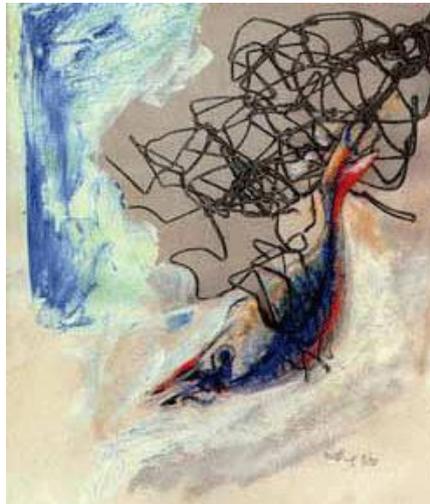


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Self-Translation from a Diglossic Perspective

The Reality of the Basque Country



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Introduction¹

As numerous studies have recently shown, self-translation is a widespread practice in asymmetric literary exchanges between minority and majority languages. Grutman divides authors producing self-translations in asymmetric contexts into three categories: “writers belonging to long established linguistic minorities” (2013: 201), “colonial and postcolonial writers who alternate between their native tongue(s) and the European language of their (former) overlords” (2013: 202), and “immigrant writers who expand on work originally begun in their native country while staking out new ground for themselves in the language of their adoptive country” (2013: 202). The study presented in this paper belongs to the first category, as Basque is a minority language of a diglossic social character in the contemporary Basque Country, cohabiting with Spanish and French². Sharing co-officiality with a major language shapes all cultural production and the everyday communication of the citizens. “The dynamics of in-State self-translation are fundamentally centripetal in nature, regardless of whether the source-language has gained official status or is merely considered a ‘patois’” (Grutman, 2013: 202). Thus, self-translations produced in contemporary Basque literature are framed in this particular context.

This paper will offer a macroscopic perspective of the phenomenon of self-translation in the Basque literature, taking into account various factors: target languages, frequency, directionality, chronology, genres, reasons for self-translation, etc., which will help describe the main characteristics of self-translation in a diglossic literature such as Basque.

Basque language and literature

Basque is a minority language within a geographical sphere in which it coexists together with powerful languages such as Spanish in the Spanish Basque Country and French in the French Basque Country. Bilingualism within the region is characterized by its diglossic nature, with the hegemonic languages being the main tools for everyday communication.

First, it is important to reflect on the relationship established between Basque and Spanish/French linked to the linguistic origins of each. As Basque is a non-Indo-

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² Spanish in the Spanish Basque Country and French on the French side of the country.

European language, it is very different from its neighboring Romance languages at lexical, semantic, and syntactic levels. This interlinguistic distance is a hindrance to the spread of the use and knowledge of the language among non-Basque speakers.

Currently there are approximately 800,000 Basque speakers, constituting 28,4%³ of the citizens in the region. However, the distribution of Basque speakers is not homogeneous. The Basque Country is divided into three administrative and political areas. On the one hand, there are the Basque Autonomous Community and the Chartered Community of Navarre within Spain, and the Communauté d'agglomération du Pays Basque in France. The lack of an administrative unity and homogeneous or shared linguistic policies for boosting the use and the knowledge of the minority language hinder all chances for its joint and homogeneous evolution.

The sociolinguistic reality in the Basque Country influences all literary creation in the region. There are authors who write their works in Spanish or French, and there are others who write in Basque. At the same time, there are some others who use two languages for their creative writing, whether Basque and Spanish or Basque and French.

The denomination of Basque literature might be understood in diverse ways, depending on what it refers to, if it is the language of expression, if it is the identity or the geographical origin of a writer. In this regard, Basque literature will only refer to what has been written in the Basque Country (in either language), or by Basque authors (even if they have published their work in other places), or it may only be limited to what has been written in Basque. The cultural and political ideology influences the use of the adjective “Basque”.

