Translating idiolects: Natalia Ginzburg's *Lessico famigliare*

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We look at the two English translations of Natalia Ginzburg's autobiographical narrative Lessico famigliare *(1963) with a focus on the literary function of idiolects, and the challenges of translating them, particularly code-mixing between standard Italian, dialects and other languages. We draw on Bassnett-McGuire (who notes a tendency for translators to "fail to consider the way in which individual sentences form part of the total structure") (1980:115), Berman (who argues that source text markers, such as idiolects, form part of an "underlying network of signification within the text as a whole") (2000:292-3) and Gutt (who maintains that a successful translation will recognise and address the relevancy of the role played by idiolects in the text) (2000). We agree with Eco (2003) when he argues that losses and gains are inevitable in any translation process and problems must be negotiated individually. We would suggest that an effective strategy for translators may be to negotiate solutions from their specific places within what Pym (1998) calls 'intercultures', points of cultural overlap between source and target texts.*

1. Introduction

Natalia Ginzburg's *Lessico famigliare* was first published in 1963 and has been consistently popular with Italians and Italianists ever since. It is a reconstruction of the life of her family circle in the period between the end of WWI and the early 1950s, and shows the intersections between the many aspects of different private lives and different public spheres. It has been published in the English-speaking world in two translated versions: *Family sayings* by D.M. Low (first published in 1967 and currently unavailable; revised in 1984) and *The things we used to say* by Judith Woolf (1997). Although the surface text of the Italian original seems to present few difficulties for translators, a close reading shows that the textual strategies Ginzburg uses to present and map these intersections are in fact a considerable challenge. The book links over a hundred characters, some of whom are in fact prominent figures of the Italian political and cultural scene; they are heterogeneous generationally, culturally, politically and geographically. Ginzburg's main textual strategy is to identify each of them through their idiolects, the speech patterns which according to sociolinguistic theory are the result of each person's particular social configuration (place of birth, gender, age, education, class) (Berruto 1987:40n22; Hatim and Mason 1990:43-5).

We examine the role that idiolects play in the source text (hereafter ST), identify elements of the idiolects of a few central characters and explain their significance in the context of the overall structure of the ST: they create and maintain the tension between *langue* and *parole*, which is the tension between public and private histories. Our discussion of both target texts (hereafter TTs) focuses not on any possible 'mistakes' made by the translators but rather on how each of them has perceived the functional role of idiolects in a text of this particular genre.

2. Methodological approach

Translation studies have evolved significantly over the last quarter of the twentieth century. The 'cultural turn' at the end of the 1970s directed research away from the normative approach which characterised the 1960s and 1970s towards a descriptive approach which takes into account issues of relationships between cultures and re-examines notions such as 'faithfulness' and 'equivalence'.

In this article we examine the ST and the two TTs from a combination of two points of view: literary analysis (the role of idiolects in the narrative) and translation theory, particularly the way "the systematic recurrence of this purposely functional feature of the speech of certain characters is to be seen as a noteworthy object of the translator's attention" (Hatim and Mason 1997:103). Our analysis of the ST allows us to discover the role of idiolects in constituting signifying networks within the ST narrative and to emphasise the importance of reproducing them in any TT. While acknowledging that both TTs may be considered satisfactory for the receiving culture of their times, we find that the cultural overlaps of the ST cannot be conveyed by one specific strategy, but need to be negotiated individually. Pym's hypothesis of 'intercultures' (1998) offers many opportunities for innovative solutions.

3. Idiolects and private/public discourses

From the initial pages—in fact from the very first paragraph—*Lessico famigliare* positions itself as the reconstruction of a milieu which was multi-faceted and multi-voiced. An important strand of family culture is represented by different anti-fascist discourses: although only one of the narrating self's siblings was personally involved in politics, the text stresses the many connections between all the family members and men and women of the Turin intellectual milieu who were active in different anti-fascist parties and movements. A more significant strand is cultural origin: Prof. Levi, the narrating self's father, is a Jew from Trieste; Mrs Levi is a non-Jew from Milan. Jewishness is constantly present, although in an understated manner because the family is non-practising: it is characterised mainly through bonds of kinship and friendship. Cultural origin is inextricably linked to regional origin, which in Italy, even among the educated classes, means use of dialects (the languages of the private sphere) as well as, and mixed with, standard Italian (the public language). In Ginzburg's narrative, code-mixing is a communicative strategy to foreground cultural identity, express emotions or make jokes.

