminist movement.⁷ It was Ibsen's first success in the capital and it led to a number of productions in the following years, often with famous actresses of the time. The last one was *The Lady from the Sea* (*Fruen fra havet*, 1888), which was staged in Madrid in 1929.
- 7 In Catalonia things were quite different to what happened in the rest of the country. Ibsen had a strong influence on the Catalan modernist movement of the late 19th century and early 20th. The young Catalan authors were interested in a revolutionary author from Norway, a country that was finding its way towards independence, and they saw in him a possible example of how to develop their own national (Catalan) literature. Young Catalan authors were inspired by the crucial changes introduced by Ibsen in the art of play writing and tried to apply his techniques to their own work (Siguán, 1990). As a consequence Ibsen's plays were quite often discussed, translated and staged in Barcelona.
- 8 During the dictatorship (1939-1975), Ibsen was almost entirely absent from Spanish theatres, and his name was seldom mentioned. However, some editorial work was carried out. The only other translation of Ibsen's complete works into Spanish was published in 1952. It was done by Else Wasteson, who is one of the few people who translated Ibsen

directly from Norwegian into Spanish (Ibsen, 1952).⁸ However, at the beginning of the seventies, when the cultural policy of the regime started to open up a little, a few productions of Ibsen's plays reached the theatres. Perhaps the most famous was the production of *An Enemy of the People* by the great Spanish actor, director and author, Fernando Fernán-Gomez in 1971. He directed it, played the leading role and even designed the scenery.

- 9 Since democracy was restored, Ibsen has been staged much more frequently in Spain. Again, the situation in Catalonia and the rest of Spain is quite different. Many of the Catalonian productions of Ibsen have used new translations of Ibsen into Catalanian. Even if most of these translations were done through a relay language, they are modern, contemporary and often written by theatre people.⁹ So one can claim that a corpus of modern translations of Ibsen into Catalanian is coming to life. However, this is not the case for translations into Spanish. Although there have been many performances of Ibsen's plays in the capital in the last forty years, very few have been based on modern translations.¹⁰ Despite this, there have been many outstanding productions of Ibsen during that period. Good examples are Antonio Buero Vallejo's *The Wild Duck* (*Vildanden*, 1884)¹¹ which premiered in Madrid in 1982 and Juan Mayorga's *An Enemy of the People*, performed in Madrid in 2007. Stage directors have nevertheless often relied on old translations or even on translations into other languages. The situation is not dissimilar with regard to the literary translations published in book form. Some of Ibsen's plays have been translated afresh, but the old translations dating back to before the war are often republished and are the most easily available in bookstores.
- 10 In conclusion, it can be argued that there is a lack of modern translations of Ibsen into Spanish made directly from Norwegian. Even if some of the plays were translated in a satisfactory fashion in the early twentieth century, they are nonetheless becoming increasingly outdated. Moreover the interest shown in Ibsen's work often reflected a desire to "use" his plays to support different causes (this was true of philosophical, feminist, nationalist, anarchist or even medical movements). Thus one can argue that Ibsen's political influence overshadowed his literary value in those years.

First approach

- 11 I believe that there is no such a thing as a perfect translation. Each language and culture offers its own possibilities, which can only be partly rendered into another language. However, I am convinced that there can be many extremely different *and* equally good translations of the same text. Different translations focus on different aspects of the text and open different doors to the original. That means that you can come to appreciate Ibsen, Dostoyevsky or Cervantes even if you can read them only in translation.
- 12 After looking into the available Spanish translations of Ibsen, I came to the conclusion that what was needed in Spain was a modern, philological translation of Ibsen's plays, translated directly from Norwegian and focusing on the characteristics of the characters' voices that had been lost in the chain of translations and retranslations. At the very beginning of the project, I set some basic rules. I wanted to provide accurate, literal translations that would preserve Ibsen's humour, originality, and quirky expressions and constructions. As one of the most important innovations Ibsen introduced into the theatre was the use of everyday language, I wanted to pay special attention to that aspect of his work.