In literary terms, there are arguably two separate literary systems within the Basque Country, one in the hegemonic language and the other in the minority language, or a single but heterogeneous multilingual system. It must be said that production in hegemonic languages (in Spanish or French) is situated at the same time in a wider reality that goes beyond the borders of the Basque region: it becomes part of the Spanish or French literary system. Furthermore, production in Basque is not wholly autonomous, but depends to a lesser or greater extent on the literatures in major languages. However, despite this dependency, it could be said that it forms a small and somehow separate system. According to Torrealdai (2016), 1,500–2,000 books are

³ Those are the complete bilinguals who can understand and communicate in Basque. Another 16,4% of citizens are passive bilinguals, that is, they understand Basque but are not able to speak (6th Sociolinguistic Survey, 2017: 3).

published every year in Basque, which is a considerable quantity for a language of limited diffusion. Some 380 authors are members of the Association of Basque Writers (EIE), although the total number of Basque authors may be higher as not all writers are part of the association. On the other hand, according to the scholar Zubiri Esnaola there are some 15,000–20,000 regular readers of Basque literature, while there are another 40,000 moderate readers, and 100,000–150,000 occasional readers (Zubiri Esnaola 2013: 51). Literature for children and youths is mostly published in Basque and narrative is the most popular genre in terms of literature for adults, compared to other more marginal genres, such as essays, poetry, drama, etc.

As previously mentioned, there is a dependency on hegemonic languages, which can be noticed among the various agents in the literary system mentioned in the scheme presented by Even-Zohar (1990). As bilingual speakers, writers must decide if they will write their work in Basque, in the hegemonic language, or in both. Similarly, readers are also bilingual, and they have access to literature in Basque, Spanish, French, English, or any other language they may master. As the offer is greater in hegemonic languages, readers are used to reading literature in more than one language. Moreover, some publishing houses work not only in one language, but publish book series in two languages, and they even promote the translation of Basque works into Spanish.

Self-translation in the Basque Country

It is worth observing the main characteristics of the phenomenon of self-translation in relation to its linguistic context. First, Basque is an established linguistic minority, coexisting with two hegemonic languages (Spanish and French), each in its respective region, and thus bilingualism is part of everyday life and is also a characteristic of cultural production in the country. Second, self-translations produced in Basque literature are part of an endogenous reality; that is, they are produced within the same place in which the originals were published, so original works and their self-translations share geographical space. Third, self-translations are produced between languages that are in asymmetric relations, presenting a dependency on major languages. Asymmetric self-translations in endogenous contexts tend to be supra self-translations (Grutman, 2011: 83), that is, the directionality goes from the minority language to the major language.

Self-translations in the Basque literary system respond to the need to make visible a small literature in neighbor systems. Cultural exchanges are an essential tool for the

survival and the development of any literature, and translation in both directions is required to maintain the liveliness of a literature. Translation into Basque has played a very important role in incorporating the canonical works of world literature in the Basque literary tradition, as well as creating and developing the literary language of Basque authors. In contrast, translation from Basque is a relatively recent phenomenon that contributes to the visibility of Basque literature in other languages and cultures.

Works in Basque language do not require translation in order to obtain a “label of quality” or to obtain approval as the equivalent of their neighbours’ literary production, they need it because translation has an enormous amount of importance in minority languages. This means that, as well as making it possible for readers of other languages to enrich the Basque literary horizon, translation guarantees the maintenance of the Basque language (Olaziregi, 2000: 422).

Translations from the Basque language are mainly into Spanish: almost half of the books translated into other languages have Spanish as their target language (Manterola, 2014: 133). Moreover, many of these books are self-translated by their authors. This means that self-translation is a significant tool for exportation.

Self-translation is always an option for a bilingual author, and he or she consciously decides whether or not to engage in it. Authors may decide to translate their own works due to personal reasons, but many other factors may also play a role. Lopez Gaseni mentions the following reasons among Basque authors: on the one hand, there is the desire to show that they have mastery of the literary language also in the target language, the need or the desire to go back to their text (and “rewrite” it), and the intention to hide the actual process of creating the literary work (primarily in diglossic realities); on the other hand, there are some other external factors, such as economic reasons (the impossibility of hiring a professional translator) or technical reasons (lack of experienced professional translators in the particular language combination and directionality) (Lopez Gaseni, 2005: 44–47). In his words, the lack of cultural policies and institutional support for promoting translation from Basque into other languages is behind these two external factors (Lopez Gaseni, 2005: 47).