Each character in the book is implicitly at some point of intersection of all these strands and his or her idiolect reflects it. Ginzburg foregrounds the importance of idiolects with a narrative strategy which in Italian is known as *tormentoni*—a term taken from the *commedia dell'arte*—signifying the recurrence of the same expression in different contexts, always somewhat incongruously. These repeated expressions have multiple functions. They produce continuity because they evoke shared memories which are the one common element of identity among the subsequent generations of family members. In Ginzburg's words (we quote only from the more recent Woolf TT because here the writer is reflecting on the role of memory rather than directly recollecting the sayings of her family):

> One of those words and sayings would be enough to make us recognize each other in the darkness of a cave or among a million people. These sayings are our Latin, the lexicon of our by-gone days, they are like the hieroglyphics of the Egyptians or the Sumerians, the evidence of a vital nucleus which has ceased to exist but which still survives in its texts, preserved from the fury of the waters and from the corrosions of time. (1997:21)

The expressions also identify individuals in their movements from the micro-histories of the private sphere of family and friendship to the macro-history of Italian society and politics in the 20s, 30s and 40s—the years of fascism and antifascism, the anti-Semitic laws of 1938, World War II, the Resistance and the new order as Italy became a conservative Western republic. They acquire different connotations in different contexts; this gives the book as a whole a spiral-like structure, where changes (in time and/or consciousness) and continuity are marked by the recurrence of sayings and memories.

4. Idiolects and translation strategies

The challenge in translating *Lessico famigliare* is to maintain these recurring expressions because they represent a textual strategy of cohesiveness and form part of what Berman calls the "underlying network of signification within the text as a whole" (Berman 2000:292-3). According to Berman, by isolating recurring words or phrases the translator discovers a *sub-text* beneath the surface of the manifest text, where "the signifiers in themselves have no particular value, that what *makes sense* is their linkage"; "if such networks are not transmitted, a signifying process in the text is destroyed" (Berman 2000:293, emphasis added). Translation strategies should recognise the importance of sub-texts and the role played by idiolects in their construction.

The main argument put forward by Umberto Eco in his monograph *Mouse or Rat? Translation as Negotiation* is that "translators have to make an interpretative hypothesis about the effect programmed by the original text [. . .] so that the decision about what a translation should reproduce becomes *negotiable*" (2003:56, emphasis in text). With specific reference to idiolects, Eco examines the problems encountered by the translators of his novel *Baudolino*, where the eponymous character speaks a pseudo-medieval Northern Italian language and where many linguistic features—including code-mixing—can only be appreciated by ST readers. Although some translators produce original solutions based on the linguistic and cultural features of their own languages, Eco concludes that it is impossible for the TTs to reflect the times and lives of the original ST protagonists. The principal aim of the translator therefore is to "generate the same effect aimed at by the original" (Eco 2003: 56): he/she must become a cultural mediator rather than a 'transcoder' of texts.

Further support for the role of the translator as a bridge between cultures is provided by Palma Zlateva in her essay 'Translation: Text and Pre-Text 'Adequacy' and 'Acceptability' in Cross-cultural Communication'. She argues that "the SL and TL usually have some common features as do the author's and the translator's universes of discourse" (Zlateva 1990: 32). She adds that these common features will usually overlap in various ways which will be determined by the language pairs involved in the translation as well as a number of other factors which could be historical, socio-political or ethical.

The notion of intercultural spaces is further developed by Anthony Pym's hypothesis of *intercultures*: "membership of intercultures presupposes some knowledge of at least two primary cultures" with members commonly contributing "particular cultural knowledge" (2004:19). He postulates that each individual translator is an intercultural agent who, due to his/her in-between status, acts as an intermediary "along and around the limits of the culture in question" (Pym 1998:190) and constitutes a *locus* for representing "substantial interculturality" (1998:180). Pym stresses that his hypothesis is "an operative fiction with critical potential" (1998:188) and acknowledges that there are institutional interests in both source and target cultures which exert pressure against such a human-centred notion.

