

Translating mimesis of orality:

Robert Frost's poetry in Catalan and Italian

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Ai miei genitori

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Summary

This doctoral thesis studies the recreation of spoken language in Robert Frost's poetry and the translation of Frost's poetry that has been carried out by Agustí Bartra and Miquel Declot into Catalan, and by Giovanni Giudici into Italian. The study starts by describing the meaning of the term *mimesis of orality* and its main features. It stresses the complexity of the phenomenon, which can be explained better only if a more eclectic theoretical and methodological approach is adopted that focuses on both the linguistic features of mimesis of orality and their potential effect on readers. Frost's poetic language is well-known for its spoken quality. In this research I define the main traits of the poet's language and then study how his evocation of orality has been interpreted by the poet-translators Bartra, Declot and Giudici and how it has been interwoven with their own poetic style. The translations share common traits that can be traced back to the stylistic patterns of Frost's original poetry. However, they also present divergent stylistic solutions that can be ascribed to each translator. By contextualizing these personal translation choices a better understanding is achieved of the causes that have motivated them, which ultimately brings the research to explore issues related to the translators' ideology and cultural commitment.

Resum

Aquesta tesi doctoral estudia la recreació de la llengua parlada en la poesia de Robert Frost i la traducció de la poesia de Frost duta a terme per Agustí Bartra i Miquel Declot al català, i per Giovanni Giudici a l'italià. L'estudi descriu el significat del terme *mimesi de l'oralitat* i les seves principals característiques. Posa l'accent en la complexitat del fenomen, que es pot explicar millor si s'adopta un enfocament teòric i metodològic més eclèctic, que se centra tant en els aspectes lingüístics de la mimesi de l'oralitat com en els possibles efectes en els lectors. El llenguatge poètic de Frost és ben conegut per la seva qualitat parlada. En aquesta recerca defineixo en primer lloc els trets principals de la llengua del poeta i estudio de quina forma la seva evocació de l'oralitat ha estat interpretada pels poetes i traductors Bartra, Declot i Giudici i de quina manera s'ha entrelaçat amb l'estil poètic propi dels traductors. Les traduccions comparteixen trets comuns que es remunten als patrons estilístics de la poesia original de Frost. No obstant això, també presenten solucions estilístiques divergents que poden ser atribuïdes a cada traductor. Mitjançant la contextualització d'aquestes opcions personals de traducció és possible aconseguir una millor comprensió de les causes que les han motivades. Això porta la investigació a examinar qüestions relacionades amb la ideologia dels traductors i el seu compromís cultural.

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INTRODUCTION

Aims

The present study focuses on poetry and translation of poetry. In particular, it analyzes the mimesis of orality that characterizes Robert Frost's poetic language, and its translation into Italian and Catalan as carried out by poet-translators Giovanni Giudici, Agustí Bartra, and Miquel Desclot. Mimesis of orality is a heterogeneous phenomenon, which explains the various attempts at a definition made by scholars throughout the years. Moreover, the recreation of orality in a written text is partly conventional, since it is determined by the combination of certain linguistic devices belonging to the written medium that individual authors choose in order to represent a situation or a character in a text. It is necessarily a culture-based phenomenon and, as a consequence, it presents a high degree of complexity when studied from the descriptive translation studies perspective. For this very reason, however, translation of mimesis of orality, and the equally thorny issue of translation of poetry represent an ideal object for research that aims to shed some light on the process of translation, and on the web of relationships it weaves between the different elements of the cultural system in which it participates.

The starting point of the analysis is the mimesis of orality in the poetical work of Robert Frost. The phenomenon of fictive orality in poetry is neither exclusive to Robert Frost nor to modern poetry. The very origins of poetry are oral and, if we just focus on the anglophone poetical tradition, oral traits already characterize part of poetic production as far back as Shakespeare, Spenser, Chaucer, and beyond. In the essay 'The Music of Poetry', T.S. Eliot (1957) remarks how any revolution in poetry is always related to a return to common speech. Eliot refers to Wordsworth, and before him, to Oldham, Waller, Denham and Dryden and concludes: "The music of poetry, then, must be a music latent in the common speech of its time" (31). I have chosen to focus on Frost after pondering several factors. To start with, literary criticism has always regarded the spoken quality of his poetic language as a central feature in his poetry. In addition to this, Frost is one of the last few anglophone poets writing in the first half of the twentieth century, together with

William Butler Yeats and Edwin Muir, among the few others whose poems were still composed in the formal metrical patterns of the English poetic tradition. Thus, rhetorical devices such as metre, rhyme, alliteration etc. which are normally associated with the Western poetic tradition and the written dimension, combine with the recreation of orality in the written medium and bring about a dynamic tension between the two domains. These areas should not be considered as opposite ends of a continuum, but they certainly establish a dialectic relationship. The first aim of my analysis is therefore to achieve an understanding of the way orality is recreated in a selection of poems by Robert Frost, and how it has been translated into Catalan and Italian. The linguistic and stylistic analysis of the texts will provide information on the main features adopted to recreate mimesis of orality in the target corpus. The aim is to describe general stylistic traits of the translation of mimesis of orality in each culture. These first observations, focusing on the translation as a product, are but a preliminary step in an examination of a much more complex phenomenon. The second aim of the research is to describe the role of the Catalan and Italian translators as intercultural actors. The phenomena observed during the stylistic analysis will raise questions regarding the translation choices and the translators' strategies. The aim is to understand the causal relationship between these choices and the political, ideological and socio-cultural issues behind them. Such an exploration implies a need to move beyond the analysis of the translational phenomena from a purely linguistic point of view, which would reduce the research to a case study, and link it to its wider cultural context in order to achieve a more general view of the translational process and a better and deeper understanding of its mechanisms. Finally, the study aims to appraise the effectiveness of the methodological tools used for the analysis of mimesis of orality, and to possibly refine them.

Structure of the thesis

The overall structure of the work can be visually represented as a sequence of concentric circles, or rather, concentric waves, as those produced by a pebble cast in a pond. The chapters proceed from more specific topics related to linguistic aspects of Frost's poetry toward wider issues related to the culturally bound processes of

translation. Like concentric waves, transmitting energy outward in wider and wider circles, each chapter of the study (with the exception of the introductory chapter on the theoretical framework) produces partial conclusions, the hypothetic nature of which calls for further verifications, and prompts the questions addressed in the subsequent chapter.

The first chapter defines the theoretical framework of the analysis. Due to the various perspectives adopted throughout the research, the framework will be necessarily eclectic. For the textual analysis, the theoretical approach is mainly linguistic, deriving from English stylistics (Leech 1969, Short 1996). In the analysis of the target text I will also make reference to the findings in translational linguistics (Baker 2000; Malmkjaer 2003, and 2004; Boase-Beier 2006). The linguistic approach is complemented by the pragmatic one, as described by Gutt (2000) and Pilkington (2000) among others.

In order to relate the results of the textual analysis to the wider cultural context in which they are inserted I have made reference to the notion of translation causes, as developed by Pym (1998), Chesterman (1998; 2000; 2002), and Brownlie (2003), among others. This framework provides me with the theoretical tools necessary to understand and describe the translational phenomena detected and their relation with both the source text and the socio-cultural context. As Toury (1995) argues, contextualization is a necessary operation in every study on translation phenomena, as it acknowledges the complexity of the reality of the target text and helps us appreciate it. The Israeli scholar stresses the importance within the study of translation activities of what he defines as justification procedures (Toury, 1995: 36), which shift the analysis from the product to the process of translation, i.e. the non-observable.

Looking at it from another angle, it is only reasonable to posit that a study in translation activities which have already yielded their products would start with the observables; first and foremost, the translated utterances themselves, along with their constituents. From there on, the study could proceed to facts which are observational “in the second order” (i.e., facts which need (re)construction before they can be submitted to scrutiny), most notably the relationships which tie together the output and

input of individual acts, the ultimate intention being to end up reconstructing the non-observables at their root, particularly the processes whereby they came into being. (Toury, 1995: 36)

In the chapter I negotiate a working definition of the notion of mimesis of orality, and provide a description of the framework used through the study, developed by the German scholars Peter Koch and Wulf Oesterreicher (2007). The framework, based on Coseriu's (1986) definition of language as a human activity, highlights the universal traits of orality. Moreover it points to the fundamental distinction between the dichotomic opposition of the medium of communication (either written or oral) and the conceptual polar opposition of language of immediacy and language of distance, which delimits a continuum along which communication may shift. The movement from one pole to another is the consequence of the use of different devices at various levels of discourse (the phonic, lexical, syntactical, textual-pragmatic, and semantic levels). Moreover, within the general denomination of language of immediacy, Koch and Oesterreicher (2007) trace a distinction between universal traits and other historically related aspects of language. In the chapter, I describe the main universal traits of the language of immediacy, making reference to their language-specific realization through examples from contemporary Catalan, English and Italian. Other studies, such as Gregory and Carroll's (1978) and Biber's (1991) are also taken into account in order to provide a wider theoretical perspective.

In the second chapter I introduce Robert Frost, his poetry and poetics. As mentioned above, his language has distinct spoken qualities and different spoken intonations defining the various voices that characterize his dramatic and non-dramatic compositions. Frost's fictional orality is developed within and in tension with the metric structure of the poem. In the chapter, I will consider the function that mimesis of orality plays in a selection of Frost's poems, focusing on how the metrical patterns and different kinds of lyrical forms adopted by the North American poet condition the shaping of a certain mimesis of orality, producing both rhythmical and intonational effects. My selection is determined by the genre to which they belong (for example, lyrical outburst, impersonal lyrical narration, dramatic monologue, and dramatic dialogue). My analysis highlights the potential relationship and

mutual influence between the poetical form and Frost's mimesis of orality. The initial hypothesis is that the form of the poem (either lyrical, monologic or dialogic) determines a shift of the poetic language from a more neutral register toward one closer to the pole of communicative immediacy, reproducing different kinds of colloquial registers. From the very beginning the analysis stresses the importance of the dramatic form (both as a dialogue among characters and as a dramatic monologue of the lyrical subject, ideally addressed to mute characters or to the readers) which becomes a hermeneutic instrument for readers themselves, leading to the understanding of a given situation in the poem, such as the relationship between husband and wife, old man and young man, or even the very relationship between humankind and nature.

The third chapter starts with an extensive textual analysis of one well-known poem by Frost: 'The Death of the Hired Man'. This pilot study aims to present the manifold phenomena constituting the different facets of Frost's fictional orality. It also allows for a better understanding of how such elements work within the body of a poem, its organic form, and what functions they have. The case study thus presents us with a holistic view of the web of relationships with other formal and symbolic elements of the poem that the features pertaining to mimesis of orality construct at the various levels of discourse. The second part of the chapter is dedicated to the analysis of the translated poem. In order to achieve a broader diatopic perspective on the translational phenomena, I have analysed the translations of the poem into four European languages (Catalan, German, Italian and Spanish). The examples outlined highlight mimetic categories that will subsequently be applied to the study of the whole corpus in the following chapter. Finally, the contrastive analysis carried out between the source text and the target text as well as among the various TTs is a first attempt at sketching the main characteristics of the translational phenomena detected and at formulating partial conclusions and hypothesis to be verified in the succeeding chapters.

In the fourth chapter I analyze translations into Italian of an anthology of Frost's poems made by Giovanni Giudici. The chapter is divided into two parts. The first part carries out a linguistic analysis that focuses exclusively on the mimetic devices detected in both source text and target text. I will not present the individual

poems but rather a selection of examples, grouped according to the mimetic phenomenon that each represents. Further examples will be included in appendix 2. The study allows me to draw partial descriptive conclusions regarding the target text at a textual level, while enabling me to formulate tentative hypotheses on the process of translation. The second part of the chapter links the results of the textual analysis with the wider cultural context of the translator. In this part of the chapter the focus shifts from the translation product to the translation process and to the personal, ideological, socio-cultural causes behind the process. In order to achieve this goal I focus on a series of factors, such as (following Brownlie 2003) the individual situation of the translator; textuality (i.e. the poetics of translation or of a certain literary genre at a given time); and translator's norms (also determined by the historical moment, by social and political forces, etc.).

The fifth chapter focuses on the translations into Catalan made by Catalan poets Agustí Bartra and Miquel Desclot. Their translations are carried out in two different historical and socio-political contexts. Bartra translates a selection of Frost's poems as part of an anthology of contemporary North American poets. He writes from exile at the beginning of the nineteen-fifties, while Spain was under Franco's dictatorship. Desclot translates at the beginning of the nineteen-nineties, in a time when Catalan has achieved an official recognition but has not yet overcome the problems and inner contradictions linked to its condition as a minorized language that was severely repressed until 1975. The analysis of both target texts is structured in a way similar to chapter four. The translations are analyzed separately and compared to their corresponding source texts. The differences in the time and political conditions during which these translations were executed make the study of the personal and cultural causes behind the translation process all the more interesting. They allow me to draw a comparison between the two translations, and ultimately become an effective tool for the understanding of aspects of the current Catalan culture and its relationship with its own literary tradition.

In the conclusions I look back at the results achieved throughout the study and reflect on their meaning and contribution to the various fields on which the research has touched (the poetry of Robert Frost, mimesis of orality in translation, the translations of Frost in

Italy and Catalonia in the twentieth century). Finally, I point to further research topics which could be developed in future studies.

Methodology

The methodology followed in this study, like its theoretical frame, changes and adapts itself to the different objectives that each phase of the research has established. The first part of the research (chapter 2), aims at achieving an understanding of Robert Frost's poetry, poetics and, more specifically, of the way his personal recreation of spoken language works in his compositions, the mechanisms that trigger it, and the balance it establishes with other formal and non-formal elements of the poems. For this part of the analysis I take into account a selection of poems by Frost belonging to different genres, starting from the hypothesis that different forms of composition and different degrees of dramatic effect in it (masque in blank verse, dramatic dialogue, dramatic monologue, personal lyrical composition, and impersonal lyrical composition) are served by different intensities of mimetic effects. I focus on the most recurrent mimetic features in each poem and relate them to the theme of the composition, to its formal structure, and, in general, to the stylistic aspects of the poems, in search of potential relationships among these elements. In chapter 3, which focuses on the stylistic analysis of just one poem, 'The Death of the Hired Man,' I introduce the contrastive dimension, by taking into account four translations of the same poem into Italian, Catalan, Spanish, and German respectively and by applying to these translations the same method of stylistic analysis applied to the source text. The objective of this comparison is still linguistic and stylistic. It aims at describing how different translators recreate in their own language the impression of spoken language characteristic of Frost's poems, and how this feature of the text relates to elements such as meter, rhetorical devices such as rhyme, alliteration, and assonance, and the theme and setting of the poem. Furthermore, I focus on potential links between the phenomena detected and other linguistic and cultural characteristics of the language, in search of translation causes.

The methodology undergoes a number of slight changes in chapters 4 and 5. The methodological approach is not different from the one

adopted in the previous two chapters, though it becomes more elaborate. It is composed of four steps, summarized below:

- Constitution of a corpus
- Linguistic and stylistic analysis of the corpus
- Contrastive analysis of the data extracted from the linguistic and stylistic analysis
- Contextualization of the translations and the translating activity

The corpus of the analysis is composed of all translations of Frost's poems into Italian carried out by Giovanni Giudici (chapter 4), and into Catalan by Agustí Bartra and Miquel Desclot (chapter 5). It also includes the corresponding source texts. The first part of the analysis focuses on the linguistic features of orality detected in the compositions. In order to systematize the analysis I have developed a template (the checklist presented in chapter 1) that contains the main devices on which the analysis focuses. The central part of the checklist refers to linguistic mimetic features drawn from the theoretical framework of the German scholars Peter Koch and Wulf Oesterreicher (also presented in chapter 1). The list includes other elements that interact with the mimetic devices and may as a consequence affect the overall impression of orality evoked in the text. During the study I refer to these elements as rhetorical devices, distinguishing them from the mimetic devices.¹ Examples of

¹ The studies devoted to rhetoric and to rhetorical devices are numerous. I draw on Spang (1991) even though, as the German scholar points out, the definition of rhetorical devices is a problematic one. A rhetorical device may be referred to as a “modificación consciente [...] del uso normal y corriente que lleva a una configuración artísticamente innovadora” (Spang 1991: 127-128). [conscious modification of normal and current usage that leads to an artistically innovative configuration]. This definition can be traced back to Quintilian. While intuitively clear, the definition is problematic as it includes a reference to the ambiguous notion of *normal and current* use of a device. An attempt to overcome this impasse can be made by substituting the term *normal use* with *customary use*. Spang proposes the following classification of rhetorical devices: rhetorical devices of 1) position (obtained through the disruption of the regular position of the elements); 2) repetition (as a consequence of the repetition of the same or of similar elements); 3) amplification (resulting in an argumentative or accumulative amplification); 4) omission (deriving from the omission of elements); 5) phatic; and 6) tropes. Throughout the study I will refer occasionally to rhetorical devices belonging to these categories.

rhetorical devices are hyperbaton, apostrophe, alliteration, and assonance. Examples of mimetic devices are interjections, phatic markers, and deictics. As I specify later in the study, the devices employed in order to evoke orality in the text may share both rhetorical and mimetic functions. During the study I stress their points of contact, their differences, and the different range of effects they produce in the written text. Whenever I characterize the devices as *mimetic*, I am focusing on their function as elements recreating mimesis of orality, whereas when I refer to them as *rhetorical* devices I want to stress their stylistic and rhetorical function as elements belonging to the tradition of Western rhetoric. An example of the different focalization of the terms mimetic and rhetorical is given by the different functions that the category of phonic devices may carry out. *Mimetic* phonic devices (such as non-standard uses of apocope and apheresis in conversations, and contracted forms of verb and subject in spoken language) may evoke orality in a written text. Their function is different from *rhetorical* phonic devices (such as rhyme, assonance, and alliteration), which aim, among other functions, at creating a certain poetic effect in a literary text.

The first parts of chapters 4 and 5 summarize and systematize the data gathered during the linguistic analysis of each poem (presented in appendix 2, 3, and 4 in which a checklist is given for each poem). This part of the analysis can be divided into several consecutive steps. First, the source text is taken into account. The contrastive dimension is then introduced by comparing the mimetic features of source and target text.

For the analysis of the source text I adopt a *longitudinal* perspective, that is, I consider the different mimetic effects that can be found in the texts in combination with other non-mimetic textual elements such as rhetorical devices, metrical structure, and the poems' themes and settings. The study of this combination of mimetic and non-mimetic elements is relevant in the analysis, since I argue that mimesis of orality does not derive only from the use of mimetic features in a text. I have adapted the term *longitudinal* from Dörnyei (2007: 79), who uses it with reference to research in applied linguistics. According to Dörnyei, "longitudinal research is a rather imprecise term that refers to a family of methods sharing one thing in common: information is gathered about the target of

the research [...] during a series of points in time” (2007: 79). In this research I focus on mimetic features not so much through a series of points in time, but rather through a series of poems. The perspective traces the combination of mimetic and non-mimetic elements in the poems of the corpus and focuses on their changing patterns through the poems. I hypothesize that the predominance of certain mimetic effects over others triggers different impressions of orality. The aim is to detect characteristics of mimesis of orality that are shared by different compositions of the source corpus and that make it possible to propose a taxonomy of the kinds of mimetic impressions created, in order to understand whether or not they evoke different voices in the poems. My classification at this point of the study combines the mimetic elements of Koch and Oesterreicher’s theoretical framework with notions imported from narratology, such as that of extradiegetic and intradiegetic narrator and point of view.

Having presented through examples the results of the analysis of the source text, I move to a contrastive examination of the elements of orality of the source and target text obtained by comparing the results of the longitudinal approach as applied to each. I refer to the study of the occurrences of mimetic devices in the poems, followed by a comparison of the frequency with which these mimetic devices are used in source and target texts. The comparison adopts as parameters the *increase*, *decrease* and *similar use* of the mimetic devices in both source and target text. I also take into account, though marginally, the potential compensatory use of mimetic effects in the target text. The notion of compensation refers to the “technique which involves making up for the loss of a source text effect by recreating a similar effect in the target text through means that are specific to the target language and/or text” (Harvey 2001: 37).² Subsequently a preliminary causal explanation is given for the phenomena of increase, decrease, and similar use of mimetic devices in the target text.

² Harvey (2001: 37) describes several typologies of compensation in translation that have been proposed in recent years. In my study I apply the general definition since I am not going into detail of the kind of compensation used by the translators and the frequency with which they use this device.

The longitudinal perspective applied to the contrastive analysis aims at verifying whether the description of the various mimetic effects detected in the source texts can still be applied to the target text. This approach allows the identification of a link between the shifts in the frequency of the mimetic devices in source and target text and the different mimetic effects they trigger. The approach of this part of the analysis can be defined as quasi-quantitative and qualitative. The quasi-quantitative part of the approach refers to the recounting of the occurrences of the mimetic devices in a text. With the label *quasi-quantitative* I mean to stress the limits of my approach, which is only partially quantitative for several reasons. First, because the polyfunctionality of the mimetic devices makes quantification difficult on some occasions. In fact, mimetic devices may have a hybrid nature. They can be included in different mimetic categories simultaneously, may carry out different mimetic functions, and may even have both mimetic and non-mimetic functions. I will describe this phenomenon later on in detail but I will give an example here for the sake of clarity. The imperative *listen* may have a phatic function, since it can be used by speakers to catch the attention of their audience. At the same time it may refer to a phenomenon of turn-taking or, if repeated twice, and depending on the intonation (*listen, listen*), it can be interpreted as a reformulation mechanism. Furthermore, if considered on a lexico-semantic level, and not on a pragmatic level, it can be inscribed in the category of mimetic devices of repetition. Finally, the contiguous repetition of the word can also be interpreted as the rhetorical device of repetition known as epizeuxis, that may carry out rhythmic and rhetorical functions in a poem and introduce literary connotations into the text. The definition of the effect that is triggered is not straightforward and depends in part on the context. I am not claiming that the polyfunctionality of these devices completely prevents a quantitative approach, though it makes it more complex. A quantitative approach can be a valuable contribution to the study of mimesis of orality in translation. However, a quasi-quantitative and qualitative approach to the analysis seems more coherent with the general approach of my study, in which I give priority to the interpretation of the function of mimesis of orality in the entire poetic text and in its translation. A second reason why I have not prioritized the quantitative approach in my study resides in the general phenomenon of evocation of orality in written texts and in their translation. As I show in chapter 1, the elements contributing

to mimesis of orality in a text are not exclusively features of orality. Other non-mimetic features may equally contribute to the evocation of orality due to the fictive nature of the object that is being studied. For example, mimesis of orality may be evoked by a particular setting or theme in a text (such as a scene representing a conversation among two characters). In a similar way, a particular poetic genre like a ballad may evoke the oral dimension because it was a traditionally oral genre, even if its language is not necessarily characterized as oral. These remarks anticipate the need for a definition of orality and mimesis of orality and become clearer once these notions have been refined (in chapter 1). At this initial stage of the study it is important to bear in mind that the main objective of the investigation (the study of mimesis of orality in translation) requires a holistic approach to the phenomenon. With the term *holistic approach* I refer to a methodology that quantifies the occurrences of mimetic devices when feasible (the quasi-quantitative approach), analyzes each poem individually (both source and target texts), appraises and interprets the effects of the combination of its elements (the qualitative approach).

The contrastive linguistic analysis raises questions regarding the characteristics of the mimetic phenomena detected and the causes that have determined them. The first set of questions (about the characteristics of the mimetic phenomena) can be labeled *what*-questions. Often a thorough report of the results of the descriptive analysis is sufficient to provide an answer to these questions by referring to the similarities and differences between elements of the language pair under analysis. The second set of questions (the *why*-questions) shifts the focus of attention from the translation as a product to the translation as a process and to its agent, the translator. Answers to these questions can only be achieved through a process of contextualization of the translations that aims at identifying and describing the personal causes behind the translation decisions. The term *personal cause* is, in this case, shorthand for the equally generic *personal taste* or *style* of the translators, as well as for the ideological, socio-cultural, and political environment that can affect translation choices. The last part of the analysis contextualizes the translations in order to determine the causal relationships existing between the phenomena detected during the previous linguistic analysis and the contextual situations that may have triggered them. There exists no single answer to these *why*-questions. Moreover,

these questions (and the answers to them) may be formulated very specifically or very generally. In my study the operation of contextualization is carried out to provide satisfying answers about the causes of the translation phenomena detected in the linguistic analysis, keeping the focus on the recreation of certain spoken-language effects in translations.

Finally, some clarifications are needed on the specific structure of this part of the research (focused on the analysis of the corpora selected) and on the overall structure given to the study. The ideal movement that can be sketched in both chapter 4 and chapter 5 (from the text to the context) is intentional. It mirrors my method of analysis, which starts with the text (both source and target text) and then moves on to the context. For this reason, chapters 4 and 5 both start by giving only a small amount of contextual information on the translators and their work, reserving the main work of contextualization until after the textual analysis, to provide answers to the questions raised by the textual analysis itself. The reason behind my choice is similar to the one that may lie behind the decision to publish an anthology of poems with an afterword rather than an introduction. In most cases this latter choice represents a decision to let the texts “speak” for themselves first. The sequence given to my study, from the text to the context, should not be interpreted as implying a hierarchical order between the two operations. Both the linguistic analysis and the contextual analysis are fundamental to answering the questions that prompt my research. Both phases are interconnected, though both approaches could also be adopted individually and with different degrees of detail.

Similarly, the whole study has been organized in a sequence of interconnected and interdependent steps. Each step of the study raises questions that motivate the subsequent step of the analysis. For this reason, the general introduction on Robert Frost’s poetics and poetry is followed by a study of a selection of poems in which his poetic language is described in its varying degrees of spoken effects (chapter 2). This first approximation is deepened in the pilot study of the poem ‘The Death of the Hired Man,’ which, moreover, introduces the translational dimension of the analysis by comparing the target text with several translations (chapter 3). The contrastive analysis isolates phenomena of mimesis of orality in translation that

trigger hypotheses verified in the following part, where a more extensive study is carried out of Frost's translations into Italian and Catalan (chapters 4 and 5), before I outline some concluding reflections.

A note on the stylistic choices of the study

Throughout the study I have used single inverted commas for poems' or essays' titles and double inverted commas for quotations. Italics are used for lexical items. Emphasis on quoted words (bold and/or italics) is always mine if not otherwise specified. Whenever examples present both a source and a target text fragment, the target text is always placed on the left hand side of the table, whereas the source text is on the right hand side. This slightly uncommon decision aims at focusing the attention of readers on the target text.

1

THEORETICAL FRAMES

Poetry is the fullest accomplishment of the synthesis between contiguity and similarity and the most important locus of linguistic creativity. Thus we endeavor to affirm that any science of language must find a proper place for the mutual implication of the two inseparable universals: Language and Poetry.

(Roman Jakobson and Linda R. Waugh, “‘Sound Symbolism’: The Sound Shape of Language’)

In the introduction I wrote that the analysis of Frost’s poems and their translations into Italian and Catalan, with special focus on the translation of mimesis of orality, shifts from the text to the context. The theoretical frame adopted for each of the stages of the analysis described in the methodological section adjusts to these stages, each of which represents a different perspective from which the phenomenon of mimesis of orality in translation is studied. As a consequence, different theoretical perspectives are adopted, which are interconnected and may therefore overlap or coincide in some moments of the analysis.

1.1 Stylistics and relevance theory

In the first stage of all my analyses I am concerned with the description of Frost’s poetics, with the role that his recreation of orality plays in the text, and with its interaction with other formal and thematic elements of the poem, whose orchestration characterizes the style of the poet. In order to achieve a satisfying definition of Frost’s poetic style and an understanding of how mimesis of orality works in his poetic language I resort to the theoretical tools provided by stylistics. Both the term *stylistics* and the term *style* are, however, problematic. Stylistics is a very broad notion within which several disciplines can be included. Numerous classifications of the different branches of stylistics exist, and these

classifications often overlap.³ In my study the term stylistics refers to the discipline developed in the anglophone world in the 1960s, whose main representatives are Roger Fowler, Michael Short, and Geoffrey Leech. Fowler (1996) named this branch of stylistics *linguistic criticism* in order to distinguish it from the different approaches to the stylistic analysis of a literary text developed in previous decades by scholars such as the Austrian Leo Spitzer, the German Helmut Hatzfeld, and the Spanish Dámaso Alonso among others. The main difference between these approaches and *linguistic criticism* is that the latter, unlike the others, draws systematically on different aspects of linguistics for the analysis of the text, on the assumption that there is no difference between literary and non-literary language, in the sense that all language use is based on the same devices and as a consequence can be studied with the same linguistic tools.

According to Short (1996: 5), “stylistics is [...] concerned with relating linguistic facts (linguistic description) to meaning (interpretation) in as explicit a way as possible.” The sentence stresses two consecutive and central moments of the analysis: the *description*, which needs to be detailed and systematic, and the *interpretation*. The description corresponds to the de-codification of the text, that is, to the fragmentation of the text into its linguistic components. In my study I will be focusing above all on the linguistic features that characterize oral communication. For this phase of the study I make use of the theoretical framework developed by Koch and Oesterreicher (2007) for the identification of features characterizing oral communication. Their framework will be described in detail later in section 1.6. Once the text is divided into its linguistic components, it is necessary to combine the information gathered and interpret it, with the object of grasping the meaning of the text.

In order to achieve a satisfying interpretation of a literary, and non-literary text (either in prose or in verse), linguistic analysis is not enough. It is necessary to resort to contextual elements and general

³ Manuel Ángel Vázquez Medel (1987: 119-268) presents an overview of the different perspectives that stylistics as a modern discipline has acquired since its foundation, generally attributed to Charles Bally. As for the different definitions of style, see also Enkvist (1974: 27-44).

world knowledge as well. Interpretation of a text means, therefore, not only understanding *what* elements compose it, but also *how* they are combined in order for a certain range of meanings to be inferred by readers rather than others, and *why* this process takes place. Answers to the *how*- and the *why*-questions can be provided by assuming different theoretical perspectives. During the stylistic analysis of Frost's poems, for example, emphasis is placed on the *effect* of certain mimetic features on readers, that is, on the impression of orality these effects evoke or trigger in readers. By speaking of effects and of evocation (as well as of inference and assumption) I am implicitly making use of exegetic tools provided by relevance theory, as has been developed by Dan Sperber and Deirdre Wilson (1995). According to these two scholars, communication between two interlocutors does not derive only from an act of codification and de-codification of the linguistic elements of the message, but also from a series of inferences that make explicit elements that in communication remain implicit. This phenomenon happens at all levels of communication, both in the written and in the oral medium, but is more evident in oral communication, where non-verbal elements have a particularly important communicative function. Sperber and Wilson base their theory on two fundamental ideas by Paul Grice (1989): the first points to how human communication is based on the recognition of *intentions*. The second idea consists of the assumption that, in order to understand the meaning of the speaker's message, the addressee presupposes that the utterance satisfies certain standards. Grice labels this presupposition *implicature* and refers to it not as an inference that is logically derived, but rather as a series of mechanisms through which the addressees consider whether what has been said abides by conversational maxims and can thus form and confirm their hypothesis. Sperber and Wilson compare the human being to a sophisticated but limited system of information processing. The system works through a series of cognitive mechanisms (perception, attention, memory) that select the stimuli they receive, choosing the most relevant ones. According to the scholars, the stimuli are relevant to a subject when they can be unfolded into bits of information that produce a *cognitive effect*, that is, when they modify the subject's perception of the world.

In Frost's poetry, the features of orality that the linguistic analysis identifies may be said to represent stimuli that create certain

communicative effects in readers, adding information to the communicative situation that is being represented. An interjection, for example, or the use of certain deictics (such as spatio-temporal deictics) characterizing the language of the lyrical subject or of a character in a poem, help readers grasp the meaning behind the words used, and formulate a series of implicatures behind them that is much wider than those directly linked to the text. Sperber and Wilson recognize a difference between what they refer to as *strong* and *weak* implicatures, which represent two poles of an axis. As Gutt (2000: 90) remarks, “implicatures vary along a continuum of relative strength, the implicature being the stronger the more necessary it is seen to be for consistency with the principle of relevance.” *Weak* implicatures therefore refer to implicatures with a low degree of determination, which often prompt the poetic effect⁴ and which create an impression, rather than express a message. Weak implicatures in a poem lead to situations of higher interpretative freedom. It should be stressed, however, that in Frost’s poems mimetic and rhetorical features work in dynamic tension; that is, they can combine, overlap, or mutually limit their effects. For this reason, throughout the linguistic analysis of the poems it is important to focus not only on the effects produced by mimetic features, but also on those prompted by rhetorical features such as, for example, rhyme and alliteration. In fact, such rhetorical devices impose structural restrictions on the construction of the sentence that are independent from the sentence’s syntactical organization. They may create, for example, a series of parallelisms, associations, or correlations whose meaning may even contradict or weaken syntax. An example of this process is given by the breaking of syntactical continuity by the formal appearance of the line. Breaking or loosening the constraints of the syntactical structure sets off a freer association among the parts of the line, which ultimately enriches the interpretation of the line and of the poem. Gutt summarizes the phenomenon as follows:

Rhyme and rhythm, however, impose phonological patterns that are independent of syntactic structure and may indeed cross-cut it. These patterns tend to enrich the interpretation, not only because they give rise to additional groupings, but also because, in contrast to syntactic relations, the relations they suggest are

⁴ See Pilkington (2000) for more details.

unspecified and so allow greater freedom in interpretation. (Gutt 2000: 157)

Later on in the study I will stress the importance of the combination of rhetorical and mimetic effects in Frost's poetry. As a consequence, while focusing on his use of mimesis of orality in this part of the textual analysis of the source text, I also take into account the relationship between these features and other structural elements of the poem, in order to define the potential effects created in the poetic text; that is, in order to achieve an interpretation of the text.

1.2. Translational stylistics

The perspective of stylistics has been applied to both the source and the target text. This operation has been possible by the assumption, already described above, that the translations of poems I have taken into account maintain the double status of translations and of poetic texts in their own right, accorded to them by their form (metrical structure, line and stanza division), by the translators whose work aims at producing a poetic product (as they have explicitly claimed or as can be implicitly inferred), by the kind of edition in which they appear and, last but not least, by target text readers who do not master the source language text and approach the texts appearing on the right hand side of the parallel edition of Frost's poems (in the Italian translation and in the Catalan one carried out by Miquel Desclot) as if they were independent compositions,⁵ expecting to find in them, in most of the cases, poetical equivalents of the source texts. However, it is not possible to disregard the fact that the translations I analyze, while sharing the status of poetry with the source text, are also translations in which the style of the poet and the style of the translator coexist. This issue points to the well-known hybrid status of translation described, among others, by Jiří Levý (1969: 72), Gideon Toury (1995: 56), and Cees Koster (2000: 16-19), and refers to the fact that a translation is (in most cases) simultaneously an independent text in the target culture for which it has been produced, and a derivative text, depending on another text,

⁵ As for the selection of Frost's poems carried out by Agustí Bartra and included in his anthology of contemporary North American poets, the edition is monolingual, which gives further strength to the poetic status of the translations.

the source text, that functions in a source culture. The double nature of translation justifies the change of approach that stylistics has towards the translated text, and the development of translational stylistics. Jean Boase-Beier (2006), for example, considers four potential points of view from which style in translation can be studied:

- i. the style of the source text as an expression of its author's choices
- ii. the style of the source text in its effects on the reader (and on the translator as reader)
- iii. the style of the target text as an expression of choices made by its author (who is the translator)
- iv. the style of the target text in its effects on the reader. (Boase-Beier 2006: 5)

While different kinds of approaches may prioritize a certain combination of the above mentioned points, according to Boase-Beier it is important in translation studies to avoid approaches which exclude one of the elements in the pairs *source text style – target text style* or *author-reader*. Kirsten Malmkjær (2003: 38) also stresses the characterizing features of translational stylistics. Making reference to Short, the scholar observes that the main concern of stylistics is to explain how readers move from the textual structure in front of them to the meaning inside them. The focus on the *why*-questions in stylistics is useful as it points to a range of constraints and conventions with which writers have to cope, and which reveal, consciously or not, ideological, social and political issues behind these choices. When the focus of stylistics shifts from the source text to the target text, however, the stress on the *why*-question acquires added complexity:

in translational stylistics with a focus on why a text means as it does, there is one constraint which (a) never plays a role in non-translational stylistics but without consideration of which (b) translational stylistics cannot proceed: a writer's linguistic choices are restricted by genre conventions and by what he or she wants to say; but a translator's linguistic choices are limited, further, by what the original text said. So while the scope of why-oriented stylistics can be stated simply in terms of an explanation of why (given what the writer wants to say and the

conventions of the genre within which he or she writes) a text has been made to mean in the way that it does, translational stylistics [...] is concerned to explain why, *given the source text*, the translation has been shaped in such a way that it comes to mean what it does. (Malmkjær 2003: 39)

The analysis of the target text entails therefore not only an analysis of the stylistic features of the translations to see how the source style has been recreated in the target text, but also an understanding and a description of how the author's style coexists with the translator's style, and what implications can be derived from their relationship. The general meaning I am attributing to *style* in this work is that of "set or sum of linguistic features that seem to be characteristic: whether of register, genre or period, etc." (Wales 1990: 436). As Mona Baker (2000: 245) remarks, style can be considered "a kind of thumb-print that is expressed in a range of linguistic—as well as non-linguistic—features." It is often taken as synonym of *language* or *voice*. Baker, however, expands the notion of style when it refers to the translator, and considers that a satisfying approach to translators' style must include also the translators' choice of the type of material, their use of consistent strategies (including the use of paratexts), and in general "recurring patterns of linguistic behaviors, rather than individual or one-off instances of intervention" (Baker 2000: 245). Detecting these linguistic patterns, however, is only the first step of the analysis, since it is important to interpret them as clues about the translators' personal, cultural, and ideological motivations, that is, about translators' positioning and about the processes that molded the translation. Like Malmkjær, Baker stresses the importance of the translation causes. However, detecting a translator's style is not unproblematic since in a translation there are "two 'authors', two languages and two sociolects involved, and the analyst must find a way to disentangle these variables" (Baker 2000: 258).

In an attempt to disentangle the variables, I introduce the contrastive dimension in the analysis, that is, a comparison between the results of the linguistic analysis of source and target texts.⁶ In

⁶ Referring to the application of a stylistic model of analysis focused on the target text only, Victòria Alsina remarks: "una anàlisi feta d'aquesta manera no inclouria el component comparatiu que forma part gairebé sempre dels estudis de

Descriptive Translation Studies several models have been developed whose aim is to guide contrastive analyses and achieve an understanding and classification of the main differences detected. Some models present a high degree of detail in the development of categories for the description of a translation, as, for example, the model proposed by Kitty Van Leuven-Zwart, and appeared in two articles in *Target* (1989 and 1990). Since my study focuses on the translation of poetry and, more specifically, on the translation of mimesis of orality in poetry (which adds an element of complexity to the analysis), I prefer to adopt a more general and eclectic approach.⁷ On the issue of translation of poetry Umberto Eco (1985) observes:

In poetry [...] it is a series of constrictions on the level of expression that determines the content, and not vice-versa, as happens in discourses with referential function. This is why, in the translation of poetry, one often aims at rewriting, as if accepting the challenge of the original text so as to recreate it in another form and another substance (trying to keep faith, not with the letter, but with the “guiding spirit” of the text, whose identification obviously depends on the translator’s critical interpretation). (Eco 2001: 94)

The contrastive analysis is just an intermediate stage of the study. It helps outline consistent differences, that is, recurrent divergences in the use of certain mimetic and non-mimetic devices in the target text (compared to the source text) that may identify linguistic patterns ascribable to the translator’s style. However, the focus of my research is not a classification of these divergences, which, alone, does not help to understand the translator’s style, nor the phenomenon of mimesis of orality in the translations of Frost’s

la traducció i que té una rellevància especial en el cas de les traduccions d’obres literàries molt significatives en què és inevitable tenir en compte el TO i l’autor del TO” (Alsina, 2008: 26) [an analysis carried out in this way would not include the comparative component that is almost always part of studies on translation, and that has a special relevance in the case of translations of important literary works for which taking into account the source text and its author is inevitable.]

⁷ Numerous studies have been devoted to the issue of translation of poetry (Levý 1969, Lefevere 1975, Holmes 1970 and 1988, Raffel 1988, Allén 1998, Koster 2000, and Campanini 2002, among others). In my investigation I have preferred to structure the contrastive analysis of the mimetic features of source and target text in the way described in the section on methodology.

poems. My objective is rather an understanding of the way mimesis of orality works in translated texts and the causes that lead to it.

1.3 The perspective of causal explanation

The notion of causality in translation has been approached by several scholars (Chesterman 1998, 2000, 2002; Pym 1998: 143-176; Toury 1995: 23-39), and has gained importance in the discipline in the last twenty years. In relation to the role played by the investigation of causes in research models, Chesterman (who uses the term *model* to refer to both theoretical and methodological aspects) (2000: 16) refers to three major kinds of research models in translation studies: comparative, process, and causal models. While the first two models, focused respectively on a comparison between source and target texts, and on the process of translation, may provide answers to questions like ‘what?’ and ‘when?’ or ‘what next?’, only the causal model can answer *why*-questions.

A causal model is the richest and most powerful of the three models discussed here, because it also contains the other two. The source text and source language are present in the model as part of the causal conditions of the translation. And the dynamic time element is automatically present in any cause-effect relation. However, the most important reason for the primacy of a causal model is a methodological one: it encourages us to make specific explanatory and predictive hypotheses. (Chesterman 2000: 21)

Chesterman distinguishes two kinds of causal explanation (1997: 47) working at a micro-level and at a macro-level respectively. The causal explanation at a micro-level refers to the causes that appear to be detected in the translator’s mind (e.g. the translator’s belief, principles, knowledge, and values). Causal explanation at a macro-level points to causes that need to be sought outside the translator’s head (client demands, social norms, ideologies, political aims, power claims, etc.). This distinction is certainly useful to understand and define the extent of causal explanation that is being provided in works of research like mine. However, it is not fine-grained enough, since the two levels often overlap and depend on each other. Pym (1998: 143-159) refines the concept of translation causality by

drawing from Aristotle's four types of causes, which he applies to translation. He distinguishes four sets of causes in translation: (a) *material* causes, (b) *final* causes, (c) *formal* causes, and (d) *efficient* causes. *Material* causes refer to the raw material of translation, that is, the source and target texts and the transfer from one text to the other. They are one of the objects of the linguistic analysis and may explain why a certain source linguistic phenomenon is translated into another target linguistic phenomenon on the basis of the structural characteristics of the two languages. *Final* causes refer to the translation's purpose and its positioning in the text. This kind of causes has been tackled and prioritized by different theoretical approaches to translation such as *skopos* theory, functional theories, and systems theories. *Formal* causes refer to the causes that determine why a translation has certain formal features that are considered characteristic of a translation. They can be associated with the notion of translation norms or translation conventions and have often been addressed in discourse on translation equivalence. Finally, *efficient* causes refer to the role played by the translator, either individually or collectively. Pym's classification has the advantage of contributing to a systematization of the approaches to research in translation causes. At the same time, it also stresses the fact that in order to achieve an exhaustive understanding of the translation phenomena that are being studied all four sets of causes need to be taken into account. This means that, while it is possible that one set of causes prevails over another, a complete causal explanation of translation phenomena can only be achieved if the four sets of causes are taken into account. The stress is on multiple causality as a constant feature of translation. Pym's classification, however, can also be reorganized in different ways (like all taxonomical proposals), and further sub-categories can be added. Chesterman (1998) for example, while also considering Aristotle's causes, introduces the notion of *proximate* causes, which refer to the processes taking place in the translator's mind, and *socio-cultural* causes, which involve the social, political, economic, ideological, historical, biological, and other external causes behind a translation (1998: 211-214). Chesterman's distinction recalls the micro and macro levels of causal explanation mentioned before, and presents a certain degree of overlap between the two categories, as well as of dependence of one category on another, since ultimately socio-cultural causes are filtered by translators and at the same time affect their behavior. The distinction (especially of proximate causes) also

overlaps with Pym's efficient causes. For the study, I have slightly adapted the classification provided by the two scholars. I have observed that issues related to Pym's material and formal causes are likely to be raised especially during the linguistic part of the analysis since they refer to the structure of both source and target languages, and to matters of equivalence in translation. I use these two terms when I describe the phenomena related to the use of mimetic features for Frost's evocation of orality. I refer to material and formal causes of translations also when I tackle the divergences in the use of these features in the target text that can be related to the specific characteristics of the target language. I make use of the notions of final and efficient causes of translations when I move beyond the linguistic analysis of source and target texts in search of an answer to those *why*-questions that are not addressed sufficiently by material and formal causes. In this phase of the analysis the general reference to final and efficient causes is further clarified. Drawing on Chesterman's work, in fact, I also distinguish, whenever possible, between the personal and the broader socio-cultural dimensions of these causes.

The process of specification of the causes of translations can actually continue *ad infinitum*. We can keep asking *why*-questions that demand a higher and higher degree of detail in our analysis, or a broader and broader perspective. This is in part a consequence of the fact that multiple causes may point to multiple ways in which an event is generated. As Brownlie (2003: 112) remarks, "the status of proposed explanations remains hypothetical." A choice must be made in regard to the number of causes and the extent to which they are analyzed in my research on the translation of mimesis of orality in Frost's poetry. I have given priority to the personal dimension of both efficient and final causes in translation; that is, I focus on the translators, their knowledge, life experience, and ideology. The broader socio-political context, which is inevitably linked to the translator's agency, is considered more tangentially as it exceeds the self-imposed limits of a research which, though shifting from text to context, is still firmly grounded in the text.

The perspective of causal explanation overlaps with the notion of *habitus* applied to translation. The concept can be traced back to Aristotle's *hexis*, a quality of being characterized by stability and permanence (Simeoni 1998: 15). Even if the term *habitus* derives

from sixteenth century Latin and refers to a way of being of the body in a medical context as an indication of a body's state of health, its meaning was enlarged and made well-known as applied to sociology and art by the French sociologist Pierre Bourdieu (1996; 1977). Bourdieu's habitus is in relation with the notions of *field*, and refers to the subjects' internalization of social structures of a certain area of human activity (*field*). This process of internalization is not passive, but implies an interaction between the social structures and the individual agency. As Bourdieu remarks:

The habitus, the product of history, produces individual and collective practices, and hence history, in accordance with the schemes engendered by history. The system of dispositions – a past which survives in the present and tends to perpetuate itself into the future by making itself present in practices structured according to its principles, an internal law relaying the continuous exercise of the law of external necessities (irreducible to immediate conjunctural constraints) – is the principle of the continuity and regularity which objectivism discerns in the social world without being able to give them a rational basis. And it is at the same time the principle of the transformations and regulated revolutions which neither the extrinsic and instantaneous determinisms of a mechanistic sociology nor the purely internal but equally punctual determination of voluntarist or spontaneist subjectivism are capable of accounting for. (Bourdieu 1977: 82)

The recognition of the plural and dynamic character of the concept of habitus, applied to translation studies,⁸ has made it possible, in recent years, as Meylaerts (2010: 2) has stressed, to achieve a better understanding both of translation as a product and “of the regularities and discontinuities of a translator's individual itinerary within a specific socio-cultural and geo-political contexts” (Meylaerts 2010: 2). Since I do not use this framework in my study, I will not describe in detail the theoretical concepts related to the notion of habitus. However, I will make reference to the habitus of

⁸ For further reference on the application of Bourdieu's habitus to translation studies see the special issue of *The Translator* (Volume 11/2, 2005) (Inghilleri 2005), and the seminal article by Simeoni (1998), among numerous other references.

the translator occasionally during the analysis of the corpus, due to its affinities with the perspective of causal explanation.

1.4 Complementary theoretical tools

In addition to the theoretical perspectives mentioned in the previous section of this chapter, the main theoretical tool for the linguistic analysis of Frost's poems and their translations is provided by Koch and Oesterreicher's theoretical framework, which is presented in detail in section 1.6. In combination with these frames, however, other notions have been used, belonging to different conceptual frames. They have been borrowed especially from frame semantics and from narratology, and have played an equally important role in the understanding and description of the textual mechanisms that contribute to mimesis of orality in a poem. I shall present them briefly in the following subsections.

1.4.1 Frame semantics in translation

The theory of frame semantics was developed by the North American linguist Charles J. Fillmore in the 1970s (see Fillmore 1976; 1977). With the term *frame*, the linguist refers to the cognitive structures that are activated each time we have to interpret the cultural elements that characterize a society, its vision of the world, and its ideologies and values. The notion of frame was prompted by Fillmore's realization that a description and thorough understanding of a language system could only be achieved by adopting an integrated view that also considered language structures, behavior, and comprehension as well as language changes and language acquisition (Fillmore 1977: 55). On this issue Fillmore adds:

In characterizing a language system we must add to the description of grammar and lexicon a description of the cognitive and interactional 'frames' in terms of which the language-user interprets his environment, formulates his own messages, understands the messages of others, and accumulates or creates an internal model of his world. (Fillmore 1976: 23)

Applied to translation theories, the use of frame semantics contributes to integrate the linguistic perspective on translation, focused on words and language structures, by taking into account the web of intertextual relationships and the translator's perception of the world that characterize the translation phenomenon. The advantages of this approach have long been stressed in translation studies (for example, by Mary Snell-Hornby 1988: 79-86) and are coherent with the importance that in the last two decades has been attributed to context in the study of translation.⁹ In the present study the notion of frame semantics contributes to understanding and evaluating with more precision the pragmatic role that the features of orality identified in the linguistic analysis play in both source and target text. As a hermeneutic tool, frame semantics can facilitate an understanding of the translation choices and strategies behind potential divergences in the use of mimetic features in source and target texts. In my study I have made reference to frame semantics by using a taxonomy of frames proposed by Ana María Rojo López (2002a and 2002b). Rojo López distinguishes five main categories of semantic frames: *visual*, *situational*, *text-type*, *social*, *institutional*, and *generic*. To these, I have added frames referring to other sensory experiences, such as aural frames, which I have found particularly relevant for a study of mimesis of orality.

1.4.2 Narratology

In the first chapter of their book, Robert Scholes, James Phelan, and Robert Kellogg remark:

By narrative we mean all those literary works which are distinguished by two characteristics: the presence of a story and a storyteller. A drama is a story without a storyteller; in it characters act out directly what Aristotle called an 'imitation' of such actions as we find in life. A lyric, like a drama, is a direct presentation, in which a single actor, the poet or his surrogate, sings or mimes, or speaks for us to hear or overhear. Add a second speaker, as Robert Frost does in 'The Death of the Hired Man,' and we move toward drama. Let the speaker begin to tell of an event, as Frost does in 'The Vanishing Red,' and we move toward narrative. For writing to be narrative no more and no less

⁹ See also Boase-Beier (2006: 15-21).

than a teller and a tale are required. (Scholes, Phelan, and Kellogg 2006: 4)

The paragraph quoted above immediately caught my attention for several reasons. First, its reference to two poems by Robert Frost made me reflect on the role and characteristics of different voices in his poetry. The presence of different structures (narrative, dramatic, or lyrical) in Frost's poems requires in fact a conceptual framework that differentiates, as Scholes, Phelan, and Kellogg do, between the various functions carried out by these voices. Differentiating these voices is a necessary preliminary step for a description of the mimetic effects that characterize each of them.¹⁰ Second, the comment above can be interpreted as an acknowledgement of the modernity of Frost's poetry, which has set aside the centrality of the Romantic lyrical subject and has opened itself up to a plurality of often contradictory visions that compose reality without however achieving an all-encompassing understanding of it. Finally, the observations on the presence of multiple voices in Frost's poems raises questions about the way this variety has been recreated in translation, and to what extent translators have left their imprint on these voices. Later on, especially in chapters 2 and 3, I will develop these themes in relation to Frost's poetics and poetry. I have

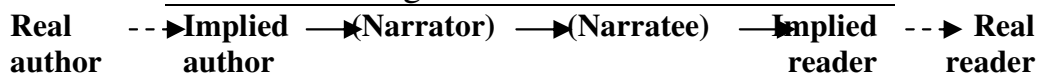
¹⁰ In an article dated 2004, Phelan observes that Robert Frost's poem 'Home Burial' has "a hybrid form, one that fuses elements of lyric and of narrative into a coherent and powerful lyric narrative" (2004: 633). Before analyzing the poem, the scholar draws a distinction between *narrativity* and *lirality*. Narrativity implies both the dynamics of character and event, and that of audience response (634). It consists of two levels: the narration of an event ("something happened"), and the authorial audience's perception of the characters who participate in the event as others in two ways (since they are external to the audience and cannot be identified with the implied author either). Conversely lirality implies that the authorial audience is less an observer and a judge and more a participant. In fact, "while we recognizes that the speaker is different from us, we move from that recognition toward fusion with the speaker" (634-635). Between narrativity and lirality we find *portraiture*, an inbetween category commonly observable in dramatic monologues. Phelan remarks that in a text, the relationship among characters and events changes and that the activity of authorial audience, the perception of the text, can move from narrativity to lirality, as happens in 'Home Burial' (and in many other poems by Frost). Phelan's comment is significant in this initial stage of the study as it represents a further justification of my decision to adopt categories borrowed from narratology for the analysis of Frost's poems and their translations. It also sheds light on aspects of Frost's poems that will be analyzed in chapter 2.

introduced them here as they serve to justify the use that I make in the study of notions borrowed from narratology. As in all disciplines, within narratology it is possible to distinguish different trends or different definitions and denominations of similar phenomena, whose presentation is beyond the scope of the study. In this section I will limit myself to describing briefly only the specific use of the terms that may help characterize the multiple impressions of orality raised in Frost's poems, and the extent to which these notions can be problematized in translation.

In order to describe the voices¹¹ found in Frost's poems and to understand their dynamic within the text and the potential association between their textual function and the mimetic features that characterize them, I resort to the diagram Seymour Chatman's presented in *Story and Discourse* (1978: 151), shown below:

¹¹ The term *voice* is a very broad one. The *Oxford Dictionary of Literary Terms* defines it as "a rather vague metaphorical term by which some critics refer to distinctive features of a written work in terms of spoken utterance. The voice of a literary work is then the specific group of characteristics displayed by the **narrator** or poetic 'speaker' (or, in some uses, the actual author behind them), assessed in terms of **tone**, **style**, or personality. Distinctions between various kinds of narrative voice tend to be distinctions between kinds of narrator in terms of how they address the reader (rather than in terms of their perception of events, as in the distinct concept of **point of view**). Likewise in non-narrative poems, distinctions can be made between the personal voice of a private lyric and the assumed voice (the **persona**) of a **dramatic monologue**." (Baldick 1996) [retrieved on 17.01.2012, original emphasis]. This general definition of voice applies to the use that narratologists such as Rimmon-Kenan (2002: 89-108) or Mieke Bal (1997) make of the term. The notion of voice is also explored by Gerard Genette (1990: 212-262) in relation to the theory of *point of view* and the notion of *mood*. As Genette writes in his introduction (1990: 31), the *voice* is one class of determinations (together with that of *tense* and *mood*), which can be used to analyze narrative discourse. The voice refers for Genette "to the way in which the narrating itself is implicated in the narrative [...], that is, the narrative situation or its instance, and along with that its two protagonists: the narrator and his audience, real or implied." Bakhtin (1984), in his essay *Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics*, refers to *voice* as someone's "consciousness expressed in discourse" (Bakhtin 1984: 88). However, according to the Russian scholar, discourse and consciousness, as represented in Dostoevsky's novels, are always dialogic, since they are composed of other discourses and other voices. In my study I use the term especially in relation to the narratological categories of narrator and character. However, I also take into account the dialogic relationship among different voices and the Bakhtinian polyphony of a voice.

TABLE 1.1 Chatman's diagram



In my study I have focused especially on the categories of *narrator* and *narratee*. The narrator is the voice that tells the events. Following Rimmon-Kenan (2002), among others, I distinguish between an extradiegetic narrator, that is, a voice who is superior to the story that is being narrated, and an intradiegetic narrator, which indicates that the narrator is also a character of the story. Depending on whether the narrator participates or not in the story, it is possible to refer to him or her as a homodiegetic or heterodiegetic narrator. These four characterizations of the position of the narrator may combine. A narrator can be, for example, extra- and heterodiegetic, like the omniscient narrators in George Eliot's *Middlemarch*, or intra- and homodiegetic, as is the narrator in the short story 'Oil of Dog' by Ambrose Bierce. The same distinction can be applied to the narratee, that is, the subject to whom the narration is addressed. In my study I alternate the term *narrator* and *narratee* with *speaker*, *audience*, and *character*, depending on the perspective that is being assumed. When, for example, I write about characters I am automatically assuming the perspective of the story-level of the composition.¹² Finally, when I use the term *speaker* or *audience*, I am focusing more on the mimetic features of the voice I am describing, in connection with the impression of an actually spoken discourse, rather than on the story and the narration. Even though narrative and dramatic poetry may prevail in Frost, it is also possible to find compositions where no story is presented. In this case the voice in first person cannot be associated with a narrating voice but rather with a lyrical subject, who is generally identified with the poet, or rather, with the implied author of the poem.

Speaking of a voice, or of several voices, in Frost's poems, and of the perspective they assume in the text, means introducing the notion of *point of view*. The term is criticized by Genette

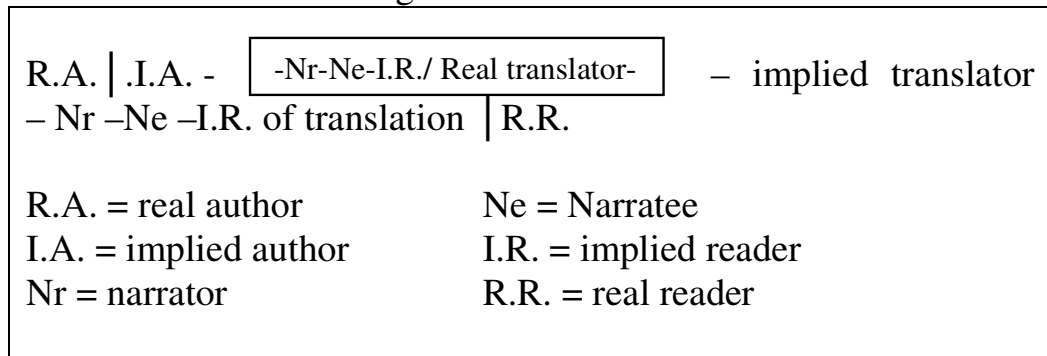
¹² *Story* is defined by Rimmon-Kenan as "the narrated events, abstracted from their disposition in the text and reconstructed in their chronological order, together with the participants in these events" (2002: 2). The notion of *story* is differentiated from that of *narration*, that is, the actual production of a text, and of *text*, which is a spoken or written discourse in which the events are told (2002: 3).

(mentioned in Rimmon-Kenan 2002: 73-74) since *point of view* would not distinguish, according to the French scholar, whether it refers to verbal communication (the answer to the question ‘who speaks?’) or non-verbal focalization (the answer to the question ‘who sees’), thus implying that the two aspects must coincide. In a study like mine, however, which focuses on mimesis of orality, I prefer to use *point of view*, implying that my focus is on who ‘speaks.’

The notions of narrator, narratee, implied author, and implied reader are used consciously, irrespective of their problematic definition, which has led postclassical narratologists to investigate and question the actual presence of a narrator in the text.¹³ I will not take into account this debate in the analysis, since it exceeds the goal of my study. Nonetheless, I cannot ignore the academic discourse on the use of narratological categories in translation that has been developed in the last two decades. Particularly significant are the well-known companion articles written by Giuliana Schiavi (1996) and Theo Hermans (1996) for *Target*. In these articles the authors question the undifferentiated use of original and translated versions of narrative texts for the description of narratological categories and principles of their theories, as if the translation process could not affect the role and function played by the narrator and the narratee in it. This criticism became the starting point for an investigation on the role of the translator in the construction of a narrative text. It led Schiavi to develop the notion of *implied translator*, which, like the implied author, is “a textual artifact. What we obtain is an implied translator sharing with the implied reader ‘a set of presuppositions’ regarding norms and standards in force in the target culture” (Schiavi 1996: 15). Schiavi inserts the implied translator in the middle of Chatman’s original diagram, since the implied translator intercepts the implied author’s message by taking on the role of implied reader. Subsequently, he or she reprocesses the text for the target culture implied reader. Schiavi’s proposed modifications are represented in table 1.2 below:

¹³ Much has been written on the issue. I prefer to refer to the articles by Andrew Gibson (2001), Manfred Jahn (2001), and Monika Fludernik (2001), among others, all included in the summer 2001 issue of *New Literary History*, which is completely dedicated to the subject of *voices and human experience*.

TABLE 1.2 Schiavi's diagram



The articles by Schiavi and by Hermans also raise issues regarding the invisibility of translators in narrative texts, which have been abundantly tackled in translation studies since then. In my study I am certainly interested in detecting the implied translator in the translation, since I can hypothesize that the translation of Frost's mimesis of orality will certainly raise questions related to the translator's recreation of orality in the target culture, and to its relationship with both the source mimesis of orality and the translator's personal writing style. However, I will not use the term *implied translator* but will always make reference to the *translator*. This decision is consistent with the analogous decision not to use the term *implied author*. Throughout the research, in fact, I refer to Frost, both as the biographical person and as the implied author of the poems under analysis. In a similar way, I will refer to Bartra, Desclot, and Giudici, entrusting the context (and, when necessary, my explicit specifications) with the disambiguation of the function and characteristics of these terms. Moreover, while for prose narrative translators still struggle with their invisibility, despite the efforts that are being made towards an acknowledgment of their role (which clarifies the need to differentiate more clearly between implied and real translator), the translator of poetry is frequently very visible.¹⁴ Furthermore, as in the case of the Italian and the Catalan translations of Frost's poems, translations of famous poets are often carried out by other (more or less famous) poets, which contributes to turn the spotlight on their role as translators. Their visibility stems also from the very genre they translate, poetry, which, more than narrative prose, is generally believed to be

¹⁴ I refer especially to translation of canonic poetry for adults. Translators of poetry for children, in fact, may have the same problems of visibility as translators of prose narrative for children.

translatable only through an act of “creative transposition” (as Jakobson’s seminal 1959 essay remarked [2000: 118]), thus stressing the translator’s intervention in the text.

1.5 Mimesis of orality¹⁵

“L’art commence par le sacrifice de la
fidélité à l’efficacité.”
(Paul Valéry)

1.5.1 Introducing the concept

From the point of view of the medium of communication, orality could be defined as whatever is uttered. Mimesis of orality could therefore be defined as whatever is represented through a written medium as if it had been uttered. It is clear from the very start, however, that this definition is not detailed enough to be used. How could we account for the representation of the thoughts of the characters in a novel, stream of consciousness, free indirect speech? How could we define the orality in the staging of a theatre piece? These questions, and many others, urge a definition of the object of study, a preliminary step of any analysis.

As I approached the theoretical studies developed so far on mimesis of orality, I was not surprised to find a variety of definitions and theoretical frameworks that often overlap or focus on different aspects of the matter. The very term *mimesis of orality*, and the alternative formulations given by scholars through the years, uncover the intricacy of features characterizing the phenomenon. Stressing the complexity of the concept of *mimesis of orality*, Brumme (2008b: 9) observes that its definition may vary according to the specific theoretical perspective adopted or its pragmatic function in a given context. This explains also the variety of terms used to define the phenomenon, such as, in English, *simulated orality* (Oesterreicher 1997), *fictional orality*, *constructed*

¹⁵ This section is in part the result of the constructive discussion on the subject of orality developed during a workshop on theoretical models for describing orality organized at the Universität Leipzig by Professor Jenny Brumme (Universität Pompeu Fabra) and Professor Carsten Sinner (Universität Leipzig), from the 28th to the 31st March 2011.

orality, and *prefabricated orality*, the latter term being used especially in multimedia communication, when referring to the recreation of orality in a written text the function of which is to be uttered as an oral discourse (for example, as in Chaume, 2003: 102). I have preferred the terms *mimesis of orality*, as used by López Serena (2007)¹⁶ for two main reasons. First, the term *mimesis* seems to me to be void of those negative connotations that words like *simulated* and *constructed* may have. Although in German scholarly writings the equivalent term *fingierte Mündlichkeit* [feigned orality] was particularly successful, the term introduces several unwanted nuances. In fact, besides the negative overtones, it seems to point to a certain authorial intention to deceive readers. It also implies the potential existence in the same text of an opposite, a *nicht fingierte Mündlichkeit* [non-feigned orality], which seems to suggest the likelihood that readers may find a natural orality in the written text, opposed to an unnatural one, a *fingierte* one. A similar connotation may be seen in the Italian expression *simulazione di parlato* [simulation of spoken language], as used for example by Enrico Testa (1991). A second reason for using the term *mimesis of orality* is that it seems more appropriate in the present context. In fact, in a study in which I investigate the translation of the recreation of orality in poetic language, the term *mimesis* evokes and highlights, though not exclusively, the artistic context and the literary features of the object of my research. As an alternative to this term, scholars have adopted the variants *oralidad ficcional* [fictional orality] (Brumme 2012)¹⁷, *literarische Mündlichkeit* [literary orality] (Freunek 2007), *dargestellte Mündlichkeit* [depicted orality] (Cadera 2002), that hint more openly than the adjective *feigned/fingiert* to the rhetorical nature of the device. Both *fictional* and *mimesis of* seem to work in a similar way. In fact, they point to the fact that the evocation of orality in literature is at the same time an act of authorial creation and recreation. It is an act of creation,

¹⁶ López Serena uses the Spanish terminology *mimesis de la oralidad*, referring to the Spanish post war narrative.

¹⁷ Paraphrasing Weidacher, Brumme clarifies: “Por ‘ficcional’ [...] se entienden textos y mundos textuales que se asimilan y crean según cierta forma de representación y comprensión y que no reclaman ser reales o que juegan con esta pretensión sin querer engañar al receptor” (Brumme 2012: 29). [“By “fictional” we mean texts and textual worlds that are similar and create according to a certain form of representation or comprehension, and that do not claim to be real, or that play with this claim without deceiving the receptor.”]

since it is an original element of the written text,¹⁸ and is the result of an act of personal interpretation and selection of linguistic and non-linguistic features (bold, italics, suspension marks, etc.), which authors make in order to achieve a representation of orality that complements their purpose. It is however also an act of recreation, at least in part, since it relies on discursive features and strategies actually used in oral communication.

Mimesis of orality is a linguistic, social, and cultural phenomenon, and as such eludes any attempt of an all-encompassing approach. Since in my research I am interested in adopting or developing a definition of mimesis of orality suitable to my field of study (poetry and translation of poetry), making it possible for me to consistently apply it throughout the analysis, I shall start the section by proposing a general definition of mimesis of orality. Subsequently, I shall describe the elements that make up the definition and check them against current theoretical frameworks or models. An analysis of the models and the various reflections carried out on the subject, of which I shall present only a number of approaches,¹⁹ will help me reconsider the initial formulation, and make the necessary adjustments.

What is mimesis of orality then? A first definition, intentionally confined to literature, might be the following : *it is a rhetorical device, or a cluster of rhetorical devices, employed by writers in order to produce a written text evoking in readers, or listeners, the impression of a language as it is actually spoken.* The definition makes reference to notions which need to be further clarified. If we fragment it we can extrapolate the following key concepts:

- Orality.
- Rhetorical devices.
- Authors' use of these devices.

¹⁸ Genette argues: "I believe there is no imitation in narrative because narrative, like everything (or almost everything) in literature, is an act of language. And, therefore, there can be no more imitation in narrative in particular than there is in language in general." (Genette 1990: 42).

¹⁹ As we shall see, the theoretical studies on the subject are numerous and vary according to the linguistic tradition to which they belong . In my study, I have taken into account a selection of theoretical reflections on mimesis of orality and on orality in general proposed by scholars belonging to the Western tradition.

- Readers' perception of them.
- Evocation of spoken language.

In the following subsections I present these aspects of the phenomenon as they have been described in a selection of theoretical studies, and problematize them.