In fact, there is not a single factor underpinning each self-translation, but a mixture or a sum of numerous factors of diverse nature. The considerable number of self-translations produced every year in the Basque context leads us to think that economic and technical reasons play a key role, but the power implications present between the source and target systems should also be considered. The Spanish target

system drives translations into Spanish of literary works from peripheral authors (Dasilva, 2009: 146). Indeed, there are many examples of opaque self-translations (Dasilva, 2011: 46) that could make the reader think he or she is in front of a work originally written in Spanish. Agents of the Spanish literary system require that translations of Basque works (as well as Catalan and Galician) be presented as authentic originals, which is why they prefer self-translations and not allograph translations. When authors are responsible for the translation of their works into Spanish, they write the text for their new audience. Thus, it could be considered that they rethink and rewrite the text in a way that is comparable to how they write their original works. After all, translations are second-level products compared to originals, and self-translations are considered versions of their originals, comparable in status from a creative point of view.

The following is an extract from the introduction to the anthology *Siete poetas vascos* (2009) edited by Jose Angel Irigaray, which illustrates the importance given by the target literary system to the participation of the author in the translation:

En toda traducción es fundamental la participación y visto bueno del autor, más aún si conoce la lengua a la que se traduce. En la presente edición, son los propios autores quienes, además de seleccionar los poemas, los han traducido o han colaborado con los que lo han hecho, buscando siempre conseguir una suficiente calidad poética en la lengua traducida. (Irigaray, 2009)

The quote suggests that the translation into the hegemonic language needs the approval of the author to warrant the quality of the target text. Somehow, the (re)creation is given priority over the linguistic transfer. Arrula states that terms such as version, rewriting or adaptation are frequently used to refer to self-translations (Arrula, 2017: 107). She suggests that, although implicitly, understanding might be based on the counterpoint translation's>fidelity (as what is explicitly mentioned constitutes changes>version) (Arrula, 2017: 108). This is one of the reasons not to employ the term "translation". In this regard, self-translation prioritizes authorship, but beyond that there is also another contextual element in Basque literature: the reasons for refusing to use the term "translation" are based on a minority complex and they nourish our abnormal situation (Arrula, 2017: 107).

In what follows, self-translation in the Basque literature will be examined through analysis of data collected in the ELI Catalogue⁴, which covers the references of books translated from Basque into other languages.

First, we should highlight the issue of directionality as self-translations are mainly produced in the direction from the minority language into a major language, namely French and Spanish. Self-translations in the other direction, that is, *infra* self-translations, from the major language to the minority language, are very rare in post-Franco Spain according to Grutman (2016: 62) and as also demonstrated in previous studies on self-translation in the Basque literature (Manterola, 2011, 2014).

Spanish and French are the main target languages of self-translations by Basque authors and there are two books self-translated into Esperanto⁵. There is a significant difference in the number of self-translations published in each language. As the analysis of the ELI Catalogue shows, Spanish is the main target language of translations of Basque literary works, representing 46.68% (Manterola, 2014: 133), and French is the fifth target language at 5.35%. In a recent update to the catalogue (2017), we observe that 824 works in total have been published in Spanish translation, while there are only 91 translations into French out of 1616 entries in the ELI Catalogue. The significant difference between the two target languages accords with the different status that the Basque language has on the two sides of the border, and the (im)permeability of the hegemonic languages in terms of translations from minority languages. As previously pointed out, Basque is an official language in the Spanish territory, but not in the French part of the Basque Country. Translations into French from minority languages spoken within France are very few compared to the translation tendencies in Spain, where Spanish is the main target language for translations from minority languages within Spain. This is why literary production tends to increase more steadily in the Spanish Basque Country, and at the same time translation from Basque into the major language (Spanish vs. French) is also stronger and more extensive.

Regarding the contemporary Spanish literary arena, self-translation constitutes a rather widespread phenomenon, not only among Basque writers but also among Galician and Catalan writers. “Le nombre d’auteurs qui se sont eux-mêmes traduits en

⁴ The ELI Catalogue (Catalogue of Translations from Basque literature) is available at <http://www.ehu.eus/ehg/eli/>.