An overall comparison of the two translations of *Lessico famigliare* reveals that the fundamental difference in the translators' approaches is to be found in the significance they have attached to the role played by idiolects in the overall textual strategy of the ST.

5. Source text challenges and target text solutions

In *Lessico famigliare* the narrating self's recollection of a childhood friend, Marisa, foregrounds a linguistic feature which becomes part of a significant subtext through its use in different contexts. Originally from a wealthy Jewish family, Marisa became a Resistance fighter and later a devoted Communist Party official. The main feature of her idiolect is a phonological feature, the use of the uvular /ʁ/ rather than the vibrant /r/. In Ginzburg's narrative this phonological peculiarity creates continuity between pre-war life (focused on the private sphere and elegant pullovers) and post-war life (focused on the public sphere and the Communist Party):

> Si faceva anche dei pull-over. "**Mi favò un bel pull-ovev**," diceva con la sua pronuncia blesa, e aveva gran varietà di questi "**bei pull-ovev**" col collo alto e rivoltato [. . .]
>
> Marisa [. .] poi diventò una funzionaria del partito comunista, e votò la propria vita al partito, ma restando nell"ombra, perché era priva d"ogni ambizione e modesta, umile e generosa. Ragionava soltanto di questioni di

> partito, diceva "**il pavtito**" con la sua pronuncia blesa, e lo diceva con lo stesso accento di attesa serena e fidente col quale diceva: "**Mi favò un bel pull-ovev.**" (1986:1035-6, emphasis added)
>
> She also made pullovers. "**I am making myself a pwetty pullover**"—she could not say her "r"s. She had a great variety of "**pwetty pullovers**" with turtle-neck collars [...]
>
> Later she became an official in the Communist Party and devoted her life to the Party. She only ever talked about Party matters, and was modest, unassuming and unselfish. (1984:116, emphasis added)[1]
>
> She also used to knit pullovers. "**I'm making myself a nice pullovah**," she would say in her little-girl voice, and she had a great assortment of these "**nice pullovahs**" with high rolled necks [. . .]
>
> Then she became a functionary of the communist party and she devoted her whole life to the party, but staying in the background, because she was modest, humble and generous and devoid of any ambition. She talked only about the affairs of the party, or "**the pahty**" as she called it in her little-girl voice, and she would say it in the same tone of serene and trusting expectation with which she used to say "**I'm making myself a nice pullovah.**" (1997:129-30, emphasis added)

While Woolf's solution still plays on Marisa's pronunciation of 'r' (*pullovah* for 'pullover' and *pahty* for 'party'), Low's version ignores completely the linking of private and public which Marisa's idiolect constitutes for the ST. He opts to translate *bel pullover* as *pwetty pullover*, effectively translating Marisa's phonological trait into a culturally meaningful phrase, but makes no attempt to match *partito* or to translate the second reference. His rendition is shorter because this part of the ST, with its networks of signification, has been omitted.

According to Lefevere, "it is extremely unlikely that translators can reproduce [linguistic] oddities [. . .] but they may have analogous features from all levels of language at their disposal" (1992:67). Availing oneself of the alternatives offered by knowledge of an intercultural pool of phonological features and giving Marisa a lisp would maintain the analogy between actual phonological features in both the source and target languages and preserve the continuity between elements of the private sphere (*pull-ovev* → *thweaterth*) and elements of the public sphere (*pavtito* → *Communithtth*)