1.5.2 Orality

In his seminal book *Orality and Literacy* (1982) Walter Ong introduces a distinction between *primary orality* and *secondary orality*. With the term *primary orality* he refers to any phonic manifestation “of persons totally unfamiliar with writing” (Ong 1982: 6). Strictly speaking, the definition describes cultures of the past that never came into contact with the technology of writing. Today it is almost impossible to find non-chirographic cultures that have not been influenced even indirectly by writing. However, *primary orality* can still be detected in those cultures and subcultures that “even in a high-technology ambiance, preserve much of the mind-set of primary orality” (Ong 1982: 11). In contrast to *primary orality*, *secondary orality* represents the oral communication “of present-day high-technology culture, in which a new orality is sustained by telephone, radio, television, and other electronic devices that depend for their existence and functioning on writing and print” (Ong 1982: 10-11). The distinction between primary and secondary orality is fundamental since primary oral and secondary oral cultures show different psychodynamics (Ong 1982: 31-75), though they still share some characteristics. The difference derives from the fact that oral cultures regard spoken language as a mode of action rather than a mirror of thought, which is the perspective of chirographic cultures.²⁰ In the present work the

²⁰ Ong draws especially on Milman Parry's revolutionary discoveries on the methods of composition of Homeric poetry, and Albert Lord's extension of Parry's original work, which Parry's untimely death had caused to be left incomplete. Lord had been Parry's disciple and in his book *The Singer of Tales* (Lord 2000) he showed how the techniques of oral composition detected in Homer's epic poems could also be found in modern oral performances by non-literate Serbo-Croatian singers, thus giving further support to the initial hypothesis of the oral composition of the Greek epos. Parry's and Lord's studies represent a Copernican revolution as they revealed what a drastic change in the mindset and consciousness of mankind the introduction of writing had caused:

term *orality* will be used and intended as Ong's secondary orality, if not otherwise specified. Furthermore, the word *orality* will be often alternated with the term *spoken language*, which avoids, in my opinion, additional ambiguities.²¹ We should take into account, moreover, that there is no perfect correspondence between the term *orality* and its equivalent in other languages, like, for example, Catalan, French, Italian, German and Spanish. In German the word *Oralität* has specific technical and scientific connotations, due to its Latin root, which helps German-speaking users identify the term as a *Fachwort* (thus reducing the risk of ambiguities). In Romance languages the word *oralitat* (Catalan), *oralité* (French), *oralità* (Italian), and *oralidad* (Spanish), while still a learned term, suggest the term *oral*, which is in more common use and may evoke any physical action carried out with the mouth, more than just the functioning of the phonatory organs and the act of speaking.²²

The terminological clarification must be followed now by a description of the meaning of the term and its main characteristics. We are entering here the wide and complex field of studies on the oral dimension of language which I hinted at in the introduction to section 1.5. Among the various frameworks developed to analyze orality (and hence to analyze the mimesis of orality) I have privileged the framework elaborated by the German scholars Peter Koch and Wolf Oesterreicher (1990²³). However, other approaches

“Literacy [...] is absolutely necessary for the development not only of science but also of history, philosophy, explicative understanding of literature and of any art, and indeed for the explanation of language (**including oral speech**) itself.” (Ong 1982: 14).

²¹ Blanche-Benveniste assumes an opposite position on this issue. According to the French scholar, it is preferable to use the term *orality*, rather than *spoken language*, because the linguistic habits related to the latter term would cause ambiguity (Blanche-Benveniste 1998: 19). In French *spoken language* as opposed to *written language*, would be perceived as inferior. Moreover, it would be felt as a partial category, not including all oral phenomena, but only those characterized by spontaneity and improvisation. As a consequence, the reading of a lecture would be considered “spoken written language” or written language intended to be read.

²² I am indebted to Professor Jenny Brumme for this observation (private conversation).

²³ In my study I make reference, however, to the Spanish edition of the book (Koch and Oesterreicher 2007). During the phase of revision of my study a new edition of the book has been published in German (2011), which I have not been able to examine yet.

from the anglophone, German and Italian tradition have also been taken into account for several reasons. Koch and Oesterreicher's framework can be considered in part an integration and re-organization of what has been written on orality before them. As we shall see, most of the features appearing in other studies overlap with the framework proposed by the German scholars. On the other hand, Koch and Oesterreicher's introduction of a conceptual dimension in the diasystem—which I describe in detail later in the chapter—represents a useful and original contribution to the study of spoken language. Apart from considering their framework, however, I shall also take into account studies that provide a criticism of the framework and propose alternatives to expand and update it.²⁴

1.5.3 Studies of orality: the oral-written continuum

Even a short summary, such as this one, of the theoretical discourse developed around the concept of orality needs to start by taking into account the distinction between the oral and the written.²⁵ This distinction has a historical value, as it prompted discussions on the very nature of the oral and the written dimensions, and the primacy of one dimension over the other. More than that, however, it occupies a central position in most of the models analyzed.

Saussure, Bloomfield and Sapir are among the first scholars who focused on the difference between oral and written language and considered the former as an object of study. Saussure argued that only spoken language ought to be the object of linguistic studies, viewing written language as a mere image of the spoken one (1959: 23-24). This posture helped foster the development of disciplines such as phonology and phonetics, whereas writing remained the main source for research in other linguistic fields. The opposition thus introduced between written and oral fired a controversy regarding the primacy of orality over literacy and vice versa, which does not help define either their characteristics or their function.

²⁴ A more detailed overview of the theoretical approaches to orality can be found in Brumme (2012), Castellà Lidon (2004), and López Serena (2007).

²⁵ An article by Chafe and Tannen (1987) presents a useful overview of the studies analyzing the relationship between written and spoken language (though clearly only until 1987, and mainly belonging to the anglophone tradition).

Biber (1988: 5-9) briefly summarizes the main points of the debate, observing how any issue of primacy when talking about writing and speech is out of focus since they are two different systems that need to be studied individually and compared for further research. Orality does come first in human development, however, concludes Biber:

Once a culture develops a written form in addition to a spoken form, the two modes come to be exploited for different communicative purposes. [...] The two modes of communication have quite different strengths and weaknesses, and they therefore tend to be used in complementary situations. From this perspective, neither can be said to be primary; they are simply different. (Biber 1988: 8-9)

M.A.K. Halliday

Biber's observation is fundamental. It became clear that the opposition oral/written could not explain the variety of types of both oral and written texts and the fact that many elements characterizing oral texts could be found in written texts and vice versa. Scholars soon realized that in both oral and written language there existed two extremes between which communication moved without interruption. The idea of a gradation, or continuum, between oral and written communication led scholars to question the meaning, status and efficacy of the opposition between written and spoken language as media. One of the most frequently mentioned studies tackling the issue is that of M.A.K. Halliday. To clarify the terms of the discussion, Halliday employed the notions of register, and the distinction between field, mode, and tenor. The British linguist defined register as the functional variation of both spoken and written language, that is, "what you are actually speaking (or writing), [...] determined by what you are doing at the time" (Halliday 1985b: 44).²⁶ As he had specified in an earlier work,

the notion of register is thus a form of prediction: given that we know the situation, the social context of language use, we

²⁶ The notion of register as a functional variety of language is complementary to the notion of dialect, that is, "the variety you speak because you 'belong to' (come from or have chosen to move into) a particular region, social class, caste, generation, age group, sex group, or other relevant grouping within the community" (Halliday 1985b: 44).

can predict a great deal about the language that will occur, with reasonable probability of being right. The important theoretical question then is: what do we need to know about the social context in order to make such predictions? (Halliday 1978: 32)

Halliday answers the question by naming the three contextual parameters of *field* (subject matter in a wide sense as institutional setting in which the act of communication takes place), *tenor* (who these people are), and *mode* (the channel of communication used, i.e., the medium, either written or oral, but also “other choices relating to the role of language in the situation” (Halliday 1978: 33)). The combination of these parameters leads to the identification of lexico-grammatical and semantic patterns which are characteristic of written or of oral language. By including in the category of mode both the channel, and the key and genre (1978: 62) —which he borrows from Hyme— he is representing, under the same label, two different ontological categories (that Koch and Oesterreiche call *Konzeption* and *Medium*). Channel would refer to the medium, written or spoken, and its sub-varieties, but also “to the particular semiotic function or range of functions that the text is serving in the environment in question,” such as descriptive, persuasive, or didactic (Halliday 1978: 144). The combination of medium and its semiotic function within the category of mode, in my opinion, may generate some confusion or at least complicate the identification of clear features that describe the oral phenomenon (and its imitation, recreation or evocation in written). As Halliday himself acknowledges (1985b: 45), although written registers “come to be recognized as characteristic of writing,” they do not belong exclusively to that dimension. Register variations are present also in the spoken language and all varieties can influence each other mutually. The observation does point to the idea of continuum between the written and the oral mode of discourse but generates also a certain fuzziness, as Hatim and Mason (1990: 51) remark, observing that the categories of field, tenor and mode tend to overlap.²⁷

²⁷ Biber (1988: 9-20) emphasizes that it is difficult to identify features belonging exclusively to the written or the oral modalities. We can only trace trends by considering their co-occurrence on the basis of functional considerations. One advantage of Koch and Oesterreicher’s model, as we shall

Gregory and Carroll

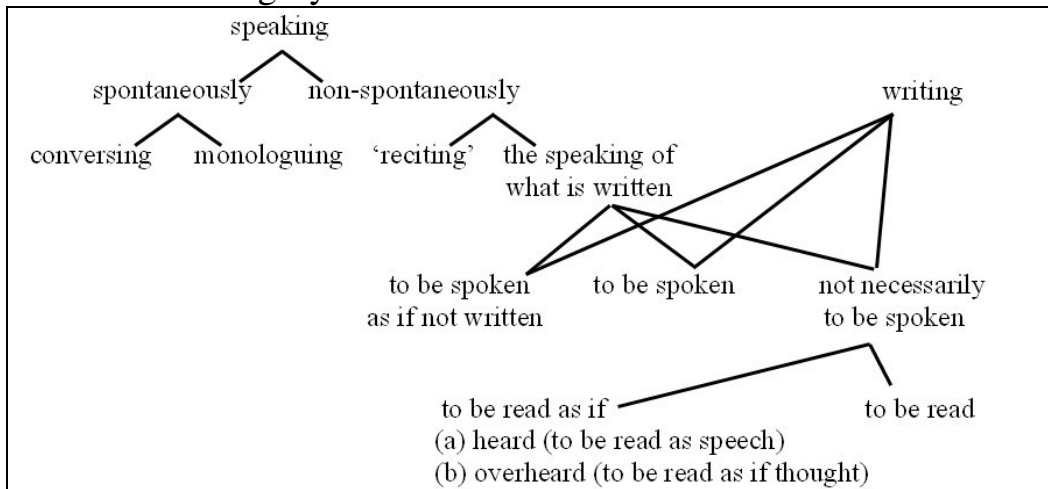
Michael Gregory and Susan Carroll (Gregory 1967; Gregory and Carroll 1978), when describing language varieties in use (Halliday's *register*, which they prefer to label *diatypic varieties*), introduce a detailed description of the elements composing the mode. They acknowledge the fact that the term *mode of discourse*, used to describe the spoken/written dimension and the relationship between language users and their medium, includes more complex distinctions than the simple medium opposition spoken/written.

As soon as relationships such as those between lectures and articles, between conversations in real life and dialogue in novels and plays, have to be considered, distinctions amongst modes of discourse, if they are to be really useful, have often to be more delicate than the primary one between spoken and written. (Gregory 1967: 188)

Gregory and Carroll summarize their distinctions in a diagram, reported in table 1.3 below.

see later on, is that it provides a structure within which different features of discourse are coherently organized and permit a better description of the linguistic phenomena observed (both in oral and in written discourse). Blanche-Benveniste (1998: 25-28) ponders the meaning of the term "features of orality" and the perspective which is assumed when referring to them. According to the French scholar, orality is often defined through a series of features that borrow from grammatical units already in use for the analysis of the written language. The results of the research group GARS (Groupe Aixois de Recherches en Syntaxe) has shown how the study of orality has led to a re-definition of grammatical units. For example, the study shows how the relationship between the two parts of the utterance "no estaba Lesage él no pasaba" [Lesage was not there he didn't go through], apparently independent, is defined by the intonation, the symmetrical syntactical construction, and by an opposition between negative and positive modalities, which make it possible to identify conditional relationships between the parts: "(si) no estaba Lesage, no habría pasado" [if Lesage hadn't been there she/he wouldn't have gone through]. In a similar way, insistent repetitions in oral language cannot always be related to subordinations of coordinations, and call for a new definition within the grammatical analysis.

TABLE 1.3 Gregory and Carroll



The advantage of Gregory and Carroll's representation is that, even visually, it covers a wide range of varieties which can be included in the category of *mode*. Moreover, it also outlines the overlapping features of the oral and written dimensions, thus pointing, though not explicitly, to the idea of a continuum. Castellà Lidon (2004: 24) objects that the diagram is a representation of the combinations between written texts and their potential oral performance. Moreover, the frame does not take into account occurrences such as written texts deriving from oral speeches (like classroom notes, proceedings from a meeting, or a published interview), or not fully spontaneous oral speeches (like a conference paper or a homily).²⁸ What concerns me most here, however, is to outline those aspects within the framework which may be interpreted as elements constituting mimesis of orality. I am referring to *writing to be spoken as if not written* and *writing not necessarily to be spoken, to be read as if (a) heard (to be read as speech); (b) overheard (to be read as if thought)*. As we can see from the diagram, both categories are points of convergence of the written and speaking modes, since they can also be read as *the speaking of what is written to be spoken as if not written* and *the speaking of what is written not necessarily to be spoken but to be read as if (a) heard, (b) overheard*.

²⁸ Castellà Lidón proposes an integration of the list of these in-between texts, adding the written texts deriving from oral ones (such as meeting proceedings, class-notes, transcription of a conference) and the oral non-totally spontaneous texts, which, however, do not depend on written texts (such as a live debate or a round table, a radio or TV interview) (Castellà Lidón 1996: 262-63). He also points to a further enlargement of Gregory and Carroll's model suggested by Jeremy Munday (in Castellà Lidon 2004: 25).

The first category includes texts such as plays, films, radio and television scripts, and political speeches. That is, it refers to all those texts that can be distinguished from other written texts because they are characterized by grammatical patterns typical of spontaneous speech, though not by the same quantities of oral features (such as pronouns and deictics with intra-textual reference) likely to be found in spontaneous oral texts. Gregory and Carroll stress the fictional nature of these texts by observing that “texts associated with this medium relationship probably use language *to create their situations to a greater extent than we do when speaking spontaneously*” (1967: 192). The main difference is the lower degree of spontaneity and higher degree of planning of texts written to be spoken, as compared to ordinary speech. The second category (*written to be read as if heard/overheard*) would refer to those written texts in which rhetorical and stylistic features (like homophonous ambiguities or extra-diegetic comments such as *he said gently, she cried*) represent “invitations to an auditory experience.” The shortcoming of Gregory and Carroll’s approach, if applied to the study of mimesis of orality, is a certain ambiguity of formulation. It is not clear, in fact, where exactly the difference lies between *written to be read as if heard* and *written to be read as if overheard*, even though the scholars attempt to clarify the concept by giving as an example the monologues of Joyce’s novels, drawn from J.W. Spencer (1965, in Gregory 1967: 193). The main hindrance to the use of this model for a description of mimesis of orality, at least in literary works, derives from the difficulty in encompassing within such general categories the complex web of linguistic features that characterize mimesis of orality.

Wallace Chafe

Other scholars besides those already examined have stressed the importance of the idea of a gradation between the written and oral modes and have tried to identify the features distinctive to each. Among them, the studies of Wallace Chafe (1982; 1994) have often been mentioned, as they bring new insight into the matter. Chafe starts by observing how the production of a written text is much slower than the production of an oral text, since in writing we try to pack into a linguistic whole a series of ideas that in speaking would be expressed in a more sequential way, as one unit at a time. Speaking is much faster than writing, as is reading. The different

time of production of a text in the two modes points, according to Chafe, to two central pairs of opposed features of oral and written texts: fragmentation/integration and involvement/detachment. The opposition suggests a gradation of intensity between the two poles. Due to their propensity to pack more information together into a single sequence, written texts tend to be more integrated. The devices used to achieve integrations are, among others, nominalizations, attributive adjectives, conjoined phrases, and sequences of prepositional phrases. Fragmentation, on the other hand, is characterized by strings of ideas joined without connectives or with coordinating conjunctions (Chafe 1982: 36-45). Written texts also differ from spoken texts in the degree of involvement or detachment perceived in the relationship between the producers and receivers of the text. Written language is characterized by a higher degree of detachment, achieved through linguistic devices such as nominalizations and passives, whereas oral texts present a higher degree of involvement, that is, of interaction of the speakers with their audience. This effect is the consequence of the use of first person references and of the monitoring of the information flow through pragmatic markers like *well, I mean, you know*, emphatic particles, and direct quotes. (Chafe 1982: 45-49).

Douglas Biber

As Biber (1988: 21) points out, the importance of Chafe's study consists above all in stressing how an accurate study of linguistic variation in language should be founded on the acknowledgement of co-occurring features, or rather, co-occurring *dimensions* (like the involvement/detachment dimension) composed by multiple features. This approach is necessary in order to understand and analyze the complexity of the phenomenon of linguistic variation, of which mimesis of orality is but one aspect. Biber's study on linguistic variation (1988) observes the spoken/written modes from a different perspective, and helps reconsider and specify the very terms "oral/written mode." He adopts the notion of *linguistic dimension* as a fundamental parameter of his analysis. The term defines "continuums of variation rather than discrete poles" (Biber 1988: 9), and is characterized by a group of features consistently co-occurring in texts. The novelty of his approach is that it inverts the perspective of analysis. While in previous studies variation in speech and writing had been analyzed from a situational and functional point of view, to which certain specific linguistic features

had been attached, Biber organizes linguistic features in groupings, through a quantitative analysis based on frequency counts of the features, which later are interpreted in functional and situational terms (1988: 13). The change of perspective is necessary, according to the North American scholar, since often groupings of features proposed from a functional point of view are not represented by similar linguistic features co-occurring in a text.

By defining *dimension* from a strictly linguistic perspective, it is possible to identify the set of dimensions required to account for the linguistic variation within a set of texts. Each dimension comprises an independent group of co-occurring linguistic features, and each co-occurrence pattern can be interpreted in functional terms. The result is an empirical assessment of how many independent dimensions can be detected, which functions are independent and which are associated with the same dimension, and the relative importance of different dimensions (Biber 1988: 14). Biber also stresses that the parameters identifying the dimensions of variation consist of continuous scales delimited by two poles that define them (involved vs. informational production, explicit vs. situation-dependent reference, etc.). These scales encompass a whole range of texts with varying presence of linguistic features proper to each of the dimensions described. As a consequence “styles, registers, genres, and text types are not related in terms of dichotomous differences; rather they are similar (or different) to differing extents with respect to each dimension” (Biber 1988: 22-23).

For his study, Biber identifies six dimensions to be applied to texts belonging to different genres. The relations drawn among texts from a multidimensional perspective allow the scholar to argue that no clear boundary exists between the written and oral mode in English (Biber 1988: 160-164). It is possible to speak of typical or expected types of discourse in both modes on the basis of the higher or lower occurrence of features belonging to three of the six dimensions identified (*Informational vs. Involved Production, Explicit vs. Situation-Dependent Reference, and Abstract vs. Non- Abstract Information*).²⁹ Considered individually, such features may point to

²⁹ It is clear that we are dealing here with a generalization and simplification of texts. As a consequence, we may consider as typically *oral* a form of discourse which: a) implies involved production, b) is situation dependent, and c) is non-

a clear distinction between the oral and the written modes, “but together they show that there is no single dimension of orality versus literacy” (Biber 1988: 162). Biber’s observations are particularly interesting, to my view, if applied to the study of mimesis of orality. If, as we have seen in the initial definition, mimesis of orality is the fictional creation or evocation of orality in texts, then the possibility of identifying elements normally *expected* to be found in an oral discourse are almost more relevant to the study than any exclusive definition of actual orality, as I shall show later on. Biber, moreover, observes that despite the overlap between the oral and the written dimensions “there seems to be a cognitive ceiling on the frequency of certain syntactical constructions in speech so that there is a difference in the *potential* forms of the two modes” (Biber 1988: 163). As a consequence, written discourse is more literate (that is, informational, explicit and abstract) than any spoken discourse, no matter how planned and informational it is.

A further consideration ensuing from Biber’s study should be taken into account. It refers to the notion of discourse complexity, analyzed in his article “On Complexity of Discourse Complexity: a Multidimensional Analysis” (Biber 1992). The scholar observes that discourse complexity is not homogeneous. There are different types of complexity, or rather relative complexities of spoken and written registers. The scholar applies a five-dimensional model to the complexity characteristics of spoken and written registers and achieves the conclusion that the fundamental distinction between spoken and written registers does not reside in the degree of complexity but rather in the variety of complexities they revert to: “Spoken registers are apparently limited in the kinds of complexity they can exploit, whereas written registers show much greater differences among themselves with respect to both their kinds and extents of discourse complexity” (Biber 1992: 160). This observation can be useful when describing apparently complex linguistic phenomena which are traditionally regarded as characteristic of the written dimension, and may at times be generically dismissed as not being part of the oral language, hence of mimesis of orality.

abstract in content; but we would still find some blurring of the features belonging to each dimension.

Summation

The selection of theoretical approaches to the study of orality presented so far has made it clear that the dichotomic opposition between oral and written language can only be considered acceptable if applied to the *medium* of communications (either phonic or graphic, as Koch and Oesterreicher remark).³⁰ If we focus on the *mode* of communication, then scholars have pointed out that it is more convenient to speak of a continuum along which the register of language varies, depending on the co-occurrence of several linguistic and contextual factors. But this observation makes us question the labelling of the continuum itself. In fact, if oral and written language share common features and cannot be distinguished by their exclusive traits, then probably the notion of spoken-written continuum is not altogether appropriate and should be rephrased. Goetsch's considerations on this issue are enlightening for their explicitness, and echo Biber's words:

The line between spoken and written language cannot be drawn with any precision. For one thing, both kinds of discourses are expressions of the same underlying language system. Here, there are no hard-and-fast criteria for distinguishing between spoken and written language. While it is true that the former is realized phonically and the latter graphically, even in this respect boundary crossings are not unusual. (Goetsch 2003: 6)

The framework developed by the German scholars Koch and Oesterreicher, presented in the following section, proposes a reorganization and reformulation of the notion of an oral/written continuum, drawing on the ideas presented so far and introducing a new perspective.

³⁰ As we shall see later on in the chapter, even this distinction is not as straightforward as it may appear at a first sight. The graphic and the phonic element may co-exist in the same medium, thanks to contemporary technological advancements.

1.6 Koch and Oesterreicher's framework

Drawing from Söll (1974: 17-25), Koch and Oesterreicher distinguish the notion of written and oral as the *medium* through which communication takes place (that is, the graphic and phonic realization of discourse) and as the *conception* around which the linguistic configuration of the expression is structured. The advantage of this distinction is that it reduces the risk of ambiguity, existing around the terms *oral* and *written*, which I have described before. The German scholars in fact specify that, while the medium distinction is strictly dichotomic, as any realization can be expressed either phonically or graphically, the conceptual distinction between the written and the oral mode is a continuum along which all forms of communication take place. The two poles of the conceptual ("Konzeptionell") continuum are labelled *language of immediacy* (*Sprache der Nähe*) and *language of distance* (*Sprache der Distanz*) (Koch and Oesterreicher 2007: 30).³¹ The advantage of this denomination is that it avoids mentioning the terms *oral* and *written* which may still create confusion with the phonic and graphic dimension. The German scholars also stress that the two poles demarcate the boundaries of linguistic communication in a multidimensional space characterized by different conditions of communication and communicative strategies. The category called *communicative conditions* refers to the extra-linguistic conditions affecting communication (for example: private versus public communication, intimacy versus no intimacy). The category called *communicative strategies* refers to communication strategies determined by the different classes of context in which communication takes place (situational context, cognitive context, linguistic-communicative context, other contexts). As a consequence, the linguistic-communicative context is just one of the contexts determining the form of communication, and achieves a central position only in conditions of extreme communicative distance (Koch and Oesterreicher 2007: 32).³² Table

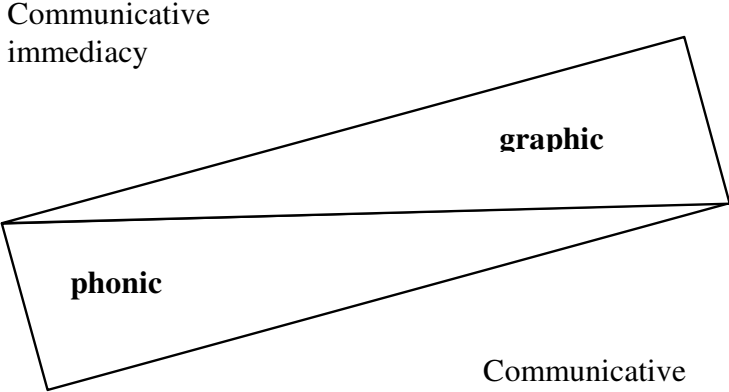
³¹ The translation of these German key terms (*Konzeptionell*, *Sprache der Nähe*, and *Sprache der Distanz*) is taken from an article in English by Oesterreicher (1997: 193-194).

³² As we can see, while Koch and Oesterreicher also stress the importance of a multidimensional analysis of communication, their perspective differs from Biber's as they do not take into account merely linguistic phenomena. The notion of dimension here is different from the more specific one proposed by Biber.

1.4 (overleaf) graphically reproduces the continuum and the graphic-phonetic dichotomy.

The categories presented so far contribute to the understanding and the description of linguistic phenomena related to the language of immediacy and the language of distance at a universal level of the language, that is, at a level characterized by non-historically defined linguistic operations such as referentialization, predication, deictic orientation, and contextualization (Koch and Oesterreicher 2007: 23). However, as Koch and Oesterreicher observe, “Lo lingüístico siempre se manifiesta necesariamente en la forma de lenguas históricas, lo cual —junto al fenómeno del cambio lingüístico— puede ser considerado como la expresión más clara de la historicidad del lenguaje humano (*langage*)” (2007: 36) [linguistic facts necessarily appear in the form of historical languages, which, together with the phenomenon of linguistic change, can be considered as the clearest expression of the historicity of human language (*langage*)]. The two scholars are interested in describing languages in their historical dimension, which implies observation of both external varieties existing among historical languages (like Catalan, Italian, and English) and linguistic variation within each historical language, i.e. what Coseriu (1986: 118-119) defines as the *architecture* of a language or *diasystem*. The Romanian scholar identifies three dimensions or variations within the diasystem: a) diatopic variation (linguistic variation related to a certain place, like, for example, a regional dialect); b) diastratic variation (any variation related to social groups or classes, like Afro-American, familiar Italian, and English teenagers’ jargon.); and c) diaphasic variation (any variation related to specific communicative situations, like academic English, and familiar Italian). The three variations are also generally referred to as dialect, sociolect and register respectively.

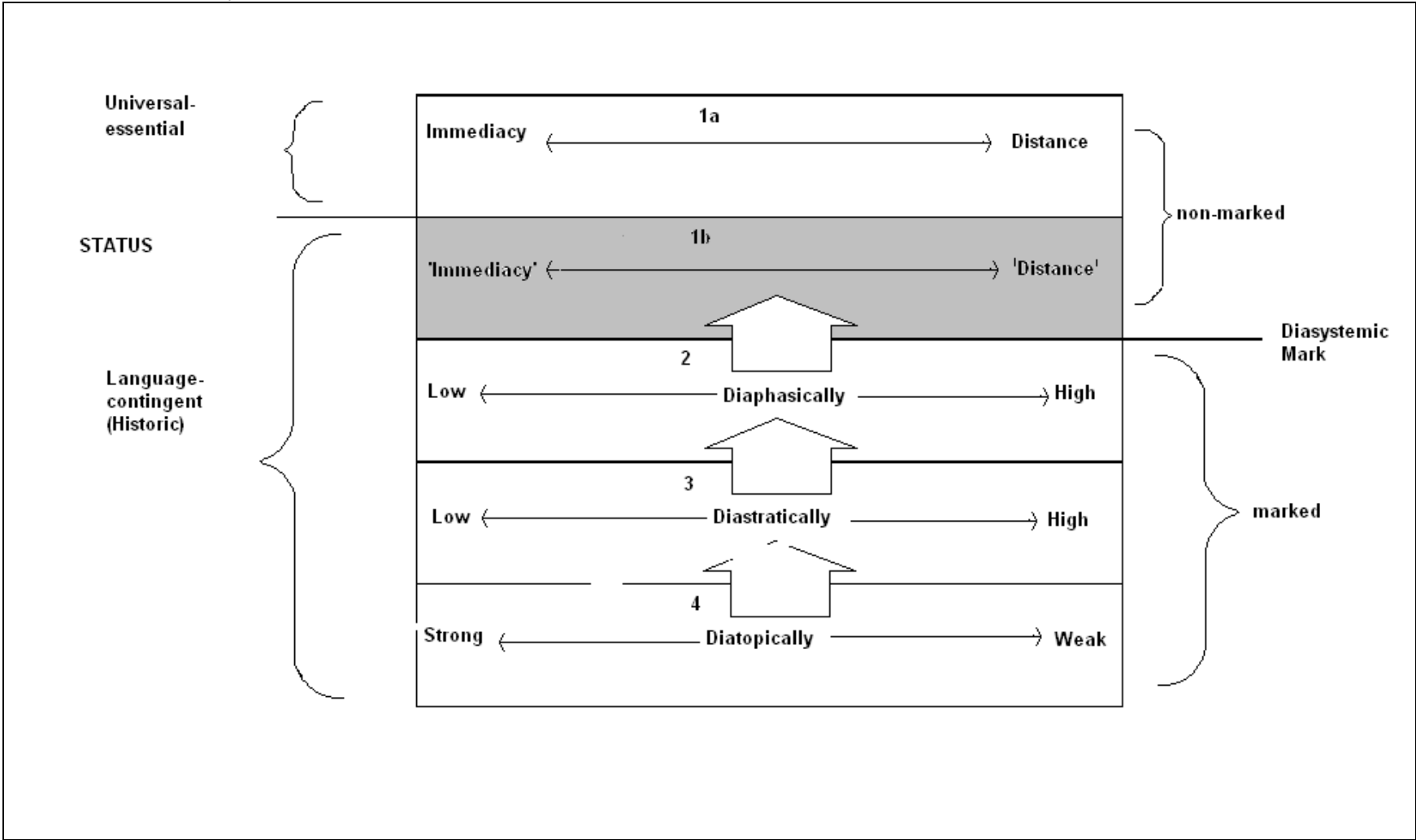
TABLE 1.4 Communicative axis

<p>Communicative conditions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Private communication - Familiarity - Emotionality - Grounding in the communicative situation and action - Possible referentialization from the here and now of the speaker - Physical immediacy - Strong cooperation - Dialogic character - Spontaneity - Thematic freedom - Etc. <p>Verbalization strategies</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Extra-linguistic, gestural and mimic contextualization - Low planning - Ephemeral character - Aggregative structure - Etc. 		<p>Communicative conditions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Public communication - Lack of emotional involvement - Lack of acquaintance - Detachment from the situations and the communicative action - Impossible referentialization from the here and now of the speaker - Physical distance - Low cooperation - Monologic character - Thematic binding - Etc. <p>Verbalization strategies</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Linguistic contextualization - High planning - Defined character - Integrative structure - Etc.
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The relationship among them, known as *variational chain*, is unidirectional, thus the diatopic variation may be included in the diastratic, and the diastratic in the diaphasic, but not vice versa. Koch and Osterreicher draw from this framework, expanding and modifying it. According to them, the diasystem would not take into account the variational phenomenon related to the conceptional opposition of communicative immediacy and distance. The continuum would characterize each of the three dimensions given by Coseriu. For example, it is appropriate to distinguish between linguistic elements of a dialect which are closer to communicative immediacy rather than to communicative distance. Moreover, the German scholars introduce a fourth dimension that they do not label (see table 1.5), which includes all universal and historical-idiomatic linguistic facts that cannot be included in the diaphasic dimension (Koch and Oesterreicher 2007: 38-39). This dimension, which has also been named *diamesic* or *diamedial*³³ is the first dimension of the variational chain since, as Koch and Oesterreicher argue, it includes elements of the previous dimensions.

³³ Brumme (2012: 18-19) describes the origin of the terms. The word *diamesic* was coined in the eighties within Italian linguistics (probably by Alberto Mioni) and is generally adopted by the scholarly circles of Romance languages. The term *diamedial* was made known by studies in stylistics carried out by Wolfgang Fleischer, Georg Michel and Günter Starke, and is popular within the Germanic and anglophone scholarly circles. In this study I use the term *diamedial*.

TABLE 1.5 Diasystem



1.6.1 Criticism and advantages

The introduction of a fourth dimension in the diasystem has been object of criticism.³⁴ Its status as an independent dimension has been questioned, among others, by Jörn Albrecht (2005: 233), who has argued that the diamedial dimension cannot be separated from the previous dimensions altogether. Like the diatopic, diastratic and diaphasic dimensions, it includes elements of the previous dimensions of the variational chain. However, while the previous three levels have clearly identifiable features, the diamedial dimension does not stand out as independent. Lebsanft (2004) expresses his reservation about the universal character of the dimension, remarking that

Man dürfte kaum behaupten wollen, dass das Nähe-Distanz-,Prinzip‘ in derselben Weise, universal‘ ist wie z. B. die aprioristischen Universalien der Kreativität, Alterität, Historizität oder Semantizität natürlicher Sprachen. Selbst wenn konzeptionelle Schriftlichkeit selbstverständlich an anthropologische Voraussetzungen gekoppelt ist, bleibt sie stets das Ergebnis historischer Kontingenz. (Lebsanft 2004: 208)

[One can hardly argue that the immediacy-distance ‘principle’ is ‘universal’ in the same way as the a priori universals such as creativity, alterity, semanticity or historicity of natural languages. Even if conceptual literacy is naturally linked to anthropological conditions, it is always the result of historical contingency.]

The limits of the universal features of spoken language described by Koch and Oesterreicher become clearer when the category is applied to translations, that is, when a comparison is drawn between a source language and one or more target languages. As Brumme points out (2008: 7-8) “Es hat sich erwiesen, dass gerade bei den universellen Merkmalen große Unterschiede zwischen Ausgangstext und Zieltext auftreten können, also die Akzeptanz in den Sprachgemeinschaften hinsichtlich der Nutzung der entsprechenden Verfahren verschieden ist.” [As for the universal features, it has been proven that substantial differences can emerge

³⁴ See Brumme (2012: 20-27) for an overview of criticism of Koch and Oesterreicher’s model.

between source text and target text, since the level of acceptability regarding the use of the corresponding procedure in a language community may vary.]

Further criticism of the diamedial level of the diasystem refers particularly to the alleged universality of its features. It is interesting to remember Biber's comment on this issue, even if he does not relate it to Koch and Oesterreicher's framework. The American scholar stresses the difficulty of any attempt at a generalization on the distinguishing features between the written and the oral modes deriving from observations of just one language (which has often been English, in the anglophone scholarly world he is referring to). Drawing on a 1986 study by Niko Besnier (quoted in Biber 1988: 205-207) on textual variation in a Polynesian language (Nukulaelae Tuvaluan), he observes how, in non-Western languages and cultures, features characterizing the spoken and written genres, and their form and function, may differ from what is expected in Western culture. He therefore supports a cross-cultural approach to the study of spoken and written language, but also champions the adoption of one central model (which, in our case, is Koch and Oesterreicher's) applied to the study of different language systems. This strategy would make cross-linguistic comparisons of textual variation possible, while contributing to the improvement of the framework itself. Koch and Oesterreicher themselves stress that the universal features of language of immediacy and language of distance refer strictly to French, Italian and Spanish. However, they also argue that "las posibilidades de realización de la perspectiva universal podrían ejemplificarse fácilmente en cualquier otra lengua" (Koch and Oesterreicher 2007: 71) [the potential realizations of the universal perspective may be easily exemplified in any other language]. While Brumme (2012: 20) agrees in discarding the term *universal*, she observes that it would still be useful to distinguish between a general level, that is, a level the features of which may be shared by more than one language, and the historical level of a single language. This distinction is particularly useful in translation studies, "donde la discriminación del nivel universal facilita el cotejo de recursos y la contrastación de soluciones con la finalidad de determinar criterios fundamentados para la evaluación y crítica de traducciones" (2011: 19) [where the differentiation of a universal level makes the comparison of devices

and solutions easier, with the aim of determining established criteria for translations evaluation and criticism].

The framework has also been criticized for its structuralist focus that does not take into account the achievements of cognitive linguistics and the flexible notion of meaning as a category deriving from the interaction among speakers (Brumme 2012: 24). It also neglects phraseology, excluding this category from the features characterizing spoken language. The lack of attention to the phraseological aspect of discourse represents an important shortcoming, considering that one distinguishing feature of oral communication is the presence of ready-made sentences and expressions.

Another recurrent criticism of the framework points to the limitations of the opposition between the graphic and phonic mediums, which is unable to describe the latest and more complex technological development in the field of media communication, where written and oral media may co-exist and affect each other. The need is also felt for a further specification of the notion of medium and a distinction between channel of production, transmission, and reception of the sign (Brumme 2012: 24). Furthermore, the introduction of forms of rapidly changing communication channels (mostly, though not uniquely, via internet, like e-mails, chats, forums, and, more recently, net phenomena like Facebook and Twitter) calls for a remodelling of the potential configurations created by the strategies of verbalization and the communicative conditions outlined by Koch and Oesterreicher. Christa Dürscheid (2003; 2006; 2007) has studied the main features of e-mail communication focusing on the place it may occupy along the continuum of communicative immediacy/distance. She proposes enlarging the categories of communicative conditions and verbalization strategies presented by Koch and Oesterreicher so that they can accommodate the new medium. Her proposal, however, seems problematic, since it lacks a definition and exhaustive description of e-mail communication.³⁵

³⁵ Similarly, Kailuweit (2009) studies how the German scholars' model can adjust to a new form of communication such as the chat, focusing on the kind of conceptual orality which it suggests. He concludes by arguing that the model is not sufficient for the description of the dynamics ruling in a chat. These rules

The criticism of Koch and Oesterreicher's framework points to the need to update it, if it is to be applicable to more recent forms of communication. However, we should also distinguish between the actual shortcomings of the framework and the difficulty of its application due to the lack of a thorough description of the phenomena characterizing new forms of communication (like e-mail communication). Before applying a model we should make sure that we define the object of our study. Notions like e-mails or chats are complex and relatively recent phenomena. Can they be considered genres, channels, mediums?³⁶ Which are their distinguishing features? How does context affect their elaboration? Neither all chats nor all e-mails refer to situations of communicative immediacy or invite its fictive reproduction. Dürscheid's study could certainly gain in thoroughness if it added references on current literature on the issue. We could hypothesize, in fact, that categories like e-mail, chat, and forum, among others, once analyzed in their components, would make possible a more straightforward application of Koch and Oesterreicher's framework.

Despite the criticism of Koch and Oesterreicher's theoretical frame, several reasons have led me to choose it for the present study. Koch and Oesterreicher's description of the conceptual continuum between the language of communicative immediacy and communicative distance, and its distinction from the dichotomic opposition of graphic and phonic media, draws on previous studies and contributes to an important terminological disambiguation. The multidimensionality of the framework, which considers the interrelation of verbal strategies and communicative conditions, permits an easy identification of average communicative situations (such as a conversation, a telephone call, or a lecture). Finally, the detailed description of the linguistic features in relation to their communicative situations and verbalization strategies, both at a general and at a historic-idiomatic level for French, Italian, and Spanish, have proved a fundamental tool for the linguistic analysis

represent a creating process that reproduces *written proximity*, and can be compared to the double system of communication that Pfister developed in 1977 in order to describe communication in a theatre piece (Pfister 2001).

³⁶ See for example Hess-Lüttich and Wilde (2003), who analyze the structure of a chat and the way in which chat communication takes place.

of translations, and, to a considerable extent, of source texts (chapter 2-5), to which the universal, or rather, general categories of spoken language could equally be applied. That the object of analysis is a corpus of poems belonging to the North American canon of twentieth century poetry precludes the difficulties, stressed above, entailed in the study of genres related to the development of contemporary multimedia technology.

1.7 Orality and mimesis of orality

The theoretical frameworks presented in the previous subsections were aimed at describing orality as a first step toward a description and definition of mimesis of orality, to which we assume it to be related. Giving a definition of orality is not as straightforward a task as might be imagined, even though the notion is intuitively clear. The current scholarly trend agrees on the notions of a conceptual continuum between language of immediacy and of distance (under various nomenclature) and of language variation. This framework has the advantage of encompassing a wide range of communicative situations the complexity of which is effectively, though not exhaustively, represented by the relationships among the multiple dimensions characterizing the variational space. The notion of a continuum is applicable to any kind of communication and contribute to drawing the boundaries of orality. At the same time, it makes it possible to indicate the area within the system where spoken language dominates. When describing the characteristics of the diamedial dimensions, Koch and Oesterreicher observe:

Die zentrale Stellung der Varietätendimension 1 ('gesprochen/geschrieben') ergibt sich ganz offensichtlich daraus, daß sie als eigentlicher Endpunkt der Varietätenkette Elemente aller drei anderen Dimensionen sekundär aufnehmen kann [...] und daß demzufolge die drei diasystematischen Dimensionen sich in ihrer inneren Markiertheitsabstufung nach dem Nähe/Distanz-Kontinuum ausrichten. Insofern können wir einerseits von **gesprochener Sprache im engeren Sinne** [...] andererseits von **gesprochener Sprache im weiteren Sinne** sprechen [...]; wir

sprechen hier in folgenden auch von **Nähebereich**)” (Koch and Oesterreicher 1990: 14-15)

[The central position in the variational dimension (spoken/written) is clearly due to the fact that, as a final point in the variational chain, it can include in a derivative way elements of all three other dimensions. As a consequence it organizes the scale of interior markers of the three diasystemic dimensions according to the immediacy-distance continuum. In this respect we can speak on the one hand of **spoken language** in the **narrower sense** [left section of dimension 1 in table 1.5], on the other of **spoken language** in the **broader sense** [left section of dimension 1, 2, 3 and 4 in table 1.5]. Henceforth we will also speak of **immediacy**.]

The German scholars seem to point to the area which would *more characteristically* represent spoken language. This observation has drawbacks and advantages. On the one hand, the formulation they present raises questions regarding the meaning of “spoken language in the narrower sense” and “spoken language in the broader sense,” and may appear rather ambiguous. On the other hand, it points to an area of the diasystem where we would normally expect to find features characterizing oral language. The idea of something that is **typically** oral, which Biber also commented on, is an important link to the notion of mimesis of orality. Equally important are the meanings of *prototypically oral* (Andujar and Brumme 2010: 7) and *stereotypically oral* which can be attributed to the notion of *typically oral*.³⁷ In fact, if mimesis of orality is a recreation (in the sense of creation of an impression) of orality in a text, then the first question to be asked is what shared idea authors in a specific culture

³⁷ In a similar way Mathilde Dargnat (2008) emphasizes, from the very beginning of her article, the importance of what is characteristically oral: “L’oralité peut se définir très généralement comme ce qui est caractéristique de l’oral, de la manière orale de pratiquer la langue, en l’occurrence le français. Il faudrait préciser comme ce qui est *perçu* caractéristique de l’oral. La nuance est importante car le biais cognitif est un maillon essentiel de la rentabilité stylistique, de l’effet d’oral, dont il sera question plus loin.” (Dargnat 2008: 12) [Orality can be defined very generally as that which is characteristic of the oral, of the oral way of using language, namely French. It should be clarified as that which is *perceived* as characteristic of the oral. The distinction is important because the cognitive bias is a vital link of the stylistic profitability, of the oral effect, which will be discussed later on.]

have about orality, or in other words, what it is that they consider to be typically oral. This shared idea undergoes a process of interpretation and personal manipulation that leads finally to the production of mimesis of orality. The relationship between orality and mimesis of orality implies therefore, as a first observation, the shift from a broader to a more confined area. On this point Nencioni (1989: 236) observes (referring to Italian) that the spoken language cannot be equated to fictional orality since in these texts authors or actors direct every aspect of the communicative situation.³⁸ He also stresses the link between spoken Italian and fictional spoken Italian when he says that “l’italiano parlato non s’identifica col parlato ‘simulato’, ma tuttavia questo costituisce una forma di consapevolezza dei fenomeni del primo, tra i quali, mutando certi presupposti, *deve fare una scelta funzionale*” (1989: 237) [“Spoken Italian cannot be identified with the ‘simulated’ spoken one. However the simulated one represents a form of awareness of the phenomena of spoken Italian, among which, changing certain prerequisites, *it must make a functional choice.*”]

It is clear that whenever we speak about something *typical* we are generalizing. What is perceived as typically oral by an author may be different from another author’s idea. Moreover, ideas of orality and its structures vary significantly from culture to culture. However, the area identified by Koch and Oesterreicher as typically belonging to oral language (“gesprochener Sprache im engeren Sinne” (1990: 15)) seems to point to a shared idea of orality, at least within Western culture. The features characterizing this area can be considered a good working tool for a description of mimesis of orality in the specific context of the present study, and a first step towards a wider understanding of mimesis of orality. It is not sufficient in itself, however, to exhaust the topic, but contributes to the understanding of the mechanisms at work in mimesis of orality. As numerous scholars have pointed out (Testa 1991, Stempel 1987, Fowler 2000, Brumme 2012) mimesis of orality cannot be totally equated to what is typically oral, since it is not simply a transcription of oral language. A proof of this lack of a direct correspondence between orality and its representation in the written

³⁸ Nencioni refers to mimesis of orality using the term *parlato-simulato*, which he divides into two categories: *parlato-scritto*, or fictional orality in spoken texts, and *parlato-recitato*, or theatre.

text is the shift of registers that is produced whenever we use in the written medium the same linguistic devices employed in the oral one. The ensuing effect is not the same, as Dargnat notes:

Une de conséquences de ce décalage de perception est que les cautions littéraires d'oralité [...] ne correspondent pas nécessairement à la réalité linguistique visée, en termes de phénomènes ou de fréquence. Par exemple, pour obtenir un effet populaire à l'écrit, l'écrivain fera appel à des caractéristiques qui sont seulement familières ou courantes à l'oral. Les études sur ce sujet passent toutes par l'idée d'une «recollection sélective» [Bourdieu1983: 99] et par une reconnaissance de cette discordance entre phénomènes sélectionnés et effet produit. (Dargnat 2008: 15)

[A consequence of this shift in perception is that the literary guarantees of orality [...] do not necessarily reflect the linguistic reality in question, in terms of phenomena or of frequency. For example, in order to obtain a popular effect in writing, the writer will revert to features that are only familiar or current in oral communication. Studies on this subject all pass through the idea of a 'selective recollection' [Bourdieu1983: 99] and a recognition of this mismatch between the selected phenomena and the effect produced.]

Mimesis of orality is achieved, then, through a selection of elements from typical oral language that successfully present to readers the illusion of orality. It is a semiotic mechanism—as Brumme (2012: 32) observes drawing on Charles Sanders Peirce's semiotic theory—triggered in readers by a series of signs derived from everyday orality. In the written text, these signs achieve indexical value, that is, they establish a metonymic relationship with spoken language. As a consequence, and with a few exceptions that I will discuss below, we cannot regard mimesis of orality in a literary text as a reliable source of information on the spoken language of a given age. Most of the times it cannot be attributed a real documentary value. This claim needs to be clarified, though, as it seems to contradict initial studies on orality which preferred to focus on written corpora for the description of the oral. The partial validity and the historical importance of these works such as, for example, the studies carried out by Hermann Wunderlich on

colloquial German (*Unsere Umgangssprache*, written in 1894), Leo Spitzer on the Italian colloquial language (*Italienische Umgangssprache*, written in 1922), Weiner Beinhauer on the Spanish colloquial language (*Spanische Umgangssprache*, written in 1929), among others (see Nencioni 1983: 129-131) is undeniable. In other areas of inquiry, like those focusing on the spoken features of dead languages, or in research on diachronic variations of a modern language, (as for example nineteenth-century English) there is no other way of studying features of orality than by analyzing and comparing texts of that age.³⁹ However, even the results of these studies should be taken *cum grano salis*, comparing literary texts with other text genres where features of orality may be expected to appear (as, for example, the transcription of witnesses' oral evidence during a trial). Finally, with modern technology at our disposal, it seems highly unlikely that any serious research having as its immediate object of study the description of the oral dimension of a currently spoken language would take into account the features of orality present in written texts produced in that language.

We could argue, therefore, that the relationship existing between orality and mimesis of orality is bidirectional. The study of features pertaining to orality is an obligatory starting point for any research on mimesis of orality, and it also provides researchers with effective tools of analysis. Mimesis of orality, on the other hand, may help, under certain conditions, reconstruct and define features of orality. It could be argued that mimesis of orality would have from this point of view an archeological or retrospective value and would not question the primacy of the spoken language over the written text, where features of orality are recreated. True as it is, we should not underestimate the influence that expressions appearing originally in

³⁹ In his seminal book *Course in General Linguistics*, published posthumously in 1916, Saussure stresses the importance of evidence given by writing in the study of the phonological system of a language, when no direct observation is possible. The Swiss scholar points to the strategies one must adopt in the study, underlining the importance of the study of poetry. "Poetic texts are invaluable documents in the study of pronunciation. They furnish many types of information, depending on whether the system of versification is based on the number of syllables, quantity, or similarity of sounds (alliteration, assonance, and rime)" (Saussure 1959: 36).

texts may have, for whatever reason (be it cultural, social, ideological, or political) on the spoken language.⁴⁰

Two elements seem pivotal to the understanding of mimesis of orality and its functioning within a text: a) its metonymic nature, as it represents oral language by allowing certain features to represent the whole (Andújar and Brumme 2010: 8) (what has also been labelled *indexical value*); and b) the typicality of the oral language it draws from. Reference to these two points can be found in Siegfried Freunek's theoretical observations on mimesis of orality. In order to describe the phenomenon in a literary context,⁴¹ Freunek (2007: 29-30) introduces the concept of *evocation*, originally defined by Coseriu as the functions of a written sign not circumscribed by the *Darstellungsfunktion* (the representational function). Evocation contributes to the enrichment of the language through the introduction of positive polysemy (*Mehrdeutigkeit*) and works within a language by referring to something without speaking directly of it (the evocative function of language) (Coseriu 2007: 137). When explaining the mechanisms governing evocation, Freunek stresses its difference from and at the same time its relation to *association*. While *association* consists of a relationship established almost mechanically by our consciousness between two sensorial impressions (for example, the smell of smoke may carry automatically to our conscience the idea of fire), *evocation* is a semiotic process, that is "ein Prozeß des Schließens oder der Inferenz, wobei dieses Schließen allerdings auf Assoziationen beruhen kann und häufig beruht" (Freunek 2007: 29) [a process of suggestion or inference, in which the suggestion can indeed be based and is often based on association]. The distinguishing feature of evocation is that it takes place only when the suggestions are a consequence of a process of interpretation of what is said, whereas this process is not necessary in order to trigger associations. The notion helps understand how elements taken from oral language provoke in readers assumptions which determine the fictional situation of a language presented as oral. Furthermore, it also sheds light on the metonymic process of mimesis of orality. At the

⁴⁰ Saussure refers to these occurrences as "teratological cases" (1959: 32).

⁴¹ Freunek describes the difference between *fiktionale*, *fiktive*, *fingierte* and *literarische Mündlichkeit* [fictional, fictive, feigned and literary orality] (2007: 27).

beginning of her subsection on evocation, Freunek makes reference to elements extracted from “mundane mündlich Äusserungen” (2007: 28) [daily oral utterances]. However, later on in the chapter, she specifies that the elements enacting the evocative process which in a text create the impression of orality are **typical** and **normal** elements of oral language.⁴² Though not altogether explicitly, Freunek is pointing to the need to focus on that area of oral language which I have considered as typically oral, and which constitutes the second central element of mimesis of orality. Moreover, the centrality of these two aspects triggers further reflections. First, interpreting mimesis of orality as a metonymic process reminds us of the readers’ active role in the interpretation of the phenomenon.⁴³ While readers’ role is central to any mimetic phenomenon in general, here it becomes a reminder of the fact that mimesis of orality cannot be fully described as a mere assembling of linguistic features deriving from oral language. It can also be observed, as Freunek does (2007: 30), that mimesis of orality works in readers as context-forming, while in actual oral situations it is rather the other way round: the situational context determines what elements of the oral language have to be used in speech. Moreover, the metonymic dynamics working within mimesis of orality and the typicality of the features of oral language it draws from also remind us of its unstable nature, which changes through time. As a consequence, features of a certain mimesis of orality which when they first appeared seemed new or even disruptive in a literary system, may later on lose their indexical value by being integrated in the conventions of the language (Brumme 2012: 32).⁴⁴ Finally,

⁴² “Die typischen, normalen Eigenschaften *mundaner* mündlicher Ausserungen und die Umstände, unter denen mundane mündliche Äusserungen normalerweise stattfinden, sind also potentielle Evokationen *fiktiver* mündlicher Ausserung” (Freunek 2007: 30) [The typical properties of normal mundane oral utterances and the circumstances under which mundane oral statements usually take place are, therefore, potential evocations of a fictional oral utterance.]

⁴³ Brumme (2012: 31) observes: “esta perspectiva sobre la oralidad en el texto ficcional se acerca a otra que interpreta el modo oral como idea anclada en la mente de los hablantes, es decir, como una experiencia compartida de forma intersubjetiva” [this perspective on the orality of the fictional text is close to another that interprets the oral mode as an idea anchored in the mind of speakers, that is, as an experience shared intersubjectively.]

⁴⁴ Testa (1991), for examples, in his study of fictional orality in the Italian novellas of the fifteenth and sixteenth century, stresses how the mimetic devices used in the novellas of the fifteenth century had a higher degree of variety and

by linking the previous observations to the specific area of the diasystem which Koch and Oesterreicher identify as characterizing typical oral language (oral language *stricto sensu*), it is possible to avoid, at least in part, the vagueness or ambiguity of expressions such as *every day orality* (“mundane Mündlichkeit”) and describe its *typical* main features.

One final question regards the ontological nature of mimesis of orality and its ultimate relationship to orality. So far, I have identified elements that, while describing orality, are clues for the identification and description of mimesis of orality. However, as we have seen, this mechanical relationship between the represented (orality) and the representer (mimesis of orality) does not cover the whole issue. Questions related to this matter are more difficult to answer. For example, should every written text evoking orality be considered as an example of mimesis of orality? Then what happens with those texts written by almost illiterate people, who write “the way they talk”?⁴⁵ To what degree can the lack of intentionality help define mimesis of orality? Answering the question regarding the relationship between orality and mimesis of orality would imply giving an answer to the problem of representation itself—to which the word *mimesis* refers—that is, the problem of the relationship between what is imitated and its imitation. Much has been written on this issue, and I prefer to refer to some important and well-

originality than those of the sixteenth century, when the mimetic devices converted into conventional formulas used to evoke orality irrespective almost of the geographical origin of the characters.

⁴⁵ Oesterreicher (1997: 200) refers to “writing by semiliterate persons” as one of the eighth types of orality in text that he identifies. He remarks: “The texts written by these semiliterate individuals—or the texts dictated by them in case they are unable to write personally—generally display linguistic elements and procedures that are, as a rule, alien to written communication: on the one hand, they show us the universal characteristics of the language of immediacy, for instance, anacoluthons, repetitions, and vagueness of referentialization or inconsistencies in deictic orientation; on the other hand, in these texts we find grammatical and lexical features of diatopic, diastratic, and diaphasic varieties that generally violate the norms of written communication. Moreover, it must not be forgotten that the notorious lack of certainty of such inexperienced writers concerning the linguistic and textual norms frequently leads, as a matter of course, to exaggerations, overadjustments, and ill-conceived imitation of higher stylistic norms, in short, to the known phenomena of hypercorrection” (Oesterreicher 1997: 201).

known essays and books for further reference.⁴⁶ These studies have analyzed the problem of mimesis from a wide variety of angles. Here I shall make reference briefly to those aspects which may shed some light on the issue orality/mimesis of orality. Benjamin's observations regarding the creation of similarities that the mimetic process involves seem particularly relevant to the present study and help put in perspective the need to avoid a straightforward equation between orality and mimesis of orality. They also lead to further reflections on the symbolic and iconic value of the graphic element, which is certainly clear in a literary text, but should not be underestimated even in simple transcriptions of oral texts, where the equation between the two dimensions is often taken for granted.⁴⁷ Lechte's (2003) reference to Gombrich's observation on the synthetic, creative power of the mimetic process contributes to frame the relationship mentioned above between fictional orality and what is considered as typically oral. Taking as example Gombrich's study of Picasso's portrait of Françoise Gilot (*Françoise Gilot, 'FemmeFleur'*), Lechte observes:

Likeness is also enacted in mimetic currents [...]. As such, mimesis does not just occur analytically, where complexity is reduced to simplicity – to basic elements – and these then copied. It also occurs in a synthetic, creative way. Thus in the example, cited by Gombrich, of Picasso's portrait of Françoise Gilot entitled, *Françoise Gilot, 'FemmeFleur'* (1946), the portrait does not reproduce the face and body of Gilot reduced to its essential elements, but reveals part of the subject, as if for the first time. (Lechte 2003: 158)

⁴⁶ See Auerbach (2003), Benjamin (1986: 333-336), Gombrich (1987), Halliwell (2002), and Sartre (1986), among others.

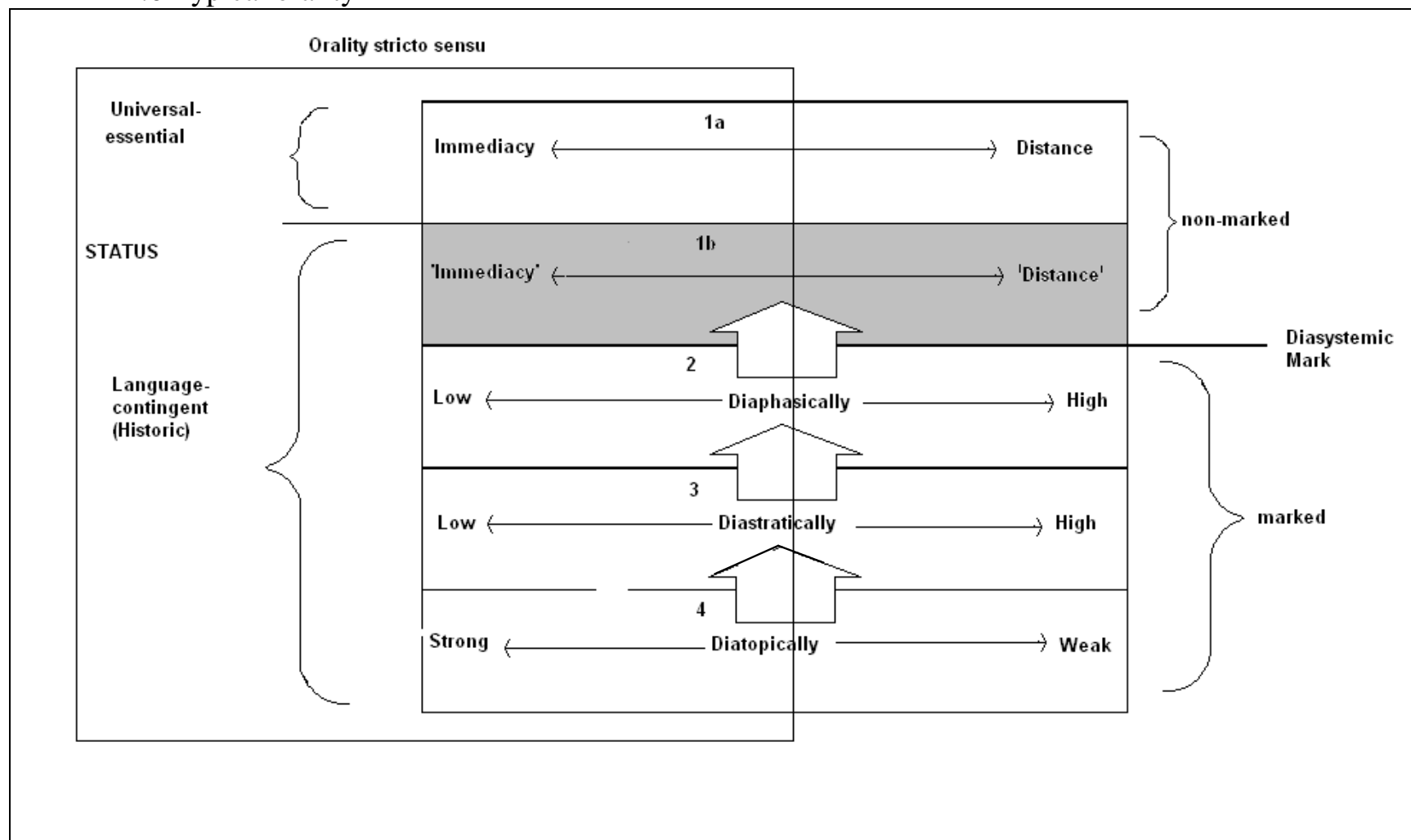
⁴⁷ Blanche-Benveniste makes similar observations regarding the difficulty of representing spoken language through the written medium, that is, the problems of transcription of an oral text (more specifically, the transposition into French of Turkish peasants' speech, which involves the additional problem of translation): "el efecto que consigue la ortografía no es aquí el instrumento de una transcripción que intentaría ser fiel. Es el símbolo de un tipo de hablante. [...]. Es difícil que el truco ortográfico pase por un inocente procedimiento de transcripción" (Blanche-Benveniste 1998: 52-53) [the effect achieved by orthography here is not the tool of a transcription that would try to be close. It is the symbol of a kind of speaker [...]. It is difficult that the orthographical trick may be assumed as an innocent process of transcription.]

When describing the perception of the physiognomic resemblance in life and art, Gombrich observes (1987: 116) how the problem of the impression of resemblance of the expression of a face in a portrait, despite objective differences in form and colour, should be sought in the relationship that the artist establishes between the apparent form and the apparent expression. The parallelism that can be drawn between the pairs apparent form-apparent expression, and mimesis of orality-typical or stereotypical orality is, in my opinion, illuminating. The revealing aspect of the mimetic act entails its creativeness, and, as a consequence, its synthetic as well as analytical quality. Mimesis of orality acts on orality by importing a selection of its elements (the *typical* features of orality) that achieve however a synthetic result which exceeds its analytical composition.

1.8 Features of mimesis of orality

In order to identify the main features characterizing typical oral language I go back once again to what Koch and Oesterreicher have referred to as oral language *stricto sensu*, that is, the left side of dimension 1 of the diasystem which I reproduce again in table 1.6 (below), marking the area labelled as typically oral. As we have seen, in their study the German scholars limit the universal quality of these features to French, Italian and Spanish. The features identified provide a guide to the textual analysis of Robert Frost's translations, considering that Catalan shares a similar range of general features of orality as Italian. On the other hand, the adoption of the same criteria for the analysis of the source texts, that is, poems written in American English, may raise some doubts. However, due to the very general character of these features, it may seem possible to apply the same linguistic categories also to the English language, since at a first stage of the textual analysis we would still be considering phenomena not directly dependent on language variation.

TABLE 1.6 Typical orality



They would refer rather to general communicative conditions and universal verbalization strategies.⁴⁸ The validity of my theoretical assumptions finds support, moreover, in other studies in the anglophone tradition (some of which I have presented in the previous sections) that partially overlap with Koch and Oesterreicher's framework in their mapping of the typical features of oral English.

Koch and Oesterreicher structure their analysis of the universal features of spoken language (the universal dimension of the diasystem) around four areas or levels of language: the textual-pragmatic, the syntactical, the lexico-semantic, and the phonic levels. Each level is composed of further features, which I summarize in table 1.7 for a clearer overview. Each of these categories can be applied to any of the features of the previous dimensions in the system (the diatopic, diastratic and diaphasic dimensions) according to the synchronic mechanism of the variational chain presented before. It justifies therefore that we start the textual analysis by applying the universal category to the text, in our attempt to describe the specific fictional orality represented there. This procedure allows us to specify later on if a linguistic occurrence identified during the analysis belongs to the universal (dimension 1 of the diasystem), or to the language specific level of the language (dimensions 2, 3, and 4). The differentiation between these levels is relevant especially when the analysis moves to the translations of Frost's poems. We may hypothesize —and several studies on linguistic variation in translation confirm it— that shifting from the universal to the language specific level in the variational chain implies an increasing degree of complexity of the translation process.

⁴⁸ It is not possible to ascertain the effective universality of the features characterizing oral language without drawing comparisons among languages belonging to altogether different cultural traditions (as, for example, Chinese and Spanish). However, the dimension of universal features of orality seems valid if confined to Western languages, on which many contrastive analyses have been carried out (as for example, the study by Freunek [2007] on the language pair Russian-German).