⁵ The EUSAL Catalogue, completed by Garazi Arrula, which compiles self-translations from the Basque literature, also identified another rare case of self-translation. Ainara Maia self-translated into Spanish, French, Catalan, German, English, and Czech an anthology of poems published online (Arrula, 2018).

castillan depuis que les langue régionales (à savoir le catalan, le galicien et le basque) jouissent d'un status co-officiel dans leur Communauté Autonome respective dépasse facilement le centaine” (Grutman, 2016: 58). The current plurilingualism, established after the end of the Franco regime, enables a rather considerable exchange between Spanish and the regional languages, and many translations are made by the authors themselves⁶. The co-official status of the language is a key characteristic for the proliferation of self-translation, which is a very recent phenomenon⁷. If we examine chronological data in the ELI Catalogue, we can see that although there are some self-translated books from the beginning of the 20th century, the phenomenon has grown continuously since the 90s (see Figure 1). The graphic in Figure 1 also shows that self-translation is an activity mainly practiced by authors in the Spanish Basque Country.

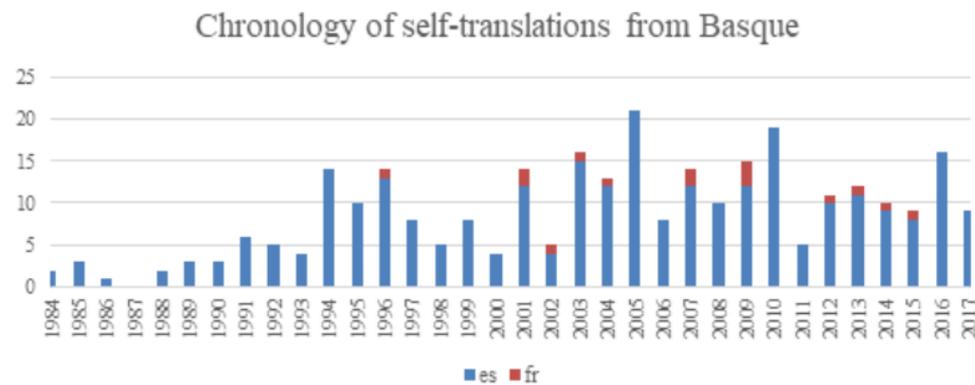


Figure 1

In terms of self-translation as against other types of translation, it can be noted that the percentages also differ in Spanish and French. Self-translation is the main

⁶ As stated by Dasilva, the Spanish literary system does not favor the translation of literature in Spanish into minority languages (Dasilva, 2009: 146), but the centripetal force induces writers in minority languages to translate their work into Spanish. Children’s and youth literature might be an exception, where the literary exchange is in both directions.

⁷ Grutman defines contemporary Spain as the “paradise” of self-translation (Grutman, 2016: 60). As Santoyo has repeatedly stated, self-translations were produced throughout centuries in Spain, but we consider a recent phenomenon the continued production of the last years.

means of transfer into Spanish with 48.89% of the total, followed by allograph translation (34.29%) and collaborative self-translation (4.58%). The percentage of self-translations is growing: in 2011 there were 176 self-translations, constituting 39.67% (Manterola, 2011: 123), while in Arrula's study⁸ (data collected to 2015) the total number of self-translations rose to 325 (Arrula, 2017: 110), and the recent update to the ELI Catalogue (2017) counted 303 self-translations (288 into Spanish and 15 into French). The percentage of Spanish self-translations is now around 48.89%.

As pointed out by Manterola, "translations carried out in pairs cannot be classified in a single category or form a homogeneous phenomenon as many factors influence the translating process" (Manterola, 2017a: 210–211). There are many ways in which an author and a translator can work together: working hand in hand, or the author working on a first draft and the translator revising it, or vice versa, etc⁹. In this study, I identified three distributive collaborative self-translations—that is, one part of the book translated by the author and another part by some other translator. There is another collaborative self-translation by two authors, who also wrote the original together—a coauthorial self-translation in Dasilva's terminology (Dasilva, 2016: 18). In addition, there are 23 collaborative self-translations that do not provide details concerning the process of translation. Finally, 11.2% of the books give no information on the translator and another 1.01% of the Spanish translations are hard to classify due to contradictory information concerning the translation process found in various sources¹⁰.