6. Idiolects and geographical/cultural dialects: translation strategies

The initial pages of *Lessico famigliare* present two idiolects with different forms and functions. Both Professor Levi and Mrs Levi occasionally mix standard Italian, the dominant language for both of them, with expressions from their respective dialects which recur as *tormentoni* throughout the text. Professor Levi uses expressions from the dialect of Trieste to convey his usually negative reactions to people and aspects of culture or history. Mrs. Levi, in an effort to pass on the nostalgic recollections of her youth, frequently repeats whole sentences in the Milanese used by her relatives. To convey these geographical differences both translators resort to, in the words of the early 19th century philosopher Schleiermacher, "disturbing the reader as little as possible and moving the writer in his direction" rather than "disturbing the writer as little as possible and moving the reader in his direction" (Schleiermacher, cited in Robinson 1997:229). Nowadays these two approaches are better known as domestication and foreignisation respectively. The contemporary theorist Lawrence Venuti is very critical of domestication strategies which, in his view, in order to make the TT fluent, also make the translator invisible (1995). We acknowledge the validity of Venuti's proposals that translators and readers should both "reflect on the ethnocentric violence of translation" and come to appreciate "the linguistic and cultural difference of foreign texts" (1995:41); however in our opinion, given the role borne by language in this text, i.e. creating sub-texts, domestication is the preferred strategy. The discussion that follows provides evidence to support our approach.

A feature of Mrs. Levi's idiolect is her repetition of phrases she heard as a teenager. An example is a saying of one of her working-class uncles:

> "Lidia, mi e ti che sem la chimica, de cosa spussa l'acido solfidrico? El spussa de pet. L'acido solfidrico el spussa de pet." (1986:916)

Low translates it as:

> "Lidia, you and me knows about chemistry, what does sulphuric acid pong of? Pongs of fart. Sulphuric acid pongs of fart."(1984:20)

Woolf translates it as:

> "Thee an' me, Lidia, as knows a bit o' chemistry, what does hydrogen sulphide stink like? Like a fart! It stinks like a fart, does hydrogen sulphide." (1997:17)

We find both these strategies problematic on the basis of two important concepts elaborated by Antoine Berman and Ernst-August Gutt. Berman is one of many contemporary theorists who maintains that rendering an SL dialect with a TL dialect "winds up merely ridiculing the original" (Berman 2000:294; see also Hatim and Mason 1990:40-1 and Schogt 1998:116-19). Gutt formulates a "principle of relevance" which requires that a translation provide all adequately relevant information for the reader with a minimal processing effort (2001:376-96). Therefore, besides attempting to reproduce a similar or 'faithful' version of the ST, the translator must ensure that his/her TT "resembles the original in assumptions that would make it adequately relevant to the receptors, and, moreover, that *these assumptions would be recoverable from his rendering without unnecessary processing effort*" (2001:379, emphasis added). Gutt's assertion is that the question of relevance will allow the translator to decide both which aspects of the original the translation should reproduce as well as how they are to be reproduced so as to be adequately relevant to the TL reader.

The most *relevant* feature in Mrs. Levi's code-mixing appears to us to be the maintenance of a cultural link to her Milanese background. The *sub-text* of this phrase is the incongruity of the uncle's jocular attempt to set himself up as an authority on chemistry by using the 'private' dialect rather than the 'public' standard language. In the TTs, Italian geographical varieties are rendered with non-standard varieties of British English, social (by Low) and geographical (by Woolf). Woolf has chosen Yorkshire dialect to translate Milanese phrases: readers of her translation, while recognising the shift between standard and non-standard English, may find it incongruous that a middle-class Italian housewife relays memories in a Northern English dialect. Low's version uses slang current in England in the 1960s and 1970s (e.g. "pong") with which present-day readers would probably be unfamiliar.

Our option would be to recreate the conspirational tones of the text and preserve its humour by foregrounding the sub-textual pretentiousness rather than the non-standard language features. We would also retain the contrast between 'pretentiousness' and 'naughtiness' by replacing *fart*, which has lost much of its taboo, with *shit*.

> "You and I, Lydia, have enjoyed the privileges of a higher education and we know that hydrogen sulphide stinks like shit! Like shit!"