TABLE 1.7 Universal features of spoken language*

TEXTUAL-PRAGMATIC LEVEL	SYNTACTICAL LEVEL	LEXICO-SEMANTIC LEVEL	PHONIC LEVEL
Discourse organization markers	Lack of agreement and <i>constructio ad sensum</i>	Low lexical variation: lexical iteration	Neglected articulation
Markers of turn taking	Anacolutha, contaminations, postpositions, funnel technique	Low paradigmatic differentiation and vague referencialization: omnibus words	Loss of distinctiveness
Phatic markers	Incomplete utterances	Presentatives	Disappearance of syllables
Hesitation phenomena	Dislocations and distribution rheme-theme	Deixis	
Reformulation mechanisms	Syntactical complexity: parataxis and hypotaxis	Emotional implication and expressive-emotive processes	
Interjections			

* Referred to French, Italian and Spanish

1.9 Mimesis of orality in translation

As we have seen in the digression on the theoretical developments around orality and mimesis of orality, both issues have been the subject of theoretical speculation in the last decades even though, all in all, research in these fields is still relatively recent. As we move to consider mimesis of orality within a translational frame, we find a similar situation. But this observation must be clarified. References to mimesis of orality in research on translation can be found whenever this rhetorical feature plays a central role in the characterization of the language of a source text or a target text. Much has been written, for example, on linguistic variation in translation with focus on the diatopic or diastratic variation of the language use of characters or of the narrator in novels. A study by Mayoral Asensio (1999), for example, presents an overview on different approaches and contributions to the study of linguistic variation. When he considers among all approaches the translational one, he observes how research carried out on the translation of linguistic variation cannot be considered satisfying, as it focuses mainly on single aspects or on general stylistic considerations, while more detailed studies would only be devoted to the analysis of dialects (1999: 147). More recently, however, several studies have been published focusing exclusively on the translation of mimesis of orality. They are either published in the form of monographs, usually analyzing mimesis of orality in translation starting from one or more case studies (Freuenk 2007; Brumme 2012), or in the form of collections of essays by several scholars examining various aspect of fictional orality from different perspectives (Ballard 2001; Brumme and Resinger 2008; Brumme 2010). These studies allow trends in research to be traced, confirming the need for specialization and systematization of the results. The adoption of Koch and Oesterreicher's framework for the description of mimesis of orality in both literary works and their translations, especially in the German and Spanish scholarly world, has the advantage of giving a more structured and less intuitive approach to the study. It does not exclude the use of other models and contributes to the development of the framework adopted. Independent of the limitations described above, Koch and Oesterreicher's framework, detailed as it is, cannot cover all the

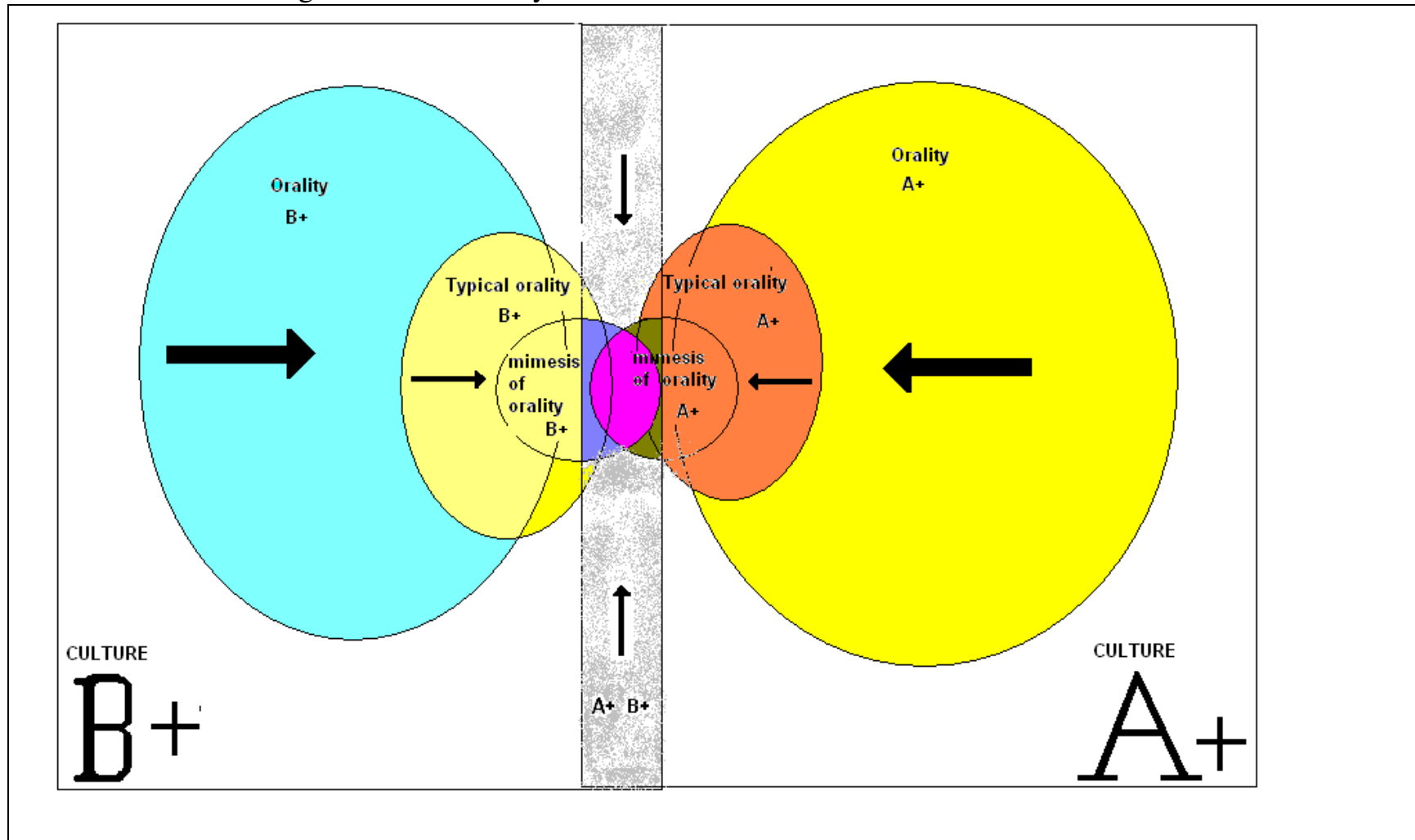
aspects of mimesis of orality in translation. In fact, when we shift our attention from fictional orality in a source text to its recreation in a target text, the perspective necessarily changes. As can be expected, new parameters related to the specificity of the translation activity come into play, adding complexity to the phenomenon.⁴⁹ These parameters (culture, ideology, power, *skopos*, etc.) are well-known notions in translation studies and need to be taken into account if we want to achieve a more exhaustive understanding of mimesis of orality in translation. So far, we have observed how mimesis of orality is achieved through a creative act, the mimetic act, that molds elements belonging to typical or stereotypical orality into wider structures. These structures are also determined by other elements of the language system not belonging to the area of communicative immediacy. During the translation process the mimetic operation of evocation of orality occurs again, even though the operation of evocation is bidirectional since it may refer to the evocation of features of both source and target orality. The web of relationships interwoven between a source and a target languages and cultures in order to recreate orality in a target text is tentatively represented in table 1.8 (overleaf). What is shown in the table is an interpretation of the rewriting process implied in every translation. Applied to the translation of mimesis of orality, it has the advantage of showing in a more immediate way the nature of the relationships among the various elements co-occurring in the translation of mimesis of orality. The right-side area of the figure refers to the source culture (A+), the left-side area to the target culture (B+). Within them source and target typical oralities overlap with mimeses of orality but do not completely contain those

⁴⁹ A similar claim has already been made by Mayoral Asensio. In the introduction of his book (1999: 16) the Spanish scholar observes how, in translation studies, the perspective of other disciplines on the subject has often been automatically imported “olvidando que la traducción no responde a todos los principios que se establecen en general en el estudio de la lengua, sino solamente a aquellos que, además de satisfacer su condición de proceso lingüístico, satisfacen también las condiciones particulares de la traducción como proceso de mediación entre personas o grupos con lenguas y culturas diferentes, sometido a un encargo profesional” [forgetting that translation does not answer to all principles established in general in the study of a language, but only to those which, above and beyond satisfying its condition of linguistic process, satisfy the specific conditions of translation as a process of mediation among people, or groups of different languages and cultures, a process subject to a professional commission.]

representations. Visually, the diagram shows that there is no straightforward relationship between the two phenomena. There is a relationship of dominance, which implies that in order to be recognized by readers in any language, mimesis of orality must necessarily be drawn from elements of typical orality of a language, that is, elements deriving from the understanding of orality shared by both readers and authors. The area of the set *mimesis of orality* outside typical orality points to the existence of further elements contributing to its creation that are not related to orality. All circles are included in the parts indicated as culture A+ and B+. The + next to the A and the B symbolizes the complexity and variety of culture (which may, therefore, include more than just a language A or a language B). The part of the figure describing the target mimesis of orality should not be considered a mirror image of the source one. The arrows indicating the direction of the elements contributing to its creation show the bi-directionality of the phenomenon. They are a simplification and a consequence of the hybrid status of translation (Koster 2000: 16), the nature of which is both derivative (from a source text) and original.⁵⁰ The figure in table 1.8 helps visualize those areas of research in the field which, to my view, are still relatively unexplored. The studies carried out so far focus mainly on the linguistic aspects of the relationship between source and target mimesis of orality (the central part of the figure) which is certainly a key aspect of any analysis. In the present study, Koch and Oesterreicher's framework provides a valid tool for this part of the analysis. However, the approach to the study of mimesis of orality, and its translation, needs to be wider, and take into account also the cultural phenomena implied in the communicative act.

⁵⁰ The diagram is a simplification as it does not take into account the effect that a translation, once it is completed, may have on a source text, nor its potential influence on the source culture.

TABLE 1.8 Translating mimesis of orality



1.10 Adaptation of the framework: the checklist

The need to develop an approach that takes into account the strictly linguistic mimetic phenomena and their interaction with other textual phenomena throughout the textual analysis of the source and target texts led me to adapt slightly the categories of the framework developed by Koch and Oesterreicher. In this last section of the chapter I present the template developed for the analysis (Table 1.9), containing a checklist of the features of orality I focus on throughout the study. Following the initial assumption that the creation of mimesis of orality relies on typical features of orality, the central part of the list unfolds around those features of orality represented in Koch and Oesterreicher's framework. However, several elements of the list are not directly related to mimesis of orality and aim to determine the co-textual elements which should also be considered in order to grasp the wider textual and cultural implications of mimesis of orality. The first entries refer to the poem's structure and formal features (such as meter, phonic rhetorical devices such as rhyme, alliteration) and its poetic form (sonnet, ballad, ode, etc.). In addition to this, as a form of contextualization, I have also included observations on potential poetic influences. The last entry (*Observations*) aims at achieving a holistic overview of the elements contributing to the evocation of orality and the dynamics they establish within the text. As for the features of mimesis of orality, I have drawn the terminology from Koch and Oesterreicher's framework of universal features of orality and slightly adapted it to my needs. In the following section I shall describe the meaning of the categories of the checklist in more depth.

TABLE 1.9 A checklist for the analysis of mimetic features

- Structure of the poem (nr. of lines, stanzas)
- Meter
- Poetic Form
- Poetic phonic devices
- Poetic Influence

- **ELEMENTS OF ORALITY:**
 - **Textual-pragmatic level**
 - Markers of discourse organization
 - Markers of turn-taking
 - Phatic markers
 - Hesitation phenomena
 - Reformulation mechanisms
 - Interjections
 - Modalization mechanisms
 - Oral narrative: *verba dicendi*
 - Oral reproduction of reported speech

 - **Syntactical level**
 - Lack of agreement and *constructio ad sensum*
 - Anacolutha, contaminations, postpositions, funnel technique
 - Incomplete or holophrastic utterances
 - Dislocation and theme-rheme order
 - Syntactical complexity: parataxis and hypotaxis

 - **Lexico-semantic level**
 - Low lexical variation or colloquial register
 - Lexical iteration
 - Omnibus word
 - Presentatives
 - Deixis
 - Emotional implication and expressive affective procedures (diminutives)
 - Phraseology

 - **Phonic level**
 - **Graphic elements**
 - Observations

1.10.1 Universal features of orality at a textual-pragmatic level

Markers of discourse organization. This general category refers to the body of strategies employed in communication in order to organize the discourse. Koch and Oesterreicher (2007: 73) observe that in conditions of communicative distance oral and written texts present a high degree of information density and of linguistic complexity. As a consequence, producers of texts need to organize their discourse around a complex hierarchical structure superimposed onto the linearity of the linguistic expression. The structure is held together by elements with precise semantic content, such as in English *first, firstly, moreover, in conclusion*, in Italian *in primo luogo, inoltre, in conclusione*, or in Catalan *en primer lloc, a més a més, en suma*. In conditions of communicative immediacy, in which texts are characterized by a linear, aggregative structure, markers of discourse organization are freed from their proper denotative meaning and are used to mark the beginning or the end of a certain discourse (markers of dialogic discourse beginning, markers of narrative discourse beginning, and markers of discourse conclusion). An example given by the German scholars is the Italian marker *allora* in the oral story-telling of a child: “La mamma non vede arrivare a casa la bambina **allora** sta in pensiero **allora** manda un cacciatore” (Koch and Oesterreicher 2007: 76) [emphasis in the original].

Markers of turn-taking. Communicative immediacy is often characterized by a high degree of dialogic interaction. These markers contribute to the alternation and designation of the interlocutors' contribution to a conversation. An example in English is the expression *you know*. It should be remarked that markers of turn-taking may also have a para-linguistic nature (as, for example, a gesture or a pitching tone of voice). In the case of mimesis of orality, paralinguistic markers may be suggested by graphic elements, such as italics.

Phatic markers. In conditions of communicative immediacy, especially during a conversation, communication is made possible by the cooperation among speakers, who need to win and mutually safeguard the attention of their interlocutors. Phatic markers also

suggest the degree of emotional implication of the speakers. Some examples are the English *look*, *listen*, and *yeah*; the Italian, *eh*, *no?*, and *ecco*; or the Catalan, *oi?*. Finally, contact markers may also have paralinguistic nature.

Hesitation phenomena. Often, communicative immediacy can be differentiated from communicative distance by its low degree of planning⁵¹ and its higher degree of spontaneity. Hesitation phenomena help speakers overcome problems of prospective reformulation, gaining time for formulation and facilitating the reception of the message (Koch and Oesterreicher 2007: 86). They can take the form of empty pauses, (symbolically represented by suspension marks or em dashes), pauses filled by words with no contextual meaning (the Catalan *doncs*, the English *well*, or the Italian *non so*), and of vocalic prolongations or simple sounds (*hm*, *eh*, etc.).

Reformulation mechanisms. These mechanisms are triggered whenever speakers are faced with retrospective problems in the formulation of the discourse in need of clarification. Some examples are *that is* in English, *en fi* in Catalan, and *cioè* in Italian. Some kinds of lexical repetitions and self-corrections can also be considered as reformulation mechanisms.

Interjections. This category is considered one of the most characteristic features of communicative immediacy and an effective device for the evocation of orality in a written text. It is an expressive device used to convey highly emotive states in contexts of strong emotional implication of the interlocutors (Koch and Oesterreicher 2007: 92). The German scholars differentiate between primary interjections, that is, indivisible linguistic units that cannot be fragmented into further semantic units and that have communicative value in themselves (as, for example, the word *ah* in English), and secondary interjections, expressions consisting of

⁵¹ Some scholars, however, such as Tannen (1982) and Halliday (1985b) have observed that it is not correct to focus on the apparently lower degree of organization of oral discourse. We should rather speak of discourse in the making, a discourse which is taking shape as it is uttered. In order to understand this difference, Halliday compares oral discourse with the various drafts and corrections which a written text may undergo before achieving its definite form (1985b: 97-101)

either individual or compound elements with independent meaning (as for example, the term *diavolo!* in Italian, *good Lord* in English, or *mare meva* in Catalan) which are used in extremely spontaneous situations with further expressive and communicative values.

Modal mechanisms. These mechanisms are employed in order to convey the illocutionary force of a speech act through linguistic and non-linguistic elements requiring little effort from the speaker. They make it possible to ground the discourse in the contextual situation in which the illocutionary act occurs. As Bosseaux remarks (2007:35), modal mechanisms are fundamental for the construction of the point of view. Simpson (1993: 43-50) distinguishes four kinds of modality in English:

- *Deontic* modality, that is, the modal system of duty, which “is concerned with the speaker’s attitude to the degree of obligation attaching to the performance of certain actions” (1993: 43).
- *Boulomaic* modality, referring to the wishes or desires of the speaker.
- *Epistemic* modality, referring to the speaker’s degree of belief in the truth of what is being said.
- *Perception* modality, a subcategory of epistemic modality that consists in expressing the speaker’s commitment to the truth of a proposition by reference to human perception.

The category of modality is a very large one including a wide range of linguistic phenomena. In relation to mimesis of orality, I consider only the modal particles or mechanisms used in conditions of communicative immediacy. While in German these mechanisms are more easily detected, since they rely mainly, though not exclusively, on modal particles, in Romance languages and in English they may belong and overlap with other categories of discourse markers (as, for example, the category of markers of turn taking). Examples of these elements are in Catalan the particles *es que*, or *doncs*; Italian has particles like *pure*, *allora*, or the conjunction *ma* used without an adversative function. In the analysis I will occasionally take into account also those mechanisms which, while being more complex, still convey in my opinion an impression of orality in the written medium.

Oral narrative: *verba dicendi*; oral reproduction of reported speech. The two interconnected categories refer especially to the narration of events, usually in narrative present (or historical present). In Romance languages as well as in English, narrative present is a way to refer to past events and has the function of enlivening recollections of the past. It is closely related to the category of oral reproduction of reported speech. In situations of communicative immediacy, direct speech is preferred to reported speech, due to its lower degree of syntactical integration, planning, temporal, spatial and personal adaptation of the referred discourse to the speaker's discourse. Direct reported speech is characterized by the presence of *verba dicendi*, reproduced in stereotyped forms often in present tense (as, for example, in English: *he/she says*).

1.10.2 Universal features of orality at a syntactical level

Lack of agreement in number, case or actantial function, gender, person. *Constructio ad sensum*. The two phenomena are a consequence of a lack of time for the planning of the utterance and a limited prospective and retrospective control of the formulation, conditions that often obtain during oral communication. An example in Catalan could be the sentence *la gent que he vist diuen que...* (lack of agreement in number). The same example is valid in Italian as well: *la gente che ho visto dicono...*

Anacoluthon. This term refers to a breach in the construction of the sentence. Koch and Oesterreicher (2007: 124) include in this category the phenomena of contaminations (when a lack of planning in the construction of a sentence produces the fluid transformation of one structure into another), postpositions, and *funnel technique*. The latter phenomenon corresponds to a semantic specification of a concept through an aggregative process consisting of the repetition of the same term or juxtaposition of similar terms as, for example, in the sentence: *they liked it, liked it a lot*.

Incomplete or holophrastic utterances. The terms refer to fragmented utterances often used in contexts of great spontaneity and strong emotional implication (as for example, someone's saying *three*, in a shop, when asked how many of an item he or she would like to buy).

Dislocations and inversion of the theme-rheme order.

Dislocations are syntactical phenomena considered the consequence and expression of a strong emotional implication which leads speakers to foreground the ultimate objective of the communication, postponing the remaining information (Koch and Oesterreicher 2007: 136). Inversions, or transpositions, on the other hand, are a simple change of order of elements in a sentence. They correspond to the rhetorical devices of *hyperbaton* and *anastrophe*. Hyperbaton and anastrophe are rhetoric figures consisting in the deviation of the grammatical word order of two words (anastrophe) like adjective-noun, subject-object, or the insertion of words in a syntactical sequence not normally separated (hyperbaton). The terms are often used as synonyms. Since they are rhetorical devices they may have both a mimetic foregrounding function and a literary function.

Syntactical complexity: parataxis and hypotaxis. According to the German scholars, hypotaxis characterizes discourse in conditions of communicative distance, due to its higher complexity and planning requirements. The aggregative structure of parataxis, conversely, generally characterizes discourses of communicative immediacy, where spontaneity and emotional implication dominate.⁵² Koch and Oesterreicher's claims regarding this specific aspect follow the main scholarly trend. Halliday often took a contrary position (for example in 1985a; 1985b), arguing that oral communication is characterized by more complex syntactical structures than written. For my study I have partly adapted Koch and Oesterreicher's definition of this feature by including in it the position adopted by Castellà Lidón, who specifies the terms of the debate and clarifies the different notion of complexity:

⁵² Koch and Oesterreicher however also specify that some forms of hypotaxis are also typical of oral discourse. They refer especially to three types of subordinate clauses that are set before the main clause: conditional, temporal, and some kinds of causal clauses. "Se trata en todos los casos de tipos de oraciones, en las que el orden S+P [subordinadas + principales] expresa la dirección de la relación lógico-semántica correspondiente; por tanto, su ordenación se puede considerar icónica" (2007: 146) [We are dealing in any case with clauses in which the subordinate-main clause order expresses the direction of the corresponding logico-semantic relationship. As a consequence its order can be considered iconic].

La llengua oral i la llengua escrita expositiva empen un nombre similar de *construccions de subordinació*, fins i tot amb un cert avantatge per als gèneres orals, en concret, per a la llengua oral formal expositiva. Des del punt de vista del total de clàusules, però, és la llengua escrita la que, de manera indiscutible, fa un ús preferent de la subordinació. (Castellà Lidon 2004: 159)

[Oral language and explanatory written language use a similar number of subordinated constructions, even with a slight advantage for the oral genres, specifically, for explanatory formal oral language. From the point of view of the totality of clauses, however, it is written language which makes preferential use of subordination.]

1.10.3 Universal features of orality at a lexico-semantic level

Low lexical variation, lexical iteration. This category represents the tendency in communicative immediacy to use words polifunctionally, that is to attribute to a limited number of words a wide range of different meanings. Low lexical variation is a consequence of the economy of efforts made by the speaker in conditions of communicative immediacy.

Omnibus words. The category designates words with a low specific content and high denotative capacity. Examples in English are the words *thing* and *stuff*. This category is closely related with the previous one.

Presentatives. With this term Koch and Oesterreicher (2007: 158-161) refer to those verbal constructions which are used to introduce a new referent. The German scholars observe that we need to distinguish this kind of construction from those which are language-specific. In French, for example, the use of *c'est* (used instead of *il est*) has no equivalent in Italian and Spanish (while it could be compared to the English *it is*). However, in all languages considered in this study it is possible to find expressions like *there is* (English), *hi ha* (Catalan), *c'è* (Italian) that carry out the introductory function described above.

Deixis.⁵³ Like *omnibus words*, deictic elements have low semantic intensity, and for this reason the two categories are often paired in texts. Considering deixis as a category contributing to mimesis of orality calls for a previous disambiguation of its functions. Deixis is intimately linked to language use in general. Galbraith (1995) observes that any attempt to produce language with no deictical elements is destined to fail:

If such cues were removed from verbal articulation, they would have to be supplied by inference or other contextual cues. Like zero in mathematics and the dark space in the theater, deixis orients us within a situation without calling attention to itself. (Galbraith 1995: 22)

In the first half of the twentieth century Bühler (1990) was among the first scholars to adopt the term *deixis* in the modern sense and to specify its functions. The German linguist and psychologist distinguished three kinds of deixis operating within the deictic field of language: deixis *ad oculos*, or exophoric deixis, i.e. the deixis anchoring the speaker's discourse in the here and now of the speaker's environment (as, for example, in the sentence *don't go there*); *anaphora*, or endophoric deixis, operating on the very discourse, pointing to a segment of the text (as for example, the use of the pronoun *it*, referring to a word previously used in the sentence); and *deixis am phantasma*, operating in the mode of imagination and long term memory, a transposition of the deictic field of our bodily orientation and experience into an imaginative construction.⁵⁴ In the present study I focus on the use of exophoric

⁵³ Like other mimetic devices, deixis also belongs to the textual-pragmatic level of language. Koch and Oesterreicher, however, study this feature within the lexico-semantic level.

⁵⁴ Charles J. Fillmore (1997) uses a different terminology, referring to *gestural*, *symbolic*, and *anaphoric* deixis. "By the *gestural* use of a deictic expression I mean that use by which it can be properly interpreted only by somebody who is monitoring some physical aspect of the communication situation; by the *symbolic* use of a deictic expression I mean that use whose interpretation involves merely knowing certain aspects of the speech communication situation, whether this knowledge comes by current perception or not; and by the *anaphoric* use of an expression I mean that use which can be correctly interpreted by knowing what other portion of the same discourse the expression is *coreferential* with" (1997: 62-63). In my study I also use the term *gestural* as an alternative to *exophoric*.

deixis, which effectively manages to evoke orality by anchoring the discourse to the here and now of communication (a fundamental condition of communicative immediacy). Exophoric deixis may also carry out an expressive function when its economic referential function is downgraded and the deictic is used to stress a certain element of the discourse. In a written text the example may suggest an emphatic tone of voice, reflecting the emotional implication of the speaker. There exist numerous taxonomies of the deictical elements. In the present study I have taken into account above all the following three subcategories:

- Demonstrative deixis, as for example the demonstrative pronouns *this* (in English), *questo* (in Italian), *aquest* (in Catalan), and *este* (in Spanish).
- Spatio-temporal deixis, as for example the adverbs *here, there, now* (in English), *dopo* (in Italian). Verbal tenses also belong to this category, since they express “the relationship which holds between the time of the situation that is being described and the temporal zero-point of the deictic context. The category needed for time deixis is that of coding time. It is the time of the communication act” (Bosseaux 2007: 30-31).
- Personal deixis, both in its specific form of referentialization (for example: *I, him*) and in its intentionally generic form (as, for example, the use of the third person plural of the verb) (Koch and Oesterreicher 2007: 164).

Since deictic elements are always present in a text, in the quantitative recounting of these elements I have only taken into account those that contribute most effectively to evoke an oral context, like spatio-temporal and demonstrative deixis. Personal deixis has been taken into account in relation to the definition of the point of view, which is important to grasp potential dramatic effects (like the abrupt introduction of an *I* or *you* in a poem in which the descriptive mood dominates).

Expressive affective procedures. These devices have strong emotional implication. Koch and Oesterreicher illustrate several procedures employed to achieve affectivity and expressiveness, which they consider forming aspects of *emotionality* as a communication factor (Koch and Oesterreicher 2007: 166-176).

These procedures serve either to establish an emotional relationship between the interlocutors based on shared values and experiences (*affectivity*) or to add intensity (*expressiveness*) to issues related to several areas of interest, most commonly: feelings, projects, ambitions, hopes, or basic aspects of life like drinking, sleeping, or sexuality. The procedures necessary to achieve these factors also work at a pragmatic and syntactical level. Diminutive forms of words are more common in Romance than in Germanic languages. In Romance languages they can be formed by adding affixes to nouns and adjectives (as for example in the Catalan word *estoneta* [a brief moment of time], or in the Italian words *ometto* [small man] and *piccolino* [little/small]), and may acquire a wide range of varying connotations.

Phraseology. Proverbs, sayings and idiomatic expressions, being commonly used in spoken language, certainly contribute to determine mimetic effects in written texts. These features belong to the more general category of phraseology. Phraseology fills a gap in Koch and Oesterreicher's framework, which seems to disregard its role in the construction of fictional orality. In view of the broad range of phenomena included in this category and their different behaviors when studied from a perspective focused on both mimesis of orality and translation, further specification is required. In fact, not all phraseological elements have the same mimetic strength, nor are they faced with the same translation strategies. In my analysis I have distinguished four different subcategories of phraseology: *phrasal verbs*, *idioms*, *proverbs*, and *routine formulas*. This list represents an intentional delimitation of my field of research and does not exhaust the general category.⁵⁵

1.10.4 Universal features of orality at a phonic level

The phenomena described at this level refer to those language realizations in the phonic medium which may occur in situations of communicative immediacy, such as a loss of clarity of a word or utterance. Koch and Oesterreicher make clear that the label *phonic* refers only to the sound essence of the phonic signifiers of signs. It is a phenomenon related to the speed of the utterance and not to a

⁵⁵ See Granger and Meunier (2008) for a problematization of the notion of phraseology in translation.

mistake in speech (Koch and Oesterreicher 2007: 177). Used for mimetic effects in the written text, it is often represented by dropping a vowel or a syllable within a word, at the beginning (aphaeresis) or at the end (apocope). An example of this phenomenon is, in Italian, the phonic realization [ˈsomma instead of [ˈinsomma], and [poˈ] instead of [poko].⁵⁶ Since the denomination *phonic device* is also used to describe phenomena such as rhyme and alliteration, in my study I have used the labels *rhetorical* phonic devices (rhyme, alliteration, assonance, etc.) and *mimetic* phonic devices (apocope, aphaeresis, etc.) in order to avoid ambiguities.

1.10.5 Polyfunctionality of features of orality

The features belonging to typical orality that I have just described have been organized in categories aiming at facilitating their application during the analysis. However, all these parameters cover manifold mimetic functions at the same time and imply overlapping mimetic phenomena. As a consequence of their polyfunctionality, for example, we may find that the same term, within a text, can be classified at a pragmatic level both as a marker of discourse organization and as a marker of turn-taking. In a similar way, a hesitation phenomenon may also represent, on a lexico-semantic level, a case of word iteration. The multiplicity of mimetic potentialities of these elements enriches the reading of the text with numerous interpretations, while representing an analytical challenge for these very same reasons. Furthermore, the notion of polyfunctionality extends its field of applicability beyond mimesis of orality. In fact, devices often employed for the evocation of certain kinds of spoken language in a written text may also carry out rhetorical functions and produce poetic effects, as is the case of word transpositions in a sentence.

⁵⁶ Koch and Oesterreicher observe that the study of the relationship between the *conception* (communicative immediacy or distance) and articulatory variants of words lack a thorough investigation at a universal level, whereas processes of a phonologic nature have been studied above all within the frame of language-specific phonologic studies (2007: 180).

1.10.6 Other features

The template shown in table 1.9 also contains a section on paralinguistic graphic elements (such as italics or bold, but also suspension marks and em dashes) which are often used to suggest a certain intonation, whether emphatic, hesitating, fearful, or of a different kind, in a written text. The phenomenon of *eye dialect*⁵⁷ is also included in this category. Finally, as a concluding point of the template, I have included the category of general observations on the texts analyzed. This point proves very useful as it invites thought, at the end of the analysis of the each poem, on the potential relationships among the various features of orality within the texts and on a first comparison between the individual source and target text. It is also a constant reminder that a thorough description and a better understanding of mimesis of orality both in the source text and in its translations are only possible if we consider the poetic context as a whole.

Before moving to the analysis in the following chapters, we need to make a few more observations on the relationship existing between mimesis of orality and orality, or, more specifically, typical orality. The representation above of the categories characterizing orality *stricto sensu*, as developed by Koch and Oesterreicher, does not cover the whole phenomenon of mimesis of orality. As the term itself stresses, a deeper understanding of the mechanisms through which mimesis of orality works in a text, especially in a literary text, can only be achieved if we consider it in relation to other rhetorical devices, both semantic, such as metaphor and metonymy, and phonic, such as alliteration, meter, rhyme, and rhythm. In fact, mimesis of orality is just one of the many literary devices and sets of textual or genre-related conventions that writers or poets have at their disposal in order to achieve specific effects at both formal and

⁵⁷ The term refers to textual elements in which changes in the spelling of words or the use of abbreviations evoke specific communicative contexts, even when the pronunciation of the word, if actually uttered, is left unaltered, and words are combined according to the standard grammatical rules. Moreover, the term refers to *any* linguistic variation, not just the dialect. An example in English could be the sentence *wat r u doing?* which evokes a certain kind of juvenile language associated to the sending of short text messages. See also, among others, Walpole (1974), who studies the phenomenon in fictional dialogue, and Nuessel (1982), who describes eye dialect in Spanish.

semantic levels. Mimesis of orality should necessarily be considered in its interaction with these co-textual devices. As a consequence, it may vary according to the rhetorical, linguistic, and artistic mastery of each poet-writer, as well as their personal, literary, and communicative objectives. It should also be observed, as Tannen (1990) does, that mimesis of orality, as a rhetorical device, can often coincide with the very same devices employed to achieve poetic or literary effects.⁵⁸ Similarly, in his seminal 1976 article “Parlato-parlato, parlato-scritto, parlato-recitato,” Nencioni (1983) describes the methodology of analysis of a literary text, stressing the practical importance for the study of the distinction between the linguistic and rhetorical level of analysis, but at the same times warning against a total separation of the two fields:

Un ampio testo scritto, specie se letterario (ma anche una conversazione programmata o almeno dotata di organicità), deve essere oggetto di una lettura gerarchizzante, che scorra tra la significazione globale e quelle particolari, tra le macrostrutture e le microstrutture, servendosi di volta in volta di tecniche di analisi adeguate ma non necessariamente eterogenee. Intendo dire che non riesco a vedere, e tanto meno a proporre, una scissione teorica fra analisi linguistica e analisi semiotica, fra analisi frasale e analisi testuale, se non come una momentanea aporia della linguistica [...] La materia delle grandi come delle piccolo strutture essendo la lingua; e la lingua essendo un dato *anche* naturale, ma incessantemente elaborato da una cultura e non mai osservabile allo stato di natura; una rigida separazione fra strutture linguistiche e strutture «retoriche», fra strutture nucleari e strutture testuali mi pare, oltre che infondata,

⁵⁸ An example can be the paradigmatic accumulation of more terms for the same notion used in oral language and often in poetry. Blanche-Benveniste (1998: 46) gives as an example a verse from the poem “L’enfant” by Victor Hugo (Un enfant aux yeux bleus, un enfant grec, assis). She also refers to other two rhetorical devices and says: “these three essential characteristics, paradigmatic accumulations, to-and-fro movement along the axis of the phrase, interpolated clauses, are procedures that are in part alien to prose writing with communicative purposes, and that is why they can disturb. But some contemporary poets (Henri Michaux, Francis Ponge), fascinated by these modes of production of the spoken language, see in it something precious, akin to a sort of birth of language, and have endeavored to show the mechanisms” (1998: 46) [my translation from the Spanish edition].

euristicamente non utile, perché manterrebbe le macrostrutture nel limbo in cui sono state per molti secoli. (Nencioni 1983: 29-30)

[A large written text, especially if literary (but also a planned conversation or at least a coherent one), must be object of a hierarchizing reading, browsing through global and specific meanings, through macrostructures and microstructures, using from time to time adequate but not necessarily heterogeneous techniques of analysis. I mean that I cannot contemplate, much less propose, a theoretical division between the linguistic and semiotic analysis, between the phrasal and textual analysis, except as a temporary aporia of linguistics. [...] Since the subject of large as well as of small structures is the language, and since language is a piece of data which is *also* natural, though incessantly elaborated by a culture and never observable at the natural state, any rigid separation between linguistic and “rhetorical” structures, between nuclear and textual structures, seems to me not only unwarranted, but also not heuristically useful. In fact, it would keep the macrostructures in the limbo where they have been for centuries.]

These observations prompt a reflection on the link between mimesis of orality and orality itself, which we were questioning before. There is a relationship of dependency and derivation between spoken language and its fictional representation. Without knowledge of the features of orality, authors could not represent it in their texts; without a shared knowledge of such features the receptors of the text could not understand it. What still needs to be clarified, however, is whether a thorough description of mimesis of orality in a literary work, in our case, in Frost’s poems and their translations into Catalan and Italian, can rely solely on elements of orality or should also take into account features which, though not characteristic of orality, contribute to evoke orality in the written text. The identity and nature of these features must also be clarified. A study by Georgia M. Green (1982) briefly acknowledges this possibility. The North American scholar observes how in English some kinds of syntactical inversions, very unlikely to be found in speech, are employed frequently in children’s books as they are associated with speech, and especially “with excited speech” (Green

1982: 137). Green's remark endorses the thesis that mimesis of orality is not completely dependent on features of orality for its creation but also relies on literary stereotypes used conventionally to refer to orality.

ROBERT FROST'S VOICES IN POETRY

2.1 Introduction

There's Frost with his blueberry pastures and hills
 All peopled by folk who have so many ills
 'Tis a business to count 'em, their subtle insanities.
 One half are sheer mad, and the others inanities.
 He'll paint you a phobia quick as a wink
 Stuffed into a hay-mow or tied to a sink.
 And then he'll deny, with a certain rich rapture,
 The very perversion he's set out to capture.
 Were it not for his flowers, and orchards, and skies,
 One would think the poor fellow was blind of both eyes
 Or had never read Freud, but it's only his joke.
 (Amy Lowell, *A Critical Fable*)

In the long satirical poem titled *A Critical Fable*, written in 1922 by Massachusetts poet Amy Lowell, an irreverent picture is offered of twenty-one poets, including the author herself. The poem presents an ironic portrait of Robert Frost and summarizes some of the main aspects of his poetry and his personality. It satirizes the conventional image generally attributed to him (such as the image of a poet of nature, or that of a rural poet), and hints at Frost's most important poetic features. This poem, at the beginning of the chapter, brings us directly to the very heart of the matter.

As Lowell reminds her readers later in the composition: "Of Frost, there are more as you'll presently see." The same reminder can be made here. The wide range of themes dealt with in Frost's poetry and the intricacy of their implications on a symbolic, poetic, and stylistic level makes it difficult to summarize them in a general short introduction that focuses on the relationship between Frost's most recurrent themes and his own mimesis of orality. In order to achieve an exhaustive overview of Frost's poetics and his mimesis of orality, I have structured the chapter in two parts. The first one is an introduction to Frost's poetry. It presents the main themes of his poetry and refers to the theory of the "sound of sense" that the poet developed and applied to his poetic language and its link to mimesis

of orality. In the second part of the chapter, through the analysis of four of his poems and a masque, I present the relationships between Frost's mimesis of orality, the different typologies of poems he writes (dramatic or lyrical), and the themes they deal with. The study of the individual poems shows Frost "in action", that is, how the main features of his recreation of orality actually work with other elements of a poem in order to achieve its unique unity.

2.2 Robert Frost: myths, themes and theories

In the previous chapter I have argued that mimesis of orality is just one of many devices that poets employ in the composition of their poems. "The poem comes before the form, in the sense that a form grows out of the attempt of somebody to say something," says T.S. Eliot (1957: 37), commenting on the inner unity that distinguishes and differentiates every poem. Due to the nature of a poem, a study of one of its features, such as mimesis of orality, must necessarily consider the dialogic relationship it establishes with all other aspects of the composition on a formal and semantic level since it affects and is affected by all its parts. This means that, considered individually, a description of the linguistic features of mimesis of orality neither offers a satisfying description of mimesis of orality nor allows an understanding of its function in a poem. The evocation of orality arises from the intersection of a specific setting or theme (an idea) with linguistic mimetic features, rhetorical figures of speech (metaphors, similes, etc.) and, in the case of Frost, the metrical structure of the line, which is not imposed onto a sentence but interacts with the natural intonation with which a sentence is normally read. Each of these issues is addressed in the next subsections individually, while still stressing the strong link between them.

2.2.1 The sound of sense

Frost's interest in mimesis of orality in his poems is closely related to two fundamental aspects of his poetics: his theory on the *sound of sense* and his interest in the dramatic. It is not probably correct to speak of a theory, since Frost never developed his ideas on this issue into a system. He speaks about it mainly in letters to friends. Writing to John T. Bartlett in July 1913, he explains how the music

of poetry should not be generated by “effects in assonation” [Frost coined the term] (Frost, 1995: 664), as Algernon Charles Swinburne and Alfred Tennyson used to do, but rather by the *sound of sense* which he defines as “the abstract vitality of our speech.” (Frost, 1995: 665). With this expression the poet refers to the meaning one can grasp from the sound of the sentence, even before the semantic value of the single words or syntax communicates it. It is the meaning we infer from a dialogue heard behind a closed door. We do not manage to catch the meaning of the single words but rather the overall sense of the conversation. As a consequence, transmission of the message relies mainly on the intonation. In order to recreate a similar sound effect in a written text, the poet must make sure that the message of the sentence, i.e. its meaning, is communicated through the right intonation in as unambiguous a way as possible. As Frost himself argues: “The reader must be at no loss to give his voice the posture proper to the sentence” (665). The written text must be “heard” by the reader.⁵⁹ But being a poet does not mean simply reproducing the speech effect. As Frost argues: a poet needs to break and combine the sound of sense, complete with its irregular accents, with the regular rhythm of metre.

Verse in which there is nothing but the beat of the metre furnished by the accents of the polysyllabic words we call doggerel. Verse is not that. Neither is it the sound of sense alone. It is a resultant from those two. (Frost 1995: 665)

2.2.2 The main themes

The link between the subject-matter of Frost’s poems and his personal language is an aspect that drew the attention of literary critics from the very beginning. One unsigned review of *A Boy’s Will* (1913), dated September 20th, 1913 (quoted in Greenberg and Hepburn 1965: 45) argues that “One feels that this man [Frost] has seen and felt: seen with a revelatory, a creative vision; felt personally and intensely; and he simply writes down, without

⁵⁹ Reploge (1978, 140) clarifies the concept: “So to make strong vernacular intonations print must have confused messages, ambiguous messages, or none at all (ellipsis). But it must be constructed so that it makes sense when intonation carries the message. [...] Turned into an epigram the rule is: the strongest vernacular voice comes from a printed code that makes the least sense – if intonation can make sense out of it.”

confusion or affectation, the results thereof.” The relationship between the personal experience of rural New England⁶⁰ and the straightforward language adopted to represent it is more clearly described in Ezra Pound’s review of *North of Boston* (1914) (quoted in Greenberg and Hepburn 1965: 46-48). The American poet and critic, who helped boost Frost’s fortune in England and his dissemination in the United States, defines Frost as an “honest writer, writing from himself, from his own knowledge and emotion” (47) adding that he “has dared to write, and for the most part with success, in the natural speech of New England; in natural spoken speech, which is very different from the ‘natural’ speech of the newspapers, and of many professors” (47). Similarly, Amy Lowell, in her review of Frost’s second book, *North of Boston*, draws a parallel between the vivid and unadorned scenery of the rural New England she knew so well, as she herself belonged to a well-known Massachusetts family, and the language that represents it almost symbolically. Lowell argues that Frost’s poetry is a true bucolic poetry. With these words she points to the fact that Frost avoids falling into the easy trap of the bucolic representation of the countryside and the pastoral life of the region (Whittier’s New England), preferring to show it in its barren, uncanny reality. In fact, in her review,⁶¹ she defines *North of Boston* as “a very sad book. All the sadder, perhaps, because the poet is at no pains to make it so[...]. Yet, in spite of its author’s sympathetic touch, the book reveals a disease which is eating into the vitals of our New England life, at least in its rural communities” (Lowell 1970: 105). Natural landscapes can be at times radiant, at times imposing and even frightening, never empathizing with the lives led within them. The characters who populate Frost’s poems are often on the verge of insanity, obsessed by thoughts of loss or death (as in ‘Home Burial’) or by the hardness of everyday life (as in ‘A Servant to Servants’ or in ‘«Out, Out—»’). Mysteries and terrible secrets may hide behind the façade of normal life (as in ‘The Fear’) and even the apparent idyll of ‘After Apple Picking’ conveys eerie feelings of uncertainty. According to Lowell, “his people are left-overs of the

⁶⁰ New England is a region in the North-Eastern part of the USA, bordering Canada, composed of the states of Maine, New Hampshire, Vermont, Massachusetts, Rhode Island, and Connecticut.

⁶¹ Amy Lowell’s review of *North of Boston* first appeared in *New Republic* in 1915 and was later collected in her book *Tendencies in Modern American Poetry* (1921).

old stock, morbid, pursued by phantoms, slowly sinking to insanity” (107). The general picture represented in his poems is that of “a latter-day New England, where a civilization is decaying to give place to another different one” (108). Frost did not like Lowell’s comment, since, in his opinion, it showed a misunderstanding of his poetry and of the virtues of New England people to whom he was paying tribute (Thompson and Winnick 1981: 196). In his poem ‘New Hampshire,’ which opens the homonymous collection (1923), he replies to Lowell’s criticism, even though he does not mention her name explicitly:

Another Massachusetts poet said,
‘I go no more to summer in New Hampshire.
I’ve given up my summer place in Dublin.’⁶²
But when I asked to know what ailed New Hampshire,
She said she couldn’t stand the people in it,
The little men (it’s Massachusetts speaking).
And when I asked to know what ailed the people,
She said, ‘Go read your own books and find out’.
(ll. 225-232)

With ‘New Hampshire’ Frost was also trying to shake off the label of regional poet implicit in Lowell’s criticism, stressing the link between what he represents in his poems and the universal significance they acquire.

I may as well confess myself the author
Of several books against the world in general.
To take them as against a special state
Or even nation’s to restrict my meaning.
(ll. 233-236)

And he subsequently adds: “Because I wrote my novels in New Hampshire/ is no proof that I aimed them at New Hampshire” (ll. 251-252). What the poet actually aims at is to invest his regionalism with a symbolic value so that the sorrows, discontents, and failures of his New England characters become ultimately those of humankind in general.

⁶² Lowell used to spend her summers in Dublin, New Hampshire.

Lowell may not have grasped the complexity of Frost's poetry when she considered it as a specimen of poetic realism. However, she certainly provides an acute insight into aspects of his poetry, which I shall describe later in more detail. She also emphasizes the parallels between Frost's poetical language and the plain subject matter it represents. Much of Frost's success is due to the accuracy of his observations and the simplicity of phrase, partly influenced by being brought up with readings of the English Bible.

He tells what he has seen exactly as he has seen it. He is never seduced into subtleties of expression which would be painfully out of place. His words are simple, straightforward, direct, manly, and there is an elemental quality in all he does which would surely be lost if he chose to pursue niceties of expression. (Lowell 1970: 128)

It may be argued that these comments, for obvious chronological reasons, refer only to *North of Boston* and may eventually be applied, to a certain extent at least, to the first collection of poems, *A Boy's Will*.⁶³ It is clear that a more general consideration of Frost's poetical language and of its speech-like quality must necessarily take into account his complete poetic work. However, there are some elements of Lowell's keen review that deserve to be studied more closely. A first and more general issue is the way the poet-scholar underscores the subject matter of Frost's poems. In fact, her depiction of a barren and at times hostile nature, which proves to be indifferent to humankind, and the disturbing, eerie personalities of the poems' characters, seems to clash with the myth of Robert Frost, farmer and poet, interested in the representation of the little things of nature. The myth, created in part by more superficial press reviews beginning with the appearance of his first book of poems, *A Boy's Will*, was later consolidated by the great popularity not only of Frost's poems but also of Frost as a person. According to such representations, the poet would prefer to turn his back on the political, social, and economic conflicts of the time, concentrating on the confined world of rural New England. This

⁶³ Referring to *A Boy's Will*, Lowell argues that Frost's poetry here is not fully mature, as he has not yet achieved his specific language, able "to bring up a whole picture or emotion in a simple word" (1970: 99). The book would present a higher degree of subjectivity, when compared to the realism of *North of Boston*.

idea of the poet and his work was a durable one, and would last well after Frost's death among the general readership. From this perspective it is easier to understand the comment that president Kennedy made on Frost during the ceremony organized in memory of the poet at Amherst College on October 26 1963: "If Robert Frost was much honored during his lifetime, it was because a good many preferred to ignore his darker truths" (quoted in Torricelli and Carroll 1999: 243). Lowell was not the only critic to grasp Frost's truer poetic essence, but it is at least indicative of her sensitivity that she described these features with such clear argumentation already in 1915.

In later studies, other critics⁶⁴ further developed Lowell's observations and argued that one aspect of the modernity of Frost's poetry, despite the traditional metric form which he never abandoned throughout his life, resides in the very representation of people and their relationships to nature. The central role played by Nature in Frost's poetry is an element of continuity with the romantic poetic tradition. The influence of Wordsworth, Emerson, and Thoreau, among others, can be easily detected in images and situations represented by Frost, especially in his early compositions. At the same time, however, these poetic occasions are also the place where Frost's attitude and his philosophy of life diverge from his poetic forefathers.⁶⁵ Frost no longer depicts Nature as it was described in romantic poetry. For poets like Wordsworth, there existed a common immanent spirit unifying Nature and humankind. Such relationship was mirrored by the affinity that could be found between natural landscapes and manifestations belonging to the world of human feelings and moral attitudes. There is no room in Frost's poetry for such empathy.⁶⁶ The poet's vision is affected by

⁶⁴ The bibliography on this issue is extensive. Among the most eminent critical works are Brower (1963), Kearns (1994), Lynen (1960), Marcus (1991), Monteiro (1988), Parini (1999), and Poirier (1977).

⁶⁵ For more details on the different attitude towards Nature in the poetry of Wordsworth, Emerson and Thoreau, as well as Frost's modern approach to it, see Brower (1963: 40-101) and Costello (1988).

⁶⁶ Brodsky (1997) explains Frost's perception of Nature by drawing on a distinction made by poet W.H. Auden in an essay on the North American poet. According to Auden, and to Brodsky, there exists a different perception of Nature in Europe than in America. In the old continent natural images are charged with literary allusions, whereas in America the relationship between humanity and nature is one of equals, and is free of references. For Frost, "Nature [...] is neither

contemporary scientific discoveries that make any identification of man with nature no longer possible. Natural elements are ruled by scientific laws that are indifferent to humankind, and the scientific achievements of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, from Darwin's theory of evolution (as Faggen's recent study (2001) has pointed out) to Sapir and Whorf's theories of language (Brower 1963: 90), introduce in Frost's poems a feeling of uncertainty. The poet does not provide readers any absolute truth through his art but leaves them with unanswered questions (as is best seen in poems like 'The Most of It'). Thus, as Lynen remarks, "despite his indebtedness to Romanticism, he must be seen as essentially anti-Romantic. By insisting on the gulf separating man and nature, he directly opposes the Romantic attempt to bring the two together" (Lynen 1960: 167). Nature is alien, indifferent to the lot of humanity. People live within Nature, of course, but the two move on parallel levels that never converge. Natural landscapes and phenomena can at times be interpreted as eerie or gloomy, at other times as radiant, vivid, joyful. But that is just an interpretation, a human mental construction projected onto external reality. People, like the lyrical subject of the poem 'A Boundless Moment,' are bound to be deceived by their own illusions. What seems to be a blooming tree in the poem is just a beech with dead leaves still clinging to it:

We stood a moment so in a strange world,
Myself as one his own pretense deceives;
And then I said the truth (and moved on).
A young beech clinging to its last year's leaves.
(ll. 9-12)

A wall, as in the poem 'Two Look at Two' inevitably separates the world of men from that of Nature, and man cannot find in the natural world any answer to his own existential questions. What he receives back is nothing, just "the mocking echo of his own" voice, as represented in poem 'The Most of It':

He thought he kept the universe alone;
For all the voice in answer he could wake

friend nor foe, nor is the backdrop for human drama; it is the poet's terrifying self-portrait" (Brodsky 1997: 8).

Was but the mocking echo of his own
From some tree-hidden cliff across the lake.
(ll. 1-4)

In Frost's poems Nature also becomes the backdrop against which comparisons between characters stand out, achieving symbolic meaning. Different reactions to Nature introduce, for example, the theme of difference and opposition between the sexes. Women find in Nature an escape from the constraints of social life, a welcoming mother that grants them freedom (as can be inferred in poems like 'A Servant to Servants', and 'The Hill's Wife'). Men, on the other hand, perceive it as a threat, a constant danger, tempting them into dark landscapes (often represented by the image of dark woods as in 'Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening', and 'Come in') that evoke death. Nature is also the scene within which humankind's different ages of life (youth, maturity, old age) are staged, as well as the reality people refuse to see in their constant striving for the eternal (as in 'Neither Far Out nor in Deep'). Symbolism allows the poet not only to deal with the nature of human experience through poetry, but also with the very nature of poetry, thus introducing a parallel meta-poetic discourse. Thus, as Poirier (1977: 7) observes, popular poems such as 'Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening' or 'Mending Wall' can be invested with multiple levels of significance referring not only to universal human ideals, values, and beliefs but also to meditations on poetry: "Both poems propose that these human dilemmas are also poetic ones, in the one case the possibly destructive solicitations of the sublime and in the other the claustrophobias of mechanical forms" (1977: 7). Of course, the variety of themes in Frost's poetry cannot be limited to the ones mentioned above, even though they are the most important and the most frequently recurring.⁶⁷ The analysis of a selection of poems carried out in section 2.3 makes possible, to a certain extent, an estimate of their complexity.

⁶⁷ Gerber (1966: 116-148) presents in chapter 5 of his book a practical overview on Frost's main themes. More correctly, he presents his own interpretation and organization of Frost's themes, which, inevitably, overlaps with the way other critics already introduced in the study have organized and classified the subject matter of Frost's poetry.

2.2.3 The poetic language and the setting

In order to identify the relationship with the language used to represent it, I start by borrowing Lynen's concept of pastoralism. According to the scholar, most of Robert Frost's poems are characterized by the pastoral mode. With this term Lynen does not refer to any given poetical form but rather to a structure around which the poem is built. More generally, the notion of pastoralism may represent two related, though different concepts. On the one hand, it may refer to the body of poems belonging to a given tradition, with a set of conventional themes and images. On the other, it may refer rather to poems having a specific form (Lynen 1960: 14). In Frost, the pastoral mode refers not just to the rural setting, which undoubtedly characterizes so many of his poems,⁶⁸ but also to a range of attitudes towards the rural world, that is, a specific point of view: that of the lyrical subject or of the characters of the poems. This point of view does not simply provide a plain perspective on certain events or ideas represented; it also evokes, directly or indirectly, "the contrast between the rural world, with its rustic scenery and naïve, humble folk, and the great outer world of the powerful, the wealthy, and the sophisticated" (1960: 9). Via this "method of pastoral contrast" (1960: 20) the elements of the rustic world acquire a wider symbolic status. In order to achieve this effect, however, the local traits of Frost's rural world need to be stressed, so as to attain a greater distance from the opposite dimension, the urban world which, in his poems, is almost always hinted at, according to Lynen, as a second, implicit part of an analogy, rather than explicitly represented. This last claim may be arguable. In my opinion, it is not necessary to force the presence of elements such as the city and modern technology onto the poems, as if they were the second part of an unspoken analogy, in order to justify the symbolic dimension of what is represented in the composition. The opposition, in fact, would not allow for the diverse, and at time contrasting features, that Frost's depiction of

⁶⁸ "the setting, then, must be more than mere acting space; it must represent a total conception of reality, one which brings together and implied set of ideas as to the nature of being, a social order, and a system of values in a single scheme of things. Frost's rural world is such a setting. For him, the transition to dramatic poetry from other forms required merely a turning from retrospection to present action" (Lynen 1960: 129).

rural settings encompasses.⁶⁹ Nevertheless, Lynen's idea of the rural world as a concept representing a range of attitudes is certainly effective, as it points to one of the links between Frost's speech-like language and the pastoral method. It seems clear that the mere description of a rural setting cannot be enough to convey the impression of a rural point of view. The effect is achieved rather through the combination of different rural settings and the colloquial register. In many of Frost's poems, even the most lyrical ones, the text evokes to readers' ears (or to the ear of imagination, as Frost would say) the voice of real people, either as the voice of the lyrical subject identifiable with the poet, or as that of fictive characters belonging to that very setting. This effect is achieved through the register chosen and the devices adopted in order to recreate the oral dimension. The colloquial register prevails in those poems in which the dramatic techniques mastered by Frost abound. Here dramatic and pastoral work together to enhance the impression of a plurality of viewpoints and their ensuing symbolic effect. However, the relaxed conversational tone remains a constant feature of his poetry even when, in later years, the dramatic mode seems to recede and a more philosophical, openly meditative tone prevails, that is to say, even when the point of view is no longer that of the rustic character but the brooding mind of the mature poet.

What is more important is Frost's ability to make the language itself function as an image. His Yankee manner is not only a way of speaking; it is the symbol of a mode of thought. By representing the thought process of his Yankee speaker, it becomes a means of picturing the regional world itself. (Lynen 1960: 80)

2.2.4 Poetic language and colloquial register

I have said that Frost defines through language points of view of rural New England that acquire universal symbolic significance. However, Frost's poems do not contain so much any specific linguistic element of regional speech as the rhythms, inflections,

⁶⁹ I am not claiming that themes like urban life, modern technology or the war are altogether absent from Frost's poems. Examples of poems dealing with these topics are 'Not to Keep' (from *New Hampshire*), and 'Bursting Rapture' (from *Steeple Bush*).

and intonations of standard American speech. Frost's characters thus assume the language of the average American man. This device helps to achieve a wider degree of generalization and increase the possibility of an identification by the readers with the language of the poem's characters. Therefore, before describing the main elements that constitute Frost's mimesis of orality and the theory on the sound of sense he developed in his letters, conferences and essays, it is important to understand what we mean whenever we speak of a certain *spoken quality* in Frost's poetical language. Here again we are confronted with a second persistent myth surrounding Frost's poetry, according to which the characters in his dramatic poems, and to a lesser degree also the lyrical subject of the shorter lyrical compositions, speak a language which evokes the New England tone of voice and cadence. The polysemy of words such as *tone* (and, to a lesser degree *intonation*, *cadence* etc.) has been underlined by Loreto (1999: 26-30), who stresses how the word *tone* can be interpreted in a technical way, as a linguistic term denoting in phonetics a particular pitch pattern on a syllable used to make semantic distinctions (as in tonal languages, like Chinese). It can also assume other shades of meaning, such as the *way* in which something is being said, or, in a metaphorical way, the style of a discourse, of a poem, of a person or of a situation (*Oxford English Dictionary*). The misunderstandings proliferating around the diatopic and diastratic features of Frost's register may have been generated by comments such as the one previously quoted from Pound, or by other critics, who used terms such as *tone* and *accent* ambiguously when referring to the recreation of people's speech in the New England region. Louis Untermeyer, for example, in the preface to the first edition of his anthology titled *Modern American Poetry* (Untermeyer [1919], quoted in Gerber 1966: 155-156) argues that in Robert Frost's blank verse "the words are so chosen and arranged that the speaker is almost heard on the printed page. [...] beneath these native sounds, we hear the accents of his people walking the New England farms and hillsides." Other critics, while describing or even criticizing Frost's use of metrical patterns (as Ivor Winters does in his well known essay 'Robert Frost: Or, the Spiritual Drifter as Poet'), always underline the proximity of his poetical language to the spoken language of simple New England people.⁷⁰ Cornelius Weygandt argued in 1937 that Frost's language

⁷⁰ Even Winters's negative criticism seems to confirm this position. The

is a consequence not just of his intentional efforts to recreate the way people talk, but also of those peculiar aspects of the regional character, especially the New Hampshire one, which the poet shares with the people of the region and which, almost naturally, intersperse all his poetry:

All rural New England shares a laconic speech, a picturesqueness of phrase, a stiffness of lip, a quizzicality of attitude, a twistiness of approach to thought, but there is a New Hampshire slant to all these qualities, and that slant you find in the verse of Frost. (Weygandt quoted in Thornton 1937: 65)

The oral effect achieved by Frost has been attributed to the poet's craftsmanship in handling the language. Special stress has been placed on the combination of linguistic elements (words, phonetic notations, syntactical structures) and metrical ones that recreate the oral cadence of the region. These first observations certainly underscore and describe some general traits of Frost's language. However, they are still developed at a rather general level and do not identify the specifics of his mimesis of orality, while insisting on its diatopically defined character. It is worth noting however, that in the early years of the publication of Frost's poems an alternative trend of criticism opposed the opinion according to which Frost's language shared aspects of New England speech, while agreeing on the general colloquial register of the language. Once again, a first clarification of this misunderstanding can be found in the early criticism written by Amy Lowell. Coming from Massachusetts, as mentioned above, Lowell knew perfectly well the peculiarities and traits of rural New England speech. In her article, the poet and critic stresses how Frost's characters, genuine as they might be, lack the authenticity of New England talk, both from a

scholar, while criticizing Frost's use of the blank verse, stresses how the poet aims to recreate a conversational tone: "Frost early began his endeavor to make his style approximate as closely as possible the style of conversation, and his endeavor has added to his reputation: it has helped to make him seem "natural". But poetry is not conversation, and I see no reason why poetry should be called upon to imitate conversation. Conversation is the most careless and formless of human utterance; it is spontaneous and unrevised, and its vocabulary is commonly limited. Poetry is the most difficult form of human utterance; [...]. The two forms of expression are extremes, they are not close to each other" (Cox 1962: 59).

lexical viewpoint and in terms of an attempt to reproduce its pronunciation in the written medium. “He [Frost] feels the people, but he has no ear for their peculiar tongue” (Lowell 1970: 25).

Lynen (1960) also carefully analyzes Frost’s language in search of those factors which determined the speech quality of his verses. He starts by studying the rhythmic and metrical patterns of Frost’s poetry, and observes that the peculiarities of such features neither suffice to justify the loose speech quality of the verses nor help define the kind of orality which the poet recreates. He therefore moves on to consider aspects of local diction, and, like Lowell before, presents his results unambiguously:

Though I have searched conscientiously, I can find only five or six localisms in the whole of his work. Frost is not a dialect poet either in the sense that he uses regional words or spells other words so as to indicate a local pronunciation. (Lynen 1960: 86)⁷¹

Frost’s mimesis of orality consists therefore in the recreation of a more general colloquial register (the “yankee manner”, as Lynen puts it [1960: 80]) rather than a specific diatopic variation. He achieves this effect through the phrasing of the sentences, not just through their lexical composition. The vagueness of syntactical connections, the use of common words combined with a certain looseness of the rhythm, the numerous asides, the apparent carelessness of the organization of the topics of the discourse increase the general impression of colloquialism. As for Frost’s use of a simple lexis, a study by Marie Borroff (1971) clarifies the meaning of the adjective *simple*. According to the scholar, Frost’s plain lexis, especially in the poems of the first books, is a consequence of a low proportion of Romance and Latinate words (that is, of lexical items with French or Latin etymology) compared to the high ratio of native English words. However, native words are not regional words.⁷²

⁷¹ One of the few examples of recreation of a diatopic variation of spoken language (precisely, English as spoken by a French-Canadian) can be found in the poem ‘The Ax-Helve’: ““You give her one good crack, she’s snap right off. / Den where’s your hax-ead flying t’rough de hair?”” (ll. 26-27).

⁷² Borroff’s analysis of Frost’s language is very detailed. The studies that focus specifically on the linguistic features composing Frost’s evocations of orality are, however, few. Most of the references quoted in the section, and throughout the

The regionalisms so paradoxically lacking in poems so thoroughly regional are but one subclass of the distinctively colloquial elements of the English vocabulary which, with the distinctively literary elements, are by and large excluded. Frost's elected norm of discourse here, and the key to his verbal artistry, is the common level of style, which represents a selection from the spoken language rather than a reproduction of it. (Borroff 1971: 43)

Gerber (1966) also returns to this point when speaking of Frost's preference for colloquial over more literary expressions. At a very first glance, the terms used by the scholar may appear ambiguous. However, after indicating how Frost follows Emerson's footsteps in his use of a real and accurate living language,⁷³ Gerber clarifies that the voices represented in Frost's poems cannot be defined as voices of people belonging to the New England region, but rather as following standard American colloquial speech. As a conclusion we may well say, as Gerber does, that "the speech Frost concocts is trompe l'oeil" (Gerber 1966: 99). That is, it is the result of a dexterous combination of rhetorical devices such as idioms and contractions, holophrastic expressions, paratactical sentences, and pragmatic markers such as "you know" and "sort of," that contribute to the evocation of the spontaneous American speech.

2.2.5 The dramatic element

References to colloquial registers however do not help to fully explain the regional quality of Frost's poetry, which cannot be denied. Taken by themselves, or even together, features such as diction, phrasing, and rhythmic pattern, are not enough to account

chapter, tackle the issue of Frost's mimesis of orality in general terms, often in relationship with the notion of *sound of sense* to which it is undoubtedly linked. Loreto (1999) describes the main characteristics of the actual tone of the poet's voice, by analyzing recordings of his readings. Finally, there is a master thesis by Ida Massaro (Niagara University) titled *The Linguistic Analysis of Robert Frost's Prosody* (written in 1970), which may have contributed to my research. Unfortunately, I could not have access to the document.

⁷³ "I feel too the force of the double negative, though clean contrary to our grammar rules. And I confess to some pleasure from the stinging rhetoric of a rattling oath in the mouth of truckmen and teamsters. How laconic and brisk it is by the side of a page of the *North American Review*. Cut these words and they would bleed; they are vascular and alive; they walk and run." (Emerson, quoted in Gerber 1966: 94).

for the “dramatic and regional qualities of Frost’s style” (Lynen 1960: 89). The overall impression derives from the combination, mutual influence, and identification of the stylistic and semantic level. In the essay ‘The Figure a Poem Makes,’ Frost had already made a similar comment:

Granted no one but a humanist much cares how sound a poem is if it is only *a* sound. The sound is the gold in the ore. Then we will have the sound out alone and dispense with the inessential. We do till we make the discovery that the object in writing poetry is to make all poems sound as different as possible from each other, and the resources for that of vowels, consonants, punctuation, syntax, words, sentences, meter are not enough. We need the help of context—meaning—subject matter. That is the greatest help towards variety. (Frost 1995: 776)

In itself this observation may add nothing to what has already been said or to the premise I set out above, according to which all the elements must be considered as closely interweaved, influencing and modifying each other dynamically. However, the peculiarity of Frost’s poetry lies in the way he achieves this connection between the style, the language, and the meaning of a poem. As we have already seen, Frost’s poems primarily represent characters whom readers assume to be from rural New England, and whom they tend to identify with the author when the character coincides with the external narrating voice of personal lyrical compositions. However, the poem can succeed in conveying the characters’ personality in all their facets, ideologies, values and beliefs only when it succeeds in recreating their very language, or rather, an impression of the living language of these rural characters. The main device through which the poet manages to convey an impression of orality is the *dramatic mode*. In many of Frost’s poems, in fact, the characters and the situations are dramatically represented. As Thompson reports in his well-known (and controversial) biography of the poet (Thompson and Winnick 1981) Frost’s first fascination with the dramatic, as well as with the interplay between poetical language and metrical structures and their rhythms derived from reading Shakespeare and Virgil.⁷⁴ What Frost admired most, especially in the English

⁷⁴ In his unfinished biography of Frost, Newdick records how the poet wrote in the margin of a book given to Elizabeth Shepley Sergeant: “First heard the voice

playwright, was the ability to portray characters through words that succeeded in conveying the sound of a conversation. Later in his life he came to admire, for this reason among others, the poetry of Edwin Arlington Robinson. In a letter of acknowledgement that Frost wrote to Robinson after receiving *The Porcupine*, Robinson's second prose play, the poet seizes the opportunity to discuss with him the theory which, by that time, he had been developing about the sound of sense.⁷⁵ And in the 'Introduction to E.A. Robinson's "King Jasper,"' written in 1935, he observed: "Robinson could make lyrical talk like drama. What imagination for speech in 'John Gorhan!' He is at his height between quotation marks" (Frost 1995: 746).

The first criticism that Frost, as a young poet, received from one of his acquaintances, the congregationalist minister in Lawrence, William E. Wolcott, was that his poems sounded "too much like talk" (Thompson and Winnick 1981: 78).⁷⁶ This comment produced the counter effect of confirming Frost in his poetical beliefs. The poet's famous preface to his one-act play, 'A Way Out' (1929), stresses the centrality of the dramatic element in his poetry.

Everything written is as good as it is dramatic. It need not declare itself in form but it is drama or nothing [...] A dramatic necessity goes deep into the nature of the sentence. Sentences are not different enough to hold the attention unless they are dramatic. No ingenuity of varying structure will do. All that can save them is the speaking tone of voice somehow entangled in the words and fastened to the page for the ear of the imagination. (Frost 1995: 713)

from a printed page in a Virgilian Eclogue and Hamlet" (Newdick and Sutton 1976: 61).

⁷⁵ Frost wrote: "I have read it [the play] twice over but in no perplexity. It is good writing, or better than that, good speaking caught alive—every sentence of it. The speaking tones are all there on the printed page, nothing is left for the actor but to recognize and give them. And the action is in the speech where it should be, and not along beside it in antics for the body to perform. I wonder if you agree with me that the best sentences are those that convey their own tone. That haven't to be described in italics" (quoted in Thompson and Winnick (1981: 216).

⁷⁶ Wolcott had appreciated Frost's poem "The Butterfly" for its lyrical quality which was, according to him, proper of true poetry, but rejected the rest of the poems.

The short text ends with his claim: “I have always come as near the dramatic as I could this side of actually writing a play” (Frost 1995: 713). Critics have felt the need to clarify the concept of the dramatic in Frost, and to investigate its characteristics. Poirier (1977), for example, argues that it is not always possible to regard all of Frost’s poems as dramatic, despite what the poet himself maintained. The scholar suggests that Frost’s words in the preface quoted above are “misleading” (19) as they invite the reader to interpret all his poems in terms of “dramatic situations,” which would imply the presence of speakers whose position is not the poet’s position. The distancing effect enacted by the dramatic situation would be assumed to be a device to solve contradictions and ambiguities in the compositions (which would belong to “other” voices, not the poet’s), while one of Frost’s great achievements is “his actually seeking out opportunities for being in untenable positions” (15). Finally, the speaking voice in the poem can also be interpreted as a metaphor of the self. Its varying features would be a consequence of the way it interacts with other aspects of the reality, which are ultimately other “metaphors of otherness” (20). Poirier’s study is of great value as it helps put in the right perspective the role played by the dramatic element in Frost’s poetry, without denying its importance. Before Poirier, studies had already been carried out on the way the dramatic worked in Frost’s compositions. In 1937, for example, Robert S. Newdick⁷⁷ (1937: 263) observed: “The primacy of the dramatic is, then, a point that Frost has iterated and reiterated. But how, it may be asked, does his practice square with his theory?” The critic goes on to observe that the question can be further fragmented in three separate parts: a) the presence of the dramatic in the poet’s teaching; b) the production of dramatic compositions; c) the presence of the dramatic in his poetry. The first part of the question is easily answered, since Frost’s teaching methods were well known for an unorthodoxy that fostered dialogue with his students and their personal interpretation and rearrangement of plays, as well as his passion for the staging of modern and classical plays (Marlowe’s *Dr. Faustus*, Milton’s *Comus*, Sheridan’s *The*

⁷⁷ Robert S. Newdick was a professor at the Ohio State University and became acquainted with the poetry of Robert Frost in 1934. The correspondence between the two men ultimately brought to a project of a biography which was never completed due to Newdick’s early death in 1939. His valuable notes, kept by his widow for years, were published in 1976 (Newdick and Sutton 1976).

Rivals, Yeats's *The Land of Heart's Desire* and *Cathleen ni Hoolihan*, at Pinkerton Academy and later, in 1917, several plays by Shakespeare, at Amherst College). As for the second and third points, Newdick seems to be satisfied with the brief remarks he gives in his essay. He mentions the two one-act plays Frost had already written at the time (*The Cow's in the Corn*, in verse, which is rather a humorous exercise, and *A Way Out*, in prose)⁷⁸ and observes that a dramatic design can be found not only in the very structure of poems (such as, for example, 'The Death of the Hired Man' from *North of Boston*, or 'Snow' from *Mountain Interval*) but also in the overall organization of the poems in the book. According to Newdick, even Frost's very first collection, *A Boy's Will*, composed mainly of short lyrical compositions, can be considered dramatic in the way the poems are arranged.⁷⁹ Even though his observations show insight into Frost's poetry and acknowledge its complexity,⁸⁰ they seem to neglect other apparently contradictory aspects which would be further analyzed by other critics. Lynen, for example, wonders why, despite the importance attributed to the dramatic, Frost's production of real dramas is so scarce (1960: 109). Moreover, the critic feels the need to better determine the term *dramatic* in order to understand to what extent Frost's poetry may be defined as such. He argues that describing the dramatic in Frost's poetry is not an easy task and cannot be made just on the basis of form. In fact, most of Frost's poems share, in varying degrees, elements belonging to the dramatic, the narrative, and the lyric. A poem like 'The Death of the Hired Man,' for example, is clearly dramatic; however it contains some narrative asides which can be assimilated to stage directions, as well as intensely lyrical moments. "The only valid way of distinguishing the dramatic poems," says Lynen, "is by their primary emphasis on action *felt to be happening in the present*" (Lynen 1960: 111 [emphasis in the original]). This definition, however, shifts the problem from the definition of the

⁷⁸ At the time Newdick was writing, Frost had not yet written the plays *In an Art Factory* and *The Guardeen*, not published in the poet's lifetime, nor had he written the two masques (*A Masque of Reason*, 1945, and *A Mask of Mercy*, 1947).

⁷⁹ "Yet a running gloss in the table of contents organizes the separate lyrics into a kind of dramatic lyric, and enables the reader more easily to perceive the poet's 'dramatic give and take' with himself" (Newdick 1937: 266).