In the case of French, 43.2% of cases do not give any information on the translator, so we do not actually know what kind of translation it is. Self-translation constitutes only 18.51% of the books translated into French, whereas allograph translations constitute 38.27%. No collaborative self-translation has been identified for French. So, not only the number of writers in the French Basque Country is smaller than the number of writers on the Spanish side, but also the percentage of self-translators is smaller. Apart from that, many of the works translated into French were written by authors from the Spanish Basque Country, who are not bilingual in French. Thus, their works need to be translated by other translators. Moreover, many of those works were

⁸ The EUSAL Catalogue, which compiles references of self-translation in Basque literature, completed by Garazi Arrula, collects not only references to books but also self-translations published in periodicals or online.

⁹ See Manterola (2017a), Dasilva (2015) or Cordingley and Frigau Manning (2017) for more detailed typologies.

¹⁰ When completing the ELI Catalogue, I consulted catalogues, data-bases, information offered by the webpages of the publishing houses or the authors, and the peritexts of books.

transferred into French not from the original in Basque, but from a middle version in Spanish: 13 directly from Basque and 18 indirectly from Spanish. That is the case of Bernardo Atxaga’s works, for example, translated from Spanish by André Gabastou. It seems that French is not comparable to Spanish as the main target language; rather, the situation is more like other foreign languages, such as German or English, for which we can also find direct and indirect translations, something that hardly ever happens with Spanish.

It is also interesting to observe the evolution of each translation type over the years. As pointed out earlier, there were few translations into Spanish until the 80s. It is from that decade on that the number began to increase, especially from the 90s. As it can be observed in Figure 2, self-translations have almost always ruled over allograph translations. The evolution of production has not been linear, either in the case of self-translations or allograph translations. It seems that the number of books that do not give any data on the translator has been decreasing in recent years.

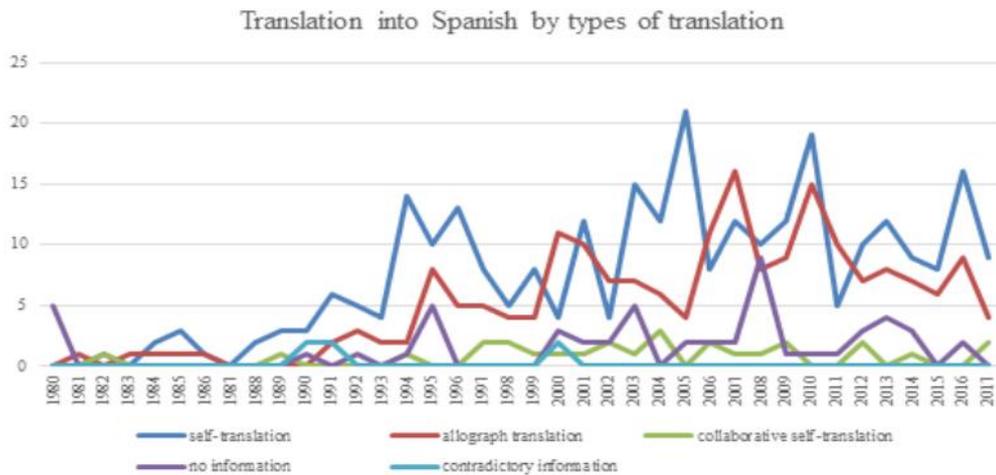


Figure 2

In the case of French, the total number of translations is considerably smaller, as mentioned previously, and the proportion of the different translation types also differs.

Looking at the evolution of each, we see that allograph translations have gained ground, although the increase is not at all linear.