Applying the concepts of *relevance* and *sub-texts* to *Lessico famigliare* allows us to suggest several alternative translation strategies. Another instance could be a second recurring phrase connected with Mrs Levi's Milanese background. When one of the Levi children was ill with a fever, Professor Levi, man of science, became enraged when his mother-in-law suggested the fever might be related to the fact that the child was teething. Therefore, when greeting visiting relatives, she whispered in dialect: "*Dis no che son i dent*"(1986:917). The humour of this *tormentone*, produced by the combination of family politics and dialect use, cannot be translated without a loss. Both Low and Woolf provide flat, standard English: "Don't say it's the teeth" (1984:21) and "Don't tell him it's his teeth" (1997:18). We would suggest that the loss could be reduced by resorting to Pym's *interculture*s. In an episode of the British comedy series *Fawlty Towers*, familiar to Anglophone audiences throughout the world, the main character, Basil Fawlty, owner of a country guest-house and just as irascible and tactless as Professor Levi, offends some German tourists with his references to World War II after repeating to himself and them, "Don't mention the war!" In our view, "Don't mention the teeth" is an ideal solution

because, besides providing a literal translation of the ST phrase, it captures the humorous reference to the well-known Anglophone cultural icon.

An examination of Professor Levi's idiolect, particularly its mixing of three different codes, reveals that it offers a number of opportunities for negotiated translation strategies based on the intercultural spaces which we, as translators, occupy.

An excellent example is the opening page of the ST:

> Nella mia casa paterna, quand'ero ragazzina, a tavola, se io o i miei fratelli [. . .] inzuppavamo il pane nella salsa, mio padre gridava: "Non leccate i piatti! Non fate **sbrodeghezzi**!" [. . .][2]
>
> [Mio padre] soleva commentare, a pranzo, le persone che aveva visto nella giornata. Era molto severo nei suoi giudizi, e dava dello stupido a tutti. Uno stupido era, per lui, "**un sempio**". "**M'è sembrato un bel sempio**," diceva, commentando qualche sua nuova conoscenza. Oltre ai "sempi", c'erano i "negri". "Un negro" era, per mio padre, chi aveva modi goffi, impacciati e timidi, [. . .] chi non sapeva le lingue straniere. Ogni atto o gesto nostro che stimava inappropriato, veniva definito da lui "una negrigura". "Non siate dei negri! Non fate delle negrigure!" ci gridava continuamente. (1986:901, emphasis added)
>
> When I was a little girl at home, if one of us children [. . .] soaked bread in the gravy, my father cried out: "Don't lick the plates, don't make **messes**."
>
> [My father] used to comment at dinner on the people he had met during the day. He was very severe in his judgments and called them all **stupid**. "I thought he was a very **silly man**," he would say by way of comment on some new acquaintance. A stage worse than silly men were "negroes". A "negro" for my father was one whose manners were gauche and lacking in assurance; one who [. . .] was ignorant of foreign languages. Any act or gesture of ours which he thought out of place was classified by him as a "negrigura". "Don't be 'negroes', "don't do those negrigure," he shouted at us endlessly. (1984:9, emphasis added)
>
> At mealtimes in my father's house, when I was a little girl, if I or my sister or brothers [. . .] mopped up our sauce with a bit of bread, my father would shout, "Don't be so **clarty**! Don't make such a **slather**!"[3]
>
> [My father] used to comment over lunch on the people he had met during the day. he was very severe in his judgements and thought everyone a fool. A fool to him was a "**half-wit**". "He seemed a proper **half-wit** to me," he would say, criticizing some new acquaintance of his. As well as the "half-wits" there were the "**yahoos**". To my father, a "yahoo" was anyone who had gauche, awkward and bashful manners [. . .] or who was ignorant of foreign languages. Every action or expression of ours that he considered out of place he would define as "**yahooish**". "Don't be such yahoos! Stop being so yahooish!" he would shout at us all the time. (1997:3, emphasis added)

In the ST, Professor Levi's words of disparagement situate him in three specific cultural/regional contexts. The main code is standard Italian, which however contains borrowings from the dialect of Trieste (*sbrodeghezzi* and *sempi*), and the Sephardic Jewish words *negri* and *negrigure*. These latter expressions, originally from the Spanish *negro* (sad or unlucky) are widespread in regional Jewish dialects (*giudeo-italiani*) throughout Northern and Central Italy and used metonymically to signify not only lack of social skills but "every possible negative connotation" (Mayer Modena 1997: 963). They are in fact words applied by Jews mainly to other Jews and as such represent a strong marker of collective identity.