- 13 I also decided to use *contemporary language* and discarded the idea of doing any *language archaeology*. One of the main arguments for producing new translations of classical authors is precisely to make them contemporary. At the same time, I believed it was important to keep the language *neutral* in order to counteract the speed with which it ages.
- 14 However, when actually working on the plays, it became clear that it is impossible to produce translations of theatre plays that are purely *for the page*. The oral character of the texts themselves forced me to approach my work increasingly as translations *for the stage*. Here are some examples of the kind of choices I made.

Practical difficulties in translating Ibsen into Spanish

- 15 The first play I translated into Spanish was *The Master Builder* (*Bygmester Solness*, 1892). In a way, it was a risky choice. It is not just one of Ibsen's last plays, but it is also often regarded as one of the most difficult. On the other hand, it was a good starting point as it forced me, right from the beginning, to face many of the main difficulties associated with translating Ibsen. As a highly philosophical play, *The Master Builder*, together with the next play I translated, *A Doll's House*, made me aware of the playwright's use of key-words and of his careful and gradual construction of concepts. A good example is the strange notion of *det vidunderligste* which is introduced at the end of *A Doll's House*. When Helmer asks what would be needed for them to reunite, Nora responds *det vidunderligste* ("the miracle of miracles" in William Archer's translation or "Wondrous" in Barbara Haveland's text). The meaning of this enigmatic expression becomes clear only as a result of the numerous occasions in which Nora uses the word *vidunderlig* ("wonderful") throughout the play.
- 16 The oral dimension of the text was made especially clear by one of the characters in *The Master Builder*, Hilde. She is the young woman who bangs on the Master Builder's door, and she embodies the future. Her language is therefore radically modern. She uses slang and her words reflect exactly what she is: a radical, free and rebellious young woman. It was therefore necessary to allow her to speak a radically modern language in Spanish as well. This language will age faster than the rest of the translation, but using it was the only way I could see of preserving the character's particular voice.
- 17 In *The Master Builder* I also dealt with another interesting problem: repetitions. In Ibsen's plays, characters often use certain phrases over and over again. The Master Builder's wife, Aline, often repeats "*Det er bare min plikt det!*" ("That's only my duty!"). As repetitions are often avoided in literature, translators frequently resort to alternative translations for the same phrase. I suppose the aim is to provide a richer language. In my opinion, however, it is important to preserve repetitions within a text. In this particular case, it is a kind of mantra that defines Aline's psychology. Duties towards religion, family and society represented the trap in which women were caught. In fact, this is a fundamental theme in Ibsen's theatre. As his characters keep saying in so many plays, people also have duties towards themselves. Moreover, the literal repetition of the phrase, "That's only my duty!" has a certain comical effect that will be lost if variations are introduced. For instance, it is funny to see how the sentence irritates the young Hilde.
- 18 When translating *An Enemy of the People*, I encountered another problem of the same nature. There are two standard interpretations of this play. While some see in

Dr. Stockmann an absolute hero, others have a more nuanced vision of him. The first interpretation is more popular outside Norway. When one compares the original with the Spanish translations, it is clear that Dr. Stockmann's growing incoherence and use of swear words have not survived the translation process. In the Norwegian original, one can sense that the situation he has been drawn into in the play is driving him mad. Depriving a translation of this linguistic development ignores an important dimension of a character.