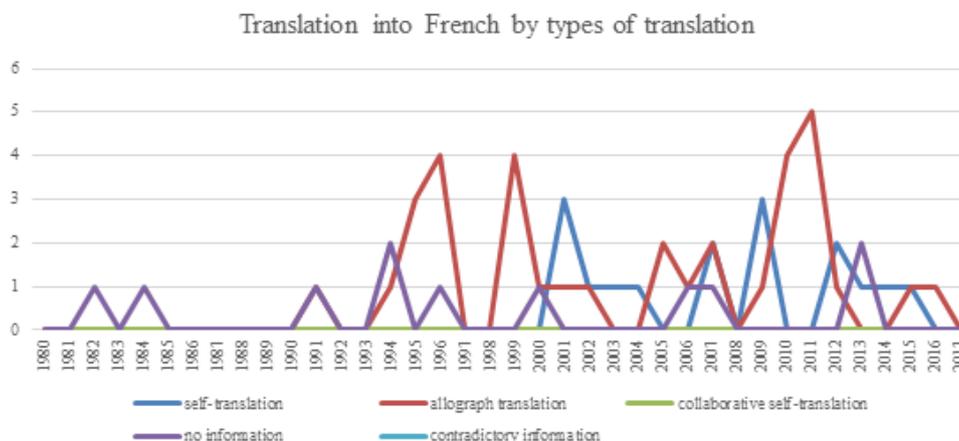


Figure 3

As for literary genres, children’s and youth literature is the genre most produced in Basque literature, as well as being the most translated into other languages (Manterola, 2014: 131), and it is also the main self-translated genre. Moreover, all self-translated books of this genre have had Spanish (and not French) as their target language, which shows that the activity is systematized (Arrula, 2017: 113).

Focusing now on the agents who decide to translate (or not) their own work, the typology is varied: 181 authors have seen their work translated into Spanish, although there is a substantial difference between them if we take into account the number of books translated. In all, 51 writers have never translated anything on their own, whereas 108 have self-translated at least one work into Spanish. Four other writers have translated a work at least into Spanish, but only in teamwork, that is, collaboration has been the only experience they have had with self-translation. In another 18 cases there is no clear information on the way their work has been translated into Spanish.

In contrast, a total of 38 authors have been translated into French. In all, there are 10 self-translators, 19 authors have been translated by others (mainly authors from the Spanish Basque Country), and in 7 cases we do not have enough data to classify the type of translation.

Table 1. Authors translated into French or Spanish

	SP	FR
Self-translated at least once	108	10
Never self-translated	51	19

Self-translated in collaboration	4	0
No clear information	18	7

In Spanish the number of authors who have sometimes translated their own work is double that of authors who have never faced the task of self-translation. However, this does not mean that authors who have self-translated their work have done so in a regular manner. Some writers try the experience of self-translation just once or twice, while others do it more systematically. The number of works translated should also be considered, as many authors have only had one or two books translated into other languages. Indeed, 55.55% of the authors who have at some point self-translated their work have only done so once, while only 5 (4.62%) have self-translated 10 books or more.

The term “self-translator” is potentially problematic, as it equally describes an author who has translated a single work and an author who has translated many more; it also describes those who systematically translate all their works, as well as any other author who has at some point translated a work and decided not to repeat the experience. As Eva Gentes states, “la décision de s’autotraduire peut intervenir à différents points du parcours littéraire: un écrivain peut le faire dès sa première œuvre [...] ou seulement après avoir fait l’expérience d’avoir été (mal) traduit par autrui” (Gentes, 2016: 100). The typology is diverse among Basque authors. On the one hand, there are some writers who have many translations into Spanish, but they have tried the experience of translating their own work only once. Anjel Lertxundi, Jon Arretxe, and Arantxa Urretabizkaia are good examples. All three have translated one work into Spanish, and the experience has not been repeated, although the number of translations into Spanish is considerable in all three cases. Arretxe says that at the beginning he tried to translate his own books, but he realized that they were bad translations (Erostarbe, 2012). Lertxundi self-translated a short story and after finishing it became aware of a major problem he had with the text (Manterola, 2017a: 200): the text in Basque and the text in Spanish were different, and the Spanish text was a *work in progress* of the Basque original (Egia, 1999: 114). The case of Arantxa Urretabizkaia is quite different. At the beginning of the 80s, an editor was interested in publishing her novel *Zergatik, Panpox?* into Catalan, and they had a translator able to translate it directly from Basque, but simultaneously they asked her to self-translate it into Spanish, to make the task of the translator easier (Urretabizkaia, 2011). That experience led her to consider that the

task of translation requires considerable effort and formation, so she decided not to repeat the experience: “decidí que ya tenía suficientes oficios de los que poder vivir para ponerme a aprender otro. Y desde entonces nunca he traducido mis textos” (Urretabizkaia, 2011). Beyond self-translation, this case also illustrates that Spanish is needed in the literary exchanges between minority languages in Spain (Gentes, 2016: 97).