In Low's version the Italian Jewish family of the ST has become a middle-class British family unmarked by class, gender, culture or geography. His rendering of dialect expressions with neutral British colloquialisms shows that he has misrecognised the cultural function of the idiolect in the ST. On the other hand, Woolf does consider the function of idiolects within the narrative. She appears to have decided that the most relevant feature of the Levis' idiolect is regional usage and attempted to produce a similar signifying network by substituting not only Yorkshire for Mrs Levi's Milanese but also Scots vocabulary for Professor Levi's Triestine. In her Introduction, she justifies her choice of Scots because it is "rich...in terms for dirt and disorder" (1997:xiv). It seems that she has not considered the more-than-

optimal processing effort that will be required by those TL readers who are not familiar with Scots. As we discovered in the course of a third-year university seminar on *Lessico famigliare*, our Australian students trying to make sense of the translation quickly became frustrated with the TT. This might suggest that Anglophone readers of non-British origin may agree with Gutt (2000) and decide that the extra effort required to process this information far exceeds any gains in contextual effects We acknowledge that the notion of *relevance* lends itself to further criticism by anyone prepared to question the supposed stability of the relationship between signifier and signified, but we are willing to use it heuristically, within a framework of translation as negotiation.

With regard to the term "negri", Low's decision is to translate it only the first time it appears and then to leave it untranslated, in quotation marks and unexplained. In this case, TL readers do not receive any signal of code-mixing nor do they perceive any Jewish connotations. Woolf provides the somewhat esoteric "Yahoos" which, as well as having no Jewish connotations, requires more than optimal processing by those unfamiliar with its usage in *Gulliver's Travels*. Both solutions result in an inevitable loss because they fail to reproduce effects which are either culturally similar or adequately relevant.

We believe that through other textual, syntactical or lexical choices available in our intercultural space, it is possible to maintain some of the intended ST effect in the TT. Such solutions reflect Eco's notion of *negotiation* and it is along this path that we intend to proceed in order to keep idiolect—that 'marker' of meaning in the ST—within the textual strategy of the TT. Like the translator envisaged by Pym we, separately and together, have a unique stock of intercultural knowledge and resources which allows us to negotiate unique solutions. Together we can claim native competence in Italian and English cultures and standard and non-standard language varieties, some knowledge of Italian Jewish cultures, limited passive knowledge of Yiddish, some familiarity with translation theories and with the interplay of public and private in autobiographical writing. As opposed to Woolf, we believe that the most *relevant* features of Ginzburg's idiolects are cultural and affective, and that we need to find a *relevant* cultural/affective intercultural space. Yiddish is an endangered language and only marginally a part of Italian culture: it is neither spoken nor understood by Italian Jews and its extensive literary and social traditions have become available to the Italian public only in the past thirty years. On the other hand, its lexicon has been partly absorbed into Anglophone culture (non-Jewish as well as Jewish) through literature, theatre, and especially film and television (from the Marx Brothers' comedies, to comics such as Mel Brooks and Woody Allen or, more recently, television series such as *Seinfeld* and *The Nanny*). This means that non-Jews have ended up acquiring at least a passive knowledge of some common Yiddish expressions. We believe that, although neither of us speaks nor reads it, Yiddish constitutes an intercultural space between ST and TT, and also that it meets Gutt's criteria of relevance and optimal processing costs. Furthermore, like Italian dialects, Yiddish is, and above all was before World War II, the language of both the private sphere (the *mamaloschen*, the mother's tongue as opposed to the *loschen Kodesh*, the language of the Father, Hebrew) and the public sphere (literature, poetry, political debate). We have therefore decided that in some cases the use of Yiddish to translate Professor Levi's expressions from Triestine or *giudeo-italiano* will re-create a *langue/parole* tension in the TT, similar to, albeit never the same as, that created by dialect/standard Italian in the ST. In the light of our intercultures, we propose a number of terms which we believe may be more readily available for processing by a TT readership. "Non fate sbrodeghezzi" (1997:3) could be rendered by "Stop making *mish-mash* of your food" (with the English/Yiddish code-mixing emphasised by italics)[4] rather than "Stop playing with your food" (Low) and "Don't be so clarty!" (Woolf). *Negri* could be translated by the Yiddish *zhlob* which, besides its literal meaning *dolt*, offers linguistic clues due to its similarity to "slob".