⁸⁰ "No one formula can be devised that will adequately encompass so many-sided and complex an artist as Robert Frost" (Newdick 1937: 269).

dramatic to the definition of *action*. In fact, a dialogue between two characters or the monologue of a speaker addressed to some mute audience is still an action. However, it can focus both on the present and on past reminiscences. As the critic notes, the versatility of dramatic poetry invites us to consider it as a continuum “extending from the most intensely impassioned speech downward into conversation, and from this in turn into anecdote and reminiscence, that is, pure narrative and lyric” (111). This observation is coherent with a general reflection on the nature of the dramatic mode. As Sinfield (1977) observes, there are several ways in which the dramatic effect and the dramatic mode can be interpreted and represented. One way is “Ibsenite naturalism” (19), in which the poet aims at recreating the actual words, intonations and cadences of people in real life. A good example is Browning’s dramatic monologue ‘Fra Lippo Lippi.’ In this poem the painter-monk Fra Lippo Lippi talks to some guards who would like to arrest him as they have caught him at night out of his cloister. From the very first lines the mimetic colloquial register is evident:

I am poor brother Lippo, by your leave!
You need not clap your torches to my face.
Zooks, what’s to blame? you think you see a monk!
What, ’tis past midnight, and you go the rounds,
And here you catch me at an alley’s end
Where sportive ladies leave their doors ajar?
(Browning 1981, ll. 1-6)

The emphatic tone suggested by the exclamation marks, colloquialisms (such as “Zooks”, which characterizes the monk almost comically as a rather secular person), and questions conveying the sense of a direct contact with the listener contribute to enlivening the conversational tone of the lines. Other dramatic modes are also possible. Both Aeschylus’s tragedies and Beckett’s or Dürrenmatt’s plays are dramatic, even though we find fewer references to the outer everyday reality, and the language may acquire a more graven fixity. “Dramatic speech may be rhetorical and lyrical as well as casual and colloquial” (Sinfield 1977: 20). A good example of the latter form (taken again from Victorian poetry) is Tennyson’s dramatic monologue ‘Ulysses,’ or ‘Tithonus,’ in which the tone of the language is lyrical and the situation

mythical.⁸¹ It is true that in Victorian poetry we detect a steady shift towards a more naturalistic mode of expression.⁸² However, there is an inversion in the trend with modernist poets, such as Yeats, Pound, and Eliot.⁸³ Speaking of the dramatic mode in Frost's poetry, therefore, does not mean associating it unconditionally with a colloquial register and naturalistic reproduction of nature. However, it can certainly be argued that Frost's dramatic poetry is closer in its form to Browning's poetry than to the modernist poetry of Pound, since it is possible to detect an attempt at a realistic characterization of the speakers and of the situation.

The dramatic mode seems to provide Frost with the necessary tools to deal indirectly, that is, through the use of fictional situations and speakers, with issues which he is interested in (such as conjugal love, mental instability, the dualistic tension between life and death), without the need to assert an absolute stance through the fictive representation of New England voices.⁸⁴ It is a device that allows the poet to represent reality symbolically, starting from a particular experience, without achieving those universal truths or representations of definite ideas, that might be found, for example, behind the symbols of Dante's poetry. This process, which is accomplished through dramatic action, is one of the central features of modern poetry. Langbaum labels it *poetry of experience*, and

⁸¹ For a comparison between the styles of Browning and Tennyson in the dramatic monologue, see Byron (2003).

⁸² As Langbaum (1985: 32) points out, the tendency towards colloquialism follows the Romantic tradition and would not be contradicted by the parallel recovery of archaic diction (later to be found in Coleridge's *The Ancient Mariner*, for example, or in Eliot's *Four Quartets*), as both devices contributed to the renovation of poetic language.

⁸³ Sinfield argues that the Modernists' deliberate disregard of any naturalistic portrait of the speaker in the dramatic monologue is achieved by avoiding any psychological description and social situation and presenting a character which almost moves in the void, stirred only by "moments of intense apprehension which transcend circumstances and perhaps personality" (1977: 65). Moreover, while in the dramatic monologues of the Victorians the intrusion of the poet's voice was indirect and only inferred behind the words of the speaker, during modernism the device is deliberately exposed. A good example is Eliot's *The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock* (1917), while with *The Waste Land* the poet operates the merger and breakdown of the duality poet-speaker.

⁸⁴ Another New England poet who used the dramatic mode, especially the dramatic monologue, in a similar way was Robert Lowell (*The Mills of the Kavanaughs*, 1951).

defines it as “a poetry constructed upon the deliberate disequilibrium between experience and idea, a poetry which makes its statement not as an idea but as an experience from which one or more ideas can be abstracted as problematical rationalizations” (Langbaum 1985: 35-36). For the scholar, the poetry of experience aims at becoming a new genre which would overcome the distinction between objective and subjective poetry, or lyrical, dramatic or narrative genres. It is a kind of poetry in which the moment of experience derived from an individual circumstance (in the case of Frost, often the observation of natural phenomena or the interaction among rural people) generates, through the dramatic action, an epiphany, a brief moment of comprehension, which is however followed by the return to the world of sensations without having achieved an ultimate, fixed truth. Readers may infer the truth, but the idea they derive is blurred and ambiguous (Langbaum 1985: 112).⁸⁵ Langbaum’s words significantly echo Frost’s statements on poetry in his well-known essay ‘The Figure a Poem Makes’:

The figure a poem makes. It begins in delight and ends in wisdom. The figure is the same as for love. No one can really hold that the ecstasy should be static and stand still in one place. It begins in delight, it inclines to the impulse, it assumes direction with the first line laid down, it runs a course of lucky events, and ends in a clarification of life—not necessarily a great clarification, such as sects and cults are founded on, but in a momentary stay against confusion. It has denouement it has an outcome that though unforeseen was predestined from the first image of the original mood—and indeed from the very mood. (Frost 1995: 777)

⁸⁵ “In traditional poetry, the unified response belongs to the poet as his normal equipment, as the appropriate response to an objective reality which combines fact and value. But it comes in the epiphany as the climax of a dramatic action, and lasts a moment only. We are then returned to the world of ordinary perception and left with the question whether the idea we carry away from the experience is true. It is in this distinction —this new disequilibrium between the momento of insight, which is certain, and the problematical idea we abstract from it—that we can discern a distinctively modern form of literature, a form imitating not nature or an order of ideas about nature but the structure of experience itself: a poetry of experience” (Langbaum 1985: 47).

2.2.6 Mimesis of orality and metric form

Frost's mastery of metrical form, and his use of metrical rhythms set against the rhythms of everyday speech are well-known features of his art. At the beginning of his career as a poet, however, prior to the publication of *A Boy's Will* in England, the interplay of the two elements was not understood by his North American contemporaries. The poet Richard Hovey, sending back Frost's poems, accused him of writing "too much in the way people talk" (in Isaacs, 1962: 86). Once his first two collections of poems were finally published in England in 1913 and 1914, the poet himself was quite surprised by the commentaries stirred by his poetical style. In a letter to John Cournous dated July 8th 1914 he explains his viewpoint:

It is as simple as this: there are the very regular preestablished accent and measure of blank verse; and there are the very irregular accent and measure of speaking intonation. I am never more pleased than when I can get these into strained relation. I like to drag and break the intonation across the metre as waves first comb and then break stumbling on the shingle. (Frost, 1995: 680)

As Frost's words stress, we are not dealing with two opposite poles (meter and speech rhythm), but rather with two different textual levels that influence each other. In his definition of prosody, Harvey Gross (1965: 10), stresses that a poem is not an idea translated into a metrical language; rather, it is a symbol within which ideas, experiences and attitudes converge, transforming into rhythmically organized sensations. Through prosody and the poem's structure the poet communicates those hidden feelings, such as awareness, tensions, and the inner life of people, which, if expressed in words, would lose their essence and intensity. Gross further clarifies his arguments by analyzing, as an example, the first two lines of the poem "West-running Brook",

'Fred, where is north?'

'North? North is there, my love.

The Brook runs west'.

'West running Brook then call it'.

(ll. 1-2)

The repetition of the word *north* is, in rhetorical terms, an anadiplosis while from the viewpoint of discourse analysis it can be considered an hesitation phenomenon. In the example quoted above, the repetition is used by the speaker as a way of gaining time and reflecting, before being able to give a definite answer to the interlocutor. In the first verse, an almost perfect iambic pentameter, the dialogue between the two speakers is intertwined with a metric rhythm which seems to guide the reader in the interpretation of the different shades of meaning that the three identical words bear. As Gross points out (1965: 65-66), the rhetorical stress falls in identical form on both the first and third north. Theoretically it should fall with equal strength also on the second north. However, since this word is placed among two words already carrying a strong metrical stress, its intensity is reduced. In this way the meter seems to suggest the emotive, rather than semantic function of the second north, since it represents, as said above, the pause the speaker makes before giving the indication of the coordinate. “The meter ingeniously adjusts and modifies both concept and feeling” (Gross 1965: 66). Finally, the impression of orality in the second half of the first verse is heightened by the use of the deictic *there*.

2.3 The poems

According to the status of the voice or voices of a poem, a distinction can be made between dramatic and non-dramatic lyrical poems. The first category presents voices which usually belong to fictional characters. In the second, the narrating voice either appears in the form of the first person singular or plural (which is still fictional, but is generally identified with the author), or as an external narrator describing a scene or an action in an apparently impersonal way (which is also generally assumed to represent the author’s point of view). These categories partially overlap. Despite the associated problems of definition, I have adopted the distinction between dramatic and non-dramatic in my study as it helps clarify the relationships between the different guises of mimesis of orality in Frost’s poems and the status of the voices speaking in his poetic compositions. In the following sections I do not propose a

classification of Frost's dramatic poetry,⁸⁶ as this is not the aim of the present study. By analyzing five poems with or without dramatic structure, and in which the dramatic mode varies in intensity, I provide a pragmatic look at the variations of degree of the features of Frost's mimesis of orality described above (themes, colloquial language and other linguistic mimetic devices, dramatic mode). The poems I examine are an impersonal lyrical composition ('An Old Man's Winter Night'), a personal lyrical composition ('Mowing'), a dramatic monologue ('A Servant to Servants'), a dramatic dialogue ('Home Burial'), and a masque ('A Masque of Reason').⁸⁷ I have intentionally excluded Frost's plays from my analysis as I wish to focus here not just on the dramatic element in his compositions but also on the interplay between the dramatic, his mimesis of orality, and the poetic structure. While the study of his plays may certainly offer further insight in the poet's use of the dramatic element and in his recreation of orality, the fact that they are written in prose makes their study less relevant to the immediate aim of my research. The hypothesis behind my approach is that, as the poems shift from a more dramatic to a less dramatic structure,

⁸⁶ Lynen proposes a taxonomy of Frost's dramatic poems, based on a decreasing degree of dramatic action (1960: 113-125). He distinguishes five groupings: I) dramatic monologues; II) dramatic dialogues; III) pastoral dialogues; IV) philosophical dialogues; and V) narrative monologues. His classification is useful, in my opinion, as it helps shed light on some important features not only of Frost's dramatic poems, but on his poetry in general. First, it effectively links the dramatic with Lynen's theory of a pastoral structure behind Frost's conception of poetry. According to the critic, the pastoral, whose structure depends on contrasts, would naturally foster the dramatic. Moreover, it also provides a convincing setting for Frost's poetry, as it would represent "a total conception of reality, one which brings together an implied set of ideas as the nature of being, a social order, and a system of values in a single scheme of things" (129). Finally, Lynen's observation on the dramatic quality of Frost's more philosophical poems shows the fundamental homogeneity and continuity within Frost's poetic production, from the dramatic compositions to the more lyrical and meditative ones. In fact, the philosophical discourse we find in Frost's poems, especially in his later work, preserves a dramatic quality since "the discussion of ideas is directed to others and is, therefore, speech rather than unspoken thought translated into words" (130). It is quite different from the lonely reflections of the lyrical subject, which we can find in other poets such as Eliot, Tennyson or Wordsworth.

⁸⁷ The poems and the masque are reproduced in full text in appendix 1.

so too will mimesis of orality move away from the pole of communicative immediacy.⁸⁸

2.3.1 The impersonal lyrical composition: ‘An Old Man’s Winter Night’

The poem ‘An Old Man’s Winter Night,’ included in the book *Mountain Interval* (1916) but already drafted during the years 1906-1907, is a short composition of 28 lines in pentameter with an overall iambic lilt and a certain metrical variation. It describes a night scene with very little narrative.⁸⁹ An old man walks around in his country house and then falls asleep in front of the stove. The imagery of the poem polarizes the inside and outside environment, suggesting a symbolic reading that produces multi-tiered evocations (for example, the evocation of the condition of humankind and its relationship with nature, but also of the relationship between the interior, mental and psychic world and the external reality) as well as associations of old age with death. The gloomy visual, aural, and symbolic frames evoked by the words in the initial lines, which depict the old man’s house surrounded by a dark nature, reinforce this association.

All out of doors looked darkly in at him
Through the thin frost, almost in separate stars,
That gathers on the pane in empty rooms.
What kept his eyes from giving back the gaze
Was the lamp tilted near them in his hand
What kept him from remembering what it was
That brought him to that creaking room was age.
(ll. 1-7)

Nature is not inanimate, but *looks* at the man in his solitude, while the man, in the torpor of old age, cannot give back a conscious gaze,

⁸⁸ The hypothesis is not original, of course. Eliot (1957: 33) had already argued that “the dependence of verse upon speech is much more direct in dramatic poetry than in any other. In most kinds of poetry, the necessity for its reminding us of contemporary speech is reduced by the latitude allowed for personal idiosyncrasy.” My interest here is to study Frost’s “personal idiosyncrasies” and the way they affect his mimesis of orality.

⁸⁹ Many critics, including Lowell (1970: 134) and Lynen (1960: 36) consider it one of Frost’s best poems, often misunderstood.

since the reflection of the light of the lamp on the window pane prevents him from seeing outside clearly. As Lynen (1960: 36-41) points out, the metaphor of light plays a central role in the poem. On the one hand, it represents the consciousness of man, which cannot perceive the outside reality.

A light he was to no one but himself
Where now he sat, concerned with he knew what,
A quiet light, and then not even that.
(ll. 15-17)

On the other, in the form of the light of the moon and the stars, it represents a cosmic consciousness, which includes the individual consciousness and which protects men from the threat of the darkness (seen in the initial lines) that symbolizes chaos in nature.

He consigned to the moon, such as she was,
So late-arising, to the broken moon
As better than the sun in any case
For such a charge, his snow upon the roof,
His icicles along the wall to keep;
(ll. 18-22)

Since the study focuses on the traits of mimesis of orality which eventually characterize different voices in the composition, I shall not pause longer over the general interpretation of the poem, preferring to cross-refer to the main critical studies mentioned at the beginning of the chapter for further reading.

Even though I have defined 'An Old Man's Winter Night' as an impersonal lyric, it should be said that this designation is an oversimplification or a convention used to indicate those poems where there is no first person subject. A narrating voice, however, is always present.⁹⁰ It provides the viewpoint from which readers observe what is being described. In this poem, as in most poems by Frost, the voice is distinctly characterized. There are several factors that contribute to this characterization. What catches the attention of the readers at first is the impression of the easy flow of the

⁹⁰ "There is always a teller in the tale, at least in the sense that any utterance of record presupposes someone who has uttered it" (Rimmon-Kenan 2002: 91).

description and its placid tone and rhythm, certainly affected by the visual frames evoked by the words. The impression seems a consequence, on a phonic level, of the relatively regular iambic cadence, which is a first element contributing to the recreation of the oral dimension in the text. Iambic is the meter which most closely approximates the natural rhythm of spoken English, as Frost himself observes in his essay ‘The Figure a Poem Makes.’ Here the poet argues that the meters of English language are “virtually but two, strict iambic and loose iambic” (1995: 776). Commenting on the form of the poem, Mark Richardson says:

We hear Frost’s quiet, deft metrics working within and across the iambic pentameter lines, not the clumsy “clomping” of the old man. In lines 18-23, metrical variations lend lightness of movement to lines whose grammatical and syntactical complexity might otherwise embarrass us. Frost manages the suspended grammar delicately and with a colloquial indirection that sorts well, though unusually, with the Miltonic subtleties.” (Richardson 2001: 248)

In addition to this, the poem is laden with a series of mimetic and rhetorical devices (mostly based on the repetition of words or syntactical sequences, such as anaphoric repetitions, epanalepses, funnel techniques and syntactical parallelisms) that heighten its cadence. Here are a few examples:

Example 2.1 Syntactical parallelisms

<p>What kept his eyes from giving back the gaze Was the lamp tilted near them in his hand What kept him from remembering what it was That brought him to that creaking room was age (ll. 4-7)</p>

Example 2.2 Funnel technique

<p>A light he was to no one but himself/ [...] / A quiet light,... (l. 15)</p>
<p>He consigned to the moon, such as she was, So late-arising, to the broken moon (ll. 18-19)</p>

Example 2.3 Epanalepsis

And **slept**. The log that shifted with a jolt
Once in the stove, disturbed him and he shifted,
And eased his heavy breathing, but still **slept**.
(ll. 23-25)

Example 2.4 Lexical iteration

And having **scared** the cellar under him
In **clomping** there, he **scared** it once again
In clomping off;—and **scared** the outer night,
(ll. 9-11)

These repetitions work at various levels of the composition. They perform rhythmic and literary functions, since they contribute to the echoing of sounds or the reverberation of the same image throughout the verses. They also create suspense, charging the sentences with feelings (Brower 1963: 113). However, they may also be attributed a more pragmatic function. In fact, they may resemble strategies of the oral communication in conditions of communicative immediacy used to bring a discourse up-to-date (Koch & Oesterreicher 2007: 110). It is important here to clarify what kind of mimesis of orality we are dealing with, or else we run the risk of a strained interpretation. The language of the poem certainly does not evoke, to my view, the oral dimension of a conversation among peers. It is rather a kind of orality similar to that of an offstage commentary, the orality of storytellers who have to revert to the devices described above, such as iteration in its different forms, in order to catch and keep the attention of the listeners and, at the same time, help them imagine the scene ("he consigned to the moon, such as she was, / So late-arising, to the broken moon," ll. 18-19).⁹¹ However, this association with a storyteller should be made with caution. What marks the difference between the orality of past storytellers and Frost's mimesis of orality is, among other features, that Frost avoids expressions and words belonging to a settled literary imagery, preferring to choose instead from everyday language.

⁹¹ My comment draws on Albert Lord's study of the "adding style" of oral composition (Lord 2000: 54 and 65).

The “grammatical and syntactical complexities” outlined by Richardson in the quotation above (2001: 248), confirm the impression of a language that cannot be ascribed to communicative immediacy. We observe a series of relatively complex hypotactical constructions, normally belonging to the condition of communicative distance, inasmuch as they imply a higher degree of planning. It is also possible to detect a hyperbaton (“A light he was to no one but himself,” l. 15) introducing a slight literary overtone. The presence of a net of parenthetical structures (see the example below), while evoking an oral discourse rich in asides, never leads to a lack of coherence and, as a consequence, shifts the discourse towards the more planned communicative distance.

He consigned to the moon, such as she was
So late-arising, to the broken moon
As better than the sun in any case
For such a charge, his snow upon the roof,
His icicles along the wall to keep;
And slept. [...] (ll. 18-23)

The description of some of the linguistic and rhetorical elements that characterize the language of the poem makes it possible to formulate a number of observations on the mimesis of orality achieved in it, and on its contribution to the characterization of the narrating voice as well as to the poem as a whole. I have noted that Frost's poetic recreation of speech relies here on common words and on certain phonic iterations rather than on the syntactical level of the discourse. This kind of mimesis of orality, midway between the communicative immediacy and distance, contributes effectively to defining a narrating voice whose tone is quiet, like the very scene it is describing. On the other hand, as it is the only voice in the poem and is unobtrusive, it assumes more neutral, less dramatic tones, though the plain vocabulary used, the presence of deixis and of common-speech expressions (“concerned with he knew what,” l. 16) foster the emotional involvement of readers with the situation and evoke the impression of a certain degree of familiarity. Finally, the presence of a distinct narrating voice is also suggested by other non-linguistic devices. A first hint at the voice of the narrator is given by the perspective from which the scene is depicted. In the poem there seem to be, in my opinion, three different prospective movements. The first movement is that of Nature (that is, natural

elements) looking at the old man through the window and embracing the whole house in its gaze. The second is the blind stare of the man through the frozen window panes. Finally, there is the gaze of the narrator, taken on by readers. Almost like a cinematographic travelling, the gaze of the narrator narrows down from the wider perspective of the surrounding darkness and moonlit sky on the old man in the room, and then moves back to a wider perspective in the end, as the sequence of nouns in the final lines suggest ("One aged man—one man—can't fill a house, / A farm, a countryside [...] ll. 26-27). The broad perspective achieved in the last line of the poem reveals the symbolic nature of the image depicted.

One aged man—one man—can't fill a house,
A farm, a countryside, or if he can,
It's thus he does it of a winter night.
(ll. 26-28)

Not just the old man but all humankind cannot be expected to govern a farm and in general, nature, the outside, the dark night ruled by chaos. What one can achieve is just a temporary order, "a momentary stay against confusion," that the poet can grant with his work.

2.3.2 The personal lyrical composition: 'Mowing'

I have started from the hypothesis that the genre of the composition affects the recreation of orality, and that, as the focus of the analysis moves from an impersonal lyrical poem to a personal lyrical composition, and then further on to a dramatic monologue, a dramatic dialogue and a masque, it is possible to detect a steady shift of fictional orality towards the pole of communicative immediacy. It should, however, be said that especially in Frost's work, the boundaries between one poetic genre and another are always blurred, and there is a constant tendency toward the dramatic, even in his more lyrical compositions. This is visible in 'Mowing' (from *A Boy's Will*, 1913), which Frost described as his "first talk-song" (Pritchard 1984: 53). The poem is a sonnet in pentameter with iambic lilt but also anapestic substitutions. Its rhyme scheme is irregular (abca bdec fge hgh). The complete poem reads:

There was never a sound beside the wood but one,
 And that was my long scythe whispering to the ground.
 What was it it whispered? I knew not well myself;
 Perhaps it was something about the heat of the sun,
 Something, perhaps, about the lack of sound—
 And that was why it whispered and did not speak.
 It was no dream of the gift of idle hours,
 Or easy gold at the hand of fay or elf:
 Anything more than the truth would have seemed too weak
 To the earnest love that laid the swale in rows,
 Not without feeble-pointed spikes of flowers
 (Pale orchises), and scared a bright green snake.
 The fact is the sweetest dream that labor knows.
 My long scythe whispered and left the hay to make.

In the poem the plain language of the voice of the lyrical subject does not suggest any individualistic outburst of feelings, but seems to invite almost an intimacy with the readers.⁹² The effect is achieved again by playing at various levels of the discourse. At a pragmatic level, we observe the rhetorical question (“What was it it whispered? I knew not well myself,” l. 3) that the subject asks himself and directs to the readers, as if to catch their attention.⁹³ At a lexical level, the use of vague words, or *omnibus* words, like “something” and “anything” enhances the colloquial tone of the sentences. The vagueness is further stressed by the chiasmic repetition of the words *something* and *perhaps* at the beginning of line 5, highlighted by the trochaic inversion and the caesura between the two words:

⁹² In my analysis of the poem I refer to the lyrical subject as to a male speaker. One of the reasons behind this choice is the partial identification of the speaking voice and the philosophy of life it expresses with that of the poet himself. The decision is also based on an observation of the straightforwardness of the language and its idiomatic fixity, (as represented by the aphorism in the line 13 of the poem) that usually characterizes men’s voices in Frost’s poems. It would be certainly interesting, on the other hand, to study the effect triggered by the identification of the lyrical subject with a female character, and the different set of literary and non-literary associations it may evoke (as, for example, a direct association with Wordsworth’s poem ‘The Solitary Reaper’).

⁹³ Poirier (Poirier 1977: 287) has also pointed out how the question reminds of a bucolic diaeresis.

[...] **Perhaps** it was **something** about the heat of the sun,
Something, perhaps, about the lack of sound-
(ll. 4-5)

Here vagueness is not a synonym for abstraction, however. In fact, most of the words Frost uses in the composition are concrete. Poirier remarks on this issue that “unlike Yeats or Stevens or Lawrence, Frost never let his visions abstract him from a sense of persistent and demanding daily reality” (Poirier 1977: 275). Thus the use in the sonnet of more conventionally poetical terms, such as *easy gold*, *fay*, *elf*, and abstract terms like *truth* or *love* are immediately associated with the concrete images of *swales*, *spikes of flowers*, *orchises*, and a *bright green snakes*.⁹⁴ The function of the abstract words is to trigger allusive and mythical associations (Paton 1981: 48) in the discourse, even though afterwards the lyrical subject does not proceed to speculate about them. In fact, he immediately turns back to reality in its concrete manifestations, that is to say, to the reality of labor, and this return is mirrored in his language.

Anything more than the truth would have seemed too weak
To the earnest love that laid the swale in rows,
Not without feeble -pointed spikes of flowers
(Pale orchises), and scared a bright green snake.
(ll. 9-12)

The sentence, with its asides and syntactical simplicity, suggests the speaker’s eagerness to convey the meaning of the abstract concept of *truth* in a practical way, by making reference to what he sees around him rather than through an abstract definition. His attitude is corroborated by the last sentence he utters before going back to work with his scythe: “The fact is the sweetest dream that labor knows” (l. 13). Its syntactical straightforwardness evokes popular sayings or aphorisms and stresses its common speech quality, as derived from daily experience; at the same time, it underlines the

⁹⁴ These words also point to the variety of registers in Frost’s poem. The term *swale*, in fact, belongs to the jargon of New England farmers whereas *orchises* introduces a more learned register (Borroff 1971: 46).

symbolic meaning of the sentence and its general validity.⁹⁵

In order to achieve a fuller comprehension of the kind of orality recreated in the text, the focus of the analysis should now be shifted to the formal poetic devices employed in the poem. I am briefly dwelling upon these features as I believe that, especially in a short lyrical poem like ‘Mowing’ the relationship between mimesis of orality and rhetorical poetic devices, to which Frost has made reference in numerous occasions, is even more central than in his longer poems and needs to be more carefully unravelled. The fact that both mimesis of orality and other rhetorical devices may derive from the same textual elements stresses the dialogic relationship between them and the multi-tiered effects and perspectives that their reading may simultaneously generate. It could also be argued that the interplay of mimesis of orality and poetic effects in the poem can be perceived as the second term of a simile of which the first term is the relationship exposed in the text between the ideal (the dream) and the real (the fact). In the same way that the ideal can only be experienced and be defined through experience,⁹⁶ poetry can be grasped when its elements succeed in pointing simultaneously to the poetic dimension of the composition (i.e. the imagery, the visual frames they evoke, and their symbolic value, as conveyed by poetical devices) and the language of common life through which they are experienced. I will illustrate this point through a series of examples. During the reading of the poem, my attention was drawn in line 2 on the word “whispering” in

⁹⁵ Aphoristic formulations are often found in Frost’s poetry. Paton observes: “His [Frost’s] poems often depend on the drift of colloquial language toward aphorism and vagueness. Daily speech and experience are loaded with allusiveness and metaphor” (Paton 1981: 44-45). O’Brian (2010) also comments on the function of aphorisms in Frost’s poems, noting how they serve as elements through which the individual experience turns into an example of the tendencies of human experiences. However, “though the poems contain this sort of dual force, they hardly can be said to express an awareness of that tension—the saying is presented as something naturally leading out of the described desires” (2010: 78).

⁹⁶ In Fagan (2007: 229) we find this quotation by Cleanth Brooks and Robert Penn Warren: “... Man is set off from nature because he is capable of the ‘dream,’ because he is an ideal-creating being... But man is also of nature, he fulfils himself in the world of labor and his ideals develop from the real world; he does not get his ideals from some Platonic realm of perfect ‘Ideas,’ but must create them from his experience and imagination.”

connection with “scythe.” One of the causes of the word foregrounding can be found during the reading of the line, in my opinion, in the metric scansion of the line. The term *whispering*, in fact, represents a dactylic inversion in a basically anapestic line. The rhythmical inversion stresses the word to the (imaginary) ear of the readers. Here is my reading of the line:⁹⁷

X	/	X	X	/	/	/	XX	X	X	/
And	that	was	my	long	scythe	whispering	to	the	ground	

Furthermore, the verb *to whisper* is repeated four times throughout the poem, a relatively high ratio for a composition of just 14 lines. The reiteration of the term, as already observed in the analysis of the previous poems, is a distinct feature of both orality and literary composition. In the text the function of the word is multifaceted and relies in part on the polysemy of the very word. The *Merriam Webster* online gives the following definitions of the term *To whisper*:

Intransitive verb

- 1: to speak softly with little or no vibration of the vocal cords especially to avoid being overheard
- 2: to make a sibilant sound that resembles whispering

Transitive verb

- 1: to address in a whisper
 - 2: to utter or communicate in or as if in a whisper
- (<http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/whisper>, retrieved October 11th 2010)

The second definition of the verb in its intransitive form (“to make a sibilant sound that resembles whispering”) is used in the poem to suggest the hissing of the scythe in the air and the sound the tool makes when used to cut the grass. The evocation through this verb of the sound produced by the tool can be found in the first and fourth occurrences of the term (“And that was my long scythe whispering to the ground,” l. 2; “My long scythe whispered and left the hay to make,” l. 14). The effect seems reinforced by the

⁹⁷ The line could be also read as follows X/ X/ X/ /XX XX/. The dominant rhythm would be iambic but the function of the rhythmical inversion would not change.

alliteration of the sound /s/ in the words “scythe” and “whispering.” The other two occurrences of the term (“What was it whispered? I knew not well myself”, l. 3; “And that was why it whispered and did not speak,” l. 6) seem to hint at the other three definitions given by the dictionary, which refer to an act of speech. At a semantic level, the verb represents thus a metaphor that would lead to a personification of the instrument. It is only a partial personification, since the poet avoids recurring openly to this literary device, preferring a more ambiguous effect.⁹⁸ As Paton argues:

The scythe may whisper out of awe for some spirit and respect for its silence; then again, the scythe may whisper because that is the sound scythes make. Like the sun and heat, it is not human, will never have words, and remains what it is, although with hints of more. (Paton 1981: 47)

2.3.3 The dramatic monologue: ‘A Servant to Servants’

To study and to understand Frost’s few dramatic monologues, the first step must involve an attempt to describe the main characteristics of this poetic form. Since its nature is still partially controversial, I develop a working definition by drawing on some of the numerous critical studies on the issue. The definition delimits the object of the analysis and helps justify my choice of the poem ‘A Servant to Servants’ within the body of poems of the North American poet. One of the first theoretical contributions to the

⁹⁸ The analysis of the Italian translation of the poem by Giovanni Giudici (which is not presented in chapter 4 due to the different focus given to that chapter) allowed me to differentiate more clearly the shades of meaning attributable to the verb *to whisper*. Giudici avoided adopting what seems the most straightforward solution, i.e. the identical repetition of the same word. He preferred to translate the first and forth occurrences of the word with the verb *frusciare* (literally, *to rustle*, with direct reference to the sound of leaves or grass) and the second with the verb *bisbigliare*, which would be the literal translation for *to whisper* intended as the act of speaking softly and in a low voice. This is perhaps one good example of what can be “found in traslation.” The experience also reminds me of Berman’s words: “Every text to be translated presents its own systematicity, encountered, confronted, and revealed by the translation. In this sense it was possible for Pound to say that translation is a *sui generis* form of criticism in that it lays bare the hidden structures of a text. This system-of-the-work presents the fiercest resistance to translation, while simultaneously making it possible and giving meaning” (Berman 1992: 6).

description of the dramatic monologue is Ina Beth Sessions's article 'The Dramatic Monologue' (1947). Sessions's definition identifies seven elements which a dramatic monologue must have: a speaker, an audience, an occasion, an interplay between speaker and audience, a revelation of character, a dramatic action, and an action taking place in the present (508). The critic allows for variations of the genre which do not present all the above-mentioned features, and which she differentiates as *imperfect*, *formal*, and *approximate dramatic monologue*. Rigid though it is, this definition is valuable for two reasons: on the one hand, it is one of the first studies to describe a series of features, the relevance of which may vary within the genre, but which certainly contributed to a better understanding of its structure. Moreover, it represents a landmark, prompting further critical studies as a reaction to it. In following years, for example, critics such as Langbaum (1985) stressed the need to overcome any attempt at a strict, exclusive, and static definition of the genre, as it would not allow us to understand the peculiar features of the dramatic monologues produced after the Victorians, especially by poets of the 20th century, or straddling the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, such as W.B. Yeats, T.E. Eliot, Ezra Pound, Robert Frost, Edgar Lee Masters, Edwin Arlington Robinson, Amy Lowell, and Robert Lowell (76). Langbaum proposes a definition focusing rather on "its way of meaning" (77), that is, on the way meaning is produced once a relationship of sympathetic identification is established between the speaker and the reader. Such relationship implies a suspension of judgment, a fundamental condition for readers in order for them to assume the speaker's point of view. The monological character of the composition cannot therefore be considered the discriminating feature of the genre. If it were so, than we should include within its category other kinds of compositions such as the epistle, the lover's lament, the soliloquy and even individual episodes in larger poems, such as the prologue of the Wife of Bath in Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales*.⁹⁹ While I agree with Langbaum's latter proposition that the monological feature of a poem is not enough to define it a dramatic monologue, it seems difficult to unconditionally accept his hypothesis on the sympathetic relationship between the readers and the speaker of the dramatic monologues. Glennis Byron (2003) for

⁹⁹ This is, however, what Sinfield (1977) does, opening up the concept even further.

example, while acknowledging the importance of Langbaum's contribution as precursor of reader response criticism, admits that nowadays the idea of the sympathizing reader is difficult to accept "in the wake of the destabilisation of the self that has marked poststructuralist, postcolonial and feminist theory" (21). Her analysis of Langbaum's reading of 'My Last Duchess' shows the limits of his idea of readers, which does not take into account the cultural, social, and historical identities that affect their judgments and sympathies.

Before Byron, Sinfield had emphasized the fact that in many dramatic monologues readers respond to the fictional speaker's words by seeking to identify with him or her, moving towards sympathy. However, this cannot be regarded as a general rule. In fact, on some other occasions, the identification achieved through the poet's withdrawal allows for ironic reflections (as in Browning's 'Fra Lippo Lippi') and a wider judgment than the speaker's (as in 'My Last Duchess'). Sinfield argues, moreover, that despite the presence of a character, the fact that this character speaks in the first person never allows for a complete identification with the fictive situation. On the contrary, readers would be at all times conscious of the artificiality of the situation (Sinfield 1977: 29-30). Readers of a dramatic monologue would be willing to enact that suspension of disbelief (first defined by Coleridge and now converted into a current concept in literary criticism) that enables them to identify with the first person of the monologue. At the same time, however, they would also be aware of the presence of the other "I," that of the poet behind the character, who manipulates the scene.

What we experience in the dramatic monologue [...] is a divided consciousness. We are impressed, with the full strength of first-person presentation, by the speaker and feel drawn into his point of view, but at the same time are aware that he is a dramatic creation and that there are other possible, even preferable, perspectives. This condition is a precise consequence of the status of dramatic monologue as feint: we are obliged to posit simultaneously the speaking "I" and the poet's "I."
(Sinfield 1977: 33)

The awareness of the two voices speaking within the dramatic monologue calls for a realization of the dialogism of the composition. Phelan (2005: 163) observes a “double movement of forms [which] involves a double logic:” on the one hand, we have the speaker’s progress, which follows the logic of the dramatic situation, and on the other, the audience’s understanding that moves toward a deeper knowledge and understanding of the speaker.

Moving back to Frost’s poems, I am interested in understanding how the voices of the poet and the speaker work in his dramatic monologues. More specifically, I shall first focus on how the North American poet builds orality in his dramatic monologues, through the use of devices such as interjections, repetitions, hesitation phenomena, and others belonging typically to mimesis of orality. Furthermore, I shall investigate how the fictive voice relates to the voice of the poet, and what kind of discourses it originates.

If we take into account only the formal features of the compositions, we can argue that Frost produced only two dramatic monologues: ‘A Servant to Servants’ and ‘The Pauper Witch of Grafton.’ However, other compositions in which not all formal features of the genre appear can still be considered imperfect dramatic monologues, as for example ‘The Black Cottage’ (*North of Boston*).¹⁰⁰ ‘A Servant to Servants’ appeared for the first time in

¹⁰⁰ It is difficult to decide to what extent we can stretch the category of the dramatic monologue in order to include some of Frost’s more personal lyrical compositions, such as ‘Stopping by the Woods on a Snowy Evening.’ In this poem, for example, the lyrical subject tends to be identified with the poet himself. The identification between the lyrical subject and the poet suggests that the composition can be interpreted as an interior monologue, or a soliloquy. However, there is no element that may inhibit other interpretations on the identity of the speaker. An example is offered by the translation of the poem carried out by the Catalan poet Agustí Bartra in 1951 (whose translations I analyze in chapter 5). ‘Tarda de neu al bosc’ (‘Stopping by the Woods on a Snowy Evening’) is the poem that opens the anthology’s section on Frost. When confronted with the need to solve the problem represented by the gender-indeterminacy of the English gerund *stopping*, in line 4, the translator opted for the Catalan past participle with feminine ending *aturada*. The decision to identify the lyrical subject as a woman prevents the reader from automatically identifying the lyrical subject with the poet. A consequence of this change, at a formal level, is the shift of the composition from what has been defined as a personal lyrical composition with dramatic overtones towards an imperfect dramatic monologue. As we have just seen, both genres are characterized as utterances of various voices (voice,

Robert Frost's second book of poems, *North of Boston*, published in 1914. It is a dramatic monologue written mainly in blank verse. The source of inspiration for the poem was a excursion the poet undertook with his whole family to lake Willoughby, Vermont, in the summer of 1909 (Thompson and Winnick 1981:142-143). Among the acquaintances Frost made there was a farmer's wife, whose story particularly touched the poet. Frost drew directly on her for the character of the speaker of the dramatic monologue.

In the poem, a farmer's housewife addresses an unidentified listener camping nearby. She confesses herself to be exhausted by the cares of the farm and by the daily cooking for her husband's hired men. She fears that the physical and mental exhaustion will bring her to fall back to a state of mental instability from which she suffered in the past and which seems to be part of the genetic heritage of her family. Her uncle, in fact, had also gone mad and had to be caged in the attic of her paternal house.¹⁰¹

The poem introduces from the very first line the speaker of the monologue and the silent listener. The oral quality of the speech is also immediately recognizable:

persona, speaker) of different intensities, as opposed to the impersonal lyric. However, in the personal lyrical composition the speaking voice often blurs with the voice of the poet, while in the dramatic monologue the voice of the speaker is more accomplished and autonomous and implies a different relationship with the ideal reader, as well as enacting different hermeneutic mechanisms.

¹⁰¹ Poirier makes an association between the long soliloquy of the woman and the potential insanity which seems to lie in wait within her. "The poem is a long soliloquy delivered to outsiders. In the many poems where one finds them listening to Frost's isolated country talkers these outsiders usually say nothing or so little that what pretends to be dialogue makes us at a certain point nervously wonder if it is not really only soliloquy, or an expression of mad loneliness searching through an interior monologue for a listener" (1977: 113). More generally, Lennard (2005: 57) stresses the link between the dramatic monologue as a genre and the weirdness of the speaker's personality: "Dramatic monologues are manipulative, and their speakers tend to strangeness: to Browning's *Gynocides*, Tennyson's time-wasted 'Ulysses' and 'Tithonus' [...] and Eliot's dithering Prufrock may be added MacDiarmid's inebriate in *A Drunk Man Looks at a Thistle*; Lowell's 'Mad Negro Soldier Confined at Munich', abused wife able 'To speak of the Woe that is in Marriage', and chiller driller in 'Under the dentist'; Hill's unimaginably displaced 'Ovid in the Third Reich'; Snodgrass's suicidal Nazis in *The Fuehrer Bunker*; Harrison's hallucinating mourner in *V.* ; and the foster-matricide of Gioia's 'The Homecoming.'"

I didn't make you know how glad I was
To have you come and camp here on our land.
I promised myself to get down some day
And see the way you lived, but I don't know!
With a houseful of hungry men to feed
I guess you'd find....It seems to me
(ll. 1-6)

Sentences are short, with a defined colloquial intonation allowing readers to perceive the intonational stress on specific words (as in the sentence "how *glad* I was). The adversative clause, "but I don't know" is not logically linked to the previous one and represents rather a secondary interjection, which is repeated three times throughout the monologue and is a marker of the speaker's disorientation whenever she reflects upon her current situation. As Loreto observes (1999: 118-119), it serves as a refrain that distinguishes the voice of the character and encapsulates, in a short sentence, her psychological essence. It is clear and touching, and creates an intonational climax with its iterative nature.

After the exclamation, the speaker seems lost for a moment, searching the right words and the strand of a discourse ("I guess you'd find....it seems to me") which ends in the woman's acknowledging her inability to express her own feelings ("I can't express my feelings, any more"). Her remark seems highlighted by the fragmented nature of the previous sentences as well as by the obscure syntactical links of lines 11-12 ("it's got so I don't even know for sure / whether I *am* glad, sorry, or anything" [emphasis in the original]). The use of italics ("*am*") suggests in the written medium the emphasis that should fall on the word. The impression of orality of the text is further reinforced by the use of colloquial expressions such as "if I wasn't all gone wrong" (l. 15) and also by the paratactical juxtaposition of sentences:

You take the lake. I look and look at it.
I see it's a fair, pretty sheet of water.
I stand and make myself repeat out loud
The advantages it has, so long and narrow,
(ll. 16-19)

However, as soon as the woman describes the lake and her moment of union with nature, sentences become longer and syntactically more complex, while the register, though still colloquial, introduces some poetical notes which accompany the lyrical description and the experience of the speaker.

[...] It lies five miles
Straight away through the mountain notch
From the sink window where I wash the plates,
And all our storms come up toward the house,
Drawing the slow waves whiter and whiter and whiter.
It took my mind off doughnuts and soda biscuit
To step outdoors and take the water dazzle
A sunny morning, or take the rising wind
About my face and body and through my wrapper,
When a storm threatened from the Dragon's Den,
And a cold chill shivered across the lake.
(ll. 21-31)

These lines work at multiple levels within the composition. On the one hand, as suggested above, they represent the moment of escape of the female character into nature. Poirier (1977) and Kearns (1987; 1994) have stressed the symbolic meaning of this union. Kearns (1994: 89) argues that nature represents the “female” and is potentially deadly for the male. Nature in her various manifestations, be they storms, lakes, rivers, trees or flowers, is like a mother goddess who is waiting for women to come out of their house and discover their kinship. The household, on the other hand, represent an often sterile domesticated sexuality, like the childless relationship to the speaker's husband, Len, and, as she will later hint at, like what seems to have been the relationship of the woman's parents (Kearns 1994: 89).

This relationship between woman and nature can be observed in many other poems by Frost, such as ‘In The Home Stretch,’ ‘The Pauper Witch of Grafton,’ ‘Maple,’ and ‘Home Burial’ (Kearns 1994: 86-106). Referring specifically to this poem, however, Kearns draws a close parallel between the image of the lake as seen from the kitchen window and the woman herself. The lake, with its peculiar form with both its ends appearing as if cut, is immobilized like the woman, water that does not flow anywhere (ll. 20-25). “The

tension in the speaker is personified in nature by the lake, whose deep, turbulently static water must suggest by standard symbolism a troubled sexuality manifesting itself in a self-acknowledged madness”(Kearns 1994: 95).

On a syntactical level, the sentence construction of the second excerpt becomes more complex, using hypotactically linked clauses and shifting the nature of the orality it represents towards a more written conception while still preserving the colloquial register through the common words employed in the sentences’ lexical composition. The images and sensations evoked by the visual frames connected to these words contribute to the characterization of a passionate language rich in sexual connotations (“or take the rising wind / About my face and body and through my wrapper”). Finally, on a phonic level, the hyper-metrical line 25, with its ternary rhythm, the iteration of the word “whiter”, and the alliteration of the voiced labialized velar approximant phoneme /w/, seems to suggest the hypnotic force of the elements of nature reaching their climax. Through the repetition, moreover, the attention of the reader is directed back towards a more formal level of the composition: the rhetorical phonetic devices employed by the poet in order to achieve multiple effects. Such devices are scattered throughout the poem and can be perceived from the very beginning. An example is the alliteration in the iambic pentameter of line 2,

x / x / x / / x x /
 To have you **c**ome and **c**amp here on our land;

or the repetition, assonance and consonance in line 16: “You **t**ake the **l**ake. I **l**ook and **l**ook at it”. Here, as Loreto observes, the verse is split by a strong central caesura in two hemistichs which construct an antithesis between the *I* and *You* in the sentences. At the same time, however, the internal rhyme of the words *take* and *lake*, the iteration of *look*, the assonance among *take*, *lake*, and the alliteration of the phonemes /l/ and /k/, create an orchestration of sounds which seem to spring one from another (Loreto 1999: 124). Readers are deliberately made aware of the sound effects of the line. This feature belongs typically, although not exclusively, to the genre of the dramatic monologue. The phonic devices highlight how language works both at a communicative and at an expressive level to produce an awareness of the poetic design behind the narrative.

As a consequence, the experience of reading becomes dual. On the one hand, the reading of a first person discourse spurs readers to share momentarily the speaker's point of view, even though it does not necessarily imply a suspension of the judgment (as Langbaum, on the contrary, argues). On the other hand, the rhetorical devices remind readers of the poetical construct and of the poet's intention behind it.¹⁰² As we shall see later on in the analysis, the dialogism enhanced by the rhetorical devices and the peculiar nature of the dramatic monologue help open up the poem to multiple layers of interpretations (psychological, social, etc.).

As we read the poem, the experience of this dual perspective becomes clearer. After the brief moment of rapture that comes from the recollection of her vision of nature, the woman seems to come back to the reality of conversation and asks her listener a few questions, not really expecting an answer, which may increase in readers the impression of loneliness of the character. The tone is again conversational, but as soon as she approaches the issue that probably impelled her to begin the conversation (her experience of temporary mental instability, and the extenuating conditions of work at home) her sentences become convulsive and interrupted by asides, as the numerous dashes suggest:

He looks on the bright side of everything,
Including me. He thinks I'll be all right
With doctoring. But it's not medicine—
Lowe is the only doctor's dared to say so—
It's rest I want—there, I have said it out—
From cooking meals for hungry hired men
And washing dishes after them—from doing
Things over and over that just won't stay done.
(ll.45-52)

It is interesting to observe how the poem's structure hints at the poet's directing intention. The enjambment of lines 46-47 ("He thinks I'll be right / with doctoring") seems to willingly delay the surprising revelation, that the woman needs doctoring, leaving

¹⁰² "Even the most colloquial monologues are plainly poems; the couplets in 'My Last Ducheess' are unobtrusive but nevertheless there. We feel continuously the pressure of the poet's mind" (Sinfield 1977: 29-30).

readers unsure as to what kind of doctoring she may need, since no clue is immediately given about the kind of illness the speaker allegedly suffers.

We learn then that the main problem is represented by the endless activities involved in household tasks and cooking for the husband's hired men, which lie heavily on her shoulders and exhaust her: hired men who keep coming and going through the lockless house-door and who do not even perceive her presence, while taking for granted her work. Her husband, even though not openly criticized, does not seem to differ much from these "great good-for-nothings" (l. 76). He undertakes too much without real profit and is taken advantage of by his hired men. He seems to be a caring husband, but the woman's words betray a different picture of the man, which she only partly consciously acknowledges. The words that seem to characterize him most subtly are uttered by the woman earlier in the poem. Both sections have a distinct oral quality mainly due to their nature of idiomatic expression or of popular saying:

He looks on the bright side of everything

Including me . . .

.....

He says, *the best way out is always through*

And I agree to that, or in so far

As that I can see no way out but through—

(ll. 45-46, 56-58)

The sentences highlighted above, with their fixed idiomatic structure, hint at the man's attitude. The first seems to include a note of veiled irony in the appendix the speaker adds to the expression ("including me"), which seems confirmed by the comment the speaker appends to the second popular saying. Both expressions, but especially the second, also suggest an intertextual reference to another popular proverb, which, like a refrain, rhythmically marks the first poem of *North of Boston*, 'Mending Wall.' In this poem, two men attend to the maintenance of a wall separating their lands. While the speaker does not understand the use of a wall that natural elements seem to oppose and pull down every year, his neighbor replies to his arguments with a proverb he learned from his father: "Good fences make good neighbors" (l. 27 and l. 45). These are the only words he pronounces, or at least the

only response reported by the speaker, and they seem to suggest, as Poirier argues, that the lyrical speaker is actually talking to himself (1977: 105).¹⁰³ The repetition of the sentence may give some clue on the speaker's opinion of his neighbor as a narrow-minded man who eschews constructive dialogue.¹⁰⁴ Like the neighbour in 'Mending Wall,' the speaker's husband, Len, in 'A Servant to Servants,' seems to prefer entrenching himself behind popular sayings in order to avoid dialogue. It is a way of escaping a confrontation with the reality of his wife's potential mental instability, which the hard conditions at home seem to be about to provoke, and to turn a deaf ear to the warning signals his wife is sending him. Finally, these words, indirectly reported by the speaker, remind us of a basic difference in the language of man and woman, as it is often represented in Frost's poems. While men's discourse in Frost seems to follow rational patterns which are mirrored in their language by more fixed structures, women's discourse appears to unfold at an emotional level, as the more fragmented structure of their language seems to suggest.¹⁰⁵

Maintaining the same colloquial tone, and in the same chatty mode adopted before, the speaker informs the listener that her father's brother (whom she never calls *uncle*, as a way of distancing objectively and empathically from him) had turned mad for love and had been confined to a cage made of hickory bars in one of the upper rooms of the house.¹⁰⁶ Prior to the description of her uncle's

¹⁰³ In the same vein, Watson also defines this poem as dramatic monologue (1971: 653).

¹⁰⁴ Much has been written on whether the speaker's point of view actually represents the poet's own point of view (thus accepting the straight identification of poet and speaker), or rather whether it represents just one point of view, opposed to the neighbour's, which the poet presents unbiased, like the two sides of the same wall. For further reference see John C. Kemp (1979), Norman N. Holland (1988: 23-31); and Mark Richardson (1997), among others.

¹⁰⁵ The multiple functions carried out by proverbs in Frost's poems, and more specifically by proverbs in *North of Boston*, where they are recurrent, is stressed by O'Brian (2010: 88), who observes: "The expressions do contribute to the regional atmosphere and sense of oral culture for which the entire volume was praised. For the most part they emanate from males, express a formulaic, automatic response to emotional matters, and attempt to damn up the flow of misery, grief, and doubt. Importantly, Frost's treatment of them is often sympathetic."

¹⁰⁶ As already hinted at in the brief introduction to Frost's poetry, madness is an important theme, since it appears, in different forms and degrees, in some of the

story, she reveals to the listener, in a significantly brief sentence, that she had also been locked up for a while in an asylum:

I've been away once—yes, I've been away.
The State Asylum. I was prejudiced [...]
(ll. 90-91)

The oral quality of the sentences quoted above is an example of the variety of devices the poet uses to build his perception of orality within the metrical structure. Line 90, for example, presents a phenomenon of hesitation followed by the re-statement of the previous sentence. In the following verse we find a holophrastic expression (“The State Asylum”). The sense here goes well beyond the literal meaning of the words and emphasizes the woman’s stance and the intensity of her emotions. Even though it is true that words and sentences in a literary or poetic context are always carrier of a plurality of meanings which exceed the literal one, what I would like to stress here is the poet’s strategy of entrusting the communication of meaning mainly to a series of pragmatic mechanisms which usually characterize the oral conversation. It is the listener, in this case not so much the silent listener to whom the woman speaks but rather the reader of the poem, who must infer the

most remarkable and popular of his poems. It is also a very wide theme that has been approached by different perspectives in the critical literature on Frost. The link to the poet’s life experience is clear. His sister Jeanie and his daughter Irma had to be confined to a mental hospital, whereas his only son, Carol, committed suicide in 1940. Frost himself, as well as his mother and wife, suffered periods of depression. However, in his poems madness achieves a wider, symbolic meaning. ‘A Servant to Servants’ is in this sense emblematic. Due to the complexity of the issue it cannot be tackled here. I prefer to refer to the interesting work by Katherine Kearns (1987; 1994: 86-106), who studies the theme of insanity in relation to the opposition man-woman, and the power positions occupied by them in Frost’s universe. In the poems the attic turns into a place of confinement for madmen, while madwomen (twentieth-century women) move out of the attic into the open air. The image of the mad uncle in the attic is a link to Frost’s poem ‘The Witch of Coös,’ in which a woman imagines that the bones of her lover, whom she has probably killed, climb up to the attic of the house. Faggen (2001: 225-232) provides another interesting study on the issue. The scholar relates the theme of madness in women as found in Frost’s poems to the notion of hereditary inheritance as developed by Darwinian psychology, which turned the insanity into a Calvinistic form of predestination. The eugenics movement considered women as source of low animal-sexuality and bestiality, and, by relating them to animality, it associated them with the risk of insanity.

meaning of what is being said through a series of implicatures derived from the given or imagined context. These devices introduce a tension between the perspective of the speaker, her limited awareness of her own words and actions, and the wider understanding of readers.¹⁰⁷ The subjectivity of the conclusions, however, grants no final certainty to readers, and leaves the field open to other interpretations.

The woman's statement, "But it's not so: the place is the asylum" (l. 97) works in a similar way. The fixity of the latter sentence has the common sense quality of a popular formula and stresses the woman's conviction that the asylum is the proper place not just because insane people are better taken care of there, but especially because "you aren't darkening other people's lives" (l. 99). On the other hand, its iconic shortness adds pathos to the speaker's denunciation of the condition of the woman locked up in marriage like the madmen in his cage. A destiny similar to hers had also awaited her mother, for whom marriage had meant sharing a house with her husband's mad brother:

Father and mother married, and mother came,
A bride, to help take care of such a creature,
And accommodate her young life to his.
That was what marrying father meant to her.
She had to lie and hear love things made dreadful
By his shouts in the night. He'd shout and shout
Until the strength was shouted out of him,
And his voice died down slowly from exhaustion.
(ll. 126-133)

The intensity of these lines and their "terrifying beauty"¹⁰⁸ are particularly arresting. Line 130, "She had to lie and hear love things

¹⁰⁷ Describing the main features of the dramatic monologue, Culler (1975: 367) observes: "Indeed in the modern view the peculiar structure of the dramatic monologue depends entirely upon this tension between sympathy and judgment—on the dramatic irony that arises from the contrast between the limited understanding the speaker has of his own words and the larger, encompassing understanding of the poet and reader."

¹⁰⁸ Which indeed made me understand better than any explanation what Lionel Trilling meant, when he defined Frost a "terrifying poet," in his much commented upon discourse held on occasion of Frost's eighty-fifth birthday. In the closure of

made dreadful,” is notable indeed for its sonority, euphony, and the interplay of different sounds which seem to chase each other. This effect is achieved by the alliteration of the alveolar lateral approximant sonorous phoneme /l/ (lie, love), the retroflex plosive sonorous /d/ (*had, made, dreadful*), the presence of other sonorous phonemes /v/, /m/ and the imperfect assonance (lie, love). The sound accompanies the sense and seems to suggest a romantic reference to love things, sweet words that lovers may whisper at each other’s ear. The contrast is all the more jarring and shocking for readers when we realize that these words are actually “made dreadful” by the shouts of the madman which echo, through the obsessive repetition of the word *shout*, in the reader’s ears as the shouts themselves echoed at night to the young bride. But the terrifying aspect of the lines becomes clearer when we become aware that the scene described by the speaker does not just refer to a conversation between two lovers, but rather to a sexual act, carried out at night and probably with no pleasure for the speaker’s mother. The love things that the young bride mentions may thus be both the words pronounced during the sexual act, which acquire obscene connotations and at the same time the words of the madman (“Anyway all he talked about was love,” l. 110) deformed by the bestiality of his shouts.

The story of her uncle’s madness ends quite abruptly (“They found a way to put a stop to it,” l. 139), reminding readers of the eerie and mysterious words that the Duke in Browning’s ‘My Last Duchess’ utters when he concludes the story he is telling the emissary of his potential second wife’s family: “This grew; I gave commands; / Then all smiles stopped together” (ll. 45-46).

his discourse, Trilling said: “I hope that you will not think it graceless of me that on your birthday I have undertaken to say that a great many of your admirers have not understood clearly what you have been doing in your life in poetry.... And I hope that you will not think it graceless of me that on your birthday I have made you out to be a poet who terrifies. When I began to speak I called your birthday Sophoclean and that word has, I think, controlled everything I have said about you. Like you, Sophocles lived to a great age, writing well; and like you, Sophocles was the poet his people loved most. Surely they loved him in some part because he praised their common country. But I think that they loved him chiefly because he made plain to them the terrible things of human life: they felt, perhaps, that only a poet who could make plain the terrible things could possibly give them comfort” (Thompson & Winnick 1981: 476-77).

The narrative continues and the listener is informed of how the speaker and her husband, much to the housewife's relief, finally moved away from the paternal house, leaving behind the hickory bar cage in the attic that was for her a constant reminder of her own latent insanity. But happiness in the new home would not last long either ("Somehow the change wore out like a prescription," l. 154). The idiomatic expression "wore out like a prescription" conveys in an almost visual way the waning of her enthusiasm for the new situation and the beautiful surroundings. The change in the focus of the discourse, from the narrative of past events to the present is, like a refrain, marked again by the exclamation "but I don't know!" repeated here for the third time. The expression introduces the same doubts and uncertainties as before about the present, expressed by asides ("[...] I'm past such help— / Unless Len took the notion, which he won't, / And I won't ask him—it's sure enough" ll. 156-158), dubitative clauses suggesting a sense of disorientation which is heightened, at a phonic level, by an alliteration that reinforces the impression of confusion ("Unless Len", "which he won't") and, at a semantic level, by the visual frames of the words, ("I s'pose I've got to go the road I'm going," l. 159); rhetorical questions ("Other folks have to, and why shouldn't I," l. 160); and loose syntactical links ("But it might be, come night, I shouldn't like it, / or a long rain [...]," ll. 163-164).

All these devices contribute to define the psychology of a woman brought by her present and past conditions of life to a point of total disorientation, split between the rational and clear call to duty and the blurred claims to pleasure of her deeper emotional consciousness, which she perceives but is unable to accept unreservedly ("I haven't courage for a risk like that," l. 170). The final lines of the monologue give the last strokes to the portrait of the speaker. The wider perspective of the readers enables them to comprehend her beyond her own self-awareness and regard her as a woman trapped behind much subtler bars, bars provided by social conventions, by the daily and marital duties, and, above all, by her own fears and uncertainties, rocking between desire, repression and loss of contact with her own nature, and can be inferred from the last lines of the poem:

But behind's behind. The worst that you can do
Is set me back a little more behind.

I sha'n't catch up in this world, anyway.
I'd rather you'd not go unless you must.
(ll.174-177)

2.3.4 The dramatic dialogue: 'Home Burial'

Most of the poems included in the book *North of Boston* (1914) have a dramatic structure. Not all of them are exclusively dramatic, however. 'Home Burial,' which I analyze in this section, is a long dramatic dialogue between a husband and a wife, whose name is Amy. As in most of Frost's dramatic poems, the oral register contributes to the representation of a situation of communicative immediacy and helps define the psychology of the characters. Their language, in fact, while sharing common traits of orality, unveils their different personalities, behaviors and philosophies of life. Understanding how orality is built up in the text may therefore become a hermeneutic instrument to grasp what is actually unsaid in the dialogue, and may help readers to achieve a holistic view of the poem and its implications regarding its implied author and its culture. Despite their mainly dramatic structure, most of the time Frost's poems present a combination of dialogue, lyric, narrative, and idyll.¹⁰⁹ Compared to other dramatic dialogues, such as 'The Death of the Hired Man,' studied above, 'Home Burial' can be considered a poem in which the dramatic structure dominates the composition, although there are also short narrative asides that introduce the scene to readers and give hints about the gestures of the characters. As the narrative unwinds and the poem achieves its climax, the narrator's asides become less frequent and shorter, and finally disappear. The development of the action, in itself rather uneventful, relies then exclusively on the dialogue and on the inferences of the readers.

'Home Burial' is a poem of 120 lines in an iambic pentameter the regularity of which is often disrupted by hypermetric lines and by inversions in the order of stresses in the metrical feet. The presence

¹⁰⁹ As Brower notes (1963: 156), for example, referring to the form of 'Two Look at Two': "In form 'Two Look at Two' is almost as novel as 'After Apple-Picking,' which we tentatively called a 'lyric idyll.' Only a very rigid classifier would be happy with any single term for 'Two Look at Two' [...]. Some hyphenated hybrid combining dialogue, lyric, narrative, dramatic monologue, and idyll seem called for. Frost himself, if asked, would probably say 'eclogue.'"

of this irregularity seems to hint from the very beginning, as Kearns argues (1994: 77), at a lack of control in the use of the language and, as a consequence, at the inability of the couple in the poem to communicate their different experience of grief.¹¹⁰ While disclosing their frustration, the text also points to the sincerity of their expressions and feelings. They have lost their child, and while the man seems to have accepted the loss as a tragic part of life, the woman cannot overcome the event. What shocks and destabilizes her is not just the child's death in itself, but also what she considers her husband's absolute lack of sensitivity, his inability to recognize the tragedy of the loss, which converts the event into a symbol of the condition of humankind in relation to death. According to Amy, her husband prefers to efface the experience with conventional sentences that deny the reality of the death. He cannot speak about his child's death because he does not know how to. Amy's grief has existential grounds. Her son's death reminds her of the solitude and defenselessness of humankind when faced with death, and her accusations against her husband become, by the end of the poem, a wider denunciation of the evil of the world and of the indifference of humankind. As she says toward the end of the poem, people prefer to turn their backs on the dying and on the unfathomable mystery of death, focusing instead on the comforting certainties of common life:

You *couldn't* care! The nearest friends can go
With anyone to death, comes so far short
They might as well not try to go at all.
No, from the time when one is sick to death,
One is alone, and he dies more alone.
Friends make pretence of following to the grave,
But before one is in it, their minds are turned
And making the best of their way back to life
And living people, and things they understand.
(ll. 102-110 [emphasis in the original])

¹¹⁰ According to Brodsky (1997: 39), conversely, the poem should not be interpreted as a tragedy of incommunicability, but as "a tragedy of communication, for communication's logical end is the violation of your interlocutor's mental imperative. This is a poem about language's terrifying success, for language, in the final analysis, is alien to the sentiments it articulates."

The poem starts *in medias res* and the setting is in itself dramatic, as it visually stresses the polarity of the positions of the characters. A stairway dominates the opening scene; at the lower end stands the husband who observes his wife, Amy. The woman, unaware of his presence, is looking fearfully over her shoulder, out of the window, as readers soon learn. The narrator takes on the husband's focalization and presents the scene in the first five lines:

He saw her from the bottom of the stairs
Before she saw him. She was starting down,
Looking back over her shoulder at some fear.
She took a doubtful step and then undid it
To raise herself and look again. He spoke
(ll. 1-5)

Throughout the poem the point of view switches from husband to wife. The way the two characters come closer to each other and then move apart resembles a tragic dance, as symbolically charged as their own language, the visual frame of which is already evoked in Amy's "doubtful step," immediately undone, in line 4.¹¹¹

Both the woman's and the man's voices share traits of an orality approaching the pole of the communicative immediacy. This is coherent with the communicative situation depicted, that is, an informal conversation between people who share a high degree of intimacy. For this reason, both the masculine and feminine voices are characterized by oral structures such as interjections, holophrastic expressions, parataxis, phatic markers, hesitation

¹¹¹ During the conversation the husband climbs the stairs while Amy first sinks on the steps under him ("she cowered under him," l. 11) and then flees him ("She withdrew shrinking from beneath his arm," l. 33) and glides downstairs to the house door. Kearns comments on this feature of the poem, stressing how it reflects and adds shades of meaning to the characters' words and to the relationship of dominance, submission and rebellion existing between them. According to Brodsky the scene is a *pas de deux*, conveyed by the euphonic and alliterative sounds of the sentences: "I mean the *ds* in this line [l. 4], in 'doubtful' and in 'undid it,' although the *ts* matter also. 'Undid it' is particularly good, because you sense the spring in that step. And that profile in its opposition to the movement of the body—the very formula of a dramatic heroine—is straight out of a ballet as well" (Brodsky 1997: 23).

phenomena etc. Here are a few examples taken from the husband's speech when addressing his wife:¹¹²

Example 2.5

A. I will find out—you must tell me, dear' (l. 12)
B. But at last he murmured, 'Oh', and again, 'Oh'. (17)
C. But I understand: it is not the stones, But the child's mound— (ll. 29-30)
D. She moved the latch a little. 'Don't—don't go' (l. 56)

Other similar examples can be found in Amy's speech:

Example 2.6

A. 'Don't, don't, don't, don't,' she cried (l. 31)
B. 'Not you! Oh where's my hat? Oh, I don't need it! I must get out of here. I must get air. I don't know rightly whether any man can' (ll. 36-38)

While sharing common features belonging to the oral dimension of the communicative immediacy, the voices are also clearly distinguishable.¹¹³ It is interesting to observe Frost's mastery in the handling of the various devices composing his mimesis of orality in order to define his characters, their psychology and attitude. In 'Home Burial,' as in other poems where the contrast between wife and husband is portrayed, and as we have already seen in 'A Servant to Servants,' the woman's speech seems to unfold along a line the logic of which is dictated more by an emotional than by a rational consciousness. This does not mean that it lacks coherence. It leads rather to a more immediate, but also more fragmentary, and at times empathic expression of her ideas and emotions, as compared to the man's use of language. It seems to be pointing to the fact that emotions, like the essential meaning of life, cannot be communicated by appealing to the conventional or institutionalized meaning attributed to words. They reside rather in the void between

¹¹² Example 2.5B represents the narrator's voice reporting in direct speech the husband's words of surprise.

¹¹³ Phelan, J. (2004: 40). observes: "As Frost shows Amy and her husband responding to each other in their moments of painful conflict he also uses those responses to reveal something beyond the particulars of the drama: their different attitudes toward grief and the consequences of those attitudes."

words, in the unsaid, which can be grasped only indirectly. Amy's stance towards language is synthetically represented by two lines. The first is an answer to her husband claiming his right to speak of his own child, to which she answers: "You can't because you don't know how to speak" (l. 75). The second, almost at the end of the poem, refers to her refusal to consider the conventional language (*talk*) a valid instrument of communication: "*You—oh, you think the talk is all*" (l. 112 [emphasis in the original]).

Another interesting example of the oral traits of the woman's language is given in line 31 quoted above ("Don't, don't, don't, don't," she cried"). The quadruple repetition of the negation "don't" is also emblematic for the adroitness through which the impression of orality accommodates to the metric structure.¹¹⁴ Yet another example of Amy's individual voice is seen in the following lines, which also represent a pivotal moment in the poem:

You can't because you don't know how to speak.
If you had any feelings, you that dug
With your own hand—how could you? —his little grave;
I saw you from that very window there,
Making the gravel leap and leap in air,
Leap up, like that, like that, and land so lightly
And roll back down the mound beside the hole.
I thought, Who is that man? I didn't know you.
And I crept down the stairs and up the stairs
To look again, and still your spade kept lifting.
(ll. 71-80)

The impression of orality is here partly conveyed by the simple syntactical structure of the sentences and their fragmentation, as for example in the hypothetical construction, where the protasis is not followed by the apodosis, but is rather interrupted by a series of asides ("If you had any feelings, you that dug / With your own hand—how could you? —his little grave," l. 73). On a lexical and phonic level what draws the readers' attention is the repetition of

¹¹⁴ On this specific line Frost commented to John Cournois: "I also think well of those four 'don'ts' in Home Burial. They would be good in prose and they gain something from the way they are placed in the verse" (quoted in Steele 2001: 129).

the word “leap,” which is a clue to the obsessive thoughts of the woman and, at the same time, reproduces the rhythmical movement of the spade digging the grave. The image is reinforced by the epizeuxis represented by the contiguous repetition of the expression *like that*, which, being a deictic is also a strong marker of orality. At a semantic level, as already seen, the woman’s accusation makes explicit what her language is already saying: they are speaking different languages, which is why her husband cannot talk of their dead child.