- 19 In order to preserve both possible interpretations, it was necessary to maintain Dr. Stockmann's inconsistencies and swearwords—one of the most difficult issues in translation in general. Translating into Spanish, this was aggravated on two fronts. Firstly, Norwegian and Spanish swearing habits are radically different (while Northerners base their swearing on religious notions, Spaniards keep theirs close to sex). Secondly, there is no tradition in Spain of translating the swearwords used by Ibsen's characters. In fact, even when translating contemporary literature, translators will sometimes encounter resistance from some of the major publishing houses unwilling to keep the swearwords of the original. The same happens with incoherencies, which are often ironed out or skipped altogether. The tradition of "correcting" and "cleaning up" an author in translation is still strong in Spain. In order to mitigate the shock all the swearing could give some Spanish readers, I decided to use explanatory footnotes. The swearwords were also an issue in the translation of *The Pillars of Society* (*Samfundets støtter*, 1877), and I tried to solve it in a similar way.
- 20 Another interesting problem appeared when translating *An Enemy of the People*. This play was the first of Ibsen's plays to be performed both in Madrid and Barcelona, and it was produced in Spain earlier than in Paris, whereas cultural innovations traditionally reached Spain through French influence. It is a deeply political play, which may explain why it aroused interest in a country with such a turbulent political history. In Eleanor Marx-Aveling's translation into English, Dr. Stockmann declares the liberals (*de liberale*) constitute a group he particularly despises: "Liberals are the worst foes of free men." I was surprised to discover that many translators into Spanish had found it necessary to soften this utterance introducing explanations such as "the so called liberals" or even "those who call themselves liberals but are not". I found it important not to introduce this kind of explanation of the original that can affect the interpretation of the play.
- 21 The translation of *Ghosts* and *The Wild Duck* raised the problem of how to maintain Ibsen's use of social differences in language to define characters. As the use of realistic or even naturalistic language was one of Ibsen's biggest contributions to the renewal of theatre that took place in his time, I wanted to keep it. In *Ghosts* some of the main characters (Engstrand, a carpenter, and his alleged daughter Regine) have a lower social status. The nuances in their lines are so accurate that, in the Norwegian original, one can feel the difference between the language these characters use when they speak to each other and the one they use when making an effort to speak in a more refined manner. Regine works for Mrs. Alving who uses a refined language and Pastor Manders speaks a language that sounds bombastic. Those shifts of register have often been overlooked by available Spanish translations of Ibsen.
- 22 It proved difficult to differentiate between social groups in Spanish. Modern Spanish has tended to diminish social differences in speech. When characters are made to speak contemporary Spanish, their language needs to be simplified. However, in order to maintain the social differences between higher and lower classes, not only must the

“errors” of the uneducated be worked in, but educated characters must also be made to sound a bit old-fashioned and sophisticated. Pastor Manders’ speech was the easiest to work out, as refined language is more common in written form than colloquial registers. All the different swear words and expressions carpenter Engstrand uses, each with their own strength, proved more difficult, just as Regine’s flirting with French words and cultivated expressions, which were complicated to keep.

- 23 A clear example of popular speech is provided by Gina’s character in *The Wild Duck*, the following play I translated. Gina does not have a refined background but, in order to please her husband, she tries to use refined words, often with bad results. When using cultivated words, she sometimes chooses the right word but pronounces it wrongly; in other cases she uses a mistaken word that is similar in sound to the one she is looking for. But often she simply uses popular or dialectal pronunciations of standard words. All this produces a comical effect that plays an important role in the play. When the text is deprived of this, some scenes become more tragic than they are in Norwegian.
- 24 To translate this particular aspect of a character’s language into Spanish, one must find natural mispronunciations of difficult Spanish words, and therefore one cannot often use the same word as the original. Complex words in Germanic languages such as Norwegian are usually the ones derived from Latin, while in Spanish those words are commonplace. To re-create this confusion of words, one must look for new pairs of similar words; in many cases these words have to be moved to a different place in the text for them to make sense. Reproducing the popular pronunciation of standard words turned out to be the most difficult part though. In Norwegian literature there is a long tradition of introducing dialects and popular pronunciation into a character’s speech (this is also true of novels in Norwegian). However, in Spanish literature there are fewer examples of this, and fewer still in translated literature. Whereas the introduction of swear words into translations can be surprising or shocking, mispronunciations typical of a more dialectal language can sound ridiculous. Yet, in this instance, it is not the character that utters them who sounds ridiculous, but the author or translator who pens them. Moreover, if done systematically, their inclusion attracts too much attention.
- 25 In some cases, I decided to do it anyway. For example Gina says “pigstol” instead of “pistol”. I wanted to keep it because her husband Hjalmar corrects her in a quite comical scene that William Archer translated thus:
- GINA: Yes, you and your father will do yourselves a mischief some day with that there pigstol.
- HJALMAR (with irritation): I believe I have told you this kind of firearm is called a pistol.
- GINA: Oh, that doesn’t make it much better.
- (Ibsen, 1918)
- 26 In Spanish, pistol is *pistola*, so I could I have chosen to translate *pigstola*, but it would have sounded strange. I considered the possibility of using *piztola*, because in certain parts of the south of Spain it is normal to change the sound [s] into a [z], and some people still regard that as a mispronunciation more than a dialectal feature. But this would have meant that Gina would be seen as a Spanish southerner. So in the end, after checking that they actually had revolvers in Norway at the time, I decided to use that word instead, even if a pistol and a revolver are not exactly the same thing. I did so because *revólver* could be transformed into *revórver*, and this is a common colloquial pronunciation in