The previous cases demonstrate that “la première expérience d’autotraduction marque un moment décisif dans le parcours littéraire d’un écrivain bilingue” (Gentes, 2016: 101). It may lead writers never to repeat the experience, as seen previously, or it can lead them to develop their translating skills. Beyond the significance that the first experience may have for a writer’s career, the subsequent experiences will shape the self-translating profile of a writer. There are many writers who continue self-translating after the first experience. In the Basque context, there are some systematic self-translators who translate every book they write in Basque into Spanish. Juan Kruz Igerabide, Mariasun Landa, and Miren Agur Meabe are prolific writers who have published more than 10 self-translations. All three writers mainly publish works for children and youth, apart from narrative for adults. Systematic self-translators could be those writers who self-translate their works, and do not try allograph translation or collaborative self-translation. There are not so many systematic self-translators in the Basque literature, but there are more writers who have tried several ways. The translation process responds to the requirements of a certain translation project. Economic conditions, time constraints, the availability of the author or the translator, the requirements of the publishing house, the characteristics of the text, etc., could directly influence the decision to self-translate or not, to collaborate with a translator, or to face the translation alone. The data collected for this study show that most of the prolific Basque writers have changed the way in which they address translation during their career.

In what follows, we will consider some examples of the distinct types of translation processes practiced by certain authors. Ixiar Rozas translated all her works into Spanish herself (*Gau bakar bat*, *Sartu, korrontea dabil*, and *Negutegia*), but she worked together with a translator on the last book she published. *Beltzuria* (2014 in Basque and 2017 in Spanish) was translated first by Jose Luis Padron and the author revised the text before publishing it, in order to find her own voice in Padron’s words (Rozas, 2017). Miren Agur Meabe, on the other hand, did the opposite. Translating her

first book into Spanish, she was not confident of the outcome, and the text was therefore revised afterwards by Kepa Murua (Manterola, 2017b). After that first experience, she gained confidence and expertise, and she has self-translated all her subsequent works into Spanish herself. Professional or personal circumstances at the point of setting up each translation project also marks the decision of whether or not to face the task of translation. Harkaitz Cano's first book was translated into Spanish by Bego Montorio, but the author has translated almost all his subsequent works into Spanish. The translation of *Twist* (published in 2011 in Basque and in 2013 in Spanish) is an exception in his career, being translated by Gerardo Markuleta. In the writer's opinion, "no tenía fuerzas para acometer ese trabajo en ese momento, para volver a meterme en una historia de esa envergadura" (Rivas, 2013). Despite putting the process in the hands of the translator, he nonetheless had considerable control of the process: "He estado muy encima del proceso e incluso algunas pequeñas partes las he traducido yo, porque tenía ese capricho" (Rivas, 2013). In contrast, Bernardo Atxaga, the most international Basque author, begun translating his works himself, but nowadays works hand in hand with his translator, Asun Garikano, on the Spanish translations¹¹.

The experience of self-translation teaches writers the mechanisms needed for the transfer from one language to another. The self-translating profile evolves and the reasons leading them to undertake their first self-translation are not the same as those that lead them to continue with the activity:

[...] les raisons de s'autotraduire peuvent changer au fil du temps, c'est-à-dire sont dynamiques. Il est par exemple frappant de constater que les raisons pour lesquelles un auteur se traduit une première fois ne sont pas nécessairement les mêmes qui l'encouragent à poursuivre sur cette voie. (Gentes, 2016: 88)

However, there are many authors who decline to self-translate their work; they do not want to go back to the text. Edorta Jimenez, for example, has had six books translated into Spanish, but they have been translated by others: four by Bego Montorio, and one each by Mikel Iriarte and Jose Luis Padron. The author's political or ideological attitude could influence the decision not to translate his or her own work into the major language, but there might also be stylistic reasons behind such a decision. Anjel Lertxundi, for example, does not self-translate his works because he knows he

¹¹ See Manterola (2014) and (2017a) for further detail on their way of proceeding.

will not be able to attain the same stylistic level in Spanish as in Basque, as he has worked thoroughly on it in Basque over many years¹².