The discourse of Amy’s husband seems to follow a more rational structure, and at the same time a more matter-of-fact philosophy, which can be inferred through the linguistic, stylistic and semantic devices he uses during his conversation with his wife. His vocabulary is plain, and his syntax, while still simple, is not so fragmented and presents fewer hesitation phenomena. A first example of his language can be found in lines 21-31, where the man, having realized what his wife has been looking at from out of the window, gives a detailed account of the scene:

The wonder is I didn’t see at once.
I never noticed it from here before.
I must be wonted to it — that’s the reason.
The little graveyard where my people are!
So small the window frames the whole of it.
Not so much larger than a bedroom, is it?
There are three stones of slate and one of marble,
Broad-shouldered little slabs there in the sunlight
On the sidehill. We haven’t to mind those.
But I understand: it is not the stones,
But the child’s mound—
(ll. 21-31)

The oral quality of the husband’s language is conveyed by the string of juxtaposed simple sentences, by the enumeration of common nouns, and by the stress on the deictic pronoun *those* in line 29. The sentences, though at times incomplete as they lack verbs in the main clauses (as, for example, in lines 24-26: “The little graveyard where my people are! / So small the window frames the whole of it. / Not so much larger than a bedroom, is it?”) do not seem to fragment the discourse. The only moment when the flow of words is interrupted

is when the man achieves the real focus of the discourse, that is, the child's grave. The ensuing impression is of a more rational and emotionally stable speech which at the same time lets readers infer the character's lack of sensitivity to his wife's grief. The inference takes place at the semantic level of the discourse through the morbid association the man makes between the graveyard, as framed by the window, and the couple's bedroom, the most intimate place of the house, where procreation and birth take place. The husband's language is, moreover, interspersed with formulaic or idiomatic expressions which convey a certain fixed quality to what he is saying. An example is given by line 37 ("Can't a man speak of his own child he's lost"), repeated in line 74 ("A man can't speak of his own child that's dead"), that makes reference, as Brodsky (1997: 32) points out, to a vernacular proverb. A second example can be found in lines 49-50 ("A man must partly give up being a man / with women-folk"), and above all in the words he utters after having dug his child's grave, as reported by his wife: "three foggy mornings and one rainy day / Will rot the best birch fence a man can build" (ll. 92-93). Like the husband in 'A Servant to Servants,' the neighbour in 'Mending Wall' and, though with different overtones, like Warren in 'The Death of the Hired Man,' the male figure seems to find in the fixity of these formulaic expressions a solid element upon which to build his perception of reality and at the same time a shield that protects him from its dangers (such as the need to face the inscrutability of death, the threat of being abandoned, madness, or the acceptance of Mercy when opposed to Justice, themes that we find in the poems just mentioned).

Finally, I shall consider the last line of the poem, reporting the man's speech and the threat he addresses his wife as she is about to open the door and leave him: "I'll follow and bring you back by force. I *will!*—" (l. 116 [emphasis in the original]). The meaning of the first part of the segment would not be difficult to interpret, were it not for the final italicized auxiliary verb ("will") and the em dash. The italic print here suggests those suprasegmental features (such as intonation, stress, pitch) which in oral communication help emphasize some words or chunks of speech. At the same time the long em dash hints at, or could be interpreted as, a written transposition of a hesitation phenomenon conveyed in an oral speech through a facial expression or a gesture. Both elements shift

the meaning to a level beyond words and leave the readers baffled as to the significance they should attribute to the segment. What are the real intentions of the husband? How can his attitude be defined? What tone of voice is he assuming? The potential variety of different interpretations of the final line seems to confirm its ambiguous nature, showing once again the intentionally contradictory quality of Frost's poetry.

Within the multitude of elements constituting the poem, mimesis of orality can thus be considered as a device (one of many, certainly, but not less important) that provides a common dimension to unite the two characters while pointing at the same time at their irreconcilable differences. It does not recompose the conflict, does not indicate a conclusion of the confrontation, but opens it up to an infinite series of interpretations.

2.3.5 Approximation to drama: *A Masque of Reason*

The analysis of *A Masque of Reason* seems an appropriate conclusion to this brief excursus on the recreation of spoken language in Frost's poems. Due to its dramatic form, the masque is certainly a genre, in Frost at least, where mimesis of orality can naturally unfold.¹¹⁵ On the other hand, because of its verse form (iambic pentameter), the genre does not depart significantly from the form of the previously analyzed poems, especially the dramatic monologue and dialogue. As a consequence, it is exemplary of the tension between poetical devices and mimesis of orality, which is the object of the study and which would not be found in Frost's three plays, written in prose: *A Way out* (1929), *In an Art Factory*, and *The Guardeen*, not published during the poet's lifetime.¹¹⁶

Frost's unusual choice of the masque as a literary genre has prompted a debate over the reasons, the meaning, and the function

¹¹⁵ As Loreto (1999: 55) observes, "il masque era un approdo naturale per l'ispirazione frostiana, perché sovrappone per definizione l'intonazione del dialogo al metro dei versi" [The masque was a natural outlet for Frost's inspiration, since it superimposes, by definition, the intonation of dialogue with the meter of verse].

¹¹⁶ Mimesis of orality, as a cluster of rhetorical devices, always implies a tension with the form of the text, and, as a consequence, also with the prose form, which, however, I have excluded from this study.

of the composition.¹¹⁷ The choice is considered unusual since the masque was already an obsolete genre by the time Frost wrote his piece.¹¹⁸ Though its origins may be traced as far back as the Roman *Fabulae Atellanae* and the medieval Mummeries or Disguisings, it is with Ben Jonson at the court of the British sovereign James I and his successor Charles I in the seventeenth century that the genre achieved its canonical form and its moment of highest popularity.¹¹⁹ It consisted of a pageant, usually held indoors at court or at the mansions of members of the gentry, and followed by a masked ball. The characters of the ball were called *revellers* and were usually wearing disguises of animals or other allegorical figures from which the term masque derives. The sovereigns or members of the court would even take part in it. Scholars have speculated over the relationship between the genre in its traditional form and Frost's masque. Loreto (1999a: 156-157; 1999b), for example, sees the link between Frost's masque and its traditional form especially in the game of masking and unmasking a truth which is a revelation already contained in us that we must recognize: a platonic anamnesis. Others, like Stanlis (1974: 441-460) and Herren (2001: 83) prefer to put *A Masque of Reason* in relationship within the North American literary tradition rather than the Jacobean and Caroline one. The scholars are not denying the existence of any link with the Jacobean and Caroline tradition. However, they place this relationship at a formal level of the composition. Frost's masque, like the Jonsonian masque, was written in verse and was formally close to poetry. According to Herren, "though both pieces [*A Masque of Reason* and Frost's second masque, *A Masque of Mercy*] have been staged, they should be interpreted as as closet dramas in which distinctly human, American, and modern prototypes engage in ideological debates via colloquial blank verse" (2001: 83).

¹¹⁷ For an effective summary of critical responses to *A Masque of Reason* see Kilcup (1998: 233-234)

¹¹⁸ Frost's interest in the genre can be dated back to the year when he was teaching at the Pinkerton Academy in Derry (1909). During that time he staged with his students a series of plays, including Milton's *Comus*, as I have already observed earlier in this chapter. Moreover, he was also in touch and admired Percy MacKey, poet in residence at the Miami University (Ohio). Mackey was also a writer and a playwright and had written several masques in the attempt to revive the genre (see also Brock 1978: 137-138).

¹¹⁹ For more detailed information on the masque see also Lindley (1995: xiv), Butler (1990: 141), Prendergast (1896-97: 126), and Orgel (1981).

Stanlis, on the other hand, makes direct reference to Milton's *Comus* (staged in 1634 and published in 1637). According to the scholar, Frost's two plays, like *Comus*, which is a pastoral drama more than a masque, depend more on poetry than on performance and their aim is to present a religious or philosophical problem (444).¹²⁰ These observations should certainly be taken into account when analyzing the recreation of the spoken language in a text which is a work to be read and to be staged.

Finally, due to the ironic representation of its characters, *A Masque of Reason* has also been considered by Stanlis (1974) and Brock (1978) among others as an *anti-masque*. This genre, the origin of which is usually attributed to Ben Jonson, performs through an ironic reversal the parodic function of unveiling the mechanisms of the very masque which it introduces.¹²¹ According to Stanlis, however (and unlike the typical Jonsonian masque), the humor and wit that characterizes so much of Frost's poetical production would be an integral part of the plot of the play rather than a mere comment on the events (1974: 444). Brock, on the other hand, interprets *A Masque of Reason* as an antimasque introducing the issue of divine justice in the ironic terms of the apparent irrationality and incomprehensibility of the unjustified suffering imposed by God on the righteous Job. The issue would find its solution in Frost's second masque (*A Masque of Mercy*), which

¹²⁰ The scholar also comments: "Although Frost had a brief 'juvenile dream of Broadway' for *A Masque of Reason*, he was in the end 'content...with the pair of masques as poems...'" (Stanlis 1974: 444). See also Parini (1999: 349).

¹²¹ Beside the previously mentioned bibliography on the masque, see also the comments of Shohet (2006: 182) and Loreto (1999a: 158). The antimasque was first performed in Jonson's *Masque of Queens* (1609). Jonson wrote it following Anne of Denmark's suggestion, "to think on some dance or show that might precede hers, and have the place of a foil, or a false masque," as the author himself writes in his introduction to the play (quoted in Lindley 1995: 32). As Lindley observes, while the masque's main goal was praise, either of the sovereign or of a courtier, the antimasque offered an opportunity to present a disguised critique of the political class, or to articulate a problem. Its political agenda and corrective intentions, however, were only partly hidden. Their effectiveness and subversive energies were toned down by the inclusion of the antimasque in the masque itself (Lindley 1995: xiv).

introduces the concept of divine mercy, going beyond the limited conception of human justice.¹²²

Frost's *A Masque of Reason* draws inspiration from the *Book of Job*, of which it is an imaginary sequel, as the ironic last line of the play indicates ("here endeth chapter fourty-three of Job"). There are just four characters on the scene: God, Job, his wife Thyatira and, near the end, the Devil. A thousand years have passed since Job's first encounter with God, and now the man, having recovered from all his disgraces, is enjoying a second youth with his wife in Heaven, in some "fair oasis in the purest desert." The sudden appearance of God from a burning bush stirs in the couple ancient unanswered questions on the reason why God had allowed Job's cruel persecution by the Devil. God's first attempt to delay and avoid a direct answer is hampered by Job's arguing the centrality of reason in human life and his expectation of a design behind all events. The answer God finally gives Job is even more baffling than the previous excuses:

I was just showing off to the Devil, Job
As is set forth in chapter one and two.
(ll. 327-328)

There is thus no real answer to Job's question and no solution to the enigma of God's reasons, at least not according to humankind's cognitive capacities and their limited idea of reason. The last lines present Job, God, and the Devil together around God's shaky plywood throne while Thyatira takes a Kodak picture of them, saying: "You'd as well smile as frown on the occasion" (Frost 1995: 388). Here, the lack of any added stage direction giving a hint as to the expressions that the actors on stage may assume, does not allow for a closer interpretation of the composition of the conflict between reason and justice, good and evil, leaving it open to speculation.

¹²² On the complementarity of the two masques see also Irwin (1960). However, Loreto (1999: 159-160) considers the structure of Frost's *A Masque of Reason* as corresponding to the classical structure of the genre, including in it both antimasque and masque, even though the opposition is transferred from the exterior dimension of chronological time, to an interior one marked by the psychological time.

A closer analysis of the masque reveals a composition of stylistic and structural complexity. What draws readers' attention first is Frost's handling of a sacred theme—the story of Job—and a tragic issue—the acknowledgement of humankind's limitations in the face of the inscrutable reasons of God—with apparent lightheartedness, irony and humor leading at times to overtly comic moments. These features also represent fundamental traits of Frost's poetics, and could be summarized under the labels of *grief*, *philosophy*, *taste*, and *humor*. In the masque they seem to find, as Brock (1978) points out, the ideal literary setting for their development.¹²³ Frost himself had clearly expressed his poetic convictions in the 'Introduction to E. A. Robinson's "King Jasper,"' mentioned earlier. Referring to Robinson's poetical mastery, he wrote:

His much-admired restraint lies wholly in his never having let grief go further than it could in play. So far shall grief go, so far shall philosophy go, so far shall confidences go, and no further. Taste may set the limit. Humor is a surer dependence. (Frost 1995: 745)

Later in the essay, Frost stressed the importance of humor as the central feature of a poet's style. "If it is with outer seriousness, it must be with inner humor. If it is with outer humour, it must be with inner seriousness. Neither one alone without the other under it will do" (Frost 1995: 745). Mimesis of orality plays an important role in the accomplishment of humorous effects which derive, most of the time, from the contrast between the sacred halo surrounding characters belonging to Biblical mythology and the contemporary English speech register of their plain everyday language. As we shall see from the analysis of some extracts of the text, the mimetic devices used by the poet are similar to those already seen in the

¹²³ Brock argues that these features represent an element of continuity with the traditional genre. Like the Jonsonian masques, in fact, *A Masque of Reason* does not present an action or a certain development of the characters' personalities. Each character represents rather one aspect of human personality (following also the tradition of Morality plays), and their interaction is the clue to interpreting the author's philosophical meditations. Frost "has merely employed these characters within their mythological context as devices through which to dramatize his ideas about the nature of divine justice and mercy, and man's understanding of them" (Brock 1978: 139).

poems examined earlier in this chapter. In terms of their occurrence in the text, they are even more numerous, since the text is intended to be staged. The propinquity of mimetic discourse to communicative immediacy is clearly perceptible from the very beginning through the abundant use, by both Job and his wife, Thyatira, of elliptic expressions (“[Man]: Pitching throne, I guess, / Here by our atoll. [Wife]: Something Byzantine,” ll. 19-20); very short sentences, mostly linked by asyndeton with a low rate of complex subordinate clauses; and lexical enumeration (“The ornament the Greek artificers / made for the Emperor Alexius, / The Star of Bethlehem, the pomegranates, / The birds, seem all on fire with Paradise,” ll. 10-13). In the masque, as in other poems by Frost, but with even livelier effects, these mimetic devices interact with other stylistic devices in order to create a vivid spoken language that characterizes each single actor of the play. In order to describe the main features of each voice I focus on the three main characters individually (Thyatira, Job, and God), pointing to the different combinations of rhetorical devices and the ensuing stylistic and mimetic effects.¹²⁴

Job’s wife, “the only *Dramatis / Personae* needed to enact the problem,” (ll. 393-394) as she herself argues, is presented as a feminist *ante litteram*. Her lines are charged with openly comic nuances which lead to a relatively undisguised criticism of feminism on the part of Frost,¹²⁵ or even to an openly sexist position, as both Job’s and God’s patronizing and silencing words

¹²⁴ I shall not analyze the language of the fourth character of the play, the Devil, as his intervention in the masque is marginal. This character has often been considered not wholly accomplished and rather flat. Other critics, however (and I agree with them) see in the lack of nuances of his voice and personality the image that Frost is intentionally proposing in the play: that of a diaphanous character, whom, as God observes “Church neglect / And figurative use have pretty well / Reduced [...] to a shadow of himself” (Frost 1995: 386).

¹²⁵ Frost’s criticism of the feminist movement is embedded in the very name of Job’s wife, Thyatira. It refers to the name of the city where one of the seven churches of the revelation was located (Revelation 2:18-29), more specifically, the church with a false prophetess named Jezebel (2:20). A link to this name can also be found in Frost’s *A Masque of Mercy*, where the only female character is the drunkard and promiscuous Jesse Bell. The name Jesse Bell, moreover, can be interpreted as personal revenge (and criticism of female power), which Frost took against Jessie Bell Rittenhouse, a powerful American literary critic of the first decades of the 20th century (see also Kilcup (1998: 235-236) for further details).

toward her seem to suggest. At the same time, Thyatira's words are also carriers of political and ideological stances which are Frost's own, and which find in the antimasque tradition a literary form ideally suited for these stances. All these features add texture to a character who is much more than a one dimensional comic or stereotyped figure, and who, as Kilcup (1998: 240) observes, ultimately plays the role of stage director of the masque, as she arranges all of the characters around God's throne for a final picture.¹²⁶ The mimetic devices Frost employs combine with other stylistic and literary devices, generating the various shades within her voice, at times pushy, at times harsh or comically formal ("I have a protest I would lodge with You. / I want to ask You if it stands to reason / That women prophets should be burned as witches / Whereas men prophets are received with honour," ll. 87-90), but always coherent with the character's personality. I shall consider her first longer intervention in the play, which is also perhaps the most significant:

Job's Wife No, let's not live things over. I don't care.
 I stood by Job. I may have turned on You.
 Job scratched his boils and tried to think what he
 Had done or not done to or for the poor.
 The test is always how we treat the poor.
 It's time the poor were treated by the state
 In some way not so penal as the poorhouse.
 That's one thing more to put on Your agenda.
 Job hadn't done a thing, poor innocent.
 I told him not to scratch: it made it worse.
 If I said once I said a thousand times,
 Don't scratch! And when, as rotten as his skin,
 His tents blew all to pieces, I picked up
 Enough to build him every night a pup tent
 Around him so it wouldn't touch and hurt him.
 I did my wifely duty. I should tremble!
 All You can seem to do is lose Your temper
 When reason-hungry mortals ask for reasons.
 Of course, in the abstract high singular

¹²⁶ The critic also adds: "The alternation in voice and perspective suggest Frost's continued ambivalence about the role of visionary women in the world (God's and the Poet's)" (Kilcup 1998: 239).

There isn't any universal reason;
 And no one but a man would think there was.
 You don't catch women trying to be Plato.
 Still there must be lots of unsystematic
 Stray scraps of palliative reason
 It wouldn't hurt You to vouchsafe the faithful.
 You thought it was agreed You needn't give them.
 You thought to suit Yourself.
 I've not agreed To anything with anyone. [...]

(ll. 119-146)

As observed above, the shortness of the sentences, the simplicity of their syntactical structures, the iterated presence of the deictic pronoun *you* (which, though necessary and not optional in English language, as compared to Romance languages, also contributes to define the context of the characters), the everyday lexis ("Job scratched his boils," l. 121), and the presence of proverbial expressions ("If I said it once I said a thousand times," l. 129) define a language that approaches the pole of communicative immediacy. The intimacy such register evokes is to be found as well in the voices of Job and God, as we shall see later, and justifies the apparently irreverent attitude of the woman. Within the homogeneous register of her speech it is possible to identify other devices, carrying out both mimetic and literary or rhetorical functions, suggesting a variation of pitch¹²⁷ in her voice and stressing the climactic moments of her argumentation. I am referring, for example, to the quintuple iteration of the word *poor* in a six-line fragment ("Had done or not done to or for the **poor**. / The test is always how we treat the **poor**. / It's time the **poor** were treated by the state / In some way not so penal as the **poorhouse**. / That's one thing more to put on Your agenda. / Job hadn't done a thing, **poor** innocent," ll. 122-127). Beside the more obvious comic effect produced by the iteration, which is also characteristic of the spoken dimension, and its alliterative game (such as in the line "In some way not so **penal** as the **poorhouse**" l?),¹²⁸ the device draws

¹²⁷ The pitch of a voice belongs solely to the oral dimension. Here, I am arguing that a combination of rhetorical devices may help readers imagine the pitches in the intonational profile of the sentences uttered by the woman.

¹²⁸ The alliterative web of the fragment is richer, though, as for example in the line "It's time the **poor** were **treated** by the **state**"

the attention of the readership to Thyatira's political agenda, her attack on the state in defense of the poor. Furthermore, the connotations evoked by the word *poor* and *poorhouse* invest, through their phonic equation, the figure of Job (*poor innocent*). Further mimetic devices present in the fragment are imperative expressions such as "Don't scratch!" or emphatic expressions like "I should tremble!". At the same time, as the woman starts being carried away by the heat of her own words, her discourse becomes syntactically more complex and rhetorically convincing ("And when, as rotten as his skin, / His tents blew all to pieces, I picked up / Enough to build him every night a pup tent / Around him so it wouldn't touch and hurt him," ll. 130-133). Finally, syntactical parallelisms, which also characterize oral expression, are used by the woman to add emphasis and rhetorical vigor to her words, giving them a sense of finality ("**You thought** it was agreed You needn't give them. / **You thought** to suit Yourself. I've not agreed / to anything with anyone," ll. 144-146).

Job tries to soothe his wife and put her to sleep: "There, there / you go to sleep. God must await events / as well as words," ll. 146-147). The *geminatio* of the *there* is emblematic of the familiar and colloquial register characterizing his voice, similar to that of his wife. It seems as if Frost is wittily granting Job the chance to speak in plain language to God, thus fulfilling the wish the character had expressed during the Biblical episode described in the *Book of Job* "O that one might plead for a man with God, as a man pleadeth for his neighbour" (16:21). However, Thyatira's voice appears more emotional and her discourse less structured and more impulsive,¹²⁹ while Job's discourse is organized and his tone of voice calmer, conveying the impression of a self-confident person who has not yet resigned himself to having his questions left unanswered. He pursues his goal, plying God with his questions in an insistent though balanced form, despite the fact that a thousand years have passed since their last meeting. The ironic references (for example: "The Christmas Tree," referring to the Holy Burning Bush), and the puns entwined in his discourse (for example: "God knows—or rather, You know (God forgive me)," l. 169) convey the impression of planned language with oral connotations that at the same time maintains control over the thread of the discourse. Job rebukes God

¹²⁹ Irwin (1960: 306) considers it "unsystematic and unprincipled."

for his evasive answers, expressed in an emptily rhetorical language. He articulates his reasons, humankind's reasons, in a precise and linear way:

[...] We disparage reason.
But all the time it's what we're most concerned with.
There's a will as motor and there's a will as brakes.
Reason is, I suppose, the steering gear.
The will as brakes can't stop the will as motor
For very long. We're plainly made to go.
We're going anyway and may as well
Have some say as to where we're headed for;
Just as we will be talking anyway
And may as well throw in a little sense.
Let's do so now. Because I let You off
From telling me Your reason, don't assume
I thought You had none. Somewhere back
I knew You had one. But this isn't it
You're giving me. You say we groped this out.
But if You will forgive me the irreverence,
It sounds to me as if You thought it out,
And took Your time to it. It seems to me
An afterthought, a long long afterthought.
I'd give more for one least beforehand reason
Than all the justifying ex-post-facto.
Excuses trumped up by You for theologians.
The front of being answerable to no one
I'm with You in maintaining to the public.
But, Lord, we showed them what. The audience
Has all gone home to bed. The play's played out
Come, after all these years—to satisfy me.
I'm curious. And I'm a grown-up man:
I'm not a child for You to put me off
And tantalize me with another 'Oh, because.'
You'd be the last to want me to believe
All your effects were merely lucky blunders.
That would be unbelief and atheism.
The artist in me cries out for design.
(ll. 228-261)

In the example above, clues to the mimetic devices used in Job's discourse are the presence of parenthetical remarks ("reason is, I suppose, the steering gear," l. 23) and phrasal verbs (such as "I let You off," "we groped this out," "You thought it out," "The play's played out," "to put me off"), which are commonly used in situations of communicative immediacy. Another interesting feature, confirming the degree of planning of the character's discourse while preserving clear oral connotations, is the higher occurrence of syntactical parallels than in Thyatira's discourse, which add rhetorical overtones to Job's discourse. I am referring to the lines quoted above: "**I thought You had** none. Somewhere back / **I knew You had** one" (ll. 240-241); "**It sounds to me** as if You thought it out, / And took Your time to it. **It seems to me** / An afterthought, a long long afterthought" (ll. 245-246); "**I'm curious. And I'm a grown-up man: / I'm not a child** for You to put me off" (ll. 255-256). Later in the play, we will find other examples:

We don't know where we are, or who we are.
 We don't know one another; don't know You;
 Don't know what time it is. We don't know, don't we?
 Who says we don't? Who got up these misgivings?
 (ll. 285-288)

Testa (1991: 216) observes how syntactical anaphoras have a hybrid nature, "a metà strada tra i tratti di semplicità, monotonia e ridondanza propri del parlato e quelli di una germinale *elocutio*" ["Midway between the traits of simplicity, monotony and redundancy which are typical of spoken language, and those of a nascent *elocutio*]. In fact, the tendency to reiterate the syntactical structure of a sentence, especially in the form of an anadiplosis (that is, the repetition of a word or segment of one clause at the beginning of the following clause) is a phenomenon typical of oral communication, as it gives continuity to the message while at the same time allowing the speaker to amplify his discourse and secure the attention of the interlocutor. On the other hand, the device also grants a cohesive rhetorical web with which the speaker can best articulate his argumentation. Finally, as Tannen observes "syntactic parallelism establishes a mesmerizing rhythm which sweeps the hearer along" (quoted in Testa 1991: 216). The use of these devices helps represent, within a frame of apparent down to earth conversation, the dignity of a character who has endured pains that

remain unexplained, and who, despite all this, will neither bend with unquestioned resignation to God's will nor allow himself any frantic protest or uncontrolled appeal to justice.

The colloquial register informing all conversations in the play contributes to the delineation, by contrast, of God's speech, and of its character. Furthermore, the parallel inevitably drawn by readers between God's voice as it can be perceived in the *Book of Job* and the hesitating attitude of Frost's character triggers the ironic effects of the conversation. In the Bible, God addresses Job from a whirlwind. He does not attempt any justification of his actions nor does he bother to answer Job's questions. As Gage (1982: 82) observes, he speaks in a highly rhetorical manner that does not follow the rational pattern of Job's forensic rhetoric. He appeals to truths well beyond human comprehension so that, finally, Job understands that "we cannot order our speech by reason of darkness" (37:19). "In terms of classical rhetoric, while it is Job's wish to ground his reason in *logos*, God's rhetoric is all *ethos*" (Gage 1982: 82). In Frost's forty-third chapter of the book of Job the situation is parodically reversed.¹³⁰ God tries to derail the questions of Job and Thyatira with sophistries that, however, produce none of the intended effects on his interlocutors:

I've had you on my mind a thousand years.
To thank you someday for the way you helped me
Establish once for all the principle
There's no connection man can reason out
Between his just deserts and what he gets.
Virtue may fail and wickedness succeed
(ll. 47-52)

The tone of Job's comment on his words betrays his skepticism:

You hear him, Thyatira: we're a saint.
Salvation in our case is retroactive.
We're saved, we're saved, whatever else it means.
(ll. 80-82)

¹³⁰ This is coherent with the poetic function of the antimasque.

God's voice does not manage to rise to its thundering heights, the way it used to do when he was speaking out of the whirlwind. In the same way as he remains entangled in the branches of the Holy Burning Bush at the beginning of the masque, so does he end up entangled in his own words. When he tries to be eloquent he sounds merely preposterous, like when, for example, he seeks shelter from Thyatira's feminist claims behind formal administrative formulas ("That is not / of record in my Note Book," ll. 102-103). His arguments are so unconvincing that Job prefers to interrupt him rather than listen to his speech going around in circles without arriving anywhere.

<p>God Job (l. 270)</p>	<p>I'd tell you, Job— All right, don't tell me</p>
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Finally, plied by both Job and Thyatira, he steps down of his rhetorical pedestal (which had already been symbolically leveled with the collapse of his plywood throne) and bursts into an impatient exclamation, with strong oral (and comic) connotations ("My kingdom, what an outbreak!" l. 302). The outburst leads a few lines later to what is expected to be the climax of the masque, that is, the revelation of God's reasons, which, however, proves to be rather an anticlimax ("I was just showing off to the Devil, Job," l. 327). According to Gage (1982: 88), God's revelation is not a *reason*, in the sense of a rational decision taken beforehand "as a *premise* that makes something true," it is rather a *motive*, an excuse found to justify one's action retroactively. As such it cannot satisfy Job. The openly oral features of God's words are a clue to his frailty and propensity to error. The register and the pragmatic strategy God adopts in order to communicate with his interlocutor changes. First, he uses the vocative "Job" to create a more intimate level of the conversation and ensure an empathic reaction. A similarly soothing function is also carried out by the rhetorical question he addresses to Job: "Do you mind?" (l. 329).¹³¹ A few stage directions here ("*God eyes him anxiously*," l. 330) help readers picture the psychic state of the character. Unlike the image of God in the Bible, here the character openly asks for understanding ("Job, you must understand

¹³¹ See also Loreto (1999: 166-169) for a more detailed analysis of the nuances of the voices of both God and Job during their exchange of lines.

my provocation” l. 347) and blathers on with excuses that, as he is aware, are clearly pointless (“You don’t seem to be satisfied,” l. 375).

After this anticlimactic moment, the masque moves toward its conclusion. The Devil arrives on the scene even though he barely speaks; his part in the script is just one line. However, his presence on stage is important, as God’s existence seems to owe as much to him as it owes to the existence of Job and humankind. As God himself avows, the Devil is the creator of any originality (“any originality it showed / Was of the Devil. He invented Hell, / False premises that are the original / of all originality [...]” ll. 202-205), while only through Job’s example and the irrationality of his punishment could God achieve emancipation from humankind itself (“you are the Emancipator of your God,” l. 78). The final Kodak picture Thyatira takes groups together three characters who form a sort of trinity, in which each part depends on the others.

As I have argued in the analysis of Frost’s masque, the main themes of the work evolve around and through the dialogue among the four characters. Within a frame of colloquial register and plain language, close to communicative immediacy, which is the common denominator of all speeches, each voice acquires particular features, highlighted by the contrasts among them that also enact ironic effects and a parodic reversal of the characters. The web of dialectical relationships they establish is constantly shifting, accompanied by a shift in the register, and does not allow for a single focus of attention. In Thyatira’s voice, for example, we have recognized the proto-feminist voice, and at the same time its caricature. We have also seen in her the devoted wife, the pragmatic, somewhat petulant, but also witty and mordacious woman. In Job we have seen the patient man, rather than the sage, the rationalist who fearlessly pursues an explanation, a reason for his past plight, despite the millennium that has passed. When he accepts God’s reason, out of resignation more than out of real conviction, his role becomes symbolic, representing humankind in general. His attitude is self-reflective, and generates more doubts and uncertainties than answers, as can be seen in the last lines of his last significant intervention in the masque:

Yet I suppose what seems to us confusion
Is not confusion, but the form of forms,
The serpent's tail stuck down the serpent's throat
Which is the symbol of eternity
And also of the way all things come round,
Or of how rays return upon themselves,
To quote the greatest Western poem yet.
Though I hold rays deteriorate to nothing,
First white, then red, then ultra red, then out.
(ll. 338-346)

Job's reference to facts of nature (the fact that rays of light do not return upon themselves, but degenerate like energy) mines the validity of the initial image ("Or of how rays return upon themselves, / To quote the greatest Western poem yet," ll. 343-344) and brings back into question the idea of a superior design in the universe. God's voice, finally, shifts from deceptive rhetoric¹³² to down-to-earth conversation among peers, thus enacting a complete reversal of situations and roles: Job is now the one who grants forgiveness and understanding to the repentant God.

Job's question, in the end, remains unanswered. But he is not the only one, of course, who is left bewildered. Readers of the masque are also left at loss for words, when faced with the blurred contours of characters and meanings. Last but not least, the particular mimesis of orality which I have described as a constant feature of the play, despite its multiple facets, is perceived with the same ironic light that has already illuminated the role and position of each of the four characters. In the final lines of the masque, in fact, Thyatira says:

¹³² It is interesting to observe that even in the initial moments, when God's language is characterized by a more formal register, the oral dimension persists in God's pursuit of rhetorical effectiveness. In his work on orality and literacy, Ong (1982: 106) remarked that rhetoric "was at the root the art of public speaking, of oral address, for persuasion [...] or exposition." This observation may help perceive the cohesion and coherence of Thyatira's and Job's language, which, as noted above, also presents elements of rhetorical persuasion, such as redundancy, repetitions, parallels, etc. For a more detailed discourse on the different meanings of the concept of *rhetoric* as applied to Frost's masque see the already quoted article by Gage (1982).

Well, if we aren't all here.
Including me, the only Dramatis
Personae needed to enact the problem.

Her meta-textual comment focuses the attention of readers on the fictionality of the scene represented and of its language. The ironic smile of the poet behind the words of the character throws us, as readers, into a whirlpool of questions (from which there is no one single way out): on the interpretation of the characters, on the meaning or meanings of the play, on the role and function of the language, and, finally, on the very status of the author.¹³³ This remark, however, should not bring us ultimately to the negation of meaning; rather, it should lead us to the awareness, as Frost himself says in 'A Romantic Chasm' (1948), his preface to the British Edition of *A Masque of Reason*, that

The fun only begins with the spirited when you treat the word as a point of many departures. There is risk in the play. But if some of the company get lost in the excitement, charge it up to proving the truth of chapter and verse in the Gospel according to Saint Mark, although the oracle speaking is Delphic. (Frost 1995, 804)

2.4 Frost's voices

In the chapter I have introduced in a general way the main features of Frost's poetry and his theory of the sound of sense. I have observed that in order to achieve a thorough comprehension of the role played by spoken language in Frost's compositions, mimesis of orality needs to be related to the theme and setting of each poem as well as to its poetic structure. The textual analysis of four poems and a masque has stressed that Frost's reconstruction of orality is a complex and multifaceted phenomenon. In fact, through the evocation of a particular kind of spoken language the poet achieves

¹³³ Similar reflections in part bring Loreto (1999b: 36) to define the masque as a post-modern work, where "the language [...] is self-referential and testing its own capacity to communicate, which ultimately determines man's ability to know." On the other hand, Thyatira's meta-narrative comment could also be inscribed in the very tradition of the Stuart masque. The genre, in fact, was characterized by a fuzziness of the borders between spectators and participants, emblematically represented by the moment when the masquers invited the spectators to join them in the revels (see also Butler 1990: 132).

the psychological and emotional characterization of the fictional voices in the poem (such as the voices of a wife and her husband, and the voice of a narrator) and makes it possible for readers to infer those traits of the relationships among characters of which characters are often unaware. The study has also provided a first confirmation to the initial hypothesis according to which the evocation of orality changes as the structure of the poems shifts from a dramatic dialogue to a dramatic monologue, and from a personal lyrical composition towards an impersonal lyrical composition. In fact, language moves away from communicative situations in which verbalization strategies determined by spontaneity and familiarity prevail, even though it remains grounded in the communicative immediacy.

3

‘THE DEATH OF THE HIRED MAN’: A CASE STUDY

True judgement in poetry, like that in painting, takes a view of the whole together, whether it be good or not; and where the beauties are more than the faults, concludes for the poet against the little judge.

(John Dryden, introduction to *Sylvae or, The second part of poetical miscellanies*)

3.1 Focusing on a text, enlarging the perspectives

In the present chapter I carry out a textual analysis of the poem ‘The Death of the Hired Man’ and its translations into Italian, Catalan, Spanish, and German. The decision to include this case study in my research is motivated by two interrelated reflections. We have seen that in order to understand how mimesis of orality works in Frost’s poetry we need to take into account the constellation of elements, on a formal as well as on a semantic level, that interact with it. For this reason in the previous chapter I analyzed a number of compositions written in different meters and belonging to different genres. The selection of poems was necessarily limited but was designed to encompass a representative range of forms in which Frost achieves a recreation of orality in poetry. As I proceed to the analysis of this phenomenon in translation, in this chapter, it seems convenient to adopt a similar approach. This method of study will allow me to take into account the relationships, often culture-bound, as they refer to different poetical traditions, that mimesis of orality in translation establishes with other elements of the target poem. At the same time, this approach will also shed light on the double operation of re-creation (of Frost’s mimesis of orality) and creation (of a target-culture mimesis of orality) that the translation act always implies. The focus of the analysis is intentionally narrowed down to the linguistic and textual features of a single poem (even though I shall occasionally make reference to wider cultural or ideological issues implied in the translation). This focus seems appropriate to the scope of this chapter, which can be summarized as follows:

- Highlighting the categories of elements (pragmatic, syntactical, lexico-semantic, phonic) that evoke mimesis of orality in the source text.
- Stressing the relationship of these mimetic elements with non-mimetic elements of the text.
- Comparing source and target mimetic devices, and source and target text in general.

In order to counterbalance the limiting decision to focus the analysis on one single poem, “The Death of the Hired Man,” I have chosen to study a variety of different target texts, including German and Spanish translations as well as those in Catalan and Italian. The broadening of the diatopic perspective aims at achieving a more encompassing view of potential translation strategies adopted for any given textual phenomenon. Such a broad analysis can be a starting point for the development of hypotheses on the different roles that translation of mimesis of orality may play in different cultural systems.¹³⁴ Finally the mimetic features outlined during the case study will serve as model for a more systematic and schematic analysis applied to the whole corpus in chapter 4 and 5.

3.2 The source poem

‘The Death of the Hired Man’ is a dramatic dialogue of 166 lines in relatively regular blank verse, and first appeared in the book *North of Boston* in 1914. It represents the conversation between a married couple, Warren and Mary, who are farmers. The object of their conversation is a third person, Silas, a hired man, whose personality is slowly sketched through the words spoken and images evoked during the dialogue, but who never actually appears in the scene. The narrative of the poem starts *in medias res*: Mary is anxiously waiting for her husband Warren to come home. She needs to inform him that Silas, now old and tired, has come back to their farm,

¹³⁴ I am aware that in order to overcome the risks of a Eurocentric perspective, a study aiming at contributing with other viewpoints on translation strategies of mimesis of orality should also include target texts produced by cultures that are farther away from anglophone traditions, for example Indian or Japanese translations. This kind of study, however, is beyond the scope and possibilities of my research at present.

where he had lived and worked in the past. He has come home to die, as Mary says, and as the title of the poem indicates. At the beginning Warren seems to be uncompromising. He is not willing to have the hired man back after Silas left him the previous summer during high season when his help was most needed. However, as the conversation progresses, and as Warren remembers some past scenes of life and work together with the old man, the couple becomes reconciled. Warren enters the house in order to talk with Silas but comes back almost immediately, sits close to Mary, who has been waiting on the porch steps, and tells her with just one word, holding her hand, that Silas is dead.

In the poem it is possible to identify three different voices directly speaking: the voice of an extradiegetic narrator who, almost like a stage director, introduces the action and gives a brief description of the whole scene throughout, which also functions as a psychological description; and the voices of Mary and Warren. The three voices have distinctive features that allow the reader to recognize them easily. I argue that such features are not static, but rather shift and change slightly as the dialogic relationship among the voices changes.

The poem starts with a brief lyrical-narrative digression. Readers are provided with few details of the scene. Frost prefers to adopt a technique which he had admired in Shakespeare's dramas, consisting of briefly sketching the characters so that they can define their own personalities as the dialogue unfolds (Isaacs 1962: 122). The very first sentences that Mary pronounces, "Silas is back" and "be kind," create a sharp contrast with the fluent and almost musical flow of the previous, longer coordinating sentences. The inversion of the metrical stress, from iamb to trochee, in the first example

Example 3.1

<p>X / / X X / / X X / and put him on his guard. 'Silas is back' (1. 5)</p>

and the spondaic rhythm of the second sentence ("be kind") generate a rhythmic variation that seems to hint at the psychological state of the woman, worried about her husband's reaction to the news. At the same time, the overall effect contributes to produce in

readers a state of tense anticipation of Warren's answer. Subsequently, a dialogue starts in which the poet succeeds in representing the voices of the woman and the man so that each of them preserves distinctive features both in the tone and in the rhythm of their discourse. As Brower (1963: 158) observed, Warren's tone and discourse are defensive ("When was I ever anything but kind to him?" l. 11). The rhythm is abrupt, characterized by sentences that at times are simply juxtaposed and strengthened by rhetorical questions. The man reports in direct speech a conversation that he had with the hired man during the previous summer, thus offering the first description of Silas to readers. Warren's sentences are short, and their logic is rigorous and straightforward. His speech helps outline Warren's personality as that of a pragmatic man of action who believes in an idea of justice based on the logic sequence of facts, as we see, for example, in examples 3.2-3.4:

Example 3.2

'told him so last haying, didn't I? If he left then, I said, that ended it. (ll. 13-14)

Example 3.3

'All right,' I say 'I can't afford to pay Any fixed wages, though I wish I could.' 'Someone else can.' 'Then someone else will have to.' (ll. 22-24)

Example 3.4

In winter he comes back to us. I'm done. (l. 30)

In these examples, direct speech gives a clear indication of the oral quality of the text. At the same time, direct discourse is a device which Frost uses deftly to highlight one facet of the psychology of his characters.

Mary's reply to her husband's assertions is also built on a series of short sentences which, however, generate a completely different rhythm. The sentences are connected paratactically ("He's worn

out. He's asleep beside the stove.”). The syntax is simple and the utterances are at times incomplete (“A miserable sight, and frightening too”). She introduces in her discourse a series of pauses graphically represented by dashes between sentences, which are not held together by the same logical coherence underlined in Warren’s speech. The short sentences convey the impression that we are reading, or rather overhearing, a discourse that follows the restless flux of emotions:

Example 3.5

<p>You needn't smile – I didn't recognize him – I wasn't looking for him – and he's changed. Wait till you see. (ll. 37-39)</p>

This does not mean that her discourse lacks coherence, but it operates at a different level, appealing directly to feelings rather than to reason. Mary’s sweeter tone of voice is used to introduce new facets of Silas’s character from a point of view of empathy with the character. Not only can this be inferred from the semantic value of the words used by the woman (“Surely you wouldn’t grudge the poor old man / some humble way to save his self-respect,” ll. 49-50) but also from the more flowing rhythm of the indirect speech Mary uses to describe her meeting with Silas (“He added, if you really care to know, / He meant to clear the upper pasture too,” ll. 51-52), and then a past discussion between the hired man and a young man, Harold Wilson, with whom Silas had worked (“Silas declares you’ll have to get him back. / He says they will make a team for work,” ll. 61-62). If we now compare this rhythm with the one generated by the rapid exchange of sharp commentaries between Warren and Silas, which the farmer just reported in direct speech (Example 2.3), we are able to differentiate between the features characterizing the speech of the two characters.

However, there is a moment in the dialogue when the modes of speech of Mary and Warren begin to converge. I am referring to the moment when the woman recalls Silas’s real working skill: how to build a load of hay. Warren acknowledges the old man’s skill, and the rhythm of his discourse as he evokes a working episode in the fields slows down and the original tensions are dissipated, though

only temporarily, by this fond recollection. The syntactical links are still simple, as they should be in a text aiming at the recreation of the speech of a person in a situation of conjugal intimacy. We find a series of coordinating or paratactically juxtaposed clauses. This aspect, in addition to the relatively regular iambic rhythm, seems to convey a quiet tone to their speech, which moves coherently from one sentence to another, building up a full-fledged image of rustic life. From a symbolic point of view it is particularly significant that the discourses of husband and wife meet on such a trivial point as the ability of a man to build a load of hay. In fact, it is possible to draw a parallel between the farm laborer's activity and the creation of a poem. In the same way as a load of hay is carefully built up, forkful after forkful, so is a poem created, word after word. As Sohn and Tyre remark (1969: 100), the work represents for Silas what poetry symbolizes for Frost: "a momentary stay against the confusion of the world" (Frost 1995: 777).

From this moment in the poem, not only do we start perceiving a steady though not fully realized convergence of the discourses of the married couple toward a single tone, but we can also discern a convergence of tone between the speech of the narrator and of Mary. While commenting on her husband's words, the woman makes a series of statements that stand out for their meditative lyricism in a way that is quite different from her previous more excited tone of voice:

Example 3.6

Poor Silas, so concerned for other folk, And nothing to look backward to with pride, And nothing to look forward to with hope, So now and never any different.' (ll. 99-102)
--

Her words seem to anticipate in tone the second narrative break in the poem (ll. 103-110) and the voice of the narrator (which I shall analyze later on).

After the narrative break with lyrical overtones, during which only Mary's gentle and silent acts *speak* to her husband sitting beside her, the couple resumes the conversation and arrives at the central

point in the poem: the definition that both Warren and Mary give of the word *home*:

Example 3.7

‘Home is the place where, when you have to go there,
They have to take you in.’
 ‘I should have called it
Something you somehow haven't to deserve.’
(118-120)

These three lines, which are significantly split up into two symmetrical halves, are a key point in the couple’s conversation. The distinct oral quality of their expressions articulates a different vision of what *home* means, and, through this, a different way of understanding and acknowledging Silas’s humanity as well as their own (Jost 1996). It seems interesting to report here Brower’s (1963) observations on the symbolic importance of the way the couple structures their sentences, as well as their contrasting phonetic and syntactical realization. According to the scholar, they symbolize the opposition between Mercy (Mary) and Justice (Warren):

The definitions of husband and wife are not Home Thoughts, but “vital sentences” – to use Frost’s term – “sentence sounds” with dramatic force beyond grammar. But the man’s home-made grammar (almost a parody of grammar) has its part in expressing his half-laughing rueful kindness, his granting Silas the bare claim of humanity. His wife’s definition, with the remarkably slow ‘somehow’ [...] is the essence of mercy. The difference between their definitions is summed up in the contrasting brute sounds of “have to” and “haven’t to” (Brower 1963: 161).

Brower’s interpretation has been expanded, criticized, and challenged by other scholars. Swennes (1970: 368), for example, speaks of a “creative conversation” between the couple. Both follow their own natures but at the same time they accept each other’s suggestions. Vogt (1979) acknowledges an opposition between the characters but argues that their behavior is revealing of Silas’s emotional situation, rather than of the couple’s personal attitudes. Jost (1996) has pointed out the different rhetorical strategies behind the discourses of Mary and Warren. He reaches the conclusion that their conversation should not be interpreted according to a binary

scheme, opposing mercy to justice, but rather in terms of a form of cooperation. The references mentioned above cannot (and are not intended to) cover the whole range of critical interpretations given to the issue so far. In this chapter I have also not taken into account the psychological and sociological implications of the character of Silas. What interests me most is simply the observation, underlined by Brower, of how Frost represents and differentiates the idiolects of Mary and Warren.

After the moment of tension between the characters caused by their different understanding of *home*, we find another short lyrical break which reflects, this time, Warren's attitude. The silent break suggests that he has understood Mary's words and comes to share her interpretation of the word *home*. In the gestures of both husband and wife we find the same symmetrical correspondence that I had highlighted in the structure of the three lines about *home* (ll. 118-120) quoted above. Warren's breaking of a little stick ("Warren leaned out and took a step or two, / Picked up a little stick, and brought it back / And broke it in his hand and tossed it by," l. 122-124) is parallel to Mary's previous putting out her hand to a morning-glory ("she put out her hand / Among the harp-like morning-glory string," ll.106-107), and it is symbolic of their harmonious relationship.

Such an interpretation would also help us understand why the last issue that Warren raises (Silas could be put up by his rich brother, but he does not go there as he refuses to humiliate himself) lacks real rhetorical force. The farmer himself does not seem to be convinced by his own words. Mary understands the situation and grants her husband the option of asking Silas's brother for assistance ("I think his brother ought to help, of course," l. 131). By closing her sentence with "of course," however, she reveals the purely formal and concessive character of her admission.

We arrive here at the closing moment in the poem. After some last recommendations, Mary sits on the steps of the porch and waits for her husband, who has entered the house to speak to the hired man. Once again, the woman's words ("I'll sit and see if that small sailing cloud / Will hit or miss the moon," ll. 160-161) introduce a lyrical break, which describes three elements ("The moon, the little silver cloud and she [Mary]," l. 163) alluding symbolically to the

three characters of the poem (Mary, Warren and Silas) or also to the three speaking voices. The description, like a musical intermezzo, has the function of deferring the conclusion of the narrative, thus creating suspense in readers who can only speculate on the meeting between the two men off the poetic stage. The closing consists significantly of two holophrastic realizations pronounced by both characters: (“‘Warren?’ she questioned. ‘Dead’ was all he answered,” l. 166). Koch and Oesterreicher (2007: 128) observe that these kinds of fragmentary realizations are characteristic of communicative immediacy. These expressions “son adecuadas en situaciones de fuerte implicación emocional y/o espontaneidad y funcionan sin problemas en contextos cognitivos y experienciales claros, en situaciones de referencia hacia el aquí y ahora” [“operate in situations of strong emotional involvement or spontaneity and work without problems in clear cognitive and experiential contexts, in situations referring to the here-and-now”]. Mary and Warren have come to a convergence of ideas, attitudes and feelings. Words are therefore almost superfluous. Two are enough, so that the readers can charge them with the adequate sound of sense, the appropriate intonation which reveals their meaning.

I complete the analysis of the source text by commenting on the four moments during which the voice of the narrator intrudes into the dialogue of the couple. The first moment corresponds to lines 1-5, which can almost be compared, as I said before, to stage directions.

Example 3.8: Narrator’s aside 1

Mary sat musing on the lamp-flame at the table Waiting for Warren. When she heard his step, She ran on tip-toe down the darkened passage To meet him in the doorway with the news And put him on his guard. ‘Silas is back.’ [1 – 5]
--

The scene described stands out for its delicacy. The image of a woman sitting at a table dimly illuminated by a lamp brings to mind the domestic scenes and the treatment of light immortalized by Flemish masters of the seventeenth century, such as Johannes Vermeer, who had inspired many well known late nineteenth and early twentieth century American painters, like John Singer Sargent,

The first objective of the analysis, in this case, is to observe the stylistic differences that can be detected between the dialogic parts of the poem and its descriptive-narrative fragments. Even at a first general reading of the narrative segments we receive an impression of lyricism that is coherently juxtaposed to the equally intimate tone of voice of the couple, the latter being, however, closer to the common speech of everyday conversation. This impression seems to find a first confirmation in the observation of the lexical components of the narrative sections. The word *mus*ing, in the first fragment, belongs to a relatively formal register and stirs up images of poetic meditation.¹³⁶ A similar effect is achieved in the second fragment through the many metaphors enriching the strophe (the moon falling down, dragging the sky, the light poured softly, the harp-like morning-glory strings, the garden bed). In the last segment, the moon appears again, almost personified, partly dimmed by a silvery cloud. The lyricism of the images is enhanced by the various rhetorical-phonetic devices which the poet uses, here more frequently than in the dialogic parts. In the first two lines, for example, the stresses fall on the initial syllables of the first metric feet, creating a musical cadence, even though in the successive lines the rhythm turns iambic again.¹³⁷

Example 3.12

/ X	X	/ X	X X	/	/	X X	/ X
Mary	sat	mus	ing on the	lamp-flame	at the	table	
/ X	X	/ X	/ X	/ X	/ X	/	
Waiting	for Warren.	When she	heard his	step			

Moreover, in the same lines we find a series of alliterations (**M**ary, **m**using, **l**amp-**f**lame, **w**aiting, **W**arren, **w**hen) heightening the rhythmic effect. In the second narrator's aside it is also possible to observe cases of stress inversion, but the metrical pattern is more

¹³⁶ Jost (1996: 404) reminds that "others have rightly remarked that Frost's choice of the word "musing" bespeaks a *poetic strain* in Warren's life" which is mirrored in the second narrative aside. According to Jost, Mary's brooding silence in the initial part of the poem relates to this second moment of silence (second aside) and pertains to the epideictic rhetoric strategy that she employs during the conversation with Warren (405).

¹³⁷ Vogt (1979:533) speaks here of *balladic mode*.

regular. An alliteration is also central in line 162 (narrator's aside 3) (“**Then there** were three **there**”).

Finally, on a syntactical level, the first three fragments are characterized by slightly more complex sentences showing a higher degree of planning. They are formed by a main clause and one or more secondary clauses (for example: “Mary sat musing on the lamp-flame at the table / Waiting for Warren,” ll. 1-2) or “She ran on tip-toe down the darkened passage / To meet him,” ll. 3-4). We also find some copulative coordinating or paratactic clauses (“Its light poured softly in her lap. She saw/ And spread her apron to it,” ll. 105-106), or in the whole narrator's aside 3. Narrator's aside 4, conversely, is mainly composed by main clauses which are, in most cases, paratactically coordinated (“It hit the moon. / Then there were three there,” ll. 161-162, and “Warren returned—too soon, it seemed to her, / Slipped to her side, caught up her hand and waited,” ll. 164-165). As I have already pointed out, according to Koch and Oesterreicher (2007: 141-147) complex clauses, like certain kinds of hypotactic clauses, belong to communicative distance due to their high degree of planning whereas the aggregative quality of the parataxis, its spontaneity, and low degree of planning correspond rather to communicative immediacy, that is to say, the dimension of common and familiar speech where the interlocutors share some common knowledge and a closer relationship. The German scholars observe, however, that even hypotaxis can be used within the sphere of communicative immediacy on some occasions, provided that the hierarchical order among the main and subordinate clauses is respected. Finally, the order can be inverted in the case of temporal, causal and conditional clauses when it “expresa la dirección de la relación lógico-semántica correspondiente; por tanto su ordenación se puede considerar icónica” (146) [“expresses the direction of the corresponding logico-semantic relationship; as a consequence, its order can be considered iconic”] (as in the sentence of lines 2-3: “when she heard his step, / She ran on tip-toe down the darkened passage”). These last observations are in my opinion particularly significant. When applied to the narrative fragments, they suggest that the narrating voice preserves a certain oral quality, even though it represents an orality with different nuances, than those of the voices of Mary and Warren. Referring to the first narrator's aside (example 3.8), Vogt remarks:

The syntax used to describe the stage setting and the initial actions is grammatically normal and unadorned with evocative diction. In Roman Jakobson’s phrase, this is “the poetry of grammar” as opposed to the poetry of image and metaphor.¹³⁸ (1979: 533-534)

Vogt seems to confirm the hypothesis according to which the voice of the narrator also shares oral traits. However, in the continuum between communicative distance and immediacy, the narrator’s speech moves rather towards the pole of the communicative distance, at least when we compare it with the words of Mary and Warren. It is nonetheless only a relative distance, since the three discourses do share a situation of intimacy that is their common denominator. As a consequence, even in this case it seems possible to perceive in the third voice distinct, though more planned, oral qualities. This remark may then justify my hypothesis that the narrator is essentially a third character, partaking of the experience of the couple. We are not dealing with a distant, omniscient narrator but rather with a third figure who describes the situation, avoids any moral judgment, and feels emotionally involved in it. This comment finds support in the description of the features of the last narrative fragment (example 3.11). Here the syntactical structure of the sentences is simplified, compared to the previous segments. Sentences are shorter. A plain sequence of nouns (“the moon, the little silver cloud, and she”) helps foreground the objects and is mirrored in the sequence of clauses which, almost like film frames, describe Warren’s return to the porch (“Warren returned ... / Slipped to her side, caught up her hand and waited,” ll 164-165). The metric structure of the two lines is regular and similar:

Example 3.13

<p>/ X X / X / X / X /</p> <p>Warren returned – too soon, it seemed to her;</p> <p>/ X X / / X X / X / X</p> <p>-Slipped to her side, caught up her hand and waited.¹³⁹</p>

¹³⁸ I don’t fully agree with Vogt, however, and have previously pointed out the poetic overtones of the word “musing,” for example. Vogt himself describes the second fragment as “a maze of metaphor, delightfully modulated from the cosmic to the domestic” (Vogt, 1979: 536).

¹³⁹ The third foot can be read as an iamb as well (*caught up* – X/).

However, the clear pauses introduced by the punctuation create a more measured rhythm culminating in the climactic moment of the last line of the poem, where the rhythm is marked by three caesuras:

Example 3.14

/ X X / X / X / X / X
Warren?’ she questioned. ‘Dead,’ was all he answered.”
l. 166

The narrating voice is not indifferent to the denouement of the scene, takes part in it emotionally, and adapts to its rhythm, prefiguring the closing of the poem in the very same way as the rhythm of Mary’s words had previously anticipated the narrator’s own voice.

3.3 ‘La morte del bracciante:’ the Italian translation

Let us consider now the translation into Italian, as carried out by the Italian poet Giovanni Giudici (included in the book *Conoscenza della notte e altre poesie*, published in 1965 and later revised in 1988). In the “Premessa del traduttore” (the translator’s preface), written by Giudici as an introduction to the collection of selected poems by Frost, the translator gives his readers several indications of his interpretations of Frost’s style. He also reveals some of his priorities in translating. Giudici argues that the essential part of Frost’s poetic discourse resides in the rigorous use of the lexis (which, according to him, can be extremely precise, as for example when the North American poet names plants specific to New England). Such lexical precision is opposed to, and in a certain way makes up for, what the translator defines as Frost’s “prosodic laziness.”¹⁴⁰ Giudici refers above all to what the North American poet wrote in a letter to Sidney Cox, dated December 1914, a fragment of which Giudici reports. In that letter, Frost claims that the poet should be brave enough to use new words in his work, that is, words to which no *a priori* poetical effect has hitherto been

¹⁴⁰ “Si direbbe anzi che questa puntigliosità lessicale di Frost [...] sia una specie di contropartita della sua pigrizia o indifferenza prosodica” (Giudici 1988: 27). [One could argue that Frost’s lexical meticulousness is a kind of compensation of his prosodic laziness or indifference.]

attributed. The poet must oppose those people who believe and expect that a poem must be composed according to current poetic diction, according to the language of a literary tradition which has gradually detached itself from the immediacy of spoken language (see Frost 1995: 681-683).

This fundamental feature of Frost's poetics should make his poems more easily translatable, according to Giudici, as the translator must concentrate mainly on its lexical elements. The translator's first statements may leave us somewhat disconcerted, as they seem to contradict what I have described in chapter 2, that is, that the spoken quality characterizing Frost's poetical language is not confined to the use of a certain kind of lexis, but is the result of a specific intonation and pragmatic, phonic, lexico-semantic and syntactical devices combined with (and in tension with) a traditional metric structure. It is the sound of sense already described (which Frost also mentions in the very same letter to Cox) that is in charge of conveying the meaning of the sentences before the individual meaning of the words or their syntactical connections can even be grasped. The uncertainties provoked by the claims of the translator (and the numerous questions they raise with regard to the modalities of Giudici's translation of Frost's mimesis of orality, and the causes behind them), are partially resolved when Giudici himself tackles one fundamental aspect of Frost's poetics, that is, the way in which the "the unmade words" (Frost, 1995: 682) are organized within the traditional poetic genres:

Dalla tensione istituita tra l'apparente pigrizia delle forme prosodiche e di genere e la concretezza del lessico, la linearità della sintassi, deriva infatti anche quel singolare effetto di "parlato" costretto in panni aulici, che della poesia frostiana è tipico e non secondario carattere. (Giudici, 1965: 8)

[The peculiar effect of spoken language forced into noble clothes that is so typical and central in Frost's poetry derives from the tension established between the apparent laziness of the prosodic and generic forms and the concreteness of the lexis and the linearity of the syntax.]

It is interesting that in his conclusions, quoted above, the translator refers not just to the lexical but also to the syntactical constituents

of the text. It seems to me that the translator here is pointing, partly unconsciously, to the high degree of complexity involved in the orality evoked by Frost's art.

In my analysis of the translated text, I have focused above all on the three voices highlighted during the study of the source poem. A first careful reading of the text seems to confirm the translator's focus on the use of a non-poetically connoted lexis and a linear syntax as a way of achieving a spoken effect. The discourses of Mary and Warren are thus characterized by expressions close to communicative immediacy. They invite readers to reproduce, even though mentally, some of the typical intonations of spoken Italian, as I shall show in some examples later on. I argue, however, that we can also detect a change in the balance existing among the three voices in the source poem. The translation widens the gap between the spoken quality of the couple's discourses and the markedly literary style of the narrative breaks. Nevertheless, it would not be correct to claim that the more literary style I ascribe to the narrating voice in the target text relies on the lexical choice of the translator. As a matter of fact, the vocabulary employed by the translator derives from a common lexis that may well be used in everyday conversations, as we can see in the following example:

Example 3.15

Pensosa Mary sedeva al tavolo china sul lume In attesa di Warren. Quando intese il suo passo Corse in punta di piedi giù nell'andito buio Per incontrarlo sulla soglia, dirgli Le novità, avvisarlo. «Silas è qui di nuovo.» Con sé lo spinse fuori della poerta e Se la chiuse alle spalle, dicendo «sii gentile». Gli tolse dalle braccia le cose del mercato E le mise nell'atrio, poi lo fece	Mary sat musing on the lamp- flame at the table Waiting for Warren. When she heard his step, She ran on tip-toe down the darkened passage To meet him in the doorway with the news And put him on his guard. "Silas is back." She pushed him outward with her through the door And shut it after her. "Be kind," she said She took the market things from Warren's arms And set them on the porch,
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sedere Accanto a sé sui gradini di legno. (ll. 1-10)	then drew him down To sit beside her on the wooden steps. (ll. 1-10)
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The literary connotation of the text is a consequence of stylistic rather than lexical choices. In line 1 (“Pensosa Mary sedeva al tavolo china sul lume”), for example, the translator makes a syntactical transposition by placing the predicate before the noun, thus stressing the brooding attitude of the woman. We find another syntactic inversion in line 6 (“Con se lo spinse fuori dalla porta e”) as well as two enjambments (in line 6-7 and previously in lines 4-5: “per incontrarlo sulla soglia, dirgli / le novità”). The same devices seem to characterize the second narrative intermezzo as well:

Example 3.16

Uno spicchio di luna tramontava a ponente, con sé sulle colline tutto il cielo portando, dolcemente versando il suo lume sul grembo di Mary. Lei vi stese il grembiule, allungò fuori la mano, fra i convolvoli come le corde di un’arpa tesi per la rugiada dal giardino alla gronda, quasi a tentar la nota di un po’ di tenerezza muta che a lui lí accanto parlasse nella notte (ll. 103-110)	Part of a moon was falling down the west, Dragging the whole sky with it to the hills. Its light poured softly in her lap. She saw it And spread her apron to it. She put out her hand Among the harp-like morning- glory strings, Taut with the dew from garden bed to eaves, As if she played unheard some tenderness That wrought on him beside her in the night. (ll 103-110)
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In this passage we observe a syntactical inversion (“con sé sulle colline tutto il cielo portando,” l. 104), an internal rhyme (“tutto il cielo port**ando** / dolcemente vers**ando**,” ll. 104-105), and an enjambment (“la nota di un po’ di tenerezza / muta che a lui,” ll. 109-110). Finally, in the last narrative segment we detect one more

inversion (which I have emphasized in bold), even though it is not as evident as those discussed above:

Example 3.17

<p>[..] Colse La luna. Così furono in tre, vago gruppetto, la luna, lei, e la nuvoletta d'argento.</p> <p>Warren tornó– troppo presto, le parve, accanto a lei si chinó, le prese la mano esitando (ll.162-166)</p>	<p>[...] It hit the moon. Then there were three there, making a dim row, The moon, the little silver cloud, and she.</p> <p>Warren returned—too soon, it seemed to her, Slipped to her side, caught up her hand and waited. (ll. 161-165)</p>
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It should be observed that in Italian, syntactical transpositions do not always imply a breach of the grammatical rules, due to a freer position of noun phrases within the clause. In a written text, inversion is often used to focus the attention of the reader on the element occupying the first position. As a rhetorical device it may introduce literary overtones in the text. However, the device can also be detected in common oral language, where the intonation of the foregrounded part contributes to clarify its meaning and function. As a consequence, the different positions which verb, subject, or noun clause may occupy within the sentence can trigger different interpretations of the sentence, thus acquiring different connotations.

The relatively regular length of the lines, especially in the first and second narrative asides, where 14-syllable lines (the Italian alexandrine) prevail, contributes to produce a quiet rhythm that enhances the meditative tone of the passages. Examples of expressions with clear oral connotations can be found in line 11 (“Quando mai non sono stato gentile con lui?”). The sentence belongs to the Italian colloquial register. The intonation one would normally assign to it, emphasizing the intonation on the adverb *mai*, immediately reaches readers’ “mental ear” revealing its hidden pragmatic meaning: it is an answer a person would give, feeling accused and partly offended by his/her interlocutor, in the very same way as Warren might have felt after Mary’s invitation to be

kind. A second example of an effective mimetic device can be found in line 70 (“Sì, ma cercavo di girare al largo”) where the colloquial fixed phrase *girare al largo* is used. A third example of a sentence in which the evocation of orality is unambiguously triggered is given in lines 118-119:

Example 3.18

<p>Casa è quel posto dove, quando ci devi andare, loro devono accoglierti. (ll. 118-119)</p>	<p>‘Home is the place where when you have to go there, They have to take you in.’ (ll. 118-119)</p>
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The translator succeeds in achieving here the impression of “parody of grammar” (Brower 1963: 161) that distinguishes the source text. The use of the second person singular with impersonal function (that in Italian, unlike English, has a less formal, more colloquial connotation), and the similar impersonal use of *loro* [they], increase the colloquial impression of the sentence.

In Mary’s discourse one example of devices that successfully recreate a spoken colloquial register can be found in lines 79-80 (“Mi ha chiesto cosa pensassi di quella frase di Harold, / che lui studiava il latino per gusto” [“He asked me what I thought of Harold’s saying / He studied Latin like the violin,” ll. 79-80]). In the sentence we observe the the polyvalent *che*, another distinctive feature of spoken Italian. The function of this particle does not consist in the explicitation of a specific logico-semantic relationship. “Su valor (causal, temporal, consecutivo etc.) viene determinado por el contexto, especialmente – como es característico de la inmediatez comunicativa – por el contexto situacional y de la acción” (Koch & Oesterreicher 2007: 146) [Its value (causal, temporal, consecutive etc.) is determined by the context, especially by the situational context and by the action, as it is typical of communicative immediacy]. Used in a written text it immediately marks it as belonging to communicative immediacy.

We can also find several examples where the translation strategies adopted in order to reproduce the oral quality of the source discourse generate a marked or overemphatic text, in some cases a consequence of a translation calque. I am referring, for instance, to lines 100-101 (“e niente **a cui** guardare indietro con orgoglio / e

niente **a cui** guardare avanti con speranza, così è adesso e mai stato diverso” [“And nothing to look backward to with pride / And nothing to look forward to with hope,” ll. 100-101]). In these lines the attempt to recreate the iterative source structure generates a slightly syntactically marked configuration in the target language, since the expression “niente a cui guardare” reproduces the English structure “to look forward/backward **to**,” and does not follow the rules of a prescriptive Italian grammar (it would be “niente da guardare,” since *guardare indietro/avanti* is transitive in Italian). However, the phrase used in the target text can in fact be used occasionally in spoken Italian. As for the effects produced in line 102 of the target text, the caesura in the middle of the line (“così è adesso | e mai stato diverso” [“So now and never any different,” l. 102]) and the almost perfect internal rhyme (adesso-diverso) enhance the assertive quality of the sentence to such an extent that it becomes a little emphatic. It introduces the possibility of a moralistic reading of the sentence, even though it evokes in part the source rhythm characterized by an initial spondee, the caesura after the first foot (“So now and never any different” // | X / X / X / X) and the alliteration of the words *now* and *never*. The concise fixed structure of the source and target lines adds a quality of popular proverbial truth to the words and, at the same time, emphasizes the expression. In this way, source and target text readers are urged to read the sentence (even if only mentally) with an intonation which will allow them to elicit the message of Mary’s sad reflections.

Finally, a comparison between the 1965 version of the translation and the 1988 version prompts questions regarding the priority given by Giudici to the recreation of orality in the target text. In the later version it is possible to detect several changes the effect of which, in the recreation of orality in the whole poem, is not always easy to determine. I shall provide some examples and make a distinction among them:

Example 3.19: Changes

1965 version	1988 version	Source text
A. D'inverno torna da noi. Sono stufo (l. 30)	A. D'inverno torna da noi. Adesso basta. (l. 30)	A. In winter he comes back to us. I'm done (l. 30)
B. Ha detto che è venuto a scavarmi un gorello nel campo (l. 46)	B. Ha detto che è venuto a scavarmi un fosso nel campo (l. 46).	B. He said he'd come to ditch the meadow for me (l. 46)
C. Harold gli chiama alla mente il latino (l. 78)	C. Harold gli fa venire in mente il latino (l. 78).	C. Harold's associated in his mind with Latin (l. 78)
D. Muta che a lui lí accanto parlasse nella notte (l. 110)	D. Muta che a lui lí accanto parlava nella notte (l. 110)	D. As if she played unheard some tenderness / That wrought on him beside her in the night (ll. 109-110)
E. Per poco che valga / non si vergognerebbe di far piacere al fratello (ll. 144-145)	E. Per poco che conti, / Lui non si umilierà per compiacere il fratello. (ll. 144-145)	E. Worthless though he is, / he won't be made ashamed to please his brother. (ll.144-145)

In example 3.18A the source colloquial expression “I am done” is translated with the equally colloquial and familiar expression “sono stufo” (Garzanti online) in the 1965 version of the translation. In 1988 the sentence is substituted with “adesso basta,” which is a more neutral expression than the previous one. Its holophrastic realization however succeeds in preserving the spoken impression of the sentence. As a consequence, even if, at a micro-level, mimesis of orality shifts slightly from a more familiar towards a more neutral communicative situation, the general impression

evoked by the sentence is still colloquial. Example 3.18B is an instance of change from lexical precision (“scavarmi un goretto” in the 1965 version) to common lexis (“scavarmi un fosso” in the 1988 version). In example 3.18C we observe a shift from a more marked translation in the 1965 version (“chiama alla mente,” the non-marked expression in Italian being “richiama alla mente”), to a neutral sentence with colloquial overtones (“gli fa venire in mente”). In both cases, the impression of orality in the target translations seems increased in comparison to the source sentence (“Harold’s associated in his mind with Latin”). In example 3.18D, the change of the tense of the verb from subjunctive (“parlasse” in the 1965 version) to indicative (“parlava” in the 1988 version), usually used in informal conversation, shifts the language towards the pole of communicative immediacy. Finally, example 3.18E shows a semantic shift in the 1965 version, probably due to a misreading of the source text, that inverts the source meaning. The shift is removed in the 1988 version in favor of a translation closer to the semantic content of the English sentence.