Negotiating strategies require that the translators examine each problem within its particular context rather than adopting a blanket approach. Another feature of Professor Levi's idiolect, his intellectual snobbery, could be conveyed through intercultures located in the overlaps between Italian, English and French. Another of his *tormentoni*, "Frances sapeva più fare" (1992:17), used to remind his wife that her friend Frances had more social flair, could be translated through the well-known French borrowing "Frances had *savoir faire*" instead of Woolf's "Frances really knew what was what" (14) or Low's "Frances knew how to get on" (17).

5. Conclusion

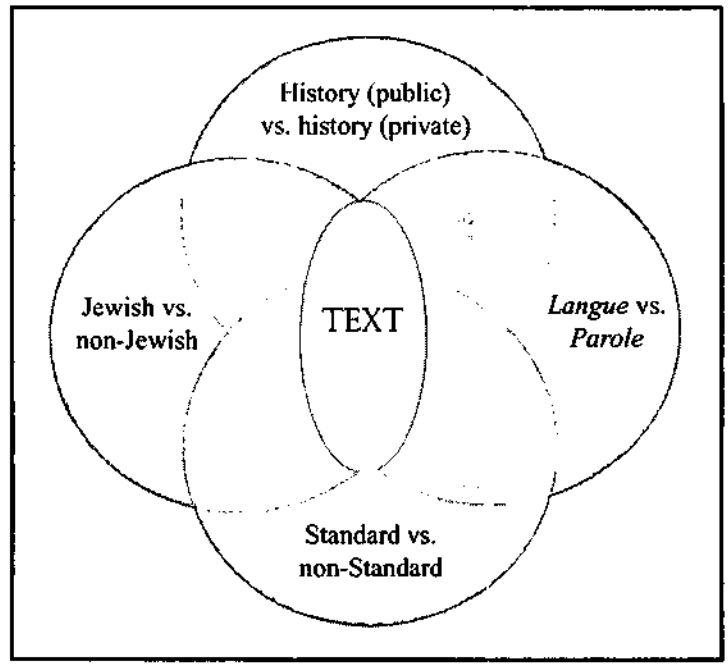

Figure 1: Networks of signification carried by linguistic features in Lessico famigliare

Figure 1 illustrates the central linguistic and cultural role of idiolects in the weaving of Ginzburg's narrative: our argument in this paper is that the maintenance of the subtexts should be an essential part of any translation strategy.

Pym writes that texts 'belong' to a certain cultural time and place and that any transfer across languages will necessarily involve a transfer of values which allow the translated text to function in the TC in the same manner in which it functioned in the SC (Pym 1992:110). While we acknowledge that both the TTs that we have considered may very well reflect the poetics and ideologies of their respective cultural and historical timeframes, we wish to suggest that translators should also be aware that 'blanket' strategies will not always serve this purpose faithfully. In our analysis of the two TTs we have found that the underlying networks of signification in the ST have occasionally been lost because idiolects have either not been fully identified or have been rendered with just one strategy. We have found our own negotiated strategy by looking at what was available to us in our particular 'cultural overlaps' (Pym 1998:177). Pym's theory has also made us aware of the fact that our solutions represent just some of the potentially infinite strategies available to other translators depending on their own intercultural overlaps.

Notes

1. Lowe's (1984) work does not contain a translation of the final, third sentence of the source text.

2. Phrases in bold are from the dialect of Trieste; phrases which are underlined are from *giudeo-italiano*.

3. Scottish terms which in English might be equivalent to 'filthy' and 'mess'.

4. *Mish-mash* with the meaning 'mess' is mentioned in Rosten (2003:306).

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