The role played by the original and the translation may reflect the asymmetrical exchanges between Basque and Spanish or Basque and French. In the case of endogenous self-translations produced in diglossic environments, the status of the original and the translation might be inverted compared to ordinary allograph translations: translations do not have the same prestige as originals in general, but supra self-translations attain a better position than their originals, as pointed out by Grutman:

[...] la autotraducción (sobre todo la de tipo asimétrico, de la que estamos hablando) puede convertirse en un arma de doble filo. [...] tanto puede aumentar la visibilidad de la versión en lengua mayoritaria que termina ocultando su creación en una lengua menos difundida, descalificándola de algún modo y confirmando al mismo tiempo la posición dominante del idioma central. (Grutman, 2009: 131)

Self-translators gain visibility, not in their role as translators but in their role as authors. There are many cases of opaque self-translations (Dasilva, 2011) with no explicit reference to the translator in the paratexts, which may lead the reader to think the books were originally written in Spanish¹³.

The loss of status of the original text in Basque can be observed in the next example. Although in fact not a case of self-translation, it can perfectly illustrate the lack of authority that a minority language writer may suffer when translating a first book into Spanish. The publishing house Alfaguara became interested in Uxue Alberdi's *Aulki joko* as the writer Unai Elorriaga talked to the publishers about it. Once the whole book had been translated by Miren Agur Meabe, the publishing house asked the author to extend and develop some fragments. She rejected the request as she considered the text was already finished; what Alfaguara considered an embryo, was already a baby to her (Sarriugarte, 2012). The attitude of the publishing house reflects the marginal nature of Basque and its lack of status. Alberdi is convinced that they would never ask an author writing in English to do the same (Sarriugarte, 2012).

In the case of self-translations from Basque into French, the asymmetry is reflected, for example, in the considerable number of bilingual books. As Arrula's study shows, almost all French self-translations are published in bilingual or multilingual

¹² See Egia (1999) for further detail.

¹³ Opaqueness in Basque literature has been studied by Manterola (2014), who provides a thorough analysis of paratexts in Basque literature.

editions, together with the original Basque (Arrula, 2017: 116). Readers access the original text and its translation in the same book; the original in some way depends on the translation. It seems the original needs the French text in order to get published (Arrula, 2017: 116).

Final reflections

In a symposium on self-translation celebrated in December 2017, Garazi Arrula presented¹⁴ a paper entitled “Askabide ala morrontza? Euskaratik erdaretara autoitzultzeaz” (Liberation or subordination? On self-translating from Basque into other languages). The question posed in the title of her contribution reflects the two poles toward which the phenomenon of self-translation can tip. Authors may feel that they are at peace with their two languages through self-translating their work from the minority into the major language. At the same time, self-translation might bring to light the dependency of a minority literary system. Minority language authors may feel forced to follow the requirements imposed by the target system’s agents. As Arrula mentioned in her contribution, the study of the activity of self-translation may not give a clear answer to her question, but does raise more questions concerning the factors influencing the practice, the motivations for it, and the characteristics of the context in which it is produced. This paper has a similar function in examining the various aspects of self-translation within a particular context.

There is no doubt that self-translation is a widespread phenomenon within the Iberian Peninsula, especially among Basque, Galician, and Catalan writers. It predominantly concerns production from the minority languages into Spanish, responding to its hegemonic power. In the case of Basque authors, self-translations are produced not only in Spanish, but also in French, as authors of the French Basque Country are bilingual in Basque and French. Although there is a substantial difference between the two target languages, self-translation is a recurrent activity in both. As we have seen, self-translation is gaining presence in Basque literature, and thus we will continue to observe its evolution in the future.

The symposium *Autoitzulpena eremu diglosikoetan (Self-translation in diglossic areas)* took place at the Faculty of Arts of the University of the Basque Country UPV/EHU in Vitoria-Gasteiz, on December 14, 2017. Papers presented at this event are available at <https://ehutb.ehu.eus/series/5a3a5e83f82b2b62518b45ea>.

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