A thorough understanding of the consequences of these changes in relation to mimesis of orality at a macro-level is difficult to establish on the basis of the textual analysis of a single poem. Other examples, not mentioned here, also point to changes to non-marked expressions in the revised translation, compared to the marked expressions of the 1965 versions. Even so it is not possible to generalize, since other examples of semantic shifts are preserved in both versions of the translation.¹⁴¹ The study of this poem raises

¹⁴¹ When semantic shifts occur as a consequence of misinterpretation of the source text, they may affect the way the characters’ personalities are perceived and consequently also affect the overtones generated by the characters’ idiolects. I shall present a few examples of semantic shifts that have not been changed in both the 1965 and the 1988 versions:

Niente: faceva soltanto su e giù con la testa (l. 43)	Nothing would do: he just kept nodding off (l. 43)
The verb <i>nod off</i> is translated in an ambiguous way, using the spatial deictics <i>su</i> and <i>giù</i> (<i>up</i> and <i>down</i>) that point to the movement of the head but do not necessarily stress the hired man’s physical exhaustion.	
“Lo so, quella è la sola specialità di Silas” (l. 88)	“I know, that’s Silas’ one accomplishment” (l. 88)

further research questions regarding the relationship between Giudici's two versions of the translation of Frost's poems that the analysis of the complete books, carried in chapter 4, will explore. The first question regards the priorities given by the translator during his revision (whether semantic or stylistic). The second question addresses the consequences of Giudici's revision on the general recreation of orality in his translations and on the change of balance between source and target text that the operation may have caused.

3.3.1 Some observations on the Italian translation

The analysis of the target text has shown that the voices of both Mary and Warren preserve source oral features and are clearly distinguishable from that of the narrator. We have also observed that on a number of occasions the oral quality of some fragments has been intensified or different colloquial connotations have been introduced that did not exist in the source text. At a macro-textual level these stylistic shifts, together with some semantic shifts, partly alter the balance among the characters and the reader's perception of them. In the source text we have three voices that influence each other while preserving their peculiar features, and seem to converge

Here the divergence is subtler. Following the sound of sense of the sentence, we understand that the emphasis on the word *one* implies the sentence's positive evaluation. In Italian the message is ambiguous and Warren's comment could also bear connotations of scorn. Such interpretation would alter the relationship among the characters, especially if we consider that, as I have suggested, this is the moment when the attitude and speech of the husband and wife starts to converge to a common point.

<p>Certo per noi lui non è nulla, nulla Piú del cane da caccia che ci venne (ll. 115-116)</p>	<p>Of course he's nothing to us, any more than was the hound that came a stranger to us (ll. 115-116)</p>
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This is another ambiguous expression in Italian. It could be easily interpreted as an evaluation of the qualities of the person, while in English it refers simply to the lack of any family relationship. In colloquial Italian it could have been translated as: *lui non ci è nulla*, starting from the expression with colloquial overtones: *mi è parente* [he is a relative to me]. I am arguing that these semantic shifts due to what appear to me misinterpretations of the original text introduce new nuances in the perception of both Mary's and Warren's personalities. The characters appear to be judgmental, projecting harsh overtones onto the speech quality of their voices, as it is perceived by the reader's mental ear.

towards a moment of emotional understanding. In the source text each character anticipates with his or her words (and the intonation associated with them) a psychological description of the other characters (especially, as we have seen, in the case of Mary and the narrator). In the target text such movement is less clear; the differences among the three voices are sharper. Without the constraint of meter, the language of Mary and Warren seems to fade into a dominant orality that overshadows other aspects of their discourses (the sensibility, the lyricism, the pensive mood).¹⁴² I have observed that Giudici, while keeping the verse form, adopts a less regular metrical pattern than that of the source text. His lines present a varying number of syllables (on average between 11 and 15, with some longer lines). The alexandrine line (a fourteen syllable line in Italian) prevails in some passages of the poem. However, it seems difficult to consider the variety of line lengths in the poem as a polymetric structure, since it lacks a regular pattern. Translators can of course adopt different strategies in order to translate iambic pentameter into Italian. They can decide, for example, to use a metrical structure that may approximately correspond to the source form in specific features. In Italian, iambic pentameter is generally translated with hendecasyllabic lines. This convention has its advantages and drawbacks. On the one hand, it reproduces in Italian a metric form which, at least for its length, is similar to that of the source text. On the other, the fixed number of syllables of the chosen metric form combined with the low frequency of monosyllables with lexical meaning in Italian may often cause the translator to omit some words or to displace them to other lines. As a consequence, the total number of lines in a translated poem may increase (though Giudici's translation has only one line more than the source).¹⁴³ In this case, Giudici prefers to

¹⁴² This observation is however a hypothesis that should be tested by expanding the corpus of translated poems to other translations by Giudici.

¹⁴³ Pujol (2006: 318-321) presents the various translation strategies in a study on the translation of Shakespeare's pentameter into Catalan. The same tactics are applicable to Italian, due to the affinity between the two languages. According to Pujol, translators have adopted four main strategies for the translation of the pentameter by 1) using lines with less than ten syllables (a relatively uncommon strategy); 2) using ten syllables line (the most common solution in Catalan. In Italian it would correspond to the use of the hendecasyllable); 3) using the alexandrine (twelve syllable line in Catalan, fourteen in Italian); 4) using a combination of different line combinations (polymetry).

translate the pentameter by adopting a pattern very close to free verse. This strategy grants him more flexibility when translating Frost's poetry and mimesis of orality into Italian.

Finally, the distance between the voice of the narrator and those of the couple increases, partly because of semantic shifts in the translation that project onto the couple's conversation overtones of contempt toward the hired man, thus suggesting a feeling of moral superiority. As a consequence, the sympathetic tuning of the three discourses detected in the source text loses its intensity and fails to produce the second silent conversation resulting from the intertwining of the voices of Mary, Warren and the narrator.

3.4 'La mort del mosso:' the Catalan translation

"La mort del mosso," the Catalan translation of the poem that I analyze in this section was carried out by Catalan poet and translator Miquel Desclot. In Catalonia Desclot is a well known writer, poet, and translator into Catalan from English, French, Italian, German, and Russian (in cooperation with Helena Vidal). He has translated prose works like *Moll Flanders* (1982) and *Bartleby, the Scrivener* (*Bartleby, el Escrivent* 1983) as well as theatre pieces like Shakespeare's *The Tempest* (*La tempesta* 1998), *Macbeth* (2002), and Moliere's *Amphitryon* (*Amfitrió* 1996), among others.¹⁴⁴ Translation of poetry, however, has been Desclot's main interest. He regards this activity as potentially enriching for the target culture, coinciding in this view with aspects of Even-Zohar's system theory and also with the important Catalan translation tradition established by the writers and translators Carles Riba and Josep Maria de Sagarra.¹⁴⁵ Among his most important translations of poetry from English, it is worth mentioning Whitman's *Song of Myself* (*Cant de mi mateix* 1985), Wordsworth's *Tintern Abbey* (*L'abadia de Tintern* 1986), and Blake's *Prophetic Books*, known also as *Lambeth Books*, (*Llibres profètics de Lambeth* in two volumes 1987 and 1989). These translations seem to have neatly paved the way for a translation of Frost's poems. Critics have often

¹⁴⁴ For a summary of Desclot's translations into Catalan see also Lafarga and Pegenaute (2009: 294-295).

¹⁴⁵ In chapter 6 I will analyze this issue in more detail, with bibliographical references.

stressed the affinities among Wordsworth, Whitman, and Frost. All three poets, in fact, were concerned with a poetic language close to the rhythms and the registers of common language. Each poet achieved personal results influenced, naturally, by the culture and the time in which he lived. As for the relationship between Blake and Frost, we could observe that both poets use a style that follows the English Christian tradition of “simple elevation” (Borroff 1971: 45). With this term Borroff points to a style which is elevated without being ornate, a style found in the Authorized Version of the Bible, in Herbert’s *The Temple*, Bunyan’s *Pilgrims Progress* and Blake’s *Songs of Innocence*. “It is characterized by simple and common diction [...], biblical allusiveness, simple syntax, and low Romance-Latinate percentiles” (Borroff 1971: 45).

Desclot translated a selection of poems by Frost on a commission from the Catalan journal *Faig art* in 1989; the poems were published in 1991. The selection, later enlarged, formed a volume titled *Al Nord de Boston* that was published in 1994. In the preliminary note to his translation Desclot gives an introduction to Frost’s style while indicating traits shared with Wordsworth’s poetics. The translator’s observations on Frost’s poetry underscore the elements of the source poetics which the translator prioritizes in his work. Later in the text, he makes explicit what his main translation objectives are:

En la meva versió m’he esforçat a mantenir el rar equilibri que va permetre a W. W. Gibson d’afirmar que «Robert Frost ha convertit la parla corrent dels homes i de les dones en poesia... Històries que en mans d’un altre poeta només serien simples anècdotes, dites per Frost agafen una significació universal, a causa de la seva nativa veracitat». (Frost 1994: 19-20)

[In my version I have strived to keep the rare balance that allowed W. W. Gibson to say that “Robert Frost converted the common speech of men and women into poetry... Narratives that in another poet would be just anecdotes, acquire in Frost a universal meaning, due to their native veracity.”]

“La mort del mosso” is the second poem of the book *Al nord de Boston*.¹⁴⁶ The book offers, as is customary, a parallel edition of both source and target texts. Their spatial opposition on the pages makes readers aware of the similarity of form between the two texts. In fact, the Catalan poem has the same number of lines (166) and the same layout as the source text, so that the translation represents almost a mirror image of the source text. It also presents a similar metrical regularity, with decasyllabic lines .

Coherent with his introductory words, Desclot produces a text that conveys an overall spoken quality. As in the source text, the mainly dramatic structure of the poem helps enhance the impression of orality. The strategy that the translator employs to achieve it partly follows the pattern of the source text. At a macro level, for example, mimesis of orality in the target text is enhanced by direct speech, in the form of exchanges of lines between husband and wife, and the further fictionality of speech within speech represented by the words of the hired man quoted in direct reported speech by Warren and in indirect reported speech by Mary. As we have already observed during the analysis of the source text, the dramatic structure triggers in readers a suspension of disbelief that helps them plunge into the actuality of the conversation almost as if instead of reading they were eavesdropping. Within this general mimetic frame the discourses of Mary, Warren, and the narrator acquire in the target text their own individual traits through the combination of phonic, pragmatic, lexico-semantic, and syntactical devices in a way that mirrors Frost’s mimetic strategies in the source text. The differentiation of voices is perceptible from the very first lines of the poem. Here the narrator’s aside, in the form of stage directions, differs significantly from Mary’s voice:

Example 3.20

Mary, a la taula, seu davant el llum, absorta, Esperant Warren. I en sentir-li els passos Es llança de puntetes a les	Mary sat musing on the lamp- flame at the table Waiting for Warren. When she heard his step, She ran on tip-toe down the
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¹⁴⁶ Despite the title of the book, which translates literally the title of Frost’s second book of poems published in 1914, the collection only includes nine of the sixteen poems in *North of Boston*.

fosques Per trobar-lo a la entrada amb la noticia i prevenir-lo: —En Silas ha tornat—.	darkened passage To meet him in the doorway with the news And put him on his guard. “Silas is back.”
Llavors surt ella enfora de la porta Mentre l’ajusta. I diu: — Sigues-hi amable—.	She pushed him outward with her through the door And shut it after her. “Be kind,” she said.
Li pren dels dits les coses del mercat Per deixar-les a terra, i se l’emporta A seure amb ella als esglaons de fusta.	She took the market things from Warren’s arms And set them on the porch, then drew him down To sit beside her on the wooden steps.
(ll. 1-10)	(ll. 1-10)

Coherently with the diegetic function of this voice, the narrator’s discourse is characterized by longer descriptive sentences. The lyrical overtone of the fragment, also observed in the source text, is partly conveyed by the visual frames evoked by the semantic content of words such as *absorta* (musing), or by segments suggesting the intimacy and delicacy of the relationship between the two people (“es llança de puntetes” [she ran on tiptoe]; “Li pren del dits les coses del mercat / per deixar-les a terra, i se l’emporta a seure amb ella als esglaons de fusta” [she takes the market things from his fingers, to leave them on the floor, and leads him to sit with her on the wooden steps]). On a phonic level, the rhythmic pattern of the first hypermetric line, in which the trochaic inversion of the first foot gives way to a regular iambic rhythm, suggests Mary’s almost hypnotic absorption at the lamp light:

Example 3.21

$/ \bar{X}^{147} \bar{X} / \bar{X} / \bar{X} / \bar{X} / \bar{X} / \bar{X}$ Mary, a la taula, seu davant el llum, absorta
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The lyrical overtone, which is triggered also by the anastrophe (“a la taula, seu”), can be perceived through the rather neutral register

¹⁴⁷ I have considered the synalepha between the final [i] of the word [mæri] and the neutral vowel [ə] of the following preposition /a/.

of the narrator's voice. The translator draws mainly on a common lexis, avoiding learned or ornate expressions. It is interesting to observe, moreover, how Desclot uses the present indicative to translate the past simple of the source text (for example "Mary sat", "Mary [...] seu"). The change does not introduce any important temporal shift or change in the perception of the action, since the present tense can be interpreted as historical present.¹⁴⁸ However, it seems to confirm the translator's initial intent to preserve the spoken quality of the poem. The historical present tense constitutes an important device in oral storytelling. Its use, and its alternation with the past in a single narrative, carries out several functions, such as segmentation, or the breaking down of the story in chronological segments, foregrounding, internal evaluation of the situation, and creation of suspense (Brinton 1992: 225-228). It is also an effective device for "dramatization", that is, the actualization of the scene to readers, so as to "make them eyewitnesses, or observers, of the scene" (Britton 1992: 235). These functions may overlap, so it is not always easy to outline in a definitive way the specific function that the present tense carries out in a text. When used by the narrating voice in a written text, as in our case, it introduces oral connotations into the text since it recreates the oral pattern of conversational narrative.¹⁴⁹ However, other reasons may lie behind this translation choice. A literal translation of the source-text past tense with the Catalan simple past may, in fact, be problematic for the translator. Catalan has two semantically equivalent past tense forms, the simple past and the periphrastic past (formed with the indicative present tense of the auxiliary verb *anar* plus the infinitive). The latter can be used both in oral and in written communication, and is diastratically and diatopically neutral; that is, it does not necessarily characterize a context of communicative immediacy. The use of the simple past, on the other hand, is

¹⁴⁸ Huddleston & Pullum (2002: 129-131) argue that, besides in historical chronicles, the historical present is most often used in everyday conversation. In fictional narratives, it is used to add dramatic immediacy to the scene described (Quirk et al. 1985: 181-183).

¹⁴⁹ The fascinating discourse on the historical present, its various definitions and functions is wide and complex. For further references see also Deborah Sciffrin's article "Tense Variation in Narrative" (1981), Monika Fludernik (1991; 1992), and Christian Paul Casparis (1975), among others. See also Koch and Oesterreicher (2007: 109-116) for references to the use of the historical present (or narrative present) in Romance languages.

exclusively consigned to formal written contexts and introduces a higher register, thus approaching the pole of communicative distance. The translation of the English simple past in the poem may have represented a double bind for the translator since it would have implied two different sets of constraints. The use of the periphrastic form on the one hand would have allowed Desclot to preserve a similar set of connotations evoked by the tense in the source text. However, it would not have been an efficient solution, since it would have introduced an extra syllable in the limited space of the decasyllable. It would also have produced an unintended repetition of the auxiliary verb form whenever the simple past was to be translated. The use of the simple past as an alternative would have given the text a distinctly formal flavor, quite distant from the colloquial register of Frost's poem. My hypothesis related to the translator's intentionality and systematicity behind the use of the present tense in the target text seems to be confirmed by the fact that it appears throughout the poem in all three interventions of the narrator.¹⁵⁰

The second strophe introduces the dialogue between the couple. The lively immediacy of the exchange of lines between the woman and her husband is built on a thick web of pragmatic markers, lexico-semantic and syntactical devices which seem to follow Frost's mimetic strategies and to adjust well to the target language. An indication of the spoken quality of the discourses of both Mary and Warren can be found, at a pragmatic level, in phatic markers such as the onomatopoeic sound "xit" ("xit, no cridis, que et pot sentir," l. 31) and the hesitation marker "vaja" ("que feia pena...i vaja, mitja por..." l. 36). Similarly, at a lexico-semantic level, we observe words, word-clusters, or word-clauses without conventional literary connotations, belonging rather to a colloquial register (for example: "I és bo per res?," l. 15; "pobre home," l. 49; "un bri de dignitat," l. 50; "xuclat pels llibres," l. 98). But it is especially at a syntactical level that the speech quality of the lines can be distinctly perceived. I am referring to certain elliptic expressions ("Però ell, res: vinga capcinejar," l. 43; "Ben poc," l. 45; "sempre el mateix, ahir, i avui, i demà," l. 102); emphatic expressions ("És clar que si!" l. 48; "Que més voldria jo!" l. 23; "N'estic fart," l. 30; "Ara ves com perduren

¹⁵⁰ In line 161, ("[...] I l'encertà") however, we also find the only occurrence of the non-periphrastic form of the preterite.

certes coses!” l. 72; “Ves quina raò!” l. 81); syntactical dislocations (“Creus que **a nosaltres** ens és més que no / a son germà?” ll. 124-125); the use of the historic present, when reporting Silas’s speech in their conversation (“«Molt bé» responc «però no puc pagar-te,»” l. 22; “Diu que què em sembla que el noi estudiï,” l. 79); and the use of personal deixis which, when employed as grammatical subjects is often pleonastic in Catalan¹⁵¹ (as in Italian and Spanish) and is mainly used to emphasize the position of the subject, often in opposition to someone else or a state of mind, for example. (“Si, i jo, per no sentir-los, m’apartava,” l. 70; “I jo el comprenc,” l. 76; “Ell associa el noi amb el llatí,” l. 78, “—Jo n’hauria dit / allò que, no sé com, no et cal merèixer,” ll. 119-120).

As in the source text, the discourses of Warren and Mary are articulated around a series of common mimetic devices that do not prevent the translator from personalizing their voices in order to achieve the representation of two distinct personalities and idiolects. For Warren’s voice, part of this impression is certainly due to the syllogistic structure of his arguments, which implies in itself a certain degree of planning (as already shown in my comments on the source text). The logical structure of his discourse seems to be accompanied by sentences which, though still syntactically simple and short, appear more compact than the numerous very short sentences or fragments of sentences pronounced by Mary. Two extracts will clarify this point. The first refers to Warren’s reaction to the news of Silas’s arrival:

Example 3.22

—Quan he deixat de ser-hi amable, amb ell? Només que ja no el vull llogar —respon—. Prou el vaig advertir a l’última sega. «Si marxés», vaig fer jo, «no tornaràs». I és bo per res? ¿Qui més l’acolliria als seus anys per la feina que	“When was I ever anything but kind to him? But I’ll not have the fellow back,” he said. I told him so last haying, didn’t I? ‘If he left then,’ I said, ‘that ended it.’ What good is he? Who else will harbour him At his age for the little he can
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¹⁵¹ See Ainaud, Espunya, and Pujol (2003: 188-190).

<p>pot fer? No hi ha manera humana de comptar-hi. Quan més el necessites, se te'n va. «Troba que hauria de guanyar una paga, si més no per poder comprar tabac i així no haver de manllevar a ningú.» «Molt bé» responc, «però no puc pagar-te un salari: què més voldria jo!»</p> <p>«Hi ha qui pot.» «Doncs que ho faci aquest que pot.» No em sabrà greu si troba res millor, com diu. Però ja pots estar segura que quan comença així un corcó l'empeny a fugir amb quatre cèntims a la bossa... en temps de fenc, quan calen tots els braços. I a l'hivern llavors torna. N'estic fart. (ll. 11-30)</p>	<p>do? What help he is there's no depending on. Off he goes always when I need him most. 'He thinks he ought to earn a little pay, Enough at least to buy tobacco with, So he won't have to beg and be beholden.' 'All right,' I say, 'I can't afford to pay Any fixed wages, though I wish I could.' 'Someone else can.' 'Then someone else will have to.' I shouldn't mind his bettering himself If that was what it was. You can be certain, When he begins like that, there's someone at him Trying to coax him off with pocket-money,— In haying time, when any help is scarce. In winter he comes back to us. I'm done." (II. 11-30)</p>
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Though sentences are short and the hypotactical structure is not complex, very few of them are fragmented. Conversely, Mary's immediate counter-argument does not even take into account her husband's comments. Her sentences are shorter and not always logically linked to one another. The suspension marks recurring four times in the short passage quoted below (example 3.22) are one of the conventional ways to represent an extra-linguistic act of hesitation, thus increasing the impression of fragmentation of the sentences.

Example 3.23

<p>—Està retut. I dorm vora l'estufa. En tornar de can Rowe me l'he trobat arraulit a la porta del graner, que feia pena i... vaja, mitja por... no cal que riguis... no l'he conegut... m'ha agafat per sorpresa, i sembla un altre. Ja ho veuràs. (ll. 33-39)</p>	<p>“He’s worn out. He’s asleep beside the stove. When I came up from Rowe’s I found him here, Huddled against the barn-door fast asleep, A miserable sight, and frightening, too— You needn’t smile—I didn’t recognise him— I wasn’t looking for him—and he’s changed. Wait till you see.” (ll. 33-39)</p>
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If we take into account another segment of the woman’s narrative, where she, like Warren before, reports the hired man’s words, it is possible to observe a similar fragmented impression, despite the more articulate structure of the sentences.

Example 3.24

<p>Hi ha afegit, si de veres vols saber-ho, que també birbaria la quintana. T’ha dit mai una cosa per l’estil? Si l’haguessis sentit com s’embullava, Warren. Fins m’he aturat a contemplar-lo dos o tres cops —tan neguitosa estava— per veure si parlava endormiscat. Retreia en Harold Wilson —ja el recordes—, el noi que vas llogar quatre</p>	<p>[“]He added, if you really care to know, He meant to clear the upper pasture, too. That sounds like something you have heard before? Warren, I wish you could have heard the way He jumbled everything. I stopped to look Two or three times—he made me feel so queer— To see if he was talking in his sleep. He ran on Harold Wilson—you remember— The boy you had in haying four years since.</p>
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<p>anys enrere, que ja ha acabat l'escola i ara és mestre. Diu que l'hauries de tornar a llogar. Que farien, tots dos, un gran equip per deixar-nos la finca com un sol. Però això ho barrejava amb altres coses. Troba que el noi promet, si no fos tanta instrucció... ja saps com discutien sota el sol inclement de juliol, el vell al carro aparellant el fenc, el noi a terra per anar passant- l'hi. (ll. 51-69)</p>	<p>He's finished school, and teaching in his college. Silas declares you'll have to get him back. He says they two will make a team for work: Between them they will lay this farm as smooth! The way he mixed that in with other things. He thinks young Wilson a likely lad, though daft On education—you know how they fought All through July under the blazing sun, Silas up on the cart to build the load, Harold along beside to pitch it on." (ll. 51-69)</p>
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The elements in bold in the previous passage represent a series of parenthetical remarks with which the woman interrupts her discourse. They are pragmatic strategies adopted in order to catch the interlocutor's attention and to gain his benevolence. While characteristic of the oral dimension, they are also keys to interpreting the real intentions of the woman. Mary is not interested in developing a totally rational and coherent discourse. Her main concern is not to win a philosophical discussion based on logical principles, but rather to win her husband's empathic attention for the old man. Her speech becomes more evocative when she describes Silas. As observed in the source text, the slight change of register suggests an interaction with the voice of the narrator and anticipates the second and third lyrical intermezzo:

Example 3.25

<p>Sempre pensa en els altres, pobre Silas, però no pot mirar cofoi enrere ni tampoc endavant amb esperança, sempre el mateix, ahir, i avui, i demà. (II. 99-102)</p>	<p>Poor Silas, so concerned for other folk, And nothing to look backward to with pride, And nothing to look forward to with hope, So now and never any different.” (II. 99-102)</p>
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The fragment does not achieve, in my opinion, the same lyrical intensity of the English one, where the mythical and religious frames brought to mind by the abstract nouns *pride* and *hope* are further reinforced by a syntactical parallelism and a web of echoing sounds produced by word iteration and the alliterative alternation of voiced and voiceless consonants. However, the final aggregative polysyndetic sequence of temporal adverbs (“ahir, i avui, i demà”) succeeds in evoking a diaphanous sensation of passing deceitfulness, foreshadowing the feeble and cold light of the moon, described by the narrator in the succeeding strophe.

I have already briefly described the voice of the narrator in the Catalan translation at the beginning of the analysis, underlining the features that remain close to communicative immediacy while introducing a scene with lyrical overtones. It seems possible to argue that the function and characteristics of these features closely follow the stylistic pattern of the source text. In its second and third interventions in the Catalan text, the voice of the narrator gains texture and personality. Its function is no longer limited to that of stage direction; it becomes more independent, as we can see in the second narrator’s aside:

Example 3.26

<p>Un tall de lluna queia per ponent, arrossegant el cel cap a la serra. La llum inunda Mary, que en notar-ho</p>	<p>Part of a moon was falling down the west, Dragging the whole sky with it to the hills. Its light poured softly in her lap. She saw</p>
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li estén el davantal. I fica els dits entre les cordes d'arpa de l'heurera, que la rosada tensa fins al ràfec, com si hi sonés una tendresa muda per a ell, assegut al seu costat. (ll. 103-110)	And spread her apron to it. She put out her hand Among the harp-like morning- glory strings, Taut with the dew from garden bed to eaves, As if she played unheard the tenderness That wrought on him beside her in the night. (ll. 103-110)
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The narrator's voice in the aside still describes a scene, but at the same time interprets it ("com si hi sonés una tendresa muda"). The verb tense alternation between the past perfect continuous ("un tall de lluna **queia** per ponent") and the present ("la llum **inunda** Mary") foregrounds the scene and adds a distinct subjective note to the description. The lyricism of the scene in the Catalan translation results from the balanced combination of its semantic and phonic dimensions. On the one hand, the reader's imagination is drawn by the visual frames evoked by the words *llune*, *llum*, *rosada*, and the aural frames suggested by the words *cordes d'arpa*, *tendresa muda*. On the other, the imaginary ear is caught by the euphony produced by the regular decasyllabic rhythm of the lines and by the alliterative game of voiced and voiceless fricative alveolar sounds /z/ and /s/ (e.g. *rosada*, *tendresa*, and *tensa*; *fins* and *sonés*), voiced and voiceless plosive dental sounds /d/ and /t/ (e.g. *rosada*, *tendresa*, and *muda*), trill alveolar /r/ and flap alveolar /ɾ/ (e.g. *arrosegant*, *serra*, and *rosada*), and a predominance of the open vowel sound /a/, the semi open vowel sound /ɛ/, and /ə/ over the closed vowel sounds /u/ and /i/ and the semi closed vowel sound /o/.

The presence of the extra-diegetic narrator as a third character becomes even more consistent in the last narrator's aside in the final lines of the poem. Here the narrator moves from the role of observer and interpreter of the characters' personalities and actions to that of spokesperson for the thoughts of one of the characters (Mary). The point of view changes and the narrator intrudes into the

conversation, the development of which had depended until that moment solely on the words of the characters.

Example 3.27

<p>Warren torna —que ràpid!, troba ella. Se li asseu al costat, l'agafa i calla.</p> <p>—Warren? —demana. —Mort —fa la resposta.</p> <p>(ll. 164-166)</p>	<p>Warren returned—too soon, it seemed to her, Slipped to her side, caught up her hand and waited.</p> <p>“Warren,” she questioned. “Dead,” was all he answered.</p> <p>(ll. 164-166)</p>
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Even though this effect is not exclusive to the Catalan translation but can be first observed in the source text, the emphatic elliptic expression “que ràpid!” and the historical present used in association with the verb of communication *demanar* enhance the spoken quality of the segment. Nonetheless, it is interesting to note that the same narrator’s intervention also includes, in the previous lines, a brief elegiac moment where we register the only occurrence in the text of the Catalan simple past. It is the moment when Mary, having invited her husband to talk directly with the hired man, prepares herself to wait for his return, looking at the night sky where only the moon and a pale cloud are visible:

Example 3.28

<p>Jo em quedo a veure si aquell nuvolet encerta o no la lluna. I l'encertà.</p> <p>Ja eren tres formant un pàl·lid rengle: la lluna, el nuvolet de plata, i ella.</p> <p>(ll. 160-163)</p>	<p>[“]I’ll sit and see if that small sailing cloud Will hit or miss the moon.” It hit the moon.</p> <p>Then there were three there, making a dim row, The moon, the little silver cloud, and she.</p> <p>(ll. 160-163)</p>
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Without asking the translator directly, it is difficult to understand what lies behind his decision to introduce the simple past at this

point of the composition instead of the present. The analysis of Desclot's other translations of Frost's poems in chapter 5 will shed light on this point. At this stage of the study it is possible to note that the use of the present (*encerta*) would not have altered the repetition of the same word at the beginning and end of the line which was probably compensating the epistrophe of the source line ("[']Will hit or miss the moon.' It hit the moon," l. 161). We can argue, however, that the use at this point of the simple past facilitates the transition from the temporal frame of the conversation between the two characters located in the present, to that of the diegesis, located in an indefinite, suggestive past. The higher register to which the simple past is usually associated contributes to the lyrical overtone of the passage. Finally, as the narrative recedes to make space for the last exchange of lines between Warren and Mary, the present tense comes back into use.

3.4.1 Some observations on the Catalan translation

The linguistic analysis of the Catalan poem has highlighted a number of features that have prompted several reflections. I have observed how Desclot succeeds in producing a target text in which the spoken quality of the source text is recreated in the target language in a similar manner. In particular, through the combinations of devices on the lexico-semantic, syntactical, and pragmatic levels, he recreates an impression of orality that does not represent specific diastratic or diatopic variations but rather corresponds to a neutral colloquial register that makes sense in a situation of intimacy and communicative immediacy between husband and wife. Variation in the balance of mimetic devices in the text contributes to the definition of the characters' voices and personalities. The third voice in the poem, that of the narrator, is also characterized by features of fictive orality that suggest varying degrees of proximity to the poem's characters, a shifting sense of involvement in the narrative, and a changing point of view. The nuances of speech and at the same time the lyrical overtones of these passages are recreated through mimetic and rhetorical strategies similar to those used by Frost.

I have also noted that the translated poem presents a regular metric pattern mostly composed of decasyllables. This observation points to an important formal constraint intentionally imposed by the

translator on his text. It is an element I shall take into account during a later phase of the study, when a comparison will be drawn among the translations examined in the chapter. It is also a feature that leads us to further remarks. First, by consciously imposing on himself this formal constraint, the translator sets the foundations in his text for that interplay of metrical forms and mimetic devices (the sound of sense) that Frost has defended throughout his life, as I described in the previous chapter.¹⁵² Second, the choice of the decasyllabic structure and the element of intentionality just mentioned seem to point to the translator's desire to inscribe his translation within the Catalan literary tradition. While avoiding psychologizations regarding the translator's intention, it is a fact that the decasyllable represents, as Bargalló (2007: 113) points out, the line *par excellence* of Catalan poetry. It is true that we do not find in the text the classic version of the Catalan decasyllable, which would be *a minore*, that is, with a caesura after the fourth syllable of an oxytonic word. However, already as far back as the seventeenth century, a different form of decasyllabic line was accepted in the Catalan metric system: the decasyllable without caesura. This form descends from the Italian *endecasillabo* through the influence of the Spanish metrical system and is characterized by the absence of a caesura and of a fixed rhythmic structure.¹⁵³ These preliminary observations allow the inference that behind the choice of this metric form lies a wish to inscribe the poem within an established Catalan poetic tradition. A further confirmation of this hypothesis seems to come from the comments Desclot wrote in his "Nota sobre la traducció" on the first translation of a selection of Frost's poems into Catalan, carried out by the poet Agustí Bartra in 1951, analyzed in chapter 5. In his anthology Bartra often chose the decasyllable as a formal equivalent, in the Catalan language and poetic tradition, of the iambic pentameter in the anglophone poetic tradition.¹⁵⁴ Desclot knew Bartra's translations and original production very well, having edited the second volume of his complete poems (*Obra poètica completa*, 1983). The choice of this

¹⁵² The textual analysis has brought to light an additional constraint: the need to adjust the semantic content of the source line so that it may fit in the corresponding target line. We could hypothesize that the parallel edition of the source and target texts has fostered this decision.

¹⁵³ For further details and classifications of this metrical form see Bargalló (2007: 112-115) and Oliva (2008: 109-115).

¹⁵⁴ The decasyllable was also congenial to Bartra's own poetic production.

metric form in relation to the Catalan metric tradition seems to offer, to my view, a convenient framework in which to insert his translation of the poem ‘The Death of the Hired Man.’

3.5 ‘La muerte del jornalero:’ The Spanish translation

Salustiano Masó is a contemporary Spanish poet and translator. During his long career he has written over 20 books of poems; his first book, *Contemplación y aventura*, is dated 1957, and his latest, *Metafísica recreativa*, was published in 2010. From very early in his career the poet has accompanied his original poetic production with work as a freelance literary translator, translating into Spanish authors such as Robert Browning, Charles Dickens, Nadine Gordimer, and Jean Jacques Rousseau, among others. In an interview from July 3rd, 2010 in the online poetry magazine *Poesía eres Tú*, (Gomez 2010) the poet acknowledges the influence that his translation activity has had on his own poetry and poetic language. In 1996 Masó published a complete translation of Frost’s *North of Boston* (*Al Norte de Boston*). It is a bilingual translation, though without parallel text. The source text is reproduced at the foot of each page with no line breaks between lines, which are instead marked by a forward slash (/). The layout of the page proves to be spatially more economical but does not allow for an easy parallel reading of source and target texts.

In the preface to his translation Masó presents a brief picture of the main features of Frost’s poetry, which we have already described in the previous chapter: his concern for a language that avoids the ornate style of the most pedantic western poetic traditions and his desire for simplicity of vocabulary and a colloquial register. Masó also traces a parallel between the North American poet and Wordsworth. The Spanish translator stresses that nothing of the subjectivity and honeyed tenderness of the English poet can be found in Frost (Masó 1996: 13). Later on the same page, Masó underlines how the oral quality of Frost’s language finds its way into the strict monotony of the meter and achieves its own cadence. As he argues, this is hardly new, since poets have always superimposed the rhythm of common speech on the theoretical pulse of the metrical pattern. As a consequence, the translation of Frost’s “sound of sense” cannot allow for a strictly philological translation.

Léxico, sintaxis, puntuación, metro, rima cuando la hay, no deben surgir nunca de una operación de mimesis o de calco. Tienen que nacer de nuevo, a impulso de la vivencia profunda del espíritu que progresa, deslumbrado y torpe, del placer al conocimiento, y obra la metamorfosis. (Masó 1996, 15).

[Lexis, syntax, punctuation, meter, and rhyme (when it occurs) should never spring from an operation of mimesis or calque. They need to be generated anew, from the impulse of the deep experience of the soul, which progresses, dazzled and clumsy, from pleasure to knowledge, and effects a metamorphosis.]

While these observations follow mainstream criticism on Frost, and have also been found in the introductions of Giudici and Desclot to their own translations, Masó makes comments that point to other features of Frost's poetry. The first refers to Frost's alleged use of free verse: "[Frost] no se revela como innovador de las técnicas de versificación, aunque emplea el verso libre de un modo muy personal" (Masó 1996: 13) [Frost does not appear to be an innovator in the techniques of versification, even though he uses free verse in a very personal way]. It is well known however that the North American poet did not use free verse. He himself writes as much in a meta-poetical reference included within the poem "How Hard It Is to Keep from Being King / When It's in You and in the Situation," in the book *In the Clearing* (1962).¹⁵⁵ Masó's

¹⁵⁵ In the poem, the title of which is itself composed by two iambic pentameters, the son of the King, a poet, says:

I'm not a free-verse singer. He was wrong there.
I claim to be no better than I am.
I write real verse in numbers, as they say.
I'm talking not free verse but blank verse now.
Regular verse springs from the strain of rhythm
Upon a metre, strict of loose iambic.
From that strain comes the expression *strains of music*.
The tune is not that metre, not that rhythm,
But a resultant that arises from them.
Tell them Iamb, Jehovah said, and meant it.
Free verse leaves out the metre and makes up
For the deficiency by church intoning.
Free verse so called is really cherished prose,
Prose made of, given and air by church intoning.
It has its beauty, only I don't write it.
And possibly my not writing it should stop me

second comment refers to the poet's use of the New England dialect "con particularidades de dicción y sintaxis de imposible traducción" (Masó 1996: 16) [with peculiarities of diction and syntax that are impossible to translate]. It would be interesting to understand which peculiarities of diction and syntax the translator is referring to, considering that Frost's reproduction of orality is usually based on a relatively simple vocabulary and syntax, quite standard in itself and presenting very few diatopic variations, as I argued in the previous chapter. Finally, when describing the most recurrent meter in Frost's poems, the iambic pentameter, Masó speaks of "endecasílabo ingles" (Masó 1996: 16) [English hendecasyllable]. The use of this term to define a classical English metric form does not seem to be particularly advisable, as it may lead to a certain terminological confusion and misunderstanding regarding the main characteristics of iambic pentameter as opposed to the Spanish hendecasyllable. As for the metrical pattern used to translate into the target language the source blank verse, Masó argues that he decided to adopt the alexandrine "y otras combinaciones métricas más extensas, manteniendo los ritmos silábicos en una pugna constante por no caer en la prosa pura y simple, difícil empeño cuando el componente anecdótico tiende como un lastre hacia ello" (Masó 1996: 17) [and other more extended metrical combinations, preserving the syllabic rhythms in a constant attempt not to fall into pure prose, a hard task when the anecdotic component is drawn to it like a magnet]. Also in this case the translator's clarification would be necessary in order to understand what "more extended metrical combinations" he may be referring to. Bearing these observations in mind, I analyze Masó's translation following the pattern adopted for the translations previously presented.

With a similar effect as in the source text, María's ¹⁵⁶ and Warren's voices assume a distinctly oral, colloquial overtone. The spoken quality of their speech is the result of the combination of several pragmatic, lexical, and syntactical devices. Within the shared frame of mimesis of orality, the discourse of husband and wife can still be differentiated: Warren's speech, as I shall show later on, appears to

From holding forth on Freedom like a Whitman—

A Sandburg [...] (ll. 209-226)

¹⁵⁶ Masó decides to domesticate the proper name *Mary* while borrowing the name *Warren*.

be more linear, implying a degree of planning, leading, on certain occasions, to situations of communicative distance due to its degree of formality. María's speech, on the other hand, seems characterized by elements that shift it towards communicative immediacy, and lean towards a clearly identifiable colloquial register. Her first longer intervention, describing her encounter with the old Silas, presents examples of the devices used by the translator to achieve his mimetic effects:

Example 3.29

<p>“Está agotado. Duerme junto a la estufa. Cuando volví de casa de Rowe me lo vi aquí, arrebujado Contra la puerta del establo, dormido como un tronco. Daba lástima verlo, y también miedo... No es para que sonrías... No le reconocí... No le esperaba yo...y está cambiado. Aguarda y ya verás.” (ll. 33-39)</p>	<p>“He's worn out. He's asleep beside the stove. When I came up from Rowe's I found him here, Huddled against the barn-door fast asleep, A miserable sight, and frightening, too— You needn't smile—I didn't recognise him— I wasn't looking for him—and he's changed. Wait till you see.” (ll. 33-39)</p>
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As can be seen, María's words belong to the lexis of everyday language, swinging between a neutral register (which predominates in example 3.28) and a more colloquial register that appears later in the poem. Often the speech quality of her sentences is highlighted by the combination of words with idiomatic expressions (such as “dormir como un tronco,” l. 35) and the emphatic use of personal deixis (“No lo esperaba **yo**...,” l. 37). The analysis of the remaining fragments of María's speech in the poem confirms, and, in my opinion, even accentuates, this first impression of colloquiality. Further examples of a colloquial register issuing from a certain lexical choice are represented by words such as “embarullaba” (l. 55), “chiflado” (l. 66), and “desparpajo” (l. 73) and fixed expression like “cabecear **sin soltar prenda**” (l. 43), “tendrán esta heredad **como una seda**” (l. 63), and “Silas **es lo que es**” (l. 140). At a pragmatic level, we observe an onomatopoeia (“¡Chis!” l. 31) and some emphatic or holophrastic formulations that follow the pattern

of the source text (“Poca cosa,” l. 45). Finally, the syntax of her speech is simple, characterized by a dominant parataxis or very simple hypotactical structures. Her language does acquire, however, on specific occasions, literary or formal connotations. This effect is particularly clear in the fragment which introduces the first lyrical intermezzo. The lyrical mood of the passage corresponds to the source effect but introduces also a more formal overtone:

Example 3.20

<p>[“]Pobre Silas, tan preocupado siempre por el prójimo. Sin nada en el ayer que mirar con orgullo, Sin nada en el mañana que ver con esperanza, Nada distinto nunca para él.” (ll. 99-102)</p>	<p>[‘]Poor Silas, so concerned for other folk, And nothing to look backward to with pride, And nothing to look forward to with hope, So now and never any different.’ (ll. 99-102)</p>
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In the source text, the iteration of the words conveys an impression of a fixed, almost formulaic structure that however adjusts itself to the speech-like flow of the discourse. In the Spanish translation the repetition is reproduced, but the nominalization of the temporal adverbs (“el ayer,” “el mañana”) and the unusual word order of the last elliptical sentence (“Nada distinto nunca para él” which, however, retains the alliterative effect of the sound /n/) add stiffness to the expression and produce a jarring contrast with the colloquial overtones of the previous lines. Another example of such contrast is given by lines 113-114, which contain María’s key question on the meaning of home:

Example 3.31

<p>“A casa”, ironizó él con voz queda. “Si, ¿pues qué, si no es a casa Vas a decir? Todo depende de lo que se entienda por la casa de uno.[”] (ll. 113-114)</p>	<p>“Home”, he mocked gently. “Yes, what else but home? It all depends on what you mean by home.[”] (ll. 113-114)</p>
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Here the sharp syntactical intricacy in l. 113 and the formal overtones introduced by the impersonal “uno,” which also prolongs the rhythm of the line, contrast with the swifter tone and rhythm of both the previous and the subsequent lines (“Claro, para nosotros él no es nada; no más / Que el perro aquel que se llegó a nosotros,” ll. 115-116).

Warren’s speech shares, as I have argued, features of mimesis of orality already observed in María’s words. However, it has more neutral connotations due to the lower ratio of words overtly belonging to a colloquial register, the absence of idiomatic turns of phrase, the lower ratio of emphatic expressions and a simple but at the same time structured syntax. The latter aspect is particularly interesting, in my opinion, as it introduces a degree of formality in his speech that brings in a slight shade of bookishness to his words, as we can see in the examples below:

Example 3.32

<p>Cree que debería ganar un módico jornal, Bastante al menos para comprar tabaco A fin de no tener que pedir y estar agradecido (ll. 19-21)</p>	<p>He thinks he ought to earn a little pay, Enough at least to buy tobacco with, So he won’t have to beg and be beholden (ll. 21)</p>
<p>Pon cada horconada en su lugar exacto, Y la marca y numera para futura referencia, A fin de hallarla y removerla, en la descarga, Con facilidad. [...] (ll. 89-92)</p>	<p>He bundles every forkful in its place, And tags and numbers it for future reference, So he can find and easily dislodge it In the unloading. [...] (ll. 89-92)</p>

The fragments present two occurrences of a subordinating final clause which is introduced by the prepositional phrase “a fin de.” In Spanish, this phrase is used in a context of more planned communication, either written or oral, being normally substituted, in situations of communicative immediacy, by the more common preposition *para*.

As for the voice of the narrator, it seems possible to argue that it certainly shares features belonging to the colloquial register already detected in the mimesis of orality of María's and Warren's language. However, the general register is more neutral, coherent with the function of lyrical intermezzo of the narrator's description. An analysis of the first lines of the poem clarifies this point:

Example 3.33

<p>Contemplaba María la llama del quinqué, sentada a la mesa, Esperando a Warren. Cuando oyó sus pasos Corrió de puntillas por el pasillo a oscuras A darle la noticia en el umbral Y ponerle en guardia. “Silas ha vuelto”. Le hizo salir con ella, cerró la puerta y dijo: “Sé amable”. Tomó luego de los brazos de Warren Las cosas que traía del mercado Y las dejó en el soportal. Después le hizo bajar Y sentarse a su lado en los peldaños de madera. (ll. 1-10)</p>	<p>Mary sat musing on the lamp- flame at the table Waiting for Warren. When she heard his step, She ran on tip-toe down the darkened passage To meet him in the doorway with the news And put him on his guard. “Silas is back.” She pushed him outward with her through the door And shut it after her. “Be kind,” she said. She took the market things from Warren's arms And set them on the porch, then drew him down To sit beside her on the wooden steps. (ll. 1-10)</p>
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During the analysis of the source text and the previous translations we have observed that the first intervention of the narrator consists of a description of a familiar scene. In the Spanish translation this aspect is reflected in the plain lexis, even though the initial inversion of verb-subject (“Contemplaba María”) in the first line carries out the double function of introducing a more literary register while focusing readers' attention on the image, poetic in itself, of the brooding woman. The unadorned language of the description, however (as, for example, the expressions “corrió de

puntillas,” l. 3, and “las cosas que traía del mercado,” l. 8), suggests a degree of intimacy which determines the communicative proximity of the characters. The same simple lexis and syntax seem to characterize the second descriptive aside as well:

Example 3.34

<p>Un segmento de luna caía hacia poniente Llevándose consigo el cielo entero hacia las lomas. Su luz le llovió blanda en el regazo. Lo vio ella Y se cubrió con el delantal. Como quien pulsa un arpa, Tendió luego la mano entre los dondiegos de día Acicalados de rocío desde el arriate a los aleros, Cual si arrancara, música inaudible, no sé qué ternura Que obró en él su virtud junto a ella en la noche. (ll. 103-110)</p>	<p>Part of a moon was falling down the west, Dragging the whole sky with it to the hills. Its light poured softly in her lap. She saw And spread her apron to it. She put out her hand Among the harp-like morning- glory strings, Taut with the dew from garden bed to eaves, As if she played unheard the tenderness That wrought on him beside her in the night. (ll. 103-110)</p>
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The overtly lyrical connotations of the fragment derive here from the visual frames evoked by words such as *arpa* [harp], *rocío* [dew], *musica inaudible* [inaudible music], *ternura* [tenderness], *virtud* [property], and from the literary echoes suggested by the moonlit landscape.

The last descriptive excerpt of the poem however does not seem to achieve a similar lyrical intensity:

Example 3.35

<p>[...] La cubrió. Entonces hubo tres allí: una guirnalda Difusa: la luna, la nubecilla plateada y ella.</p>	<p>It hit the moon. Then there were three there, making a dim row, The moon, the little silver cloud, and she.</p>
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<p>Regresó Warren –demasiado pronto, pensó María— Se deslizó a su lado, le tomó la mano y esperó.</p> <p>“¿Warren?”, inquirió ella.</p> <p>“Muerto”, fue toda la respuesta de él. (ll. 161-166)</p>	<p>Warren returned—too soon, it seemed to her, Slipped to her side, caught up her hand and waited.</p> <p>“Warren,” she questioned.</p> <p>“Dead,” was all he answered. (ll-161-166)</p>
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The long metrical combinations chosen by Masó seems to lead here to a dilution of the lyrical tension, as can be seen in the very last line of the poem, composed of 18 syllables (“¿Warren?”, inquirió ella. ‘Muerto’, fue toda la respuesta de él”, l. 166). In the last line the dramatic opposition of the personal pronouns “ella” and “él” is prioritized over shorter expressions as might have been “fue toda **su** respuesta.” This stylistic choice leads to a very long line in which both the emotional tension between the two characters and the involvement of the narrator in the scene, heightened in the source text by the holophrastic realizations, are diluted.

3.5.1 Some observations on the Spanish translation

Through the textual analysis of the Spanish translation I have outlined the general stylistic features of the text. It has been observed that the tenor of discourse, that is to say, the correlation existing between the language of the speakers and their mutual relationship (Gregory and Carroll 1978: 8), is characterized by a clearly detectable colloquial register. However, the register of each voice presents significant variations along the line delimited by the poles of communicative distance and communicative immediacy. As a consequence, their speech assumes at times a higher degree of planning and more formal overtones. This trait is also discernible in the target text. What we do not find in the Spanish translation is the delicate change of registers which, in the source poem, allowed one voice to anticipate and introduce the other, as in the case of Mary’s and the narrator’s voices. In the case of the Spanish translation, on the contrary, the transition between voices is harsher, due to a more abrupt change of register, like in the Italian translation. There are

several causes which may lie behind this phenomenon. Narrowing down the analysis to the textual level, which is the scope of the present chapter, I have observed that this change of register is mainly caused by a more frequent use in the narrative and descriptive segments than in the dramatic segments of inversions that introduce an overtly literary or more elevated register. Moreover, the lexis of the descriptive fragments, though not ornate, is certainly more evocative and not interpolated by familiar or colloquial expressions, whereas these devices appear in the speech of husband and wife even more frequently than in the source text. Finally, the gap between the tenor of the voice of the narrator and that of the characters' voices is accentuated by the metrical frame adopted by Masó. In the source text the lyrical overtones of the descriptive passages do not rely solely on the frames and echoes suggested by the semantic level of the words. They are rather a consequence of a thick web of rhetorico-phonetic devices, such as alliterations and assonances, which enhance or subvert the iambic rhythm. The relationship between meter and mimesis of orality is also evident in the dramatic passages. In these cases the pentameter is the relatively rigid boundary line within which fictive orality finds its balance and flow. In the Spanish translation the phonic web characterizing the lyrical passages is not as powerful as in the source text. Furthermore, the lack of a compact or regular metric scheme does not provide a foundation similar to the one upon which Frost's controlled orchestration of sounds, images, and rhythms play out. The speech quality of the characters' voices in the target text seems to overflow, compared to the voice of the narrator. The point of view among them changes, as well as the balance among their voices and the degree of emotional involvement that can be inferred from it.

3.6 'Der Tod des Tageslöhners:' the German translation

In the synchronic study of a single poem by Robert Frost and its translations into four languages, the perspective offered by the German translation is to my view particularly interesting. It provides, in fact, an example of a translation in a Germanic language, closer therefore to the source language than the target Romance languages previously considered. This fact may bring new

insight into the study of the translation of mimesis of orality in ‘The Death of the Hired Man.’

Like in Catalonia, Italy, and Spanish speaking countries, there is no translation of Frost’s complete poetical work in Germany, even though several anthologies have been published since 1952.¹⁵⁷ The translation I analyze, ‘Der Tod des Tagelöhners,’ is taken from the latest published book of poems by Frost, *Robert Frost: Promises to keep. Poems Gedichte*, a bilingual edition with translations by Lars Vollert. Vollert is not a full time translator as he works mainly as a creative director in an advertising company. He has a doctorate in English and German language and literature and has also translated a selection of e. e. cummings’s poems (*I. six nonlectures / Ich. sechs nichtvorträge* 2004, and *like a perhaps hand. Poems – Gedichte* 2001) In Vollert’s notes to his own translation, ‘Der Zank zweier Liebender: Robert Frost und seine Welt’ (Vollert 2002), the translator stresses, among other issues, the importance of meter and mimesis of orality in the North American poet’s works. He observes how Frost mastered the devices of meter and rhyme but used them in his own personal way. He also points to the link between literary and common language:

Nach seiner [Frost’s] Ansicht lagen die traditionelle literarische Sprache und die tatsächlich gesprochene Sprache unnötig weit auseinander. Sein Bestreben war, eine dichterische Sprache zu verwenden, die nahe an die natürlich gesprochene seiner Neuengländer reichte. (Vollert 2002: 151)

[According to him [Frost] the literary language of tradition and the actual spoken language were unnecessarily separated. He strived to use a language of poetry which came closer to the one naturally spoken by his New-Englanders.]

¹⁵⁷ There are four German translations of Frost’s work published as individual books: *Gesammelte Gedichte* (1952), a monolingual collection of translations and adaptations of various German authors; *Gedichte* (1963), edited by Eva Hesse, drawing on the previous translation in bilingual format; *In Liebe lag ich mit der Welt in Streit. Gedichte* (1973), translated by Helmut Heinrich and Karl Heinz Berger; and *Robert Frost: Promises to keep. Poems Gedichte* (2002), translated by Lars Vollert.

The function of the metrical structure is to highlight the poetic element within everyday language. The translator also stresses that the common speech quality of Frost's diction should not be mistaken for mere imitation of orality

Was ihn unübertroffen gelingt, ist die Kombination von Rhythmus und Tonfall der gesprochenen Sprache mit den Gesetzmäßigkeiten des Metrums. Alles fügt sich scheinbar mühelos ineinander und macht fast immer die im Grunde strenge Form der Texte vergessen. Von «Alltagsprache» zu sprechen wäre verkehrt – niemand spricht so wie in Frosts Gedichten. Aber sie wirken wie gesprochen. (Vollert 2002: 152)

[He was unmatched in combining the rhythm and cadence of the spoken language with the rules of meter. All elements fit apparently without effort so that the fundamentally strict form of the text is forgotten. It would be wrong to speak of “everyday language” – no one speaks like in Frost's poems. But they appear as if they were spoken.]

This remark points to the fictional nature of mimesis of orality in general, and sheds some light on the inner mechanisms of Frost's art, which sometimes allows for complex syntactical forms far removed from what is commonly understood as orality. Vollert argues that the principles composing Frost's theory of the sound of sense represent at times an insurmountable problem of translation, due to fundamental differences between the German and English language systems. In German in fact, words are usually composed of more syllables than in English, among other reasons, because the language is much more highly inflected. The German translator has to use a language evoking common speech and fit it in “das enge Korsett vom Metrum und Rheim” (Vollert 2002: 153) [the narrow corset of meter and rhyme]. In order to achieve a result that does not diverge too much from the semantic content of the poem, the translator needs to compromise. Vollert basically paraphrases Heisenberg's principle of uncertainty applied to poetic translations: “Je näher man formal an Frost herangerückt wäre, desto mehr Frost wäre an anderer Stelle verloren gegangen” (Vollert 2002: 153) [The closer one gets to Frost in form the more one loses Frost in other ways]. As a consequence, the translator decides to renounce rhyme almost completely, apart from five poems presented as experiments, where rhyme is kept and semantic shifts are

introduced. He considers it a necessary compromise through which he tries to minimize the semantic losses while maintaining the broader metric structure of the iambic pentameter. It should be observed, however, as the translator himself argues, that iambic pentameter is an established metric form in German poetry.¹⁵⁸ Vollert's use of blank verse in his translation, with occasional variations and divergences from it, can therefore be inscribed in this tradition. It is this "Vereinbarkeit von Metrum und Struktur der normalen, mündlichen Sprache" (Voller 2002: 153) [compatibility of meter and structure with normal, spoken language] that I shall now proceed to analyze, starting from the stage direction-like description of the scene in the first lines of the poem:

Example 3.36

<p>Mary sann in das Lampenlicht am Tisch Auf Warren wartend. Als seine Schritte nahten, lief sie auf Zehen durch den dunklen Flur, die Nachricht an der Tür zu überbringen und ihn zu warnen. «Silas ist zurück.» Sie schob ihn mit nach draußen durch die Tür Und schloss sie hinter sich. «Sei nett», sprach sie. Sie nahm den Einkauf Warren aus den Armen Und legte alles hin und zog ihn nieder, sich auf die Stufe neben sie zu setzen. (ll. 1-10)</p>	<p>Mary sat musing on the lamp- flame at the table Waiting for Warren. When she heard his step, She ran on tip-toe down the darkened passage To meet him in the doorway with the news And put him on his guard. "Silas is back." She pushed him outward with her through the door And shut it after her. "Be kind," she said. She took the market things from Warren's arms And set them on the porch, then drew him down To sit beside her on the wooden steps. (ll. 1-10)</p>
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¹⁵⁸ Paul and Glier (1970: 144-149) recount how blank verse first entered German poetical practice in the 16th century, as a rhymeless variation of the French *vers commun* or the Italian *endecasillabo*. Later it was adopted also as the meter of original dramas. Its flexibility in terms of permitted variations within the structure made it an ideal tool for playwrights (Binder et al. 1973: 47). German poets such as Goethe, Schiller, and Kleist, among others, soon personalized it.

As in the source poem, the initial words evoke visual and aural frames defining the lyrical scene and the intimate atmosphere. The lexis of the fragment is plain without being colloquial, and the syntax is not complex, with paratactical constructions (“Sie schob ihn mit nach draußen durch di Tür / **und** schloss sie,” ll. 6-7; “Sie nahm den Einkauf Warren aus den Armen / **Und** legte alles hin **und** zog ihn nieder,” ll. 8-9), which are also an example of syntactical parallelism. There are also cases of hypotaxis with a low degree of complexity observable in the first four lines. These features, and the predominant iambic rhythm of the lines, contribute to the easy flow of the reading, as for example, in line 5:

Example 3.37

X / X / X / X / X /
“Sie schob ihn mit nach draußen durch die Tür

Trochaic inversions, on the other hand, like the initial “Mary sann in” (l. 1) and “Silas ist zurück” (l. 5), or the spondee “Sei nett” (l. 7), add emphasis to the expression.¹⁵⁹ Further features belonging to the rhetorico-phonetic level of the text are the alliterations which enhance the rhythmic cadence of the passage, for example:

Example 3.38

A. lief sie auf Zehen durch den dunklen Flur (l. 3)	A. She ran on tip-toe down the darkened passage (l. 3)
B. Sie schob ihn mit nach draußen durch die Tür (l. 6)	B. She pushed him outward with her through the door (l. 6)
C. Und sch [ʃ]loss sie hinter sich. «Sei nett», s [ʃ]prach sie. (l. 7) ¹⁶⁰	C. And shut it after her. “Be kind,” she said. (l. 7)

¹⁵⁹ The first foot in line 3, “lief sie,” is a trochaic inversion determined by the syntactical structure of the sentences. It could be read with a stress on the pronoun “sie” but this reading would alter the natural flow of the spoken cadence.

¹⁶⁰ The use of the verb *sprechen* (speak) and not *sagen* (say), which would have been a more literal and more common translation, seems to point to the priority given to the meter by the translator. *Sprach sie* instead of *sagte sie* has the

As the reading moves on to Warren's speech we observe a change in the strategies employed to represent his voice. I shall present a short fragment as an example:

Example 3.39

<p>«Wann bin ich je nicht nett zu ihm gewesen? Doch ich will diesen Kerl nicht wieder hier. Hab ich's beim letzten Heuen nicht gesagt? Wenn er jetzt abhaut, sagte ich, ist's aus! Was taugt er noch? Wer sonst gibt ihm ein Dach In seinem Alter, bei dem, was er noch schafft? Auf seine Hilfe ist doch kein Verlass. Wenn ich ihn wirklich brauche, haut er ab. Er meint, er sollt' ein bisschen was verdienen, für Tabak grad genug, damit er nicht durch betteln sich zu Dank verpflichtet fühlt! <na gut>, sag ich, <ich kann er mir nicht leisten, dir festen Lohn zu zahlen, so gern ich's tät'.> <Ein anderer kann's.> <Dann muss halt der es tun.> Es stört mich nicht, dass er was Besseres will, wenn's das nur wär. Du kannst dir sicher sein:</p>	<p>“When was I ever anything but kind to him? But I'll not have the fellow back,” he said. “I told him so last haying, didn't I? ‘If he left then,’ I said, ‘that ended it.’ What good is he? Who else will harbour him At his age for the little he can do? What help he is there's no depending on. Off he goes always when I need him most. ‘He thinks he ought to earn a little pay, Enough at least to buy tobacco with, So he won't have to beg and be beholden.’ ‘All right,’ I say, ‘I can't afford to pay Any fixed wages, though I wish I could.’ ‘Someone else can.’ ‘Then someone else will have to.’ I shouldn't mind his bettering himself If that was what it was. You can be certain,</p>
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advantage of being one syllable less, thus keeping within the syllabic and stress limits of the iambic pentameter.

<p>Fängt er so an, dann ist da einer, der mit einem Taschengeld ihn locken will — zur Heuzeit, wenn es wenig Helfer gibt. Im Winter kommt er wieder her. Mir reicht's.» (ll. 11-30)</p>	<p>When he begins like that, there's someone at him Trying to coax him off with pocket-money,— In haying time, when any help is scarce. In winter he comes back to us. I'm done.” (ll. 11-30)</p>
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Sentences become shorter, often joined by asyndeton to each other. We also observe the use of colloquial expressions (“Wenn er jetzt abhaut, sagte ich, ist's aus,” l. 14; “Was taugt er noch?” l. 15; “was er noch schafft?” l. 16), or the redundant use of the second person pronoun with emphatic effect, often employed in conditions of communicative immediacy (“Du kannst **dir** sicher sein,” l.26). At a phonic level we observe the use of apocopes (“er sollt,” l. 19; “grad,” l. 20) or aphereses (“so gern ich's tät,” l. 23; “ein anderer kann's,” l. 24; “wenn's das nur wär,” l. 26) These devices have both a mimetic and a poetic function, since by reducing the number of syllables they allow for greater flexibility within the pentameter. Finally, the presence of interjections like “na gut” (l. 22) and the modal particle “halt”¹⁶¹ (l. 24) are clear markers of orality and make it possible to describe Warren's speech as colloquial and close to the pole of communicative immediacy.

Mary's speech shares the features of orality characterizing Warren's language. We find therefore colloquial terms like “erbärmlich” (l. 36), *schleppen* (“Ich schleppte ihn ins Haus,” l. 40), *einnicken* (“er nickte immer wieder ein,” l. 43), “im Nu” (l. 63), and “Sein Werktag ist vorüber, ganz gewiss,” (l. 153). A distinctive oral touch is given by the presence in her talk of a relatively high number of interjections (“**Ach**, Warren,” l.47; “**Oh**, Warren,” l. 54; “**Ach**, armer Silas,” l. 99). As we already observed in Warren's language, her speech is characterized by apocope and apheresis (“er hat nen

¹⁶¹ For an exhaustive description of the functions of the interjection *Na* in German see Ehlich (1986: 93-139). As for the specific use of *na gut*, the linguist notes that it is usually uttered with the function of neutralizing what has been said in its immediate proximity (usually a suggestion), and introducing the statement immediately following (usually a performance, provided that specific conditions are given) (Ehlich 1986: 132).

The translator reproduces, in the case of Warren's definition ("«Daheim ist, wo man wenn du hingehen musst, / dich einzulassen hat,»" l. 118-119) an impression of fragmented grammar that, while maintaining its coherence, seems to originate directly from the flow of the man's thoughts rather than the standard syntactical connections between sentences.

I conclude my study of 'Der Tod des Tagelöhners' by focusing on the narrator's voice. As I have said before, in the source text during the second and third lyrical interlude, the off-stage voice acquires personality and consistency. Its status changes from a rather impersonal narrator and stage director to a more involved narrating voice. In the German translation, the balance between a personal voice, with oral overtones, and a more lyrical voice, with poetic overtones, seems to be recreated effectively, as we can see in the passage below:

Example 3.42

<p>Im Westen fiel ein Teil des Monds herab Und zog mit sich den Himmel zu den Hügeln. Sein Licht floss sanft in ihren Schoß. Sie sah's Und hielt die Schürze auf. Die Hand griff in Die harfengleichen Fäden einer Winde, im Tau gespannt vom Gartenbett zum First, als spielte sie von Zartheit ungehört, die auf ihn wirkte neben ihr des Nachts. (ll. 103-110)</p>	<p>Part of a moon was filling down the west, Dragging the whole sky with it to the hills. Its light poured softly in her lap. She saw And spread her apron to it. She put out her hand Among the harp-like morning- glory strings, Taut with the dew from garden bed to eaves, As if she played unheard the tenderness That wrought on him beside her in the night. (ll. 103-110)</p>
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The fragment achieves a lyrical intensity in harmony with a tone of voice which, though not colloquial, does not revert to literary verbal ornaments either. It is rather the result of a plain but evocative lexis whose visual and situational frames suggest a bucolic scene in a moon-lit night, simple syntactical structures, and a balanced use of

various rhetorico-phonetic devices. I am referring above all to the iambic rhythm, the regularity of which suggests the quietness of the landscape described, and to alliterative combinations such as the alternation of the voiced /z/ and the voiceless /s/, as in line 105: “**S**ein Licht floss sanft in ihren **S**choß. **S**ie sah’s.” The evocative rhythm of the narrator’s voice is stressed again by the sequence of main clauses connected in almost all cases by the copulative conjunction *und*:

Example 3.43

<p>Nach vorn gebeugt ging Warren zwei Schritt vor und hob ein Stöckchen auf und trug’s zurück, zerbrach’s in seiner Hand und warf es fort. (ll. 121-123)</p>	<p>Warren leaned out and took a step or two, Picked up a little stick, and brought it back And broke it in his hand and tossed it by. (ll. 121–123)</p>
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The presence of parataxis and of the shortened forms *trug’s* and *zerbrach’s* recreate an impression of orality that seems quite coherent with the image of the narrator as teller of a tale and indirect participant of a scene (midway between the homodiegetic and heterodiegetic narrator that is slowly being outlined in the poem). His final intervention reinforces this impression:

Example 3.44

<p>Sie traf den Mond. Dann war’n sie drei, in einer blassen Reihe, der Mond, die kleine Silberwolke, sie. Warren kam wieder – allzu bald, schien ihr —. Glitt neben sie, griff ihre Hand, saß still. Sie fragte: «Warren?» «Tot» war seine ganze Antwort. (ll. 161-166)</p>	<p>It hit the moon. Then there were three there, making a dim row, The moon, the little silver cloud, and she Warren returned-- too soon, it seemed to her, Slipped to her side, caught up her hand and waited. ‘Warren?’ she questioned. ‘Dead’ was all he answered. (ll. 160 – 166)</p>
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The mounting suspense characterizing the last lines of the source poem, which leads to the surprising denouement, is effectively recreated in the translation by the juxtaposition of words, the ellipsis of the subject in the parenthesis “allzu bald, schien ihr” (l. 164), and the use of almost exclusively monosyllabic and bisyllabic words creating definite rhythmic effects. The use of these devices triggers in target text readers reactions to the narrating voice that are similar to those observed in the source text. In the German translation, as in the source text, the narrator is perceived as a third voice who, while being external, is neither omniscient nor indifferent to the scene that takes place in front of him. The narrating voice takes on Mary’s point of view, as can be seen in its comment “schien ihr” [it seemed to her] and above all contributes, with the escalating fragmentation of the description, to the mounting tension of a finale that finds a resolution in Warren’s monosyllabic answer, as well as in the narrator’s more articulated conclusions.

3.6.1 Some observations on the German translation

The textual analysis of ‘Der Tod des Tagelöhners’ has stressed the main textual strategies adopted by Lars Vollert for the translation of Frost’s ‘The Death of the Hired Man.’ Mimesis of orality occupies a central role in his translation. As a result, all voices in the poem have a distinct spoken quality. As we have been able to observe in the study of the previous translations, this feature does not represent a translation problem, as Frost’s mimesis of orality is based mainly on universal oral traits of the language. Vollert, moreover, stresses the importance of the role played in Frost’s poems by the poetic form, i.e. the metric structure within which Frost’s mimesis of orality develops. In his translations he succeeds in achieving an effective balance between the device of meter and mimesis of orality. Throughout the composition the iambic pentameter provides a tense rhythmic structure around which the poem can develop its lyrical and mimetic effects. On the other hand, because blank verse is a well established meter in German literary tradition and is considered especially suited to dramatic texts, it may well have represented an advantage for the translator. The final result is a translation that recreates a similar range of poetic and mimetic effects as in the source text, and that conveys the richness of

emotive nuances, the lyrical intensity, and the oral immediacy of Frost's poem.

3.7 Partial conclusions

It is time now to draw some conclusions, tentative and partial as they may be, from the study of the source and target texts analyzed thus far. In order to do so I introduce a contrastive approach that outlines points of contact and divergences among the translation choices adopted. These observations still concern the textual level of the analysis, a choice that is coherent with the restricted scope of the chapter and the limitation of the corpus to one single poem. At the same time they will serve as a launching pad for hypotheses that will be explored in the following chapters.