Spanish, where it is normal for the sound [l] at the end of a syllable in the middle of a word to be transformed into the sound [r], and this without geographical connotations.

- 27 Another example was the word *portrait*. Gina and her husband are photographers, so the word appears often. In Norwegian it is *portrett*, but Gina always skips the first *r* and says *potrett*. Here it was easy. In Spanish it is called *retrato* and I could say *retato* because it is not uncommon to lose an *r* that appears between a consonant and a vowel. These two cases are examples of Gina's mispronunciations in the original for which I could find a natural equivalent in Spanish. In other cases it was impossible, so I had to leave them out. I compensated the loss by introducing a mispronunciation somewhere else. At one point, Gina says: "I have asked the portress to clean it". In Spanish it would be "*Le he pedido a la portera que lo friegue*".¹² In colloquial speech it is not uncommon to lose a vowel in diphthongs, so I could use *fregue* instead of *friegue* and achieve the desired effect.
- 28 However, I often found that a better way of maintaining the popular flavour of the characters' speech in Spanish was to use popular expressions and grammatical errors. When Gina says: "Heaven knows I had almost forgotten those old stories" (Archer's translation), which in Spanish is: "*Dios sabe que casi se me habían olvidado esas viejas historias*", I wrote *me se* instead of *se me*, because that is a common grammatical error in Spanish. But this of course requires a lot of imagination and implies drifting away from the notion of a "strictly" literal translation. Once I started to look for ways of doing this, I found many different places where I could introduce mispronunciations and grammatical errors, but in the end I did it sparsely, just what I considered enough to render the flavour of Gina's voice without irritating results.
- 29 What is at stake in the importance of maintaining all these aspects of Ibsen's language (swear words, repetitions, mispronunciations, social nuances...) in translation is not simply faithfulness to the original text, or the viability of the translation on stage. The question is that these nuances, or their absence, may affect the interpretation of a character and even of a play, transforming comic scenes into tragic ones, or crazy characters into respectable ones.
- 30 I have become increasingly aware of the oral nature of Ibsen texts. Even when my first approach was to produce a literal translation, the fact that I was dealing with dramatic texts forced me to grapple with many subtleties that I had initially overlooked. The experience of working with these plays has pushed my translations further towards the stage, and on the way I have also found my own voice and freedom as an author. I hope that these translations, along with the next I will produce (*Rosmersholm* [1886], *Hedda Gabler* [1890], *Little Eyolf* [*Lille Eyolf*, 1894], *John Gabriel Borkman* [1896] and *When We Dead Awaken* [*Når vi døde vågner*, 1899]) will provide a slightly different access to Ibsen in Spain.
- 31 To return to my point of departure: very few Spaniards can read Ibsen in the original Norwegian. Therefore I found it important to provide a translation that focused on aspects of Ibsen's language that had not been included in other translations (probably because most of them had not been translated directly from the source text). I hope the texts I have produced, combined with previous and future good translations into Spanish of Ibsen's work, will lead Spaniards to a deeper knowledge and appreciation of the great playwright that is Henrik Ibsen.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- ARAQUISTÁIN, L., 1930, "Ibsen en España" [Ibsen in Spain], in *La batalla teatral* [The Theatrical Battle], Madrid/Barcelona/Buenos Aires, Mundo Latino, p. 77-89.
- GREGERSEN, H., 1936, *Ibsen in Spain. A Study in Comparative Drama*, Cambridge, Harvard University Press.
- IBSEN, Henrik, 1888, *An Enemy of the People*, trans. Eleanor Marx-Aveling, in *The Pillars of Society and Other Plays*, London, Scott.
- , 1906, *A Doll's House* in *The Collected Works of Henrik Ibsen*, trans. William Archer, vol. VII, London, Heinemann.
- , 1915, *Teatro completo* [Complete Plays], trans. Pedro Pellicena Madrid, Ediciones Kronos.
- , 1917, *Casa de muñecas: Comedia en tres actos*, trans. Gregorio Martínez Sierra, Madrid, Renacimiento.
- , 1918, *The Wild Duck*, trans. F.E. Archer in *The Wild Duck; The League of Youth; Rosmersholm*, New York, Boni and Liveright, Act III.
- , 1952, *Teatro completo* [Complete Plays], trans. Else Wasteson, Madrid, Aguilar.
- , 2010, *Casa de muñecas & Solness, el constructor*, trans. Cristina Gomez-Baggethun, Madrid, Nordica Libros.
- , 2012, *Obras escogidas* [Selected Plays], La Habana, Casa Editorial Tablas-Alarcos.
- , 2014, *A Doll's House*, trans. Barbara Haveland, in *The Master Builder and Other Plays*, London, Penguin Classics.
- LITVAK, Lily, 2001, "Literary Muse: Art, Literature and Cultural Life in Spanish Anarchism", in *Musa literaria: arte, literatura y vida cultural del anarquismo español (1880-1913)*, Madrid, Fundación de Estudios Libertarios, p. 239-274.
- O'CONNOR, Patricia W., 1977, *Gregorio and María Martínez Sierra*, Boston, Twayne.
- OZIMEK-MAIER, Janis, 1980, *Ibsen and Spain: a Re-Examination*, University of Wisconsin-Madison.
- REM, Tore, 2006, *Henry Gibson / Henrik Ibsen. Den provinsielleverdensdikteren* [Henry Gibson / Henrik Ibsen. The Provincial World Author], Oslo, Cappelen.
- SIGUÁN, Marisa, 1990, *La recepción de Ibsen y Hauptmann en el modernismo catalán* [The Reception of Ibsen and Hauptmann in Catalan Modernism], Barcelona, Promociones y Publicaciones Universitarias.