In their theoretical preambles all of the translators stressed the importance of the spoken quality of Frost's poetic language and its interplay with the fixed structures of meter. As might be anticipated from such a focus, translators have achieved their personal mimesis of orality following the pattern offered by the source text. The fictive orality recreated in the target texts has resulted, in general, from the combination of phonic, lexico-semantic, syntactical, pragmatic, and rhetorical features. Giudici and Masó, on the one hand, seem to have focused especially on the lexical level, choosing to recreate the orality of the source text through the use of plain words and fixed, popular, or colloquial expressions that accentuate the impression of colloquialism of the language. Desclot and Vollert, on the other hand, seem to have used a wider range of mimetic devices. These first remarks lead to a reflection on the translation of Frost's mimesis of orality. Taken by itself, that is, out of the poematic context, the New England intonation observed by several critics in Frost's poems does not refer to a diatopic variation of the language, but rather to a cadence added to standard colloquial American English, as stressed in chapter 2. Borrowing from Koch and Oesterreicher (2007: 37-40) we could say that Frost's mimesis of orality is *in part* recreated through the use of features belonging to the variational dimension 1 of the language system, a dimension that includes universal rather than idiomatic features of the spoken language. By drawing on the universal (as labelled by Koch and Oesterreicher) features of their own languages, the four translators

create their own mimesis of orality while evoking Frost's own mimetic language. Yet the four translations also present stylistic differences that must be taken into account and that are illuminating of the relationship between mimesis of orality and other textual and extra-textual elements. Analysis of the translations seems to point to two major trends. Giudici and Masó decide to translate the poem without adopting any strict metrical structures. As I observed above, this choice has produced poems with long lines in which the lack of a regular metrical structure leads occasionally to an irregular rhythm. In the Catalan and in German translations, the adoption of the decasyllable and blank verse respectively (following more closely Frost's theoretical dictates), has ensured a formal structure that, while imposing a constraint on the translation, also provides a poetic framework within which the devices of fictional orality must be accommodated. I also argue that the regularity of meter reduces the somewhat discordant contrast of registers between the narrative intermezzos and the dramatic sections which we observed in the Italian and Spanish translations.

The similar strategies adopted by the Italian and Spanish translators may be better understood in the light of the structural similarities between these two target languages. Both languages present a low ratio of monosyllables with lexical meaning, which reduces their flexibility compared to English, Catalan, and German, in a translation with heavy formal and semantic constraints. Catalan and German on the other hand, while still not as rich in monosyllables with lexical meaning as English, are less limiting in this respect. The German translator, for example, often circumvents the problem by shortening the form of words. The dropping of a syllable, moreover, introduces a spoken nuance in the line, without characterizing it diatopically or diastratically.

This observation, however, needs to be verified through a more extensive study. This is the aim of chapters 4 and 5, in which the occurrences of the features of mimesis of orality in the corpus will be quantified and compared to the poems' rhetorical and metric features, outlined in this chapter. Through the case study I have shown how an analysis of mimetic features in a poem has to take into account other textual features in order to achieve a satisfying understanding of the function of mimesis of orality in the text. The study has also raised further questions on the causes of the

translation phenomena and of the translation trends sketched here. Answering these questions requires a shift in the focus of the research from the text to the translator and the translation process, and brings in personal, ideological, social, historical, and political factors that will be considered in light of the results of the linguistic analysis of the corpus in the following two chapters.

ROBERT FROST AND GIOVANNI GIUDICI

4.1 Introduction

The aim of the present chapter is to introduce, analyze and describe the translations of a selection of poems by Robert Frost that the Italian poet Giovanni Giudici (1924-2011) carried out in 1965 and revised in 1988.

In Italian there exists no translation of Frost's complete poetical work. The North American poet has been included in several anthologies of American, or English and American poets translated into Italian. The only anthologies dedicated to Frost's poems in Italian are by Franco de Poli (Frost: 1961) and Giudici. I have chosen the latter since it has a wider selection of poems both in terms of number of compositions included and of variety of forms (narrative, lyrical, dramatic).¹⁶² The chapter is divided into three parts. The first part summarizes the results of a linguistic analysis of the source text, highlighting the main features of orality that Frost used in the source poems for his personal recreation of spoken language in poetry.

In the second part, I analyze the mainly linguistic and paralinguistic elements through which Giudici recreates an impression of orality in the target language, and draw a comparison between the results of the analyses of the source text and the target text. The contrastive dimension has a central function in pointing to differences in the nature and frequency of the mimetic devices adopted in both source and target text. Any observation of an increase or decrease in the use of features of *typical orality* (section 1.8, table 1.4) for the achievement of mimetic effects that may result from this side-by-side comparison between source and target texts helps outline the major trends in this translation. Since this section of the chapter is intended to offer an overall view of the mimetic devices present in both source and target texts, it does not present the poems individually but focuses through a series of examples on the various mimetic devices detected during the linguistic analysis of each

¹⁶² For an overview on the Italian translations of Frost's poems see Loreto (1999c)

poem, their frequency and the relationship linking the source to the target devices. Details of the analysis of the individual poems can be found in appendix 2.

The third part of the chapter widens the horizon of the research beyond the narrow borders of a linguistic analysis. The approach is a further step towards identifying the final and efficient causes of certain translation choices (see section 1.3), the justification for which needs to be sought outside the linguistic field. In this part of the chapter I carry out an operation of contextualization of the target text and the translation process leading to it from the personal, ideological, and socio-historical point of view of the poet-translator. Delving into the underlying causes of translation choices may at times be like walking on quicksand, from which not even an interview with the translator, when possible, can help us out altogether. It is for this reason that the conclusions reached in this chapter can be considered as hypotheses that lead to further research. The structure of this chapter reflects my research method. I start with the texts and subsequently move to the context to find causal explanations to the issues that the textual analysis could not adequately clarify.

4.2 Analyzing the corpus: the source text

In section 1.10 I introduced a list of mimetic and rhetorical features on which the textual analysis of the translations is focused. I present it once again in this section for readers' convenience (Table 4.1 below) The corpus analyzed in this chapter consists of the poems of Frost and their translations into Italian contained in the book *Conoscenza della notte e altre poesie scelte e tradotte da Giovanni Giudici*, published by Mondadori in 1988 (Frost 1988). The book is a revised and enlarged edition of an earlier edition of Giudici's translations, published by the Einaudi publishing house under the similar title of *Conoscenza della notte e altre poesie* (Frost 1965).

TABLE 4.1 Checklist

- Structure of the poem (nr. of lines, stanzas)
- Meter
- Poetic Form
- Poetic phonic devices
- Poetic Influence

- ELEMENTS OF ORALITY:
 - **Textual-pragmatic level**
 - Markers of discourse organization
 - Markers of turn-taking
 - Phatic markers
 - Hesitation phenomena
 - Reformulation mechanisms
 - Interjections
 - Modalization mechanisms
 - Oral narrative: *verba dicendi*
 - Oral reproduction of reported speech

 - **Syntactical level**
 - Lack of agreement and *constructio ad sensum*
 - Anacolutha, contaminations, postpositions, *funnel technique*
 - Incomplete or holophrastic utterances
 - Dislocation and theme-rheme order
 - Syntactical complexity: parataxis and hypotaxis

 - **Lexico-semantic level**
 - Low lexical variation or colloquial register
 - Lexical iteration
 - Omnibus word
 - Presentatives
 - Deixis
 - Emotional implication and expressive affective procedures (diminutives)
 - Phraseology

 - **Phonic level**

 - **Graphic elements**
- Observations

The later edition includes an introduction by Massimo Bacigalupo, a ‘Nota del traduttore’ [Translator’s note], by Giudici, seventy poems and translations in parallel texts, the titles of which are summarized in table 4.2 (even though in this section of the chapter I focus only on the source poems), and Frost’s essay ‘The Figure a Poem Makes,’ translated by Bacigalupo with the title ‘La figura che una poesia crea.’ I shall give further details on the situation leading to the translation of the anthology and its revision later on in the chapter, when I contextualize the translations.

TABLE 4.2 *Conoscenza della notte e altre poesie* Translated by Giovanni Giudici

From <i>A Boy’s Will</i> (1913)	
1. ‘The Pasture’	‘Il pascolo’
2. ‘Storm Fear’	‘Paura della tormenta’
3. ‘In neglect’	‘Negletti’
4. ‘The Vantage Point’	‘L’osservatorio’
5. ‘Mowing’	‘Mietitura’
6. ‘October’	‘Ottobre’
7. ‘Reluctance’	‘Riluttanza’
From <i>North of Boston</i> (1914)	
8. ‘Mending Wall’	‘La riparazione del muro’
9. ‘The Death of the Hired Man’	‘La morte del bracciante’
10. ‘A Hundred Collars’	‘Cento colletti’
11. ‘Home Burial’	‘Sepoltura in famiglia’
12. ‘The Black Cottage’	‘Il villino nero’
13. ‘A Servant to Servants’	‘Una serva di servi’
14. ‘After Apple Picking’	‘Dopo la raccolta delle mele’
15. ‘The Fear’	‘La paura’
From <i>Mountain Interval</i> (1916)	
16. ‘The Road not Taken’	‘La strada non presa’
17. ‘Christmas Trees’	‘Alberi di Natale’

18. 'An Old Man's Winter Night'	'Notte d'inverno di un vecchio'
19. 'The Telephone'	'Il telefono'
20. 'Meeting and Passing'	'Incontrarsi e passar oltre'
21. Hyla Brook	'Rio Hyla'
22. 'The Oven Bird'	'L'uccellino del forno'
23. 'Putting in the seed'	'Nel deporsi del seme'
24. 'The Hill Wife'	'La moglie in collina'
25. 'Locked out'	'Chiusi fuori'
26. 'Brown's Descent'	'Discesa di Brown'
27. 'The Sound of the Trees'	'La voce degli alberi'
From <i>New Hampshire</i> (1923)	
28. The Witch of Coös'	'La strega di Coös'
29. 'Fire and Ice'	'Fuoco e ghiaccio'
30. 'In a Disused Graveyard'	'In un cimitero in disuso'
31. 'The Runaway'	'Il fuggitivo'
32. 'Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening'	'Fermandosi nel bosco in una sera di neve'
33. 'For Once, Then, Something'	'Ma, quella volta, qualcosa'
34. 'The Onset'	'L'assalto'
35. 'To Earthward'	'Stringendosi alla terra'
36. 'Two Look at Two'	'Due guardano due'
37. 'Not to Keep'	'Non da tenere'
38. 'On a Tree Fallen Across the Road'	'Di un albero caduto attraverso la strada'
From <i>West Running Brook</i> (1928)	
39. 'The Need of Being Versed in Country Things'	'Necessità d'esser versati nelle cose campestri'
40. 'Spring Polls'	'Pozze primaverili'

41. 'Acceptance'	'Accettazione'
42. 'A Minor Bird'	'Un uccelletto in minore'
43. 'Acquainted with the Night'	'Conoscenza della notte'
44. 'The Investment'	'L'investimento'
45. 'Dust in the Eyes'	'Polvere negli occhi'
46. 'The Armful'	'Le braccia cariche'
47. 'What Fifty Said'	'Quel che dissero i cinquant'anni'
48. On Looking up by Chance at the Constellations'	'Guardando per caso alle costellazioni'
49. 'The Bear'	'L'orsa'
From <i>A Further Range</i> (1936)	
50. 'On the Heart's Beginning to Cloud the Mind' offuscare	'Quando il cuore comincia ad la mente'
51. 'Desert Places'	'Luoghi deserti'
52. 'They Were Welcome to Their Belief'	'La pensassero pure così'
53. 'The Strong are Saying Nothing'	'I forti non dicono nulla'
54. 'Moon Compasses'	'Compasso della luna'
55. 'Neither Out Far Nor in Deep'	'Né lontano né in profondo'
56. 'Design'	'Disegno'
57. 'Not Quite Social'	'Un po' scontroso'
58. 'Provide, Provide'	'Provvedi, provvedi'
From <i>A Witness Tree</i> (1942)	
59. 'All Revelation'	'Ogni rivelazione'
60. 'Happiness Makes Up in Height for What it Lacks in Length'	'La felicità ripaga in profondità quel che le manca in lunghezza'
61. 'The Most of It'	'Quasi tutto'
62. 'Never Again Would Bird's Song Be the Same'	'Non piú sarebbe stato il canto degli uccelli lo stesso'

63. 'The Subverted Flower'	'Il fiore sconvolto'
64. 'The Gift Outright'	'Il dono totale'
65. 'Time Out'	'Intervallo'
66. 'To a Moth Seen in Winter'	'A una falena vista d'inverno'
67. 'It is Almost the Year Two Thousand'	'È quasi l'anno duemila'
From <i>Steeple Bush</i> (1947)	
68. 'Directive'	'Direttiva'
69. 'The Fear of God'	'Il timore di Dio'
70. 'No Holy Wars for Them' Guerre	'Per loro, non Sante'

As I have clarified in the section on methodology (Introduction), the approach I adopt here is both quasi-quantitative and qualitative. An exclusively quantitative method of analysis, though possible, would not have been useful to a study like mine, which seeks an understanding of the complexities of translation of mimesis of orality in the poetry of Robert Frost. The need to introduce a more eclectic approach was also determined by the relative heterogeneity of the corpus (made up of poems of different line-lengths, different numbers of lines, and different poetic genres), which complicates the interpretation of the role played by a given device within the text. An apostrophe or an anastrophe, for example, may be carrier of both oral and literary connotations on certain occasions, and an evaluation of their functions may be rather an analysis of gradation (more literary versus more colloquial) and interplay with other contextual elements than an identification of absolute value. Moreover, practically all mimetic devices may carry out different functions (textual-pragmatic, lexico-semantic, syntactic, phonic) at the same time, due to their polyfunctionality. Another example of the limits of the quantitative approach, within the frame of the present study at least, is given by the problematic quantification of deixis. As I have shown in chapter 1, deixis is always present in discourse. Therefore, instead of counting the occurrences of all personal deictics in a text, I have preferred to take into account only those occasions where the specific use of personal deictics creates a dramatic situation eliciting oral mimetic effects. Spatio-temporal and demonstrative deictics are always included in the analysis of the mimetic features

of the corpus as their relation to mimesis of orality and to the creation of an extra-textual context is more immediate. The quasi-quantitative perspective is summarized in section 4.3.1 in which the occurrences of mimetic devices detected in each source poem are compared to those found in the target text. The qualitative perspective is presented under the heading of *longitudinal* analysis and is applied to both source and target text (sections 4.2.1 and 4.3.2-4.3.6) and, as a consequence, it appears twice in the chapter. In the analysis of the source text this perspective offers a description of patterns of use of mimetic devices in relation to the form and poetic genre of the composition, and presents causal relationships among them.

4.2.1 A longitudinal analysis

In order to understand how Frost's mimesis of orality works in the poems of the source text I study the oral mimetic devices in relationship to recurring patterns detected in the poems, that is, common features that make it possible to organize the poems of the corpus in groups sharing similar characteristics. In this way a more homogeneous backdrop is provided against which the features analyzed work toward the creation of certain spoken-language effects. In the classification that I propose, the common denominator is provided by the role played by personal deictics in the poems. As a first step toward a description of their oral mimetic function, I consider the position of the personal deictic *I* in the narrative (and lyrical) frame of the poem. I have chosen this element as an organizing criterion in view of its fundamental function as creator of discourse, drawing on Bosseaux's observations:

Language is transformed into discourse where the *I* defines the individual and the centre of that discourse. Hence, the *I* is at the zero-point of the spatio-temporal coordinates of the deictic context. It is both a linguistic role and the primary agent of subjectivity. It creates a universe of discourse in which reference can function. (Bosseaux 2007: 29).

My claim is that the general oral impression evoked in poems varies according to the role attributed to the personal deictic *I* and its interrelations with other deictic elements. The interpretation of its

role, in fact, clarifies the point of view of the speaker in the poem and highlights the mimetic characteristics of his or her voice. In other words, I focus on how changes in the relationship between the *I* and the other elements of the deictic field affect the mimetic creation of different voices in the poems and contribute to the creation of different dramatic effects. The other deictics I am referring to are exophoric spatio-temporal and demonstrative deixis, which depend necessarily on personal deixis, and in particular, on the zero-point of the deictic context, the *I*. When the *I* is present in a text, the frequency of use of other deictic elements serves to characterize the voice of the speaking *I*, his or her relationship with the deictic field, and the relationship with readers. In her study on deictic terms in novels and plays, Furrow (1988: 375) observes that “the more deictics in a narrative passage, the stronger the link with the reader, who is treated as a listener, as someone who can be made to picture and respond to the same events as the narrator has so vividly seen and, in the act of narration, is seeing again.”¹⁶³ The use of spatio-temporal deictics therefore defines a dialogic relationship with readers that is particularly important to interpreting the tone of voice of the speaker or speakers in a poem.

The conclusions and theses of narratology are relevant here because most of the poems in this corpus can be considered to be narrative; that is, they present a story. Those poems which do not develop any story can be considered lyrical compositions, and the *I*, if present, can be defined as lyrical subject. An example of this kind of poem is represented by ‘Acquainted with the Night,’ in which the *I*-lyrical subject focuses on the the speaker’s self, rather than on an action or the description of an event. However, in most of the poems of the source corpus, the *I* takes on the role of narrator, though with different shades of meaning. The deictic *I*, for example, may refer to an intradiegetic-homodiegetic narrator, describing a scene in which he or she is taking part without the involvement of any other character (as for example in the short composition ‘The Armful’). However, the *I* can also refer to a character’s voice speaking in first person in a dramatic dialogue, as in ‘A Hundred Collars.’ In this

¹⁶³ The scholar’s observation refers to the way deictics play a role in characterization and how, as in Hamlet’s monologue, a lack of deictics, and especially a lack of the personal pronoun *I*, characterizes impotence and insecurity in the narrator.

case the point of view switches from a homodiegetic narrator to a hypodiegetic narrator who tells a story within the story. As a consequence, the function of the *you* deictic also changes. It may refer to an extradiegetic narratee, an addressee outside the story and scene that is being presented within the text, who is usually associated with the implied reader. In this case the *you* is often used in impersonal form as a way of generalizing. However, it can also refer to an intradiegetic narratee, that is, a character in the story. The third person deictic identifies characters normally referred to in reported speech, either direct or indirect. Finally, the first person *I* may also be absent from the poem. In this case, the presence of the (extradiegetic) narrator may be felt behind the scenes, but tends to disappear in the presentation of a scene or an action (as, for example, in the poem ‘Spring Pools’). I have grouped the poems of the source corpus in the following categories, according to the actual absence or presence of the deictic *I* in the text and the function attributed to it:

- Group 1. Absence of the deictic *I*: the voice of a modern storyteller.
- Group 2. Presence of the deictic *I* as a narrator: the present *I*.
- Group 3. The *I* and *you* of characters within the text.

These categories should not be interpreted as exclusive. They point rather to a gradation of the presence of the first person *I* in the poem. Group 1 includes all those poems in which the narrator is implicit, that is, in which the *I* does not appear even though the presence of a narrator-lyrical subject (identifiable with the implied author) is felt. The poems tend to present a scene described by a narrator whose voice is not intrusive though not necessarily external. The *I*, as subject of the discourse, is never explicitly present in the text. The narrator is in fact perceived as witnessing the scene that is being described. Examples of this kind of poems in the corpus can be found in the compositions belonging to the books of poems written in Frost’s full maturity and old age, thus reflecting the tendency in his later poems towards a more philosophical speculation. However, examples of these poems can also be found in the early collections. The mimetic effects achieved by the narrator’s voice determine its involvement in the narration and the intensity of the relationship established with readers. An example of

a poem belonging to this category is ‘An Old Man’s Winter Night,’ analyzed in chapter 2.¹⁶⁴

Group 2 refers to those poems in which the first person *I* narrator (and on a few occasions the first person plural *we*) is explicitly present in the poems (as in the poem ‘Mowing’). The presence of a self drawing attention to himself through the deictic pronoun stresses the subjective dimension of the poem. At the same time, it also adds dramatic nuances to the composition, as its presence may point to the implicit presence of an interlocutor, or, in the case of a lyrical outburst or meditation, to an audience who is assumed to be the readership. On the other hand, when the *you* is explicit in the text, the dramatic effect is heightened by the impression of a dialogue of the speaker with the interlocutors he is addressing.

Group 3 includes all those poems in which the presence of the *I* not only refers to a narrator, but can be identified with the voice of characters, at a second degree of narration. The group includes all source poems of the book with dominant dramatic features. It should be observed that very few poems are purely dramatic, that is, are not framed by a narrative voice. In the group, we can perceive a gradation of the narrative presence from the end of the continuum where the narrator is totally absent, as in purely dramatic poems (such as ‘A Servant to Servants,’ a dramatic monologue in which the only voice to be perceived, at least directly,¹⁶⁵ is that of the tired and distressed housewife), to dramatic poems with narrative intrusions similar to stage directions (as in ‘Home Burial’ among others), to the opposite end, where dramatic fragments are mere parentheses in the narration.

¹⁶⁴ Examples of poems belonging to each category will be given later on, as I analyze them in relation to the dominant mimetic devices used in each group.

¹⁶⁵ In the poem it is also possible to perceive the voices of other characters (the husband, the mad uncle) reported by the speaker.

4.2.2 Group 1. Absence of the deictic *I*: the voice of a modern storyteller

Eighteen poems can be included in the group. They are listed in Table 4.3

TABLE 4.3 Group 1. The voice of a modern storyteller

1. 'October'
2. 'An Old Man's Winter Night'
3. 'The Oven Bird'
4. 'The Need of Being Versed in Country Things'
5. 'Spring Pools'
6. 'Acceptance'
7. 'The Investment'
8. 'The Bear'
9. 'They Were Welcome to Their Belief'
10. 'The Strong are Saying Nothing'
11. 'Neither Out Far nor in Deep'
12. 'All Revelation'
13. 'Provide, Provide'
14. 'The Most of It'
15. 'Never Again Would Birds' Song be the Same'
16. 'The Subverted Flower'
17. 'Time Out'
18. 'No Holy Wars for Them'

In most of the poems of this group the devices most frequently used to characterize mimesis of orality (in this case, the voice of an extradiegetic narrator) belong to the syntactical and semantic level. Syntax is simple, and while hypotactical constructions are certainly present in the compositions, in general parataxis prevails over hypotaxis. This characteristic is a general feature of Frost's poetry, and has already been commented on in the previous chapters. It is interesting however to study at least one example since the combination of this device with other mimetic and rhetorical elements of the poem evokes a specific form of orality.

Example 4.1

From: 'The Need of Being Versed in Country Things'

Yet for them the lilac renewed its leaf,
And the aged elm, though touched with fire;
And the dry pump flung up an awkward arm;
And the fence post carried a strand of wire.
(ll. 17-20)

In the poem, the sequence of coordinating connectors carries out different functions. First, it contributes to the description of a scene that is achieved by the addition of element to element. This technique suggests the temporal sequence through which the objects (the elm, the pump, and the fence) appear in the visual horizon of the narrator. The lack of a more planned construction suggests a certain degree of spontaneity. Second, the anaphoric repetition of the connector *and* reinforces the rhythmic pattern of the poem which, due to its rhyme scheme and its metric and stanzaic form (divided in elegiac stanzas of iambic pentameters) can be inscribed in a tradition of meditative poems.

Holophrastic, incomplete, or elliptical expressions are also occasionally used among the poems of this group. Their fragmented nature means that part of the sentence remains implicit and must be inferred by readers on the basis of the communicative context. I shall consider three examples (in bold below) adding some lines to contextualize them in the composition:

Example 4.2

From 'The Bear'

He paces back and forth and never rests
The toe-nail click and shuffle of his feet,
the telescope at one end of his beat,
and at the other end the microscope,
two instruments of nearly equal hope,
And in conjunction giving quite a spread
(ll. 17-22).

Example 4.3

From 'Acceptance'

At most he thinks or twitters softly, '**Safe!**
Now let the night be dark for all of me'.
(ll. 11-12).

Example 4.4

From 'The Subverted Flower'
He stretched her either arm As if she made it ache To clasp her - not to harm; As if he could not spare To touch her neck and hair. 'If this has come to us And not to me alone—' (l. 23).

The mimetic force of the three examples above is not the same, as can be easily perceived. In example 4.2 the sequence of appositions in bold adds communicative immediacy to the description and contributes to the recreation of the general ironic intention of the lines. The language context however, is neutral, and cannot be directly related to a situation of spontaneity. Example 4.3 presents a holophrastic realization ("Safe!"), with emphatic effect added by the exclamation mark. The oral connotation of the expression is reinforced by the immediate co-text in which it is found, that is, the direct speech which, in itself, "creates the illusion of 'pure' mimesis, although it is always stylized in one way or another" (Rimmon-Kenan 2002: 113). Similar characteristics can be found in example 4.4, since the device is also found in a sentence reported in direct speech. However, the mimetic effect is even stronger as the sentence is not only incomplete but it also carries out pragmatic functions of hesitation. The hesitation phenomenon points to a wider gamut of interpretations that can be given to the sentence and its closer dependency on extra-textual contexts, as often happens in situations of communicative immediacy.

At a lexico-semantic level, the common denominator seems to be a plain lexical choice, low semantic variation, omnibus words, lexical iterations, and exophoric deictic elements. Common lexis characterizes most of the poems written by Frost, as has been observed in the previous two chapters. For this reason, I will not give examples of this feature, preferring to focus my examples on other kinds of lexico-semantic mimetic devices:

Example 4.5

From 'Oven bird'
There is a singer everyone has heard, Loud, a mid -summer and mid -wood bird, Who makes the solid tree trunks sound again. (ll. 1-3)
The bird would cease and be as other birds But that he knows in singing not to sing . The question that he frames in all but words Is what to make of a diminished thing . (11-14)

In Example 4.5 we observe instances of lexical iteration (*mid*, *bird*, and *sing*), and of low lexical determination (*everyone*, *what*, and the omnibus word *thing*). A further lexico-semantic mimetic element is the initial presentative expression *there is* that introduces the discourse. These mimetic devices intermingle with rhetorical devices such as alliteration (“Who makes the **solid tree trunks sound** again,” l. 3) and rhyme. Word iteration often also carries a rhetorical and rhythmic function. Both the rhythmical effects and the lexis of the poem contribute to the evocation of a language which is never poetic—Brower (1963: 29) defines the poem an “odd talking-song”—and thus prevents the poem from falling into the cliché that the situational frame depicted (the singing of birds in the woods in summer) might suggest.¹⁶⁶

¹⁶⁶ “The poet’s rhythm is always being steadied by prose statement, and his grammar is of the plainest. In the wager of ‘one to ten,’ where we might expect ‘ten to one’ in summer’s bounty, and in the playing with various ‘falls’ his subtly amused tone comes out clearly enough. The restraining quality of his speech goes finely with the language he has used of the bird’s song and with the question he frames in the end. But the poet outdoes the bird: he manages in *not* singing to sing. Tempo and feeling increase as the rhythm rides with surprising force through full stops and with what Edward Thomas beautifully called ‘a quiet eagerness of emotion.’ Readers who see in the poem a symbol of Frost as a poet or a veiled *ars poetica*, should note that the symbol is not the bird but the poetic art, the ‘feat of words’ as a whole. But that further metaphor is only touched on: as in the best of Frost, lightness is all” (Brower 1963: 30-31).

Example 4.6

From 'The investment'
A. Over back where they speak of life as staying (You couldn't call it living, for it ain't'), There was an old, old house renewed with paint, And in it a piano loudly playing. (ll. 1-4)
B. All that piano and new paint back there was it some money suddenly come into? Or some extravagance young love had been to? Or old love or an impulse not to care— Not to sink under being man and wife But get some color and music out of life. (ll. 9-14)

In example 4.6 further instances of mimetic devices belonging to the lexico-semantic level of discourse can be detected. I have stressed in bold the personal deictics *they* and *you* used with impersonal function. This use, though neutral, is more frequent in situations of communicative immediacy.¹⁶⁷ We observe the presentative *there was*, and the epizeuxis of *old* with emphatic functions. The repetition of *old* is also evocative of nursery language and suggests, together with the previous presentative, the atmosphere of a fairy tale. An important mimetic role is played by the demonstrative deictics (*there* and *that*) adding liveliness to the description and involving readers in the here and now of the narrator. Finally, elements of low lexical determination such as *some* and *get* add spontaneity and a certain degree of informality to the language. Despite the formal constraints of the poem (a rhymed sonnet), the mimetic effect achieved can be inscribed in the area of communicative immediacy. The external narrator's voice is connoted as oral, even popular. Its oral nuances produce an ironic effect, but it also seems to identify at times the point of view (and the language) of the speaker with that of the character, a poor digger, and, in general, with the members of the social environment

¹⁶⁷ In situations of communicative distance, as can be an academic article, strategies of impersonalization are used that avoid the *you*, preferring the use of *one*, of passive structures, of nominalizations, or the generic name of the academic specialty or specialists (Ainaud, Espunya, and Pujol 2003:121).

that is being described. Mimesis of orality mainly results from the use of devices at a semantic and syntactical level. Moreover, though the form is rigid, the rhythm is not, stressing the superposition of the rhythms of spoken language on the metrical rhythm of the composition.¹⁶⁸

Example 4.7

From 'Provide, Provide'

Some have relied on **what** they knew,

Others on being simply true.

What worked for them might work for you.

(ll. 13-16)

Finally, example 4.7 presents instances of low lexical determination. In the lines quoted above, and in the poem to which they belong, orality relies on the colloquial, ironic, or even comic connotations of lexical choices and on simple syntax. Here again, as in the previous examples, mimesis of orality evokes the orality of a storyteller, that is an oral language which, though characterized by linguistic elements of the communicative immediacy, makes readers aware of its formal rhetorical structure through clear rhythmic patterns and rhetorical devices, the formal rhetorical structure that a storyteller would revert to when narrating tales to an audience.

What stands out as a common trait of the poems of this group is the low frequency of features belonging to the universal pragmatic level of orality. We only have a few examples of rhetorical questions, imperatives, or apostrophes with phatic function, as, for example, most emblematically, in the poem 'October,' where the numerous imperatives convey a prayer-like rhythm to the poem (e.g., "O hushed October morning mild, / Begin the hours of this day slow. /

¹⁶⁸ Sharon Felton (2001: 172), observes that the composition has "conversational irregularity". The scholar draws a parallel between this variation in the sonnet form and the scene depicted where "too much conscious crafting—either in the liberal application of paint to the deteriorating house or in the scansion of a sonnet—announces something artificial at hand. One becomes conscious of the workman's labor rather than of the resourcefulness or integrity of the work itself. 'The Investment' thus offers a portrait not only of a couple who treasures color and music balanced against the austerity of real existence but of a poet who does, too."

Make the day seem to us less brief,” ll. 7-9). Other examples can be found in the poem ‘Provide Provide’ (“die early and avoid the fate,” l. 7), or in ‘No Holy Wars for Them’ (“God, have you taken cognizance of this? / And what on this is your divine position?” ll. 9-10). Only in three poems (‘Acceptance,’ ‘The Most of It,’ and ‘The Subverted Flower’) do we detect the presence of pragmatic features such as interjections, modal mechanisms, and *verba dicendi* associated to the reproduction of a reported speech.

This overview of the features of orality used with more frequency within group 1 raises questions on the kind of orality that they evoke in the poem. We have spoken of mimesis of orality, when referring to the voice of the narrator or lyrical subject of these poems. What, however, characterizes it and where exactly can we locate it along the continuum of communicative distance and communicative immediacy? Finally, what are the distinguishing features of this kind of mimesis of orality? As to the first question, we have seen that even in those poems where the variety of devices used to recreate orality is not so wide and the voice of the narrator unobtrusively describes a scene or an event, a common spoken quality can be detected. The combination of a common lexis, a relatively simple syntax and the occasional use of exophoric spatio-temporal and demonstrative deixis appeals to the readers’ shared experience of common life, thus fostering their involvement in the situation. At the same time, the presence of devices such as syntactical parallelisms, repetitions, and a rhythm tending towards iambic play the double function of mimetic and poetic devices, making readers aware of the poetic dimension of the poem, which additional explicit rhetorical phonic devices such as rhyme, alliteration, and assonance further stress. The result is a voice that shares many of the conditions necessary to achieve a language close to communicative immediacy (see table 1.4: private communication, relative intimacy, emotional involvement, deictic referentialization, etc.). Its language is familiar, at times emotive, at times ironic, implying in both cases a certain cooperation with readers and pointing to an implied dialogism despite the evidently monologic character of the discourse. This impression is also reinforced by the referentiality from the here and now of the speaker. The verbalizing strategies of the narrating voice, however, cannot be considered as straightforward motions towards communicative immediacy. The narrator’s language in fact almost

always presents a consistent degree of planning even though it is interspersed with occasional aggregative structures or incomplete constructions. What emerges from this overview on features of orality in the poems of this first group is a need to clarify the intuitive comments made in chapter 2. If, in that chapter, I referred to the recreation of orality in ‘An Old Man’s Winter Night’ as being midway between communicative distance and communicative immediacy, it seems more appropriate now to locate the voice of the narrator closer to communicative immediacy. More precisely, and notwithstanding the many nuances that this voice can assume from poem to poem, the voice speaking in these compositions resembles that of a modern storyteller, that is, of a storyteller who organizes his or her discourse around rhetorical structures, which he or she contributes to modernize. In fact the rhetorical devices used in the poems are not made up of fixed formulas provided by the stock of literary Western tradition, but they are drawn from everyday language. This claim seems justified by the overtures of poems evoking the formulas used to introduce a scene in storytelling (as in ‘The Oven Bird’: “There is a singer everyone has heard,”¹⁶⁹ l. 1; in ‘Acceptance’: “When the spent sun throws up its rays on cloud / And goes down burning into the gulf,” ll. 1-2; or in ‘The Investment’: “Over back where they speak of life as staying / [...] / There was an old, old house renewed with paint, / and in it a piano loudly playing,” ll. 1-4). In other poems the scene may be introduced more dramatically *in medias res*, especially through the use of a third person subject, *he* (as in ‘The Most of It’: “He thought he kept the universe alone,” l. 1; or in ‘Never Again Would Bird’s Song Be the Same’: “He would declare and could himself believe / that the birds there in all the garden round / from having heard the daylong voice of Eve / Had added to their own an oversound,” ll. 1-4). The voice of a modern storyteller is thus perceptible behind the rhetorical devices upon which the story is built, but at the same time it remains close to its imaginary audience by sharing with its addressees mimetic features of a common language.

¹⁶⁹ About this first line, Bower comments that it sounded like a “flat prosaic statement” (1963: 29).

4.2.3 Group 2. Presence of the deictic *I* as a narrator: the present *I*

The poems included in this second group are characterized by the explicit presence of the narrator-lyrical subject, either in the form of the first person singular deictic *I* (in subject position), *me*, *mine*, etc., or in the form of the first person plural deictic *we*. The discriminatory criterion for this group is the absence of the *I* subject referred to a character dramatically represented as hyponarrator, that is, belonging to a second level of narration.¹⁷⁰ The group contains more than half of the poems of the corpus. Being the most populous of the three groups, a notable heterogeneity of features can be expected. For this reason, I have further split the group into two subgroups: group 2a: poems with *I* narrator; and group 2b: poems with *I* narrator and *you* interlocutor.

Group 2a: the narrator's *I*

In this subgroup I include twenty-nine poems (table 4.4). The compositions of this subgroup are characterized by a more frequent and varied use of features of orality belonging to all universal levels.

TABLE 4.4 Group 2a. The narrator's *I*

1.	'Storm Fear'
2.	'In Neglect'
3.	'The Vantage Point'
4.	'Mowing'
5.	'Reluctance'
6.	'After Apple Picking'
7.	'The Road not Taken'
8.	'Christmas Trees'
9.	'Hyla Brook'
10.	'Locked Out'
11.	'The Sound of the Trees'
12.	'Fire and Ice'
13.	'In a Disused Graveyard'

¹⁷⁰ This criterion allows for nuances though. In the preceding group, for example, the poem "The Subverted Flower," contains three lines of direct speech (ll. 2, 23, 24).

14. 'The Runaway'
15. 'Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening'
16. 'The Onset'
17. 'To Earthward'
18. 'On a Tree Fallen Across the Road'
19. 'A Minor Bird'
20. 'Acquainted with the Night'
21. 'Dust in the Eyes'
22. 'The Armful'
23. 'What Fifty Said'
24. 'On the Heart's Beginning to Cloud the Mind'
25. 'Desert Places'
26. 'Moon Compasses'
27. 'Design'
28. 'The Gift Outright'
29. 'It is Almost the Year Two Thousand'

At a pragmatic level, for example, we observe a relative increase¹⁷¹ in the use and in the variety of phatic markers, including apostrophes, rhetorical questions and imperatives, modal mechanisms, oral reproduction of reported speech, and *verba dicendi*. Interjections are also occasionally used while the remaining features of the category appear on very limited occasions. The following examples show how such features evoke mimesis of orality in the poems.

Example 4. 8

From 'After Apple Picking'

But I was **well**
 Upon my way to sleep before it fell
 And I could tell
 What form my dreaming was about to take.
 (ll. 14-17)

¹⁷¹ With the term "relative increase" I am referring to the increase that can be noted once the present subgroup is compared with group 1.

Example 4. 9

From 'A Minor Bird'

The fault **must** partly have been in me.
The bird was not to blame for his key.
And **of course** there **must** be something wrong
In wanting to silence any song.
(ll. 5-8)

Example 4. 10

From 'The Armful'

I crouch down to prevent them as they fall;
Then sit down in the middle of them all.
I **had to** drop the armful in the road
And try to stack them in a better load.
(ll. 9-12)

The examples given above present instances of modal mechanisms, that is, mechanisms through which the narrator's ideas, attitude and emotions are expressed. In example 4.8 the word *well* is used to add emphasis to the sentence and suggest the confused state of mind of the speaker, who is in a dreamlike condition in which the very definition of sleep loses its defined contours ("One can see what will trouble / This sleep of mine, whatever sleep it is", ll. 37-38). In example 4.9 the modal function carried out by the word *must* and the expression *of course*, points more clearly to the hesitant attitude of the speaker who reflects on his own reactions to the bird's song. In example 4.10, finally, the use of the expression "I had to" suggests not only a condition of need but also a situation in which the narrator has no other acting option. In all three examples, the use of modal mechanisms, though only at times colloquial (often neutral), hints at a potential degree of intimacy of the narrator with the addressees (the readers).

Example 4.11

From 'Meeting and Passing'

And all the time we talked you seemed to see
Something down there to smile at in the dust.
(**Oh**, it was without prejudice to me!)
Afterward I went past what you had passed.
Before we met and you what I had passed.
(ll. 10-14)

Example 4.11 presents an instance of interjection. As we have already observed (for example in the comment of another poem of group 2a, ‘Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening,’ analyzed in chapter 3), interjections are effective devices for the evocation of orality, due to the degree of spontaneity and expressiveness they imply. In this case, the oral impression of the sentence is further reinforced by its parenthetical structure that suggests a low degree of discourse planning.

Example 4.12

From ‘In a Disused Graveyard’
So sure of death the marbles rhyme, Yet can't help marking all the time How no one dead will seem to come. What is it men are shrinking from? (ll. 9-12)

In the example above we note a rhetorical question, to which a phatic function can also be attributed. With it the narrator is openly addressing the readers, thus suggesting a dramatic dimension that enhances the evocation of orality. It is important to clarify, in this case, that the language of the narrator in the poem cannot be defined as oral. In fact, the strict formal division of the composition (16 lines divided in 4 quatrains of relatively regular iambic tetrameter close to the *In Memoriam* Stanza),¹⁷² and the theme and title of the poem that call to mind Thomas Gray’s *Elegy Written in a Country Churchyard*, evoke literary frames. However, the tension produced by the literary connotations of the first two stanzas and the colloquial overtone brought into the poem by the rhetorical question adds ironic effects, further stressed by the narrator’s comment in the last stanza: “It would be easy to be clever / And tell the stones: Men hate to die / And have stopped dying now forever. / I think they would believe the lie” (ll. 13-16).

On a textual-semantic level, common traits of the poems of this group are the low level of lexical variation and a plain lexis. In at

¹⁷² The *In Memoriam* Stanza is a stanza in tetrameters with rhyme pattern abba. The stanza is called *In Memoriam* because, though originating from a love poem by Ben Jonson, called “An Elegy”, it was made famous by Alfred, Lord Tennyson’s elegiac poem “In Memoriam”. (Hobsbaum 1996:130-132).

least eleven poems we observe cases of lexical iteration. Spatio-temporal deixis is used in more than two thirds of the poems of the subgroup. It is interesting to observe also the frequent use of phraseology (proverbs, fixed expressions, phrasal verbs, etc.), which adds a distinct spoken color to the text. On a syntactical level, we observe the use of sentences characterized either by numerous paratactic structures (in half of the poems) or by structures with a balanced ratio of parataxis and hypotaxis. Example 4.13, taken from the poem ‘After Apple Picking,’ presents significant instances of both lexico-semantic and syntactical mimetic devices.

Example 4.13

From ‘After Apple Picking’
A. But I am done with apple-picking now. Essence of winter sleep is on the night, The scent of apples; I am drowsing off. (ll. 6-8)
B. Magnified apples appear and reappear , Stem end and blossom end, And every fleck of russet showing clear. My instep arch not only keeps the ache, It keeps the pressure of a ladder-round. And I keep hearing from the cellar-bin That rumbling sound Of load on load of apples coming in. (ll. 18-23)
C. There were ten thousand thousand fruit to touch, Cherish in hand, lift down, and not let fall, (ll. 30-31)

The most evident lexico-semantic mimetic devices in the example above are the repetitions of words with emphatic effect (“appear,” “load,” “thousand”) and the use of fixed idiomatic expressions (“I am done with apple-picking now,” “I am drowsing off”) and spatio-temporal deixis (“now,” “coming in”). On a syntactical level mimesis of orality is evoked especially by the sequence of parataxes connected by asyndeton, as can be seen in lines 18-23 (example 4.13B) and above all in lines 30-31 (example 4.13C). The juxtaposition of sentences evokes the aggregative structures of communicative immediacy and, at the same time, adds swiftness to the general rhythm of the lines. The alternation of neutral or

common place language with more resonant sequences (“Essence of winter sleep is on the night,” l. 7) achieves a symbolic meaning and suggests the state of mind of the narrator, who is constantly swinging between a dreamlike state and a tighter hold on reality. This kind of orality is coherent with the general form of interior monologue of the poem.

One exception to the generally simple paratactical structure of the sentences in the poems of this group is represented by the beautiful and well-known sonnet ‘Design.’ The syntax here is more complex; clauses unfold in the first two quatrains of the sonnet creating an intricate structure mirroring the image of the spider-web described in the poem and pointing, with its ambiguous allusions, to the far more intricate web of meanings that the poem unfolds (as shown in the example below).¹⁷³

Example 4.14

From ‘Design’
I found a dimpled spider, fat and white, On a white heal-all, holding up a moth Like a white piece of rigid satin cloth— Assorted characters of death and blight Mixed ready to begin the morning right, Like the ingredients of a witches' broth— A snow-drop spider, a flower like a froth, And dead wings carried like a paper kite. (ll. 1-8)

Nevertheless, the voice of the narrator remains conversational and this impression is reinforced if we compare, as Monteiro does (1988: 34-43), the first draft of the poem dated 1912 and titled ‘In White’ to the revised and final version of 1922. As Mary Adams observes:

perhaps the most important change, according to several critics, is the addition of a first-person voice; from the bookish inversions and anachronisms of the first version [...] we can infer that Frost had intended the speaker to be conventional and

¹⁷³ Extensive comments on the sonnet and its complexity have been given especially by Monteiro (1988: 34-43) and Brower (1963: 104-108).

limited, far from the allusive complexity of voice in the revisited draft. (Adams 2001: 76)

On the basis of the features detected, it is possible to extend these considerations to the remaining compositions of the subgroup. ‘Design,’ despite its more complex syntactical structure, seems to confirm the impression of a colloquial orality characterizing the voices of the poems. Depending on the combination of the various features of orality at a longitudinal level, the voice of the first person speaker may appear to be more or less orally connoted, but would still move in an area close to communicative immediacy. In a poem like ‘Storm Fear’ (the first eight lines of which are reproduced below), for example, where there is a convergence of pragmatic, syntactical, semantic, and paralinguistic graphic features, the colloquial quality of the voice catches the readers’s imaginative ear:

Example 4.15

From ‘Storm Fear’
When the wind works against us in the dark, And pelts with snow The lower chamber window on the east, And whispers with a sort of stifled bark, The beast, ‘Come out! Come out!’— It costs no inward struggle not to go, Ah, no! (ll. 1-8)

Interjections (“Ah, no!” l. 8), *verba dicendi* (“whispers,” l. 4), lexical iteration (epizeuxis with emphatic function: “‘Come out! Come out!’—” l. 6), coordinating connectors between clauses (“and pelts,” “and whispers”), the deictic function implied in the verb *come*,¹⁷⁴ direct speech, and the narrative overture of the segment are all concentrated in these few lines to convey the impression of a lively language close to communicative immediacy: the voice of a

¹⁷⁴ “[T]he description of the presuppositional structure of motion sentences containing this verb [*come*] requires reference to all three of the major grammaticalized types of deixis—person, place and time” (Fillmore 1997: 17, but see also 77-102).

person made nervous by the storm outside his or her house, whose thoughts and words seem to follow, also through the varied line length of the poem, the broken irregular rhythm of the wind whistling in the house and beating its windows.

To conclude, I will briefly consider again the poem ‘Design.’ As shown by Monteiro (1988), Frost subjected the poem to a series of revisions that transformed the poem from a composition with a more lyrical and sophisticated register, in which the external narrator unobtrusively presents a scene (apart from the final rhetorical question “Design, design! Do I use the word aright?” l. 14), to a personal lyric where the deictic *I* gains centrality. This change mirrors a similar change toward the recreation of a clearer spoken language in the first person singular, and may be conceived as symbolically representing the very gradation of mimesis of orality which starts to be outlined in the present analysis, from a less marked orality (in the poems of group 1, where the narrator’s presence as a speaking subject is inferred but not revealed), to the more definite spoken, and at times colloquial, tone of this second group.

Group 2b: the narrator’s *I* and the interlocutor’s *you*

The second subgroup includes those poems in which the *I* (or *we*) of the narrator is accompanied by the presence of one or more *you* interlocutors, who are however not always clearly identifiable. I have counted only eleven poems with these features and the slenderness of the group may find a partial justification in its being an in-between category, sharing traits with the following and last group of poems (group 3), in which the deictics *I* and *you* engage in a dramatic relationship on the level of the story (as characters) and of the narration (as intradiegetic-homodiegetic narrators).

TABLE 4.5 Group 2b. The narrator’s *I* and the interlocutor’s *you*

- | |
|---|
| <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. ‘The Pasture’2. ‘The Telephone’3. ‘Meeting and Passing’4. ‘On Looking Up by Chance at the Constellations’5. ‘Not Quite Social’6. ‘To a Moth Seen in Winter Time’7. ‘Directive’ |
|---|

8. 'The Fear of God'
9. 'Happiness Makes Up in Height for What it Lacks in Length'
10. 'Putting In the Seed'
11. 'No Holy Wars for Them'

In group 2b the presence of a second person interlocutor strengthens the impression of a conversation actually taking place, almost independently from the convergence of other features of mimesis of orality in the text. What I am arguing is that the presence of a *you* opposed to the *I* conveys to readers the impression that the words they read are polarized by two people, one (*I*) actively speaking, the other (*you*) passive and silent. It is true that also in this case the relationship between the *I* and *you* may assume different shades of meaning depending on whether the *I* refers to an extradiegetic narrator presenting a scene or to an intradiegetic narrator who is, at the same time, also a character of the scene. In a similar way, the *you* may have a more impersonal use, as it may refer to readers, or an audience, in general, or it may represent other characters of the story. Irrespective of this distinction, the presence of the two deictic elements immediately evokes a dialogic situation, thus predisposing readers to perceive the orality of the situation even if the language in itself is not necessarily oral. The example *par excellence* of this phenomenon is given by the way the personal deictics *I* and *you* interrelate in a dramatic monologue, and by the expectations it triggers in readers (as we have seen in 'A Servant to Servants' in chapter 2). In poems with a dramatic monologic form, a narrator/character describes an external event or an internal mental and emotional state to a *you* who must be assumed as in the here and now of the narrator's reality, without necessarily being identified. My claim is that in the poems where no different use of the mimetic devices studied so far can be detected, it is the presence of the *you* that adds immediacy to communication and helps distinguish the composition from an interior monologue. To test this hypothesis I analyze one poem of the group ('Not Quite Social') in which the number and variety of features of orality belonging to the various levels of the language system are used with less frequency than in other poems of the same subgroup. I present the poem in full for more clarity:

Example 4.16

‘Not Quite Social’

Some of you will be glad I did what I did,
And the rest won't want to punish me too severely
For finding a thing to do that though not forbid
Yet wasn't enjoined and wasn't expected clearly.

To punish me overcruelly wouldn't be right
For merely giving you once more gentle proof
That the city's hold on a man is no more tight
Than when its walls rose higher than any roof.

You may taunt me with not being able to flee the earth.
You have me there, but loosely as I would be held.
The way of understanding is partly mirth.
I would not be taken as ever having rebelled.

And anyone is free to condemn me to death—
If he leaves it to nature to carry out the sentence.
I shall will to the common stock of air my breath
And pay a death-tax of fairly polite repentance.

Mimesis of orality relies here above all on lexico-semantic devices like vague referentiality (“**Some** of you will be glad I did **what** I did,” l. 1; “For finding a **thing** to do that though not forbid,” l. 3), and the use of a plain lexis interspersed with colloquial connotations and ironic effects (“And pay a death-tax of **fairly** polite repentance,” l. 16). Deixis is present especially in the form of personal deictics (“Some of **you** will be glad **I** did what **I** did”, l. 1) clarifying the position of the participants in the communicative act without giving clues about the identity of the interlocutors. Spatio-temporal deictics, which are normally a strong index of orality, are absent in the composition (the expression “You have me **there**,” l. 10, has a fixed idiomatic value and is a deictic element with symbolic rather than gestural function). The text hardly contains any feature of orality belonging to the pragmatic level. Its syntax, especially in the first two quatrains, presents a high degree of planning, since each quatrain is formed by one single sentence. Syntax becomes however more fragmented and closer to

communicative immediacy in the third and fourth quatrain. In the poem, the mimetic impression is conveyed especially through personal deixis. In fact, the presence of the deictic *I* and *you* abruptly entering the scene in the first line of the first quatrain (“Some of you will be glad I did what I did,” l. 1), and then again in the first line of the third quatrain (“You may taunt me with not being able to flee the earth,” l. 9) determine a *conversational context* in which oral features and a dramatization of the discourse may be expected. It is also significant that this poem can be considered, for its structure and formal features, a dramatic monologue with an indeterminate interlocutor and little action.

As for the remaining mimetic features of the whole body of poems of the subgroup 2b (textual-pragmatic, syntactical and phonic mimetic features), they do not differ significantly from group 2a and allow for similar conclusions on the mimetic effect they achieve and on the position of the narrator’s voice in the communicative immediacy-communicative distance continuum.

4.2.4 Group 3. The *I* and *you* of characters within the text

The poems belonging to this third group are characterized by the presence of a fictional dramatic situation in which the speaking voices cannot always be identified with that of the narrator. As a consequence, any *I* appearing in these poems may play one of two different roles. On the one hand, it may represent the narrator, whose voice frames the dramatic scene. On the other, it may assume the voice and point of view of a character. The role played by these voices may vary in centrality from poem to poem. In the dramatic monologue ‘A Servant to Servants,’ for example, the narrating voice coincides with that of the character, while in ‘The Witch of Coös’ it is little less than a coda providing closure to the dialogue between mother and son. In ‘The Death of the Hired Man,’ as I have shown extensively in chapter three, the interplay of the narrator’s and the characters’ voices becomes more complex and subtle. Finally, in the 42 line-long poem ‘Two Look at Two,’ the external description of an event dominates the composition while the dramatic part is reduced to a few lines of direct speech. This group includes eleven poems, listed in table 4.6.

TABLE 4.6 Group 3. The *I* and *you* of characters within the text

<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. 'Mending Wall' 2. 'The Death of the Hired Man' 3. 'A Hundred Collars' 4. 'Home Burial' 5. 'The Black Cottage' 6. 'A Servant to Servants' 7. 'The Fear' 8. 'Christmas Trees' 9. 'The Witch of Coös' 10. 'Two Look at Two' 11. 'Not to Keep'

As I expected, most of the compositions in this group belong to Frost's second book, *North of Boston* (seven out of eleven), in which dramatic poetry dominates, and to his next two books *Mountain Interval* (one poem), and *New Hampshire* (three poems). The distinguishing trait of the mimesis of orality achieved in this group, compared to the previous sets of poems, is the recurrent use of features of orality belonging to the universal pragmatic level of language. In one of Frost's longest dramatic poems, 'A Hundred Collars,' it is possible to detect an almost complete array of the pragmatic mimetic devices singled out by Koch and Oesterreicher's framework. We find a marker of discourse organization, which, though semantically precise and not general (as *then* could be in an oral discourse), is introduced by an adversative conjunction with emphatic function ("**But first**—let's see—what was I going to ask you?" l. 162). Further examples of textual-pragmatic mimetic devices detected in the poem are summarized in examples 4.17 to 4.22.

Example 4.17 (Phatic markers)

A. Don't touch me, please—I say , don't touch me please (l. 77)
B. You see , I'm in with everybody, know 'em all' (l. 120)

In example 4.17A above, the mimetic effect of the phatic markers with contact functions is reinforced by emphatic repetitions.

Example 4.18 (Hesitation phenomena)

A. ‘No room,’ the night clerk said. ‘ Unless— ’ (l. 20)
B. ‘ Oh—ah—fourteen—fourteen. ’ (l. 63);
C. But really I—I have so many collars”, (l. 167)

Hesitation phenomena are recreated often by repeating the same word, thus suggesting the speaker’s intent to gain time. They are also conveyed by incomplete or elliptical sentences, as in lines 20 and 63 (example 4.18A-B), and are further stressed by the em dash that suggests either a pause or a prolongation of a sound. Hesitation phenomena are also used to add suspense to the narration (as in “‘No room,’ the night clerk said. ‘Unless—’” l. 20).

Example 4.19 (Reformulation mechanisms)

But first— let’s see —what was I going to ask you? (l. 162)

This phenomenon shares traits with the previous one, since it can be interpreted as a moment of hesitation and, at the same time, the speaker’s effort to organize his discourse. As we can see, it is accompanied by other pragmatic devices such as a marker of discourse organization, already mentioned above, and a rhetorical question with no real phatic function.

Example 4.20 (Modal mechanisms)

A. “ Really , friend, I can’t let you,” (l. 165)
B. “But really I—I have so many collars” (l. 167)

The mimetic device above suggests an emphatic intonation pointing at a specific psychological situation of the speaker (in this case, above all, embarrassment).

Example 4.21 (Interjections)

A. Oh , Because I want their dollar? (ll. 150-151)
B. There now , you get some sleep (l. 178)

Example 4.22 (*Verba dicendi*)

A. Fairbanks, he says to me— he’s editor— ‘feel out the public sentiment’ — he says . (ll. 105-106)
B. Fairbanks, he says to me, ‘Help us this year’, Meaning by us their ticket. ‘No’, I says , I can’t and won’t. You’ve been in long enough: (ll. 112-114).

The use of *verba dicendi*, and oral reproduction of reported speech can be observed in the speech of the collector, who is reporting other people’s words. The repetition of the word *say* and the direct reported speech add immediacy to his discourse and heighten the impression of spoken language. The same comments can be referred to the instances of interjection (example 4.21)

In other poems of the subgroup, such as ‘Home Burial,’ or ‘The Death of the Hired Man,’ a similar deployment of mimetic devices can be noted. As for other mimetic devices belonging to the other levels of language (syntactical, lexico-semantic, and phonic) the main difference in comparison with the previous groups of poems resides in the more frequent use of incomplete or holophrastic expressions, and inversions with foregrounding functions. Finally, there is also an increase in the use of paralinguistic graphic devices such as the em dash and italics.

The combination of the features of orality employed in the poems belonging to group 3 points to the creation of a language fully rooted in communicative immediacy, and compliant with most of its communicative conditions and verbalization strategies. The combination of the numerous devices normally used in situations of communicative immediacy succeeds in creating the impression of different shades of a lively spoken language. Through Frost’s art, and mastery of the mimetic devices he uses in order to recreate the impression of orality in his poems, the different combination of the same set of devices evokes a variety of voices, each of which suggests with its mimetic immediacy a different personality and a different psychological situation.

4.2.5 Summarizing and debating: voices in Frost's poems

At this point of the study it is convenient perhaps to start summarizing and organizing the results obtained so far, partial as they may be. The linguistic analysis of the source corpus has shed light on the relationship between Frost's mimesis of orality and his poetry. Firstly, it should be noted that all of Frost's poems analyzed present a language moving within the wide and manifold area of communicative immediacy. This observation is certainly a truism, considering the innumerable critical studies stressing and analyzing this aspect of his poetry. My aim here is to provide a more detailed description, and a less approximate definition, of the position occupied by Frost's mimesis of orality within the area of communicative immediacy. No dominant literary or high register has been observed in the entire corpus.

The organization of the English poems on the basis of the different roles played by the deictic *I* in the poems has allowed me to outline and describe a gradation of mimetic effects within the corpus. I have observed that in those poems where the narrator is external (group 1) and his or her¹⁷⁵ level of involvement in the scene or action described is minimal, we receive an impression of orality that I define as "modern storyteller orality." The label was inspired by the observation in many poems of devices that share both a rhetorical and mimetic function. Among the examples given during the description of the mimetic effects in group 1, I referred above all to the various rhetorical forms assumed by the phenomenon of word iteration. The ensuing impression is that of a voice that has organized its discourse at times with oratorical dexterity around figures of speech that help win the imagination of their audience, like Greek *aoidoi*, medieval minstrels, or Balkan *guslari*. Equally important in the label is the reference to the *modern* dimension of

¹⁷⁵ Readers usually tend to identify the narrator with the author. When the identification does not take place, a more intense effort of imagination is required, since the situation is clearly fictionalized and readers are made aware of it by the first person *I*. The introduction of an *I* that is not identified with the author may imply a shift in the perception of the whole form of the poem. When the Catalan poet and translator Agustí Bartra translated the *I* of the poem "Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening" as a female narrator (resolving the gender indeterminacy of the English text), the poem changed from a soliloquy to a dramatic monologue (Giugliano forthcoming).

the voice of storytellers. The presence of a plain lexis, a syntax generally combining with balance parataxis and hypotaxis, and the use of spatio-temporal deixis avoid the risk of falling into standard poetic formulas, guaranteeing the lively actuality of the language.

The introduction of an explicit *I*-narrator (poems in group 2) produces a polarization of the discourse between the first person subject and the interlocutor *you*, who can be either implicit (group 2a) or explicit (group 2b). In the first case, the absence of an explicit *you* blurs the profile of the audience. Readers consider themselves passive observers of some inner speculations of the first person narrator, but they may also feel addressed directly (through the use of imperatives and apostrophes with phatic function). The mimetic effects vary in intensity, moving from an orality still very close to that of the modern storyteller to a more current version, richer in realistic effects and closer to everyday language. When the *I*-narrator addresses an interlocutor *you*, a dramatic situation is immediately evoked. I have argued that the dialogic relationship implied by the opposition *I-you* fosters the impression of orality in readers almost irrespective of the presence of other mimetic devices. As an aside, it should be stressed that the narrator can also assume the first person plural *we*, usually as a way of giving a more general validity to an experience or an opinion, and to include the audience in the discourse, inviting to intimacy and to sharing that specific point of view (as, for example, in ‘On Looking Up by Chance at the Constellations,’ or in ‘The Gift Outright’). In these cases the language of the narrator assumes an intimate, confessional overtone. The deictic *we* may also have a different referential meaning when it points to specific persons, as in the poem ‘On a Tree Fallen Across the Road.’ In this poem, the *we* refers to the narrator and a partner. The voice of the narrator shifts from an extradiegetic to an intradiegetic position.

When the *I* refers not only to the narrator but also to a character (as in the poems of group 3), the dramatic dimension imposes itself clearly, in the form of either a dramatic monologue or a dramatic dialogue. Naturally, the dramatic element evokes a context in which the use of spoken language is generally expected by readers. The mechanism is similar to the situation described above for the poems of group 2b, but the resulting effect is more intense. The spoken language recreated in these poems is very close to communicative

immediacy and assumes a wider range of mimetic effects that depend not only on the mimetic devices adopted and their combination, but also on other specific contextual elements of the poem that contribute to the variety of characters and accents.

During the study I have also noted that, within the range of features of orality contained in Koch and Oesterreicher's framework some features are hardly present at all in the corpus. I am referring specifically to pragmatic devices such as markers of turn-taking, non-semantically defined markers of discourse organization, syntactical devices like lack of agreement, *constructio ad sensum*, anacoluthon, and funnel technique. The limited presence of these devices in the text makes it possible to argue that Frost's poetic style tends to avoid using elements of oral language that have a more disruptive¹⁷⁶ effect on the standard grammar of written texts, since its use may undermine the very intelligibility of the text. However, the relatively frequent use of holophrastic expressions or incomplete utterances, potentially equally disruptive, points to another possible justification for this absence. Devices like *constructio ad sensum* or anacoluthon have strong mimetic power, but translated to a written text may also connote it as occupying a diastratically lower level than its oral counterpart (Dargnat 2008: 15), risking unwanted parodic effects. The downgrading effect does not necessarily happen when holophrastic expressions and incomplete utterances are transposed in a written text. This observation, however, is still hypothetical and calls for further research on the issue.

4.3 The target text: Giudici's translation

Once the pattern of the linguistic analysis of the source text has been established, it is possible for us to apply it to the target text and move more swiftly through the translations carried out by Giovanni Giudici. For this reason, I make reference to the occurrences of the mimetic elements in the Italian corpus through the comparison I draw between them and the occurrences of the features of orality detected in the source text (table 4.7). Any change found between the two texts is described in terms of

¹⁷⁶ In a descriptive frame such as that of the present study, the term *disruptive* should not be interpreted as having negative connotations.

increase (+), decrease (-) or similar (=) use of the features of orality. The first objective of this approach is to identify potential trends in the use of such elements in the Italian corpus. I also adopt a longitudinal perspective and consider whether, and how, potential changes in the use of the features of orality isolated during the analysis affect the general perception of the poems. During this part of the study the parameters against which I draw the comparison between source and target texts are provided by the taxonomy proposed for the English corpus (divided into three groups). This perspective allows us to consider the changes in the use of the mimetic elements in terms of shifts of the target text from the source text, and to ask questions regarding the consequences that these shifts have on the creation of mimesis of orality in the target text and the causes that determine them. The first set of questions regarding the consequences of the translation shifts brings the focus of the longitudinal perspective back to the target text alone and introduces more general observations on the interaction between mimetic and poetic features in the Italian translations. The second set of questions, that is, the causes of the translation shifts, produce hypotheses that prompt a contextualization of the translation as a product and as a process.

4.3.1 Comparison of frequency of source and target features of orality

An overview of the results of the comparison between frequency of use of features of orality in the source and target texts is summarized in table 4.7.

TABLE 4.7 Comparison of the frequency of use between source text and target text

Universal features of orality	Comparison	Source text occurrences	Target text occurrences
Pragmatic level			
Markers of discourse organization	Decrease (--)*	21	14
Markers of turn-taking	Similar	1	0

Phatic markers	Similar	19	22
Hesitation phenomena	Similar	12	11
Reformulation mechanisms	Similar	6	4
Interjections	Similar	38	39
Modal mechanisms	Increase (++)	24	39
Oral narrative: <i>verba dicendi</i>	Decrease (--)	51	34
Oral reproduction of reported speech	Decrease	25	21
Syntactical level			
Lack of agreement and <i>constructio ad sensum</i>	Increase (++)	5	19
Contaminations, postpositions, funnel technique	Increase	4	7
Incomplete or holophrastic utterances	Decrease	181	171
Literary transpositions	Decrease (--)	8	87
Oral transpositions	Increase (++)	12	33
Dislocations of theme-rheme order and inversions	Increase	4	8
Syntactical complexity: parataxis and hypotaxis	Not quantified		
Lexico-semantic level			
Low lexical variation and colloquial register	Not quantified		

Lexical iteration	Decrease (--)	115	84
Omnibus words	Decrease (--)	42	32
Presentatives	Decrease (--)	32	20
Personal deixis	Not quantified		
Spatial deixis	Decrease	120	109
Temporal deixis	Decrease (--)	37	22
Demonstrative deixis	Decrease (--)	99	80
Emotional implication and expressive-emotive processes	Increase	11	17
Phraseology	Equal	58	57
Phonic level	Decrease	19	11
Paralinguistic graphic elements	Increase (++)	47	71

* The symbol ++ indicates a substantial increase in the occurrences of the device, the symbol -- a substantial decrease.

It is important to remember that the assessments of increase, decrease, and similar use of features of orality in table 4.7 point to approximate values, considering the multi-functionality of each mimetic device. The majority of features of orality belonging to the universal textual-pragmatic level show approximately the same frequency in Giudici's translation as in the source text. The number of markers of discourse organization in the target text decreases. In both cases these markers are not semantically underdetermined, even though in Italian there is less variation than in English, where we occasionally find more literary markers (like *afterwards*, as in

‘Meeting and Passing;’ Giudici translates both the adverb *then* and *afterwards* as *poi* [then]). These markers therefore have a bland, though perceivable, mimetic function. As in the source text, there is hardly any occurrence of markers of turn-taking. Hesitation phenomena can also be found in similar proportion in the Italian translation. The translation of interjections presents some nuances, even though, set against the above mentioned parameters of analysis, there is no relevant shift in frequency. I have distinguished between primary interjections (mainly mono-vocalic) and secondary interjections.¹⁷⁷ In the original text the most frequent primary interjection is *oh*, which has been translated by Giudici with the same word most of the time. It has also been used creatively (that is, without correspondence in the source text) to achieve oral effects in a poem like ‘A Servant to Servants’:

Example 4.23

From ‘Una serva di servi’	From ‘A Servant to Servants’
Fui via una volta, sì, son stata via All’Asilo di Stato, al manicomio. Oh I pregiudizi: nessuno ci avrei mandato dei miei (ll. 90-92)	I’ve been away once—yes, I’ve been away. The State Asylum. I was prejudiced; I wouldn’t have sent anyone of mie there; (ll. 90-91)

On one occasion, in “Una serva di servi,” *oh* has been translated with *ah*, (with no change in the mimetic effect):

Example 4.24

Tu... ah tu pensi che parlare sia tutto. Ma io devo fuggire (l. 112)	<i>You—oh</i> you think the talk is all. I must go— (l. 112)
---	--

Secondary interjections have been translated literally whenever interjections belonging to the same semantic field can be found in

¹⁷⁷ For an evaluation of the data gathered on the translation of interjections in the Italian corpus I have made reference to Richet’s study (2001: 79-128), which refers to the translation of interjections from English into French, and vice versa. Despite the fact that interjections are culture-bound, Richet’s observations and conclusions can undergo a relative generalization and be applied to the current analysis due to the cultural propinquity of French and Italian.

the target language (as in ‘Cento colletti’ (‘A Hundred Collars’): “God” - “Dio,” ll. 69 and 90; or in ‘Una serva di servi’ (‘A Servant to Servants’): “Bless you” - “Oh benedetto,” l. 170). Interjections with vague deictic functions like “there now,” “there you go,” and “there” have always been translated with “ecco,” which in Italian may assume a similar exophoric deictic function. Finally, I have detected two cases of omissions in the translation of secondary interjections (“dear me,” in ‘The Black Cottage,’ l. 105, and “Whoa,” in ‘The Fear,’ l. 8). Their omission, however, does not alter the general impression of orality of the language used in the poems, conveyed and compensated for by other co-textual mimetic features. As in the source text, interjections in the target text can be considered effective devices for the achievement of a language of communicative immediacy. No relevant shift has been detected in the use of phatic markers either. One of the factors that contributes to the relatively equal frequency of the use of these elements in both source and target text is the fact that I have attributed a broader meaning to this category than the one described in Koch and Oesterreicher’s framework. In fact, I have included not only short lexical segments, but also imperatives, apostrophes, and rhetorical questions in which I detected a phatic function. These elements are not necessarily culture-bound and are liable to undergo fewer changes during the translation process. The comparison between source and target texts shows a slight decrease in the use of reformulation mechanisms. After observing the phenomenon in detail, however, it seems reasonable to argue that the decrease does not significantly affect the overall mimetic effect of the translated poems. First, the number of reformulation phenomena detected in both source and target texts is very low. As a consequence, it is possible to hypothesize that the mimetic strength of the device is low. Secondly, a reformulation phenomenon may also appear as an interjection, a hesitation phenomenon, etc. As a consequence of their polyfunctionality, the individual occurrences of the phenomenon in the target text may, in the process of translation, shift more exclusively towards a different feature of orality. In the poem ‘The Telephone,’ for example, the question “What was it?” in l. 15 (“I listened and I thought I caught the word– / **What was it?** Did you call me by my name?,” ll. 14-15), pointing more explicitly to a reformulation strategy of the speaker, has been translated by repeating a word appearing in the previous line (“ho ascoltato, ho creduto capire la parola... / **Quale parola?** Mi chiamavi per

nome?,” ll. 14-15), in which the impression of hesitation prevails on the still perceivable reformulation intention. In a second example, from ‘A Hundred Collars’, the reformulating function of the device employed in the source text heightens the phatic relevance of the emphatic expression in the target text (‘Cento colletti’) (“But first–**let’s see**–what was I going to ask you?,” l. 162 – “Ma prima–**aspetti**–cosa volevo chiederle?,” l. 161). The interpretation of the mimetic function of these devices is often a matter of nuances which, nonetheless, still results in a colloquial mimetic impression. Modal mechanisms are the only group of elements within the pragmatic level of the language in which an increase in the occurrences has been detected in the target text. I shall consider three examples:

Example 4.25

From ‘Il villino nero’	From ‘The Black Cottage’
Secondo lei, questo appunto aveva deciso la guerra (l. 79)	She had supposed the war decided that (l. 79)

Example 4.26

From ‘Polvere negli occhi’	From ‘Dust in the Eyes’
Venga pure a schiacciarmi, caduta da un tetto (l. 4)	Let it be overwhelming, off a roof (l. 4)

Example 4.27

From ‘Direttiva’	From ‘Directive’
d’un vecchio cedro proprio su quell’acqua (l. 56)	Of an old cedar at the waterside (l. 56)

Although the modal markers in the examples quoted above (in bold) may also carry out other pragmatic functions, as they do in most of the cases detected in the target text, these markers serve to stress the narrator’s or the characters’ point of view, adding emphasis to the sentence. The result is an increase in the oral effect evoked by the segments of text in which these features appear.