NOTES

1. . The Norwegian scholar Tore Rem has recently argued that pride of place in the Western Canon is occupied by the English incarnation of Henrik Ibsen (whom Rem calls Henry Gibson), as opposed to the Norwegian playwright Henrik Ibsen himself. See Rem (2006).

2. . Ibsen has had a long life of his own in the Spanish language on the other side of the Atlantic, but I will not go into his reception in Latin America. Firstly because the short length of this article does not allow it, but also because some of the main problems I am discussing here have to do with colloquial language, and this is the aspect of the Spanish language that changes most from one country to the other. In fact, when my translations of *A Doll's House*, *An Enemy of the People* and *The Master Builder* were published in Cuba, the text had to be adapted by the Cuban publishing house to accommodate the local variations in Spanish. See Ibsen (2012).
3. . Although the translators in the *Ibsen in Translation* project have meetings for each play, where we discuss the problems we encounter in our job (specially related to the interpretation and contextualization of the text), in the end we are *authors* of our translations. In other words, we make our decisions individually and set our own rules for our translations in the different languages we use.
4. . See Litvak (2001).
5. . As an example of this kind of discussion, see Araquistáin (1930).
6. . See Gregersen (1936: 76-80 ; 93-94).
7. . See Ibsen (1917) and Patricia W. O'Connor (1977: 25).
8. . As far as I know, the only other translations into Spanish published in Spain that have been directly translated from Norwegian are: Alberto Adell's translations of *A Doll's House* and *Hedda Gabler* (H. Ibsen, 1989, *Casa de muñecas, Hedda Gabler*, Madrid, Alianza Editorial) and the translation by J. A. Garrido and K. H. Andersen of *An Enemy of the People* (H. Ibsen, 2014, *Un enemigo del pueblo*, Madrid, Alianza Editorial). Of the translations included in the *Ibsen in Translation* project, only my translations of *A Doll's House* and *The Master Builder* have so far been published. See Ibsen (2010).
9. . Among the translators of note are the playwrights Feliu Formosa and Rodolf Sirera, along with Anne-Lise Cloetta, who translated directly from Norwegian.
10. . One of the few exceptions was a production of *A Doll's House* that premiered in Madrid in 1982. The playwright Ana Diosdado based her version on Kirsti Baggethun's translation, which was produced for the occasion and translated directly from Norwegian.
11. . In fact, Ibsen's influence is most frequently remarked upon in the work of the modern Spanish playwright Buero Vallejo. See, for example, Ozimek-Maier (1980).
12. . Words in bold type are used in quotations to emphasize certain points.

ABSTRACTS

As a classical author writing in a minority language, Henrik Ibsen constitutes a peculiar case and the problems relating to the translation of his plays into other languages are especially relevant. This article describes the author's experience in translating several of Ibsen's plays from Norwegian into Spanish (*The Master Builder*, *A Doll's House*, *An Enemy of the People*, *Ghosts* and *The Wild Duck*).

Despite many of their other good qualities, the available translations into Spanish have partly ignored Ibsen's humour, originality and quirky expressions and constructions, and none of them include the characters' use of swear words and the way in which their language reflects their social and cultural differences. Through practical examples, the translator shows how these nuances can affect the whole interpretation of the characters and even of the play, as Ibsen uses

them to set the tone of the scenes. Swear words, mispronunciations and grammatical errors can, for example, turn a tragic scene into a comic one. This article shows how the translator confronted these difficulties and how she decided to solve them. The description of her experience can also constitute a practical example of how, when dealing with theatrical texts, that is, oral texts, one cannot avoid taking a stand on theoretical discussions about whether to translate for the page or translate for the stage, whether to make literal, philological translations or more free and oral ones.

Henrik Ibsen, dramaturge de premier plan qui écrit dans une langue minoritaire, constitue un cas particulier, et la traduction de ses œuvres dans d'autres langues soulève d'importantes questions. Dans cet article, nous relatons notre expérience de traductrice de plusieurs pièces d'Ibsen du norvégien vers l'espagnol (*Solness le constructeur*, *Une maison de poupée*, *Un ennemi du peuple*, *Les Revenants*, *Le Canard sauvage*).

Malgré la qualité des traductions disponibles en espagnol, elles laissent souvent dans l'ombre l'humour d'Ibsen, son emploi d'expressions ou de constructions bizarres, son originalité ; et aucune d'entre elles ne reprend les jurons utilisés par les personnages, la façon dont leur langue reflète les différences sociales et culturelles. À travers des exemples pratiques, nous montrons comment ces nuances de langue peuvent modifier notre vision des personnages, voire de la pièce tout entière. Les mots grossiers, les erreurs de prononciation et les fautes de grammaire peuvent, par exemple, transformer une scène dramatique en scène comique. La description de cette expérience de traduction permet de constater combien il est difficile, lorsqu'on traduit des textes de théâtre, des textes oraux, de ne pas prendre position dans le débat entre traduction pour la page et traduction pour la scène, ou entre traduction littérale et traduction libre.

INDEX

Keywords: Ibsen, translation, theatre, Spanish, oral texts, swear words, social differences

Mots-clés: Ibsen, traduction, théâtre, espagnol, textes oraux, jurons, différences sociales

AUTHOR

CRISTINA GÓMEZ-BAGGETHUN

Cristina Gómez-Baggethun traduit en espagnol la littérature norvégienne. Elle a étudié les mathématiques et la philosophie à l'université Complutense de Madrid, et a également suivi des cours de littérature dans les universités d'Édimbourg et d'Oslo. Elle a traduit de nombreux romanciers norvégiens (comme Roy Jacobsen, Per Petterson, Herbjørg Wassmo, ou encore le prix Nobel de littérature Sigrid Undset). Ces dernières années, elle a consacré beaucoup de temps au théâtre, avec notamment ses traductions en espagnol de plusieurs pièces d'Ibsen. Elle a obtenu plusieurs prix, comme le prix NORLA (2009) et le prix Anders Jahres pour les jeunes artistes (2012).