Giudici's translation strategies make use of different devices with compensatory oral effect. An example of compensation can be seen in the poem 'Un uccelletto.'¹⁷⁸

Example 4.28

From 'Un uccelletto'	Froom 'A Minor Bird'
E qualcosa non va, qualcosa manca in chi vuol far tacere uno che canta (ll. 7-8)	And of course there must be something wrong In wanting to silence any song (ll. 7-8)

In example 4.28 above, the modal verb *must* conveys, to my view, an impression of uncertainty, heightened by the discourse marker *of course* and the vagueness of the term *something*, as if the narrator were reflecting on the words uttered in the very moment as they are being pronounced. In the target text, Giudici translates the impression of hesitation through a parallelism ("qualcosa non va, qualcosa manca"). The device is not the same as in the source text, but the translation preserves the oral mimetic effect deriving from the impression of reading a sentence planned as it is being formulated.

Verba dicendi are used less frequently in the source text than in the target text. This phenomenon is a consequence of the higher tolerance to lexical repetition in English than in Italian, which brings the translator to find synonyms and, occasionally, to omit the verb altogether, as for example, in the poem 'Rabberciare il muro' ('Mending Wall'):

Example 4.29

Ma lui: «buoni confine fanno buoni vicini». (l. 28)	He only says, 'Good fences make good neighbors.' (l. 28)
---	--

¹⁷⁸ However, in the same poem, Giudici also translates the modal verb *must* literally ("The fault **must** partly have been in me," l. 5 - "Mio in parte il torto **dev'**essere stato," l. 5).

At a syntactical level, the comparative chart points to an increase in the use of constructions with lack of agreement, which are almost absent in the source text. It is significant that the use of these devices is more frequent in the translation of dramatic poems, especially in those belonging to the collection *North of Boston*, since through these devices communicative immediacy is easily evoked. An example is the occurrence of the *che polivalente*, or polyvalent *che*, an occurrence of which has already been described in the poem ‘La morte del bracciante’ (‘Death of the Hired Man’), in section 3.3, and which can be found in ‘La paura’ (‘The Fear’) among others:

Example 4.30

L’ho visto dal modo che avete frustrato il cavallo” (l. 73)	I saw by the way you whipped up the horse. (l. 73)
--	--

The use of polyvalent *che* heightens the impression of orality. At the same time the voices of the narrator and of the characters are connoted as diastratically less neutral than in the source text, as a consequence of the diastratical shift, described above, that happens whenever certain standard oral devices are reproduced in the written medium with disruptive effects on the coherence of the text. The frequency of contaminations and funnel technique in the target text is low, as in the source text. Incomplete elliptical expressions and holophrastic utterances are used very often in both source and target text and with approximately the same frequency (the decrease in not significant in percentage) and similar oral mimetic effects. These similarities point to the fact that, within the limits imposed by the language, Giudici reproduces the structure of the source text. As we will see later in the chapter, this regularity of translation is coherent with the translator’s self-imposed constraint to translate the poems keeping the same number of lines and adopting the line in the source text as a semantic unit. No significant variation in the use of paractical and hypotactical structures has been detected in a comparison between source and target text. Parataxis prevails over hypotaxis, the latter maintaining a relatively simple structure. An example is given by the syntactical structure of the short poem ‘Il timore di Dio’ (‘The Fear of God’) that I reproduce in full:

Example 4.31

From 'Il timore di Dio'	From 'The Fear of God'
Se dovessi salire dal Nessunposto a un Luogo, E da Nessuno a essere Qualcuno, Mi raccomando continua a ripeterti Che ciò tu devi a un capriccioso iddio La cui grazia per te piu che per gli altri Non sopporta un esame scrupoloso. Continua a non presumere. Se non hai licenza Di portar l'uniforme di chi sei, E sei tentato di sostituirla In aspetto o in un tono piu dimesso, Attento a non scoprirti troppo, a non usare Per tua divisa quello che doveva Essere schermo al piu intimo dell'anima.	If you should rise from Nowhere up to Somewhere, From being No one up to being Someone, Be sure to keep repeating to yourself You owe it to an arbitrary god Whose mercy to you rather than to others Won't bear to critical examination. Stay unassuming. If for lack of license To wear the uniform of who you are, You should be tempted to make up for it In a subordinating look or tone, Beware of coming too much to the surface And using for apparel that was meant To be the curtain of the inmost soul.

The first six lines of the target text are one single sentence, followed by one short sentence (l. 7) and a longer one (ll. 7-13). However, the latter is mainly composed of a few subordinate clauses of the same kind (connected by the coordinating conjunction “e”: “se non hai licenza,” “e sei tentato”) or by asyndeton (“attento a non scoprirti troppo,” “a non usare”). The syntactical structure cannot be defined as simple, but the sequence of sentences repeating a similar syntactical pattern may evoke the phatic structure of a paternalistic sermon addressed to an audience and aimed at provoking a change in the listeners or at least warning them against something. As in the source text, the prevalence of these syntactical constructions

contributes effectively to the evocation of this sermon-like oral register.

Probably the most conspicuous change in the frequency of use of features of orality at a syntactical level is the increase in the occurrences of syntactical inversions or transpositions. Frost occasionally uses the device of inversion of the order of elements in a clause, with foregrounding purposes and oral effects (as in the first line of ‘Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening’: “Whose woods these are I think I know”). In the target text, inversions may still have foregrounding purposes since they focus the attention of readers on a specific element of the clause by inverting the standard, neutral order of its elements, but they produce no mimetic effect. The inversion most of the times is perceived as literary, or simply marked, achieving a disruptive effect on the mimesis of orality. However, it is also possible to find inversions with foregrounding functions evoking orality, as in the examples below:

Example 4.32

From: ‘La riparazione del muro’	From: ‘Mending Wall’
Qualcosa c’è che non sopporta un muro (l. 1)	Something there is that doesn’t love a wall (l. 1)
Altra cosa i guasti dei cacciatore” (l. 5)	The work of hunters is another thing (l. 5)

Example 4.33

From ‘Serva di servi’	From ‘A Servant to Servants’
Di riposo ho bisogno (se proprio vuol saperlo) (l. 49)	It’s rest I want—there, I have said it out— (l. 49)
Quattro ne abbiamo a pensione, gran buoni-a-nulla (l. 76)	We have four here to board, great good-for-nothings (l. 76)
Questo per lei fu sposare mio padre (l. 128)	That was what marrying father meant to her (l. 129)

The examples of literary inversion are much more numerous, though. I define them as literary since they can often be likened to rhetorical devices like anastrophe or hyperbaton. Even though they have varying intensity, most of them have a literary flavor. I do not provide examples of literary inversions here since I am going to describe them in detail later in the chapter.

At a lexico-semantic level there is a general decrease of mimetic devices in the target text. Within the category of lexical iteration, we should distinguish between the use of spaced lexical iterations, for which the correspondence between source and target text is similar, and the contiguous repetition of words. This latter device presents a higher degree of variation in the corpus since there are fewer mirror-correspondences between source and target texts. Repetitions are at times omitted in the target text, and substituted by circumlocutions with a similar expressive function (hesitation, emphasis, or other emotions), as in the example below:

Example 4.34

From 'Da non tenere'	From 'Not to Keep'
Le mani? E lei a guardare, a domandare (l. 8)	His hands? She had to look, to look and ask (l. 8)

Repetitions are introduced anew, however, as a translation alternative to different expressions in the target text:

Example 4.35

From 'Quasi tutto'	From 'The Most of It'
non un amore riflesso di riecheggiate parole ma amore in cambio, amore corrisposto" (ll. 7-8)	Is not its own love back in copy speech, But counter-love, original response" (ll. 7-8)

The translation strategy shown in the latter example is, however, rarer. The iteration of the word "amore" adds an emphatic note to the line similar to the effect which, in the source text, is created by the aggregative structure formed by the apposition of the words "counter-love" and "original response," while also introducing a semantic shift. Depending on whether the iteration is spaced or contiguous, the mimetic effect may assume different nuances. A

more spaced lexical iteration points to low lexical variation, thus adding conversational overtones to the language. Spaced iterations may also assume a more fixed structure, as in the case of anaphoric repetition. This occurrence is not so frequent in the Italian translation as it is in the source text, due possibly to the fact that English has a higher level of acceptance of lexical repetition than Italian.¹⁷⁹ Moreover, spaced iterations are less frequent because some of the repetitions detected in the source text are in the form of anaphoric iterations of the personal deictic *I*. In Frost's poems this device may play an important role in determining the rhythm of the composition (see, for example, 'Acquainted with the Night': "I have been one acquainted with the night. / I have walked out in rain — and back in rain. / I have outwalked the furthest city light," ll. 1-3; or 'What Fifty Said': "When I was young my teachers were the old. / I gave up fire for form till I was cold. / I suffered like a metal being cast. / I went to school to age to learn the past," ll 1-4). However, a similar occurrence cannot be found frequently in the target text, since in Italian the subject pronoun is usually omitted and its repetition would acquire an emphatic effect.

In the category of deixis, the importance of which has already been stressed regarding the creation of oral effects in a written text (see section 1.10.3), the most relevant decrease in the target text is in spatial deixis. However, if we take into account the sum of spatio-temporal and demonstrative deictic elements then the decrease in the use of this device in the target text becomes less relevant. As happens in the source text, the presence of these types of deixis in the translations is immediately evocative of an oral context close to communicative immediacy. As for personal deixis, which has not been quantified, its frequency in the target text does not seem to change with respect to the source text, even if it takes on a different form, mainly as verb inflection rather than as a personal pronoun. More than any change in the use of spatio-temporal and demonstrative deictic elements, changes in the use of personal deictics would have implied stark shifts in the point of view.

¹⁷⁹ There is a similarity in the degree of tolerance to repetitions in Italian, Catalan and Spanish compared to English. A reference to the higher tolerance of the English language to repetition can be found in López Guix and Minett Wilkinson (1997: 78-79) or Ainaud, Espunya, and Pujol (2003: 150), among others.

Features implying emotional or expressive implications (in the present study, basically diminutives) appear more frequently in the Italian translation than in the source text. This observation leads to several linguistic reflections. In Italian, diminutives¹⁸⁰ (and other procedures with expressive finality pointing to a change in size and quality of an object, like augmentatives or pejoratives) are frequently formed through the use of suffixes added to almost all types of nouns. In English the use and applicability of suffixes for the formation of diminutives is more limited. The difference, however, is not just quantitative. Both in Italian and in English the use of diminutive forms has informal connotations, if compared to equivalent forms obtained through an adjectival modification of the noun.¹⁸¹ In English, diminutives formed through suffixes produce a more marked diaphasic shift of the communicative situation towards an informal, intimate context (often reminiscent of nursery language). These observations on the general use of diminutives in English and Italian can help us understand why, in the translation of the poem ‘The Runaway’ (‘Il fuggitivo’), Giudici can use diminutives like “Un cavallino,” l. 3 (“A little Morgan,” l. 3), “poverino,” l. 11 (“the little fellow,” l. 11), and “sciocchino,” l. 13 (translating the interjection “Sakes,” l. 12) and still convey the impression of an intimate conversation between two adults, probably a couple. But general observations on the frequency and connotations of diminutives in English and Italian do not provide readers with any easy formula for the interpretation of this device

¹⁸⁰ I am referring here to diminutives proper and not to lexicalized diminutives, that is, words which, though etymologically diminutives, have lost their original stylistic function (such as, in English, the word *cigarette*, *tablet*, *bullet*, *clarinet*, *etc.*). See Chamanikolasová and Rambousek (2007: 39-42) for a more detailed distinction between *diminutives proper*, *frozen* (and *hyperfrozen*) *diminutives* (that is, lexicalized diminutives), and *semifrozen diminutives* (partially lexicalized diminutives).

¹⁸¹ Chamanikolasová and Rambousek (2007: 39) observe: “diminutives display two basic semantic features: they denote referents of small size and suggest the speaker’s emotional attitude to the referent. The emotional load is what distinguishes diminutives from noun phrases with size adjectives. The word ‘puppy,’ as opposed to ‘small pup’ for instance, is emotionally marked and its use has certain pragmatic consequences [...]. The emotional load of diminutives can thus be viewed as a semantic-pragmatic feature.” Even though the quotation is taken from a comparative study of English and Czech it is applicable here since the specific extract refers to the general semantic features of diminutives.

and its effects on the evocation of orality in the poems. It is true that its use refers to terms of endearment evoking a situation of emotional involvement and communicative immediacy. However, a more subtle interpretation of the effects produced by this device cannot rely on general observations regarding the correspondence (or lack thereof) between the use of diminutives in the two languages, and it calls for a contextualization of each occurrence. In the poem ‘Un uccelletto in minore’ (‘A Minor Bird’), for example, the impression of orality in the translation is heightened by the diminutive “uccelletto” (l. 6, and in the title, corresponding to the source text term “bird”), hinting to an emotional affective link of the speaker with the bird which in the source poem can be imagined but is never made explicit. The same consideration can be applied to the diminutive *uccellino* in the poem ‘L’uccellino del forno’ (‘The Oven Bird’). In the poem ‘Il villino negro’ (‘The Black Cottage’), we find two examples of semifrozen diminutives (*villino-cottage* and *cuffietta-bonnet*), in which the diminutives in Italian are partly lexicalized, even though the emotional implication can still be perceived. Finally, in ‘Fermadosi nel bosco in una sera di neve’ (‘Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening’), there is a case of diaphasic shift in the translation of the source expression “my little horse” (l. 5) with the Italian diminutive “il mio cavallino,” immediately triggering associations with nursery language. The narrator’s language is perceived as more informal, and slightly out of context, at least in standard Italian.¹⁸²

The last category of semantic features of orality taken into account in our contrastive analysis is that of phraseology (phrasal verbs, idioms, proverbs, and routine formulas). Even before approaching this part of the analysis I was aware that the translation of set phrases is a spiky issue, being “a meeting point of conflicting theories about form, meaning and culture in language” (Colson

¹⁸² Loreto (1999c: 110-111) makes a similar observation about this example and comments on it by stressing the literary intertextuality of the term “cavallino” in Italian poetry: “In the Italian version of ‘Stopping by Woods’ ‘cavallo’ often becomes ‘cavallino’ (Giudici, Nobile, Pisanti, De Logu [Italian translators of Frost]). It consequently sounds very obsolete and a bit too precious and affected, very much like Giovanni Pascoli, whom these translators may very well have had in mind, because he belongs to the most pristine Italian poetic tradition—and with whom, by the way, Frost curiously shares the fate of being misinterpreted in his apparent simplicity and easiness.”

2008: 200). On the other hand, as Baker (2007: 14) observes, “idioms (in the broad sense of fixed stretches of language) enhance naturalness and create an impression of fluency.” They also contribute to add a strong informal flavour to language, especially when they have a high degree of opacity (Baker 2007: 15). They are therefore important elements in the evocation of orality in a written text. In the case of Frost’s poetry, phraseology is of fundamental importance since it contributes to the evocation of different variations of spoken language in his poems, and is used as an element of psychological characterization of both characters and narrator. As can be expected, since phrasal verbs do not exist in Italian, Giudici translates them with semantic equivalents that do not always have colloquial overtones (as, for example, in ‘A Hundred Collars’: “’Twas nothing but my foolish **hanging back**,” l. 59, translates as “ma era soltanto il mio stupido **ostinarmi**”). In the immediate context of the line, the result in the target text is often a decrease of the mimetic effect of the sentence. It should however be stressed that, apart from the language-specific mechanisms that Italian can use to convey the impression of informal language, other compensatory strategies may have been used by Giudici to recreate a similar oral effect at the macro-level of the poem, which may not be evident from the micro-level approach of this part of the analysis. Giudici’s lexical choice, for example, belongs most of the time to an informal colloquial register. Moreover, the translation strategies he adopts for the remaining phraseological subcategories highlighted may cover the distance from communicative immediacy which the lack of phrasal verbs as a linguistic category seems to create. If we focus, for example, on idioms and routine formulas we observe a frequent use of these elements. A quantitative comparison here is difficult, since the boundaries of these categories are often blurred and overlapping. It is equally difficult, moreover, to establish their mimetic strength, and, within the area of communicative immediacy, the gradations of informality and colloquialism that they can have. Examples of this variation of mimetic effect can be found in the ‘Cento colletti’ (‘A Hundred Collars’), which has already been quoted several times.¹⁸³ In the source text, the fixed expression with colloquial overtones *to feel*

¹⁸³ Due to its length, its dramatic form and its informal and orally connoted language, the poem ‘A Hundred Collars’ and its translation are an important source of examples of devices used by Frost and Giudici in the creation of orality.

mean, standing for *to feel miserly* (in line 54: “I’ve felt mean lately; mean’s no name for it”) is translated with the functionally and stylistically equivalent *sentirsi giù* (“Mi sentivo un po’ giù, forse non è la parola,” l. 54). In another line of the translation, however, the intensity of the oral colloquial effect is more difficult to determine when compared to the source text. Line 69 (“What makes you stand there on one leg like that?”) is translated with “Ma che fa lí, impalato su una gamba?” (l. 69). In the source text, the colloquial register determined by the presence of the spatial and demonstrative deictics *there* and *that* and the fixed expression characterized by the collocation of the verb *to stand*, the deictic *there*, and the expression *on one leg*, conveys an impression of informal language of which the Italian fixed expression *stare impalato* may be assumed as an equivalent formula. The translation, however, may acquire slightly abusive connotations, accentuated by the contrast with the use of the Italian polite third-person form, normally used in more formal communicative situations. The examples point to the difficulty and subjectivity we incur whenever we need to interpret the mimetic intensity of the occurrences of idiomatic expressions in the target text. Giudici seems to translate source idiomatic expressions with other fixed stretches of sentences belonging to the same semantic field and containing a similar image component whenever this is possible (as in ‘The Road Not Taken’: “Yet knowing how **way leads to way**,” l. 14 - “Pure, sapendo bene che **strada porta a strada**,” l. 14; or in ‘The Oven Bird’: “**Mid-summer is to spring as one to ten**,” l. 5 - “Per i fiori una sola / primavera val dieci piene estati,” ll. 4-5). On other occasions, fixed idiomatic expressions are translated with fixed expressions of similar meaning (as in ‘The Fear’: “I saw it just as **plain as a white plate**,” l. 9 - “L’ho visto proprio **chiaro come il giorno**,” l. 9). Idiomatic expressions are also translated with non-idiomatic expression (as in ‘The Runaway’: “he isn’t winter-broken,” l. 10 - “Lui non conosce l’inverno”, l. 10), and viceversa (as, once again, in ‘The Runaway’: “And then he had to bolt,” l. 5 - “poi, **via come una freccia!**,” l. 6), reminding us once more of the creative use of this device in Giudici’s translation. This translation strategy, as well as the use of other mimetic devices with compensatory effects, will be studied in the next section, where the macrostructural level of the individual translated poems and of the entire translated corpus will be taken into account.

The comparative chart given at the beginning of this section (table 4.7) also points to a decrease in the target text in the frequency of phonic features of orality. This result has not taken into account the shortening of subject-verb or verb-negation that can be found in English. In Italian this kind of phonic modification is not accepted as a standard and neutrally connoted spoken form (as it is in English). Any abbreviation of this type would imply a shift of the register towards a language-specific diastratical and/or diatopical level. We occasionally find examples of apocopes (especially in the use of *po'* instead of *poco*) evoking colloquial language. Finally, Giudici calques the source text use of extralinguistic graphic features like italics with emphatic function, while suspension marks are used as substitutes for em dashes conveying visually the impression of hesitation in speech. The reason behind the increase of occurrences of this device in the target text may reside in the fact that while em dash is a commonly used and versatile punctuation mark in English (*The Chicago Manual of Style*), and does not always imply a mimetic effect, suspension marks in Italian are usually used to evoke hesitation phenomena in the discourse.

The comparative perspective of this subsection has allowed us to observe the relative stability, increase, and decrease in the frequency of features of typical orality in the translations carried out by Giudici in comparison with their use in the source text. Throughout the section I have indicated whenever possible potential linguistic causes of these trends (Pym's material causes), focusing especially on the increase and decrease of frequency of certain features, and describing how they affect mimesis of orality in the target text. Some changes in frequency are unsurprising as they refer to language-specific features of English and Italian (for example, the increase in frequency of modal markers and diminutives with emotional implication in the target text, or the decrease of mimetic phonic devices). Other phenomena have no immediate explanation and have raised further questions that require a widening of the perspective of the analysis. We may wonder in fact why there is an increase in the use of devices creating a lack of syntactical agreement; why there is a *significant* increase in syntactical inversions, and in the variety of inversions, which we have classified as oral, literary, or simply marked; what effects these changes have on the overall recreation of orality in the translated poems; what are the meaning and possible causes of the

similarities detected in the frequency of many mimetic devices at the pragmatic, syntactical, and semantic levels; what is the contribution to the evocation of orality of other rhetorical features and structures not directly associated with it, such as meter, rhyme, enjambment, etc.; what these data can say about Giudici's choices as a translator, as a poet, and about the culture, broadly defined, to which he belongs. The sequence of questions could be enlarged and deepened. The following sections, with their longitudinal and contextual perspectives, aim at providing answers to these questions.

4.3.2 The longitudinal perspective of comparison: voices in the Italian translations

During the analysis of the source text, the longitudinal perspective, as I have labeled the approach, has been useful in describing how various mimetic features combine in order to evoke different kinds of spoken registers. The presence of these features in the text is also determined by the typology of the poetic text in which they occurred. This approach gives insight into Frost's poetical work. It also offers clues on the functions and ranking of features of orality in the evocation and fictional representation of spoken language in a text. The same longitudinal approach applied to the Italian corpus and enriched by the contrastive dimension leads us to a better understanding of the mimesis of orality recreated in the target text, and the way it relates to other rhetorical and formal features.

In grouping the poems from the target text we must pose several questions: is the tripartite grouping proposed for the English poems still applicable to the corresponding translations, or should the parameters be changed? Is it still an effective frame within which mimesis of orality in the target text, and the translation phenomena related to it, can be studied and described? Is it possible to apply the same labels that describe mimesis of orality in each source group of poems to the recreation of orality carried out by Giudici in the corresponding target groups? Some of these questions find an immediate answer. As for the first question, the applicability of the grouping proposed for the source text to the Italian translations seems feasible since its fundamental parameters (the presence of an implicit narrator, of a first person narrator, or of a fictional dramatic

situation) are still valid. Of course, the personal deictic *io*, corresponding to the English *I*, can no longer be taken as a distinguishing element of the groups, for the obvious reason that in Italian the pronoun is generally omitted. This is however a formal difference linked to the language-specific grammatical rules. Personal deixis as a category is conveyed in Italian through the verb inflection. The tripartite grouping's effectiveness makes it possible to answer the second question in the affirmative: the grouping can still be considered an adequate frame for the description of mimesis of orality in the target text, and for its comparison with the mimetic impressions created in the source text. As for the last question, about the validity for the target groups of the same labels devised to describe mimesis of orality in the source groups, the following sections aim at providing an answer to it by studying the simultaneous presence of features of orality in the poems of the three groups, and by enriching the study with a comparative perspective.

4.3.3 Group 1. Still a modern storyteller?

A panorama of the features of orality employed in group 1 and its comparison with the source group does not highlight any drastic change in the use of mimetic devices used in the translations. As in the English poems, the majority of the elements of orality detected in the group (in table 4.8) belong to the syntactical and semantic level of the language.

TABLE 4.8. Group 1. Still a modern storyteller?

<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. 'Ottobre' 2. 'Notte d'inverno di un vecchio' 3. 'L'uccellino del forno' 4. 'Necessità d'esser versati nelle cose campestri' 5. 'Pozze primaverili' 6. 'Accettazione' 7. 'L'investimento' 8. 'L'orsa' 9. 'La pensassero pure così' 10. 'I forti non dicono nulla' 11. 'Né lontano né in profondo'

12. 'Ogni rivelazione'
13. 'Provvedi, provvedi'
14. 'Quasi tutto'
15. 'Non piú sarebbe stato il canto degli uccelli lo stesso'
16. 'Il fiore sconvolto'
17. 'Intervallo'
18. 'Per loro, non Guerre Sante'

Hardly any pragmatic features have been used for the recreation of orality in the poems of the first group. This first rough comparison gives us some clues about the translation strategies employed by Giudici but certainly does not suffice to achieve a thorough description of mimesis of orality in the target text. A more detailed comparative stylistic analysis is necessary, which takes into account the interaction of features of orality with other rhetorical devices in each target poem and stresses the different mimetic mechanisms triggered. I shall start by presenting a general impression and shall subsequently narrow down the focus of the analysis to the linguistic and textual elements leading to it. As in the source text, the language employed in the poems of this group can be placed in the area encompassing the half of the communicative axis closer to the pole of communicative immediacy. The use of plain lexis and simple syntactical structures, which is a constant feature of all the translations in *Conoscenza della notte*, and the moderate use of syntactical and semantic devices such as incomplete or holophrastic utterances, lexical iteration and omnibus words certainly contribute to it. On the other hand, the lack of words belonging to a diastatically lower level of the Italian diasystem or suggesting a situation of great informality, the scarce use of syntactical devices with more disruptive effects on what are perceived as standard grammatical rules for formal written language, such as lack of agreement, anacolutha, funnel technique, etc., convey the impression of a language in which mimesis of orality assumes neutral tones, that is, it is closer to the midpoint of the continuum. Examples of these devices will be given later on in the section, during the analysis of fragments of a selection of poems belonging to group 1. These first observations do not differ much from those made during the analysis of the source text. As in the source text, moreover, mimesis of orality is also conveyed through other textual elements, such as the setting and theme of the poem (for example an

idyllic setting or a theme suggesting a meditative mood), and the visual frames and literary echoes they evoke. Moreover, in connection with this issue, it is possible to argue that changes to elements like setting and theme in a translation tend to be less frequent and less drastic than changes to other textual elements such as meter or verse form (analyzed later on), which also contribute to the evocation of orality. While this remark should not be assumed as a rule, it may help detect one of the causes behind the similar use of these elements in source text and target text, including them among the textual and linguistic contact points between Giudici's translation and Frost's poems of group 1.

Equally interesting for an understanding and a description of the type of fictional orality recreated in the poems of target group 1, and for its relationship with the source text are those elements that diverge from the use they have in the source text. A first and to my view central element is the moderate increase in the use of syntactical inversions, which cannot always be likened to oral foregrounding strategies, but rather to literary rhetorical devices (hyperbaton or anastrophe), conveying a more literary flavor to the language of the poem. On some occasions, moreover, the impression created by inversions is one of syntactical emphasis, hindering the fluent reading of the line and creating an effect of semantic resistance and obscurity. In these cases, the modern storyteller's voice evoked in the poems of the source group can still be identified in the target text even though its overall mimetic effect is more heterogeneous in comparison to the effects recreated in the source text. We observe a gradation of the mimetic effect from a position of great similarity with the source text's modern storyteller's orality (*modern storyteller*=), to one in which the juxtaposition of mimetic devices and inversions with literary flavor within the same line or in contiguous lines hinders the association of these effects with the modern storyteller's orality (*modern storyteller*≠). The notion of gradation in this case seems useful, as it is a reminder that both source text and target text contain a variety of mimetic impressions, which however, in the case of the English poems, can still be perceived in the frame of the voice of the modern storyteller, while this is not always possible for the voice perceived in the translations. Position *modern storyteller*≠ does not imply that no impression of spoken language is evoked in the

poems, but rather that the features of orality employed in them achieve different mimetic effects.

The poem ‘Provvedi, provvedi’ (‘Provide, Provide’) is a good example of a composition in which mimesis of orality is very close to the modern storyteller’s orality of the source text. I shall consider three of the seven tercets composing the poem:

Example 4.36

From ‘Provvedi, provvedi’	From ‘Provide, Provide’
Quella strega venuta (vizza e vecchia)	The witch that came (the withered hag)
A lavare le scale con straccio e secchia,	To wash the steps with pail and rag
Fu un tempo la bellissima Abishag,	Was once the beauty Abishag,
Vanto e orgoglio del cine di Hollywood.	The picture pride of Hollywood.
Troppi eran grandi e alteri e non son piú	Too many fall from great and good
Perché tu metta in dubbio che quella lei fu.	For you to doubt the likelihood.
Muori presto, evita questo fato.	Die early and avoid the fate.
O se un tardo morire t’è destinato	Or if predestined to die late,
Fa in modo di morire in ricco stato.	Make up your mind to die in state
(ll.1-9)	(ll. 1-9)

In the source text, the mimetic effect relies on the colloquial, ironic, or even comic connotations of the lexical choice and on simple syntactical structures (mimetic features *stricto sensu*). Moreover, as Loreto observes (2001: 294) “the childish lullaby lilt and the slightly comic effect of the triple end rhymes increase the ironic distance, especially when rhyming words provide grotesque contrasts (‘throne/crone’).” The result is a kind of fictional orality reminding the voice of a humorous storyteller, a modern jester.¹⁸⁴ In the target text, the translator gives equal importance to a rhyming pattern similar to the original, creating a kind of nursery rhyme. At

¹⁸⁴ On this aspect of the poem, Loreto adds: “The register reminds the reader of oral narratives of exemplary episodes culminating in a moral lesson” (2001: 295).

the same time he evokes orality through a plain lexis (“vizza,” “vecchia,” “secchia,” etc.), a simple syntax (made up of short sentences and elliptical constructions without main verb such as: “Meglio scendere ben ossequiati / circondati da amici comprati / che soli del tutto. Provvedi, provvedi!” ll. 19-21), and the final repeated exclamation with phatic function (“Provvedi, provvedi!). The association of the simple rhyme scheme and the mimetic features triggers ironic and comic effects similar to those generated in the source text.

A similar instance can be seen in the poem ‘L’orsa’ (‘The Bear’), of which I quote two passages:

Example 4.37

From ‘L’orsa’	From ‘The Bear’
È questo, fuori di gabbia, il procedere dell’orsa. Per un’orsa, nel mondo c’è spazio e libertà: a me e voi l’universo appare rattrappito. (ll. 10- 12)	Such is the uncaged progress of the bear. The world has room to make a bear feel free; The universe seems cramped to you and me. (ll. 10-12)
Col muso in su e con gli occhi (posto che l’abbia) chiusi, (Non è, ma quasi sembra religioso) (ll. 27-28)	With lifted snout and eyes (if any) shut (He almost looks religious but he's not) (ll. 27-28)

In the target text syntactical and semantic devices are used to achieve a mimetic effect very close to the conversational ironic tone of the source text. Example 4.37 presents instances of oral foregrounding of a term (“È **questo**, fuori di gabbia, il procedere dell’orsa. / **Per un’orsa**, nel mondo c’è spazio e libertà: / **a me e voi** l’universo appare rattrappito”), and the presence of parenthetical clauses (ll. 27-28). In the translation we also find idiomatic expressions creatively used (“questo **va-e-vieni**,” l. 18). What draws the readers’ attention is also the fact that the relative regularity of the line length in the target text (mainly a 14-syllable line) provides in part the rhythmical regularity that, in the source text, is heightened by the heroic couplet.

An example where the divergence in the modern storyteller's orality between the source and target text becomes more evident is in the poem 'L'investimento' ('The Investment'), copied in full below:

Example 4.38

'L'investimento'	'The investment'
<p>Là dietro dove chiamano la vita una stare («Non puoi chiamarla un vivere, perché non lo è»), Vecchia, ma vecchia, una casa ridipinta di fresco C'era, con dentro un piano che alto suonava. Fuori, sul campo, al freddo, un uomo con la zappa, Immobile diritto fra le patate scavate, Contava i suoi pasti invernali, uno per cespo, Un poco tendendo l'orecchio alla baldanza del piano.</p> <p>Tutto quel pianoforte e quella pittura di fresco Erano un po' di soldi piovuti là d'improvviso? O qualche stravaganza d'un ancor giovane amore? O di un amore antico la noncuranza impulsiva –</p> <p>Per non insabbiarsi nell'essere moglie e marito, Ma avere dalla vita un po' di colore e di musica?</p>	<p>Over back where they speak of life as staying (‘You couldn’t call it living, for it ain’t’), There was an old, old house renewed with paint, And in it a piano loudly playing.</p> <p>Out in the plowed ground in the cold a digger, Among unearthed potatoes standing still, Was counting winter dinners, one a hill, With half an ear to the piano’s vigor.</p> <p>All that piano and new paint back there, Was it some money suddenly come into? Or some extravagance young love had been to? Or old love on an impulse not to care—</p> <p>Not to sink under being man and wife, But get some color and music out of life?</p>

In the source text, despite the formal constraint of the form (sonnet) and rhyme, the poem achieves a highly mimetic effect. The speaker's voice is connoted as oral, even popular. Its oral nuances produce an ironic effect (as if the speaker were winking to readers in an intimate conversation), and an overlapping of the point of view of speaker and character. Mimesis of orality results from the use of mainly semantic and syntactical mimetic devices (partly shown already in example 4.6). Moreover, though the composition respects the sonnet form strictly, the rhythm is flexible thus facilitating the creation of an oral impression. On this specific aspect Felton (2001: 172) observes that the composition has "conversational irregularity" and that a parallel can be drawn between rhythmical variation in the sonnet form and the scene depicted: in the same way that the couple cherishes the use of color and music against "the austerity of real existence" (2001: 172), the poet employs rhythmical variations on the backdrop of the sonnet form. In the target text, mimesis of orality is achieved through devices similar to those employed in the source text. We observe low lexical variation (such as the repetition of the word "vita"), lexical iterations with emphatic functions, reminding of nursery language ("Vecchia, ma vecchia," l. 2), spatial deixis ("**Là dietro** dove chiamano la vita uno stare," l. 1; "**Fuori**, sul campo, al freddo, un uomo con la zappa," l. 5; "Piovuti **là** d'improvviso," l. 10), idiomatic expressions ("Un poco **tendendo l'orecchio** alla baldanza del piano," l. 8), etc. These features recreate the conversational and straightforward tone of voice of a storyteller presenting a scene. However, the presence of syntactical inversions adding literary flavor to the language, though not altogether obtrusive, can be clearly felt. In lines 3-4, for example ("una casa ridipinta di fresco / **c'era**"), the hyperbaton of the presentative verb "c'era" is made even more evident by the enjambment. The anastrophe in line 11 ("O qualche stravaganza **d'un ancor giovane amore**") and line 12 ("O **di un amore antico** la noncuranza impulsiva") evoke literary frames juxtaposed to the oral ones, drawing readers' attention to formal features of the poem which may disrupt the suspension of disbelief required for mimesis of orality to achieve realistic effects.

Finally, the poem 'Il fiore sconvolto' ('The Subverted Flower') represents a good example of a translation in which the presence of several inversions reduces the impression of oral fluency of the language of the external narrator. The source poem deals with the

theme of sexual arousal, perceived by a man as being as natural as the flower he holds in his hands (which symbolically represents it). The perception is not shared by the young woman, for whom the flower becomes “base and fetid” (l. 52), and is flicked and flung away by the man, once he realizes that his attraction does not find any correspondence in her. The flower thus becomes the subverted symbol of a menacing sexuality. The source poem is a seventy-three-line composition in rhymed iambic trimeter. Both the metric and the rhyme patterns are irregular, suggesting the hesitation of the male character and of the narrator in presenting the scene. Apart from the presence of syntactical and semantic features of orality similar to those described in the previous poems presented in this section, the impression of orality derives here also from the dramatic effect triggered by the few lines in direct speech not introduced by *verba dicendi* (“‘It is this that had the power,’[”] l. 2; [“]‘If this has come to us / And not to me alone—” ll. 23-24), which add immediacy to the sentences of the narrator. It is also conveyed by the changing point of view of the narration, shifting from the perspective of the external narrator to that of the young man and woman. Readers perceive the man’s point of view in lines 6 and 7 (“But she was either blind / or **wilfully** unkind”), that describe the young woman, while the animalization of the man’s body (“And cracked his ragged muzzle,” l. 14) and gestures recreates the young woman’s point of view. This effect produces an almost cinematic dynamism in the narration, highlighted also by the shortness of the metric structure of the line (iambic trimeter) and of the syntactical structure of sentences. Images are described briefly and clearly and this quality of sharp vividness is mirrored in the language of narration, as in the sequence of images in the lines below:

His lips were sucked and blown
And the effort made him choke
Like a tiger at a bone.
She had to lean away.
She dared not stir a foot,
Lest movement should provoke
The demon of pursuit
That slumbers in a brute.
(ll. 27-34)

In the target text, mimesis of orality relies at a semantic level on the use of common words, and at a textual-pragmatic level on mimetic devices such as interjections and incomplete sentences in direct speech indicating hesitation, mirroring equal devices used in the source text. The translation is also characterized by simple syntactical structures and relatively short sentences that, like in the source text, serve as a device to represent a linear sequence of actions, an event being described by the narrator as it unfolds. The main differences at a syntactical level are the numerous inversions, which hinder the conversational descriptive flow of the narrator's voice. I shall present some examples below:

Example 4.39

<p>E d'altra specie un sorriso Gli strinse come se fossero Un morso di dita le labbra E in una smorfia la bocca Lei immersa fino alla vita Fra tirsidoro e felci Stava, gli splendidi arruffati Capelli. Le tese le braccia (ll. 11-18)</p>	<p>And another sort of smile Caught up like fingertips The corners of his lips And cracked his ragged muzzle. She was standing to the waist In golden rod and brake, Her shining hair displaced. (ll. 11-17)</p>
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Example 4.40

<p>Benché ogni parola parlata Tirata via dalle labbra Gli fosse e stremato ansimasse Come sull'osso una tigre. (ll. 26-29)</p>	<p>Though with every word he spoke His lips were sucked and blown And the effort made him choke Like a tiger at a bone. (ll. 26-29)</p>
--	--

Example 4.41

<p>Lei si chinó per schermirsi, Ma un piede muovere, no, Non osando per non destare Il demone assalitore (ll. 30-33)</p>	<p>She had to lean away. She dared not stir a foot, Lest movement should provoke The demon of pursuit (ll. 30-34)</p>
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Example 4.42

Ed ella azzardò di terrore Lo sguardo a spiare se lui Avesse sentito e volesse (ll. 37-39)	Made her steal a look of fear To see if he could hear And would pounce to end it all (ll. 37-39)
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In example 4.39 we observe the hyperbatons “d’altra specie un sorriso” (inversion of noun phrase and subject); “come se fossero / Un morso di dita le labbra” (inversion of verb-subject), “Fra tirsidoro e felci / Stava” (inversion of verb and prepositional phrase), and the anastrophe “gli splendidi arruffati / Capelli” (inversion of adjective and noun). Example 4.40 presents the hyperbaton “Tirata via dalle labbra / Gli fosse” (inversion of verb and prepositional phrase) and the anastrophe “stremato ansimasse (inversion of participle with adverbial function and verb). Example 4.41 presents the hyperbaton “Ma un piede muovere, no, / Non osando per non destare” (inversion of verb and object). In example 4.42 we have an inversion of noun / noun phrase “di terrore / Lo sguardo.” The examples show how the conversational ease of the narrator’s voice in the target text is more fragmented, farther away from the communicative immediacy than the source voice, and less homogeneous. However, I have observed that, despite the conversational ease characterizing all of Frost’s poems, fragmentation, sharpness, and a tighter rhythm are also distinguishing features of mimesis of orality in ‘The Subverted Flower,’ as a consequence of the syntactical structure of the sentences and their metric and rhyme pattern. These features contribute to the impression of abruptness with which the story is presented, *in medias res*, while the vividness of the images heightens the immobility of the young woman, paralyzed by fear in the middle of high brakes and goldenrods.¹⁸⁵ In the target text, the

¹⁸⁵ The vividness of the images in the poem is also conveyed by the narrator’s focalization on specific details in the first part of the poem: the man’s smile, the flowers surrounding the young woman, her displaced hair, the focus on her hair and neck (clear hints to body parts provoking sexual arousal), the movement of the man’s arm, etc. The ensuing picture reminds me of Andrew Wyeth’s painting *Cristina’s World* (1948), in which elements like the strand on hair of the woman sitting on the ground in the field, the blades of grass, and the distant house are all rendered with great realism and permeated by a sense of foreboding. The association is not random, since Frost and Wyeth were friends. The painter knew

syntactical inversions accentuate the contrast with the conversational register of the narrator's words, evoking a roughness in the flow of the voice matching the eerie roughness of the theme.

The four translations considered ('Provvedi, provvedi', 'L'orsa', 'L'investimento', and 'Il fiore sconvolto') point to a gradation of the mimetic effects, ranging from mimetic impressions that bring the language closer to the pole of communicative immediacy (with colloquial and ironic overtones, as in 'L'orsa'), to more neutral ones (as in 'Il fiore sconvolto'). This gradation is also detectable in the source text, but here becomes more visible.

4.3.4 Group 2a. A voice in first person

Like in the previous group, target poems belonging to this group (listed in table 4.9 below) present occurrences of features of orality similar to the corresponding source texts.

TABLE 4.9 Group 2a. A voice in first person

1. 'Paura della tormenta'
2. 'Negletti'
3. 'L'osservatorio'
4. 'Mietitura'
5. 'Riluttanza'
6. 'Dopo la raccolta delle mele'
7. 'La strada non presa'
8. 'Alberi di Natale'
9. 'Rio Hyla'
10. 'Chiusi fuori'
11. 'La voce degli alberi'
12. 'Fuoco e ghiaccio'
13. 'In un cimitero in disuso'
14. 'Il fuggitivo'
15. 'Fermandosi nel bosco in una sera di neve'
16. 'L'assalto'
17. 'Stringendosi alla terra'
18. 'Di un albero caduto attraverso la strada'

Frost's poems well, was fascinated by the realism of the images represented in them, and found inspiration in Frost's poetry for his paintings.

19. 'Un uccelletto in minore'
20. 'Conoscenza della notte'
21. 'Polvere negli occhi'
22. 'Le braccia cariche'
23. 'Quel che dissero i cinquant'anni'
24. 'Quando il cuore comincia ad offuscare la mente'
25. 'Luoghi deserti'
26. 'Compasso della luna'
27. 'Disegno'
28. 'Il dono totale'
29. 'È quasi l'anno duemila'

As observed during the analysis of the source text, we detect here a more frequent use of pragmatic mimetic devices than in the previous group. This higher frequency derives from dramatic situations introduced by the reference to the first person deictic indirectly addressing the readers. In the group we observe a variety of mimetic features that create different impressions of oral language in different communicative situations. As in the previous group, and as in the source text in general, mimesis of orality can be described here by reverting to the notion of gradation and variation of the spoken impression evoked in the text. The mechanisms generating these effects do not change in the target text. What interests me here, however, is to consider them from a comparative perspective in order to see how the different combination of mimetic and non-mimetic effects in the translated poems of this group produces an increase or a decrease in the impression of orality in the text.

A poem in the target group 2a in which the impression of orality decreases is 'La strada non presa' ('The Road not Taken'). Commenting on the source text, John H. Timmerman (2001: 305) observes that the poem, probably included in Frost's letter to his poet friend Edward Thomas, satirizes Thomas's indecisiveness and for this reason it is characterized by a "tone of jesting but friendly conversation."¹⁸⁶ The conversational tone that many critics have detected in the poem is due to neutral lexical choices and to a combination of pragmatic devices that play an equally important

¹⁸⁶ See also Thompson and Winnick (1981: 234-235).

mimetic function in the target text, as can be seen in the examples below:

Example 4.43

A. Poi presi l'altra, che era buona egualmente (l. 6)	A. Then took the other, as just as fair (l. 6)
B. Benché, in fondo , il passar della gente (l. 9)	B. Though as for that , the passing there (l. 9);
C. Oh , quell'altra lascio a un altro giorno! (l. 13)	C. Oh , I kept the first for another day! (l. 13)
D. Pure, sapendo bene che strada porta a strada (l. 14).	D. Yet knowing how way leads on to way (l. 14)
E. Questa storia racconterò con un sospiro Chissá dove fra molto molto tempo: (ll. 16-17)	E. I shall be telling this with a sigh Somewhere ages and ages hence: (ll. 16-17)
F. Divergevano due strade in un bosco, ed io... Io presi la meno battuta (ll. 18-19)	F. Two roads diverged in a wood, and I- I took the one less travelled by (ll. 18-19)
G. E di qui tutta la differenza è venuta (l. 20)	G. And that has made all the difference (l. 20)

Example 4.43A presents an instance of marker of discourse organization *poi* corresponding to the source text's *then*. In 4.43B the oral connotation, which in the source text is suggested by the deictics *that* and *there*, is conveyed in the Italian translation by the modal marker *in fondo* [after all], that suggests the narrator's point of view. Further mimetic devices are the interjection *Oh* in example 4.43C, the fixed expression (*strada porta a strada*) in 4.43D, colloquial expressions (*chissá dove*) and the epizeuxis with emphatic functions ("molto molto tempo," l. 17) in 4.43E, a hesitation phenomenon stressed by a word repetition ("ed io... / io presi," ll. 18-19) in 4.43F, and the spatial deictic (*qui*) in 4.43G. All

these examples correspond approximately to similar instances of mimetic devices in the source text and evoke similar oral effects. However, in the target text, it is also possible to detect a clash between elements that are more typical of situations of communicative immediacy and structures with literary connotations characterizing communicative distance, such as gerundial constructions and certain kinds of hyperbatons that cannot be associated to any mechanism of oral foregrounding. As an example, I have emphasized the inversions of verb-subject, verb-adverb, gerund-main clause, found in the first stanza:

Example 4.44

<p>Divergevano due strade in un bosco Ingiallito, e spiacente di non poterle fare Entrambe essendo un solo, a lungo mi fermai Una di esse finché potevo scrutando Là dove in mezzo agli arbusti svoltava. (ll. 1-5)</p>	<p>Two roads diverged in a yellow wood, And sorry I could not travel both And be one traveler, long I stood And looked down one as far as I could To where it bent in the undergrowth; (ll. 1-5)</p>
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Other inversions can be found in line 8 (“Perché era erbosa e **poco segnata sembrava**” –“Because it was grassy and wanted wear”) and in line 18 (“**Divergevano due strade** in un bosco, ed io...”-“Two roads diverged in a wood, and I—”). The number of syntactical inversions is high. This textual feature of the translation contradicts the colloquial register and shifts the text away from the jesting conversational tone of the source text.

A poem in the target group 2a in which the impression of orality seems to approach the mimetic effects achieved in the source text is ‘Luoghi deserti’ (‘Desert Places’). I have chosen this example, despite the fact that other poems of the group could show my point as effectively, because of the complex web of mimetic and non-mimetic devices that compose the source text and which should be taken into account in order to appreciate the overall rhythm of the composition and the spoken quality of this rhythm. ‘Luoghi deserti’ is the translation of a well-known poem by Frost. The source text

has been the object of many critical studies and has drawn the attention of scholars for its rhythmic and musical composition. Brower (1963: 108-109), for example, stresses the contrast between “the urgency of the rhythm” and “the hypnotic resonance of o-sounds and the images of whiteness merging into darkness.” Heaney (1997: 66-69) also focuses on the insistence of the sound and on the rhythmic movement of the stanzas linked to the emotional development of the speaker. Referring to the first stanza, for example, the Irish poet and scholar observes that “the meter is full of the hurry and slant of driven snow, its unstoppable, anxiety-inducing forward rush, all that whispering turmoil of a blizzard” (Heaney 1997: 67). In connection to these features, scholars such as Brower (1963), Poirier (1977), and Heaney (1997), among others, have also stressed the vernacular, or speech-like quality of the language employed in the composition. About the first two lines of the poem (“Snow falling and night falling fast, oh, fast / in a field I looked into going past”) Heaney says: “The curves and grains of the first two lines of ‘Desert Places’ are correspondingly native to living speech, without any tonal falsity. Who really notices that the letter *f* alliterates five times within thirteen syllables?” (Heaney 1997: 67). Poirier, when describing the last stanza, refers to its register as “slangy school-yard tone” (Poirier 1977: 146), and adds:

it is typical of Frost that he would bring, without any signaling, a fashionable-sounding phraseology of self-diminishment into combination with that kind of vernacular voice which draws its strength from a sense of rootedness, no matter how unfertile the soil. (Poirier 1977: 146)

Referring to line 13 (“they cannot scare me with their empty spaces”), Brower compares the words to “nasal scorn, (nearly a snort)” (1963: 109). The comments do not give, in my opinion, a clear idea of what kind of spoken tone of voice is being recreated in the lines. However, they are interesting for the stress they put on the importance of both mimetic and less strictly mimetic rhetorical effects for the evocation of a certain kind of plain orality in the text, the contemplative mode of which invites intimacy and heightens the impression of a metaphorical communicative proximity of readers to the narrator.

Giudici's translation presents a similar combination of mimetic and non-mimetic features. In the target text, while the line length is not regular, ranging from eleven to fifteen syllables, we still detect a rhyming pattern which, though varying from stanza to stanza, is nevertheless definitely perceivable (abbc deef gfif jklj). Giudici also makes use of alliteration, mirroring the source text pattern (as in line 1: "**fitte** cadere **notte** e **neve**, oh, **fitte**"). Figures of speech of iteration are also used in a similar way (like the *derivatio* in lines 9-10: "E, **solitaria** com'è, la **solitudine** / ancor piú **solitaria**, anzi che meno sarà"). The colloquial overtone is evoked by the use of a plain lexis, appositive sentences ("– Un candor piú vacuo di neve ottenebrata / **Senza espressione, senza nulla da esprimere,**" ll. 11-12) and simple syntactical structures. We do find an example of hyperbaton (in lines 1-2 "Fitte cadere notte e neve, oh fitte / **in un campo ho guardato** passando oltre"), corresponding however to one of the few inversions in Frost's poems which do not characterize the language as oral, but rather literary ("Snow falling and night falling fast, oh, fast / **In a field I looked into** going past," ll. 1-2). The combination of rhetorical (rhyme, alliteration, etc.) and mimetic features, together with the visual and psychological frames evoked by the words describing the snowy, deserted landscapes, contribute to the evocation of a contemplative though plain tone of voice.

Cases of increase in the oral impression of the language are less frequent in the target group 2a. Occasionally, it is possible to detect the use of expressions which in the target language have more accentuated oral connotations than the source language phrases they translate. However, they are isolated examples that do not lead to an overall change of the language of the translation, and do not bring it closer to the pole of communicative immediacy. The only example in which this phenomenon seems to be detectable more objectively is in the poem 'Il fuggitivo' ('The Runaway'). The narrating voice in the source text is in first person plural. Personal deixis here does not have the function of including readership in the experience which is being described, but rather points to a narrator remembering an experience shared with one or more persons (though usually the poem is interpreted as the narration of an experience that has happened to a couple). The source poem is rich in mimetic devices, and the situation is also dramatically reported, partly in direct speech. The syntax is simple, and the sequence of

coordinating connectors suggests the development of an action as it is being described, that is, the colt approaching, then running away and coming back again (“and snorted at us. And then he had to bolt / [...] / And we saw him, or thought we saw him, dim and gray,” ll. 5 and 7; “And now he comes again with clatter of stone / And mounts the wall again with whited eyes / And all his tail that isn’t hair up straight,” ll. 15-17). The direct speech is characterized by short sentences. Only the last three lines are syntactically more complex, functioning as a closure of the poem and charged with symbolic meanings. Phonic rhetorical devices like rhyme are also present, but they do not affect the spoken quality of the language of the poems because they have an irregular pattern (ababcdefddefgghihijj). The metric structure is similarly irregular. In the target text (‘Il fuggitivo’), rhyme is not employed, and the line length of the poem is irregular. We can hypothesize that these two factors facilitate the recreation of an impression of common spoken language, as they reduce the number of formal constraints imposed on the translation. We also observe an increase in the use of diminutives with affective and colloquial connotations (“cavallino,” “sciocchino,” “poverino”). Other devices for the evocation of orality, like modal mechanisms (dubitative verbs or structures: “o cosi credemmo,” l. 7; “Secondo me,” l. 9; “Quasi penso che,” l. 12) are used in a similar way as in the source text. Finally, the last three lines of the poem take on stronger oral connotations than in the source text due to a *constructio ad sensum* not present in the source text (“**Chiunque** lo lasci fuori cosi tardi / [...] / **bisognerebbe** dirgli di venire a riprenderselo,” l. 19-21).¹⁸⁷ The lines also present a left dislocation of the indirect object (“chiunque” [whoever]), generally used in colloquial language. The overall impression is of a language closer to communicative immediacy, with traits of spontaneity and lack of planning typical of a conversation among peers. The oral impression is heightened by the irregular rhythm of the text, which is not constrained in strict metric or rhyme patterns and seems to shift thus towards the more irregular rhythms of prose.

In this subsection I have focused on the way mimesis of orality is achieved in the Italian translations by commenting on examples taken from three poems (‘La strada non presa,’ ‘Luoghi deserti,’ and ‘Il fuggitivo’). The translations are instances, respectively, of a

¹⁸⁷ According to standard written grammar it should read “**a chiunque.**”

decreasing, similar, and increasing degree of the speech-like quality of the language employed. Once again, syntactical inversions with literary flavor seem to be the main linguistic cause of changes in the mimetic perception of the target text, in comparison to the source text. On the other hand, we have also seen how semantic features of orality play an essential role in the creation of spoken effects in the translations.

4.3.5 Group 2b. Narrator and interlocutor

Similar observations on the decreasing, increasing, and equal evocation of orality produced in the target text can be applied to the poems belonging to the target group 2b (see table 4.10 below).

TABLE 4.10 Group 2b. Narrator and interlocutor

1. 'Il pascolo'
2. 'Il telefono'
3. 'Nel deporsi del seme'
4. 'Incontrarsi e passar oltre'
5. 'Guardando per caso alle costellazioni'
6. 'Un po' scontroso'
7. 'A una falena vista d'inverno'
8. 'Direttiva'
9. 'Il timore di Dio'
10. 'La felicità ripaga in profondità quel che le manca in lunghezza'
11. 'Per loro, non Guerre Sante'

As the group is numerically inferior to the previous one, it is more difficult to establish partial translation regularities, even though a recreation of orality similar to that in the source text is detected, as a consequence of analogous mimetic devices. We can expect that mimetic effects are achieved more successfully in translation whenever formal constraints such as rhyme or a certain rhythmic pattern are not given priority in the translation (as in the poem 'Un po' scontroso'-'Not Quite Social'). An example of this kind of translation is the poem 'A una falena vista d'inverno' ('To a Moth Seen in Winter'). The source text can be considered an imperfect dramatic monologue. Its dramatic structure represents an ideal setting in which a wide range of pragmatic and a semantic devices

can unfold their mimetic functions and attain a language with a clear spoken quality. The use of blank verse, close to the rhythms of spoken English, gives further support to the mimetic elements of the composition. At a pragmatic level we observe an instance of discourse organization introduced by a spatial deictic (“**Here’s first** a gloveless hand warm from my pocket,” l. 1), a phatic marker (“And now **pray** tell what lured you with false hope,” l. 7, which is part of a rhetorical question with equally phatic function), tags with emphatic functions, like the connector *but* (“**But** stay and hear me out,” l. 10; “**But** go,” l. 17), and an occurrence of modal markers (“I **surely** think,” l. 10). The poem also presents syntactical devices like elliptic utterances (“Bright-black-eyed silvery creature, brushed with brown, / The wings not folded in repose, but spread,” ll. 3-4). Finally, at a semantic level, we find examples of low lexical variation or colloquial expressions (like the colloquial presentative “**Here’s first** a gloveless hand,” l. 1; the word iteration in “A perch and resting place ’twixt **wood and wood**,” l. 2; the omnibus word *something* in “And what I pity in you is **something** human,” l. 14; the emphatic anaphoric repetition of the verb *go* in “But **go**. You are right. My pity cannot help. / **Go** till you wet your pinions and are quenched,” ll. 17-18) idiomatic expressions (as in line 11: “**You make a labor of** flight for one so airy,”), and deictic elements.

Giudici’s translation presents a similar set of mimetic devices. We detect phatic markers (“E **dimmi** ora, **ti prego**,” l. 7), emphatic use of conjunctions (“**Ma** fèrmati, stammi a sentire,” l. 10; “**Ma**, va’, ora. Hai ragione. La mia pietà non serve,” l. 17), modal markers (“Io credo **sicuro**,” l. 10), lexical iterations (“che tu così lieve fai **troppa** fatica a volare, / **troppo** spendi di te per sostenerti,” ll. 11-12; “Ma, **va’**, ora. Hai ragione. La mia pietà non serve. / **Va’** finché madide e morte siano le tue ali,” ll. 17-18), omnibus words (“Ed è **qualcosa** di umano che in te mi desta pietà,” l. 14) , deictic elements (“**Eccoti** calda una mano appena tolta di tasca,” l. 1; “E dimmi **ora**, ti prego,” l. 7; “Ma, va’, **ora**. Hai ragione. La mia pietà non serve,” l. 17). The examples above stress how the translation presents a great number of devices at a semantic and pragmatic level that add a conversational quality to the voice of the first person speaker of the poem. At the same time, the language of the target text has a poetic overtone, conveyed especially by the sequence of imperatives and rhetorical questions with phatic and vocative function and by words belonging to a register that evokes

poetic contexts (as in the already quoted lines “Ma, va’, ora. Hai ragione. La mia pietà non serve. / Vai finché **madide e morte** non siano le tue ali,” ll. 17-18, in which the poetic effect is heightened by the alliteration of the sound /m/). Finally, we also find elliptical sentences with poetic overtones (“tu dal nero occhio vivido, argenteo-bruna creatura / non raccolte le ali in riposo, ma aperte,” ll. 3-4). The lyrical connotations of these elements heighten the intimate atmosphere described in the poem, in which the words addressed to the moth by the speaker are, as a matter of fact, a quiet interior monologue, a conversation with the speaker’s self.

Instances of translations in which the mimetic effects seem to decrease, or lose homogeneity, occur sporadically in the group. In the poem ‘Il telefono’ (‘The Telephone’) the mimetic effect decreases due to the use of inversions with literary connotations, as shown in the example below:

Example 4.45

From ‘Il telefono’	From ‘The Telephone’
Trovato il fiore, un’ ape ho allontanata, La testa ho reclinata, E sorreggendo lo stelo (ll. 11-13)	Having found the flower and driven a bee away, I leaned my head And holding by the stalk (ll. 11-12)
Diceva ‘vieni’... e chinandomi udivo. (l. 17)	<i>Someone</i> said ‘Come’—I heard it as I bowed. (l. 17)

The literary effect is also heightened by the use of participle or gerundial constructions (“**trovato** il fiore,” l. 11; “**e sorreggendo** lo stelo,” l. 13), which, because of their planned nature, characterize discursive strategies of communicative distance.

4.3.6 Group 3. Characters in conversation

In chapter 3 I carried out an analysis of the poem ‘The Death of the Hired Man,’ which I have included in source group 3. The study highlighted features of orality in the Italian translation leading to hypotheses that, to a certain extent, can now be verified by checking the linguistic and translational phenomena observed there against

the results of the analysis of all the poems of both source and target group 3. Like in source group 3, mimesis of orality is achieved in the translations (see table 4.11, below) through a varied use of features of orality belonging to all universal levels of the diasystem.

TABLE 4.11 Group 3. Characters in conversation

1. 'La riparazione del muro'
2. 'La morte del bracciante'
3. 'Cento colletti'
4. 'Sepoltura in famiglia'
5. 'Il villino nero'
6. 'Una serva di servi'
7. 'La paura'
8. 'Alberi di Natale'
9. 'La strega di Coös'
10. 'Due guardano due'
11. 'Non da tenere'

There is an increase in the use of pragmatic features of orality in comparison with its frequency in the previous target groups. The phenomenon is a consequence of the dramatic structure of the poems and their fictional settings. Since the poems of this group present two different sets of voices (the voice of the narrator and those of the characters), I focus on the ways mimesis of orality is achieved in both cases, comparing them with the source text. In chapter 3 I commented on how the voice of the narrator of 'The Death of the Hired Man' and those of the two characters (Mary and Warren) shared features of orality that made it possible to infer their participation in the same emotional situation while preserving their distinctive individual tones. In the poems of source group 3, where both narrator and characters are present, the impression of orality that their voices evoke suggests similar relationships. While the voices of the characters are always characterized as oral and colloquial, pointing to different degrees of familiarity between them, the oral features of the narrator's voice may indicate either his or her emotional involvement with the facts that are being narrated or, at the opposite end, a more detached attitude. Nevertheless, the narrator's voice is still grounded in the area of communicative immediacy. In the poems of target group 3, we can note a change of

balance between these two sets of voices, that lead to their distancing. In the translations, in fact, the narrator's voice is more openly literary (and as a consequence, is perceived as distant), while the characters' voices are connoted as more oral. The linguistic elements that create this impression of divergence in the mimetic effects are mainly syntactical inversions and participial constructions. In addition to this, the lexical choice characterizing the narrator's voice becomes more neutral and less colloquial than the characters,' and pragmatic elements become less frequent. The distance between the mimetic effects characterizing the voices of the characters and the literary tone of the narrator's voice becomes evident in poems like 'Cento colletti' ('A Hundred Collars'). The source text, extracts of which have been quoted on several occasions in this chapter due to its dramatic structure and the richness of mimetic features employed, presents easily distinguishable voices. The register adopted by the narrator's voice is initially relatively formal. In the introductory lines of the poem, the sentence "Lancaster bore him" (l. 1) evokes literary formulations used to describe the biographies of great men.¹⁸⁸ The effect, as a consequence, is parodic, with humorous and ironic overtones, heightened by the words immediately following: "such a little town, / such a great man" (ll. 1-2). Later in the poem we perceive a shift in the point of view, which moves from the external narrator's perspective to that of the teacher, Doctor Magoon, especially in the lines describing the encounter between the scholar and the collector. In the first lines (ll. 1-19), however, the narrator's language is detached, gently mocking the figure of the teacher, as is suggested by the description of the political bias of the character: "Though a great scholar, he's a democrat, / If not at heart, at least on principle" (ll. 12-13). The narrator's voice also serves to create suspense, especially through brief interruptions of the dialogue, delaying the action with descriptive elements and further defining the atmosphere that is being evoked (e.g. "Woodsville's a place of shrieks and wandering lamps / And cars that shock and rattle—and *one* hotel," ll. 21-22). In opposition to this, the characters' voices (Doctor Magoon, Lafayette, a collector, and a night clerk of the hotel) are vividly characterized by a wide array of pragmatic, syntactical, semantic, phonic, and graphic mimetic devices. The

¹⁸⁸ This phrase also recalls the first sentence of Virgil's famous epitaph: "Mantua me genuit" [Mantua bore me].

result is a clearly colloquial language with standard spoken features. Furthermore, the contrast between the situational context (a conversation between strangers) and the verbalization strategies employed especially by the collector and the clerk convey the impression that this language is diastratically connoted, despite the standard spoken character of its linguistic features. On the one hand, in fact, the text presents a conversation between strangers, one of whom, being a scholar, occupies a higher rank on the social ladder than the collector or the clerk. This social difference invites readers to expect a language of conversation closer to communicative distance. This expectation clashes with the colloquial register of the collector's language, which suggests a situation of communicative immediacy not justified by the social status and degree of personal acquaintance of the characters. As a consequence, the collector's language is perceived as diastratically lower, even though it does not present features of any specific sociolect.

In the target text we find a similar richness of mimetic devices characterizing both the narrator's and the characters' voices. In the introductory segment the narrator's intervention preserves a plain discursive language similar to that found in the source text. The humorous and ironic effects of the source text are equally evoked in the first line by the expression "Lancaster gli diede i natali," belonging to a higher register, and, later on, by references to the social status and the political affiliation of Doctor Magoon. However, an analysis of the remaining segments of the narrator's discourse, which are much shorter than the initial one, reveals numerous hyperbatons of varying degrees of intensity and effect. The hyperbaton is one of those devices that can be found equally in a literary discourse and in a mimetic discourse, so it is important to identify and describe the effect it produces in the text in order to understand whether or not it has a mimetic function. In Giudici's translation most of the syntactical inversions have a literary flavor, marking the voice of the narrator as altogether different from those of the other characters. I shall present some of the occurrences detected, mostly referred to a subject-verb inversion:

Example 4.46

<p>A. Strinse gli occhi il portiere, con aria di sfida (l. 28)</p>	<p>A. The night clerk blinked his eyes and dared him on. (l. 28)</p>
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B. Su tre rampe di scale lo guidò il portiere di notte (l. 33)	B. The night clerk led him up three flights of stairs (l. 33)
C. all'ultima di queste bussó, entrando (l. 35)	C. At the last one of which he knocked and entered (l. 35)
D. Ai piedi di una lettiera batté il portiere di notte (l. 39)	D. The night clerk clapped a bedstead on the foot (l. 39)
E. Guardó Lafe, il dottore, si guardó intorno (l. 49)	E. The Doctor looked at Lafe and looked away (l. 49)
F. Con i bottoni d'una camicia nuova alle prese (l. 52)	F. Fumbling the buttons in a well-starched shirt (l. 52)
G. Convulsamente il dottore deglutí (l. 62)	G. The doctor caught his throat convulsively (l. 62)
H. Subito sussultando sottomesso il dottore Contro un cuscino s'abbandonò senza scampo (ll. 73-74)	H. The doctor made a subdued dash for it, And propped himself at bay against a pillow (73-74)
I. Si lasciò andare un po' sul guanciaie il Dottore (l. 180)	I. The Doctor slid a little down the pillow (l. 179)

While the inversions in examples 4.46B-E may still be interpreted as ways of foregrounding the term that appears in the first position as is often done during oral communication, the remaining examples convey the impression of a language that is not usually found in communicative immediacy, but evokes a more literary language and context. On other occasions, like in example 4.46F, the inversion is so strong, though not a-grammatical in Italian, that it can almost be associated to poetic license. The different connotations of the inversions listed above are more evident if compared to the inversion identified in the discourse of the collector, which follows the conventions of oral conversation and foregrounding of a topic:

Example 4.47

<p>«Lafe è il suo nome mi sembra?» «Si, <i>Layfayette</i>. A volo l’ha capito. E il suo?» (ll. 41-42)</p>	<p>«Lafe was the name, I think?» «Yes, <i>Layfayette</i>. You got it the first time. And yours?» (ll. 41-42)</p>
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These two lines also give some clues regarding the mimetic features employed to add realism to the characters’ language. We detect the use of a verb expressing doubt, that is, the speaker’s point of view and inner state (“mi sembra” [it seems to me]), short elliptical questions (“E il suo?” [“And yours?”] in the Italian polite form of address), and italics with emphatic effect. In addition to this, we also find, among others, numerous examples of polyfunctional textual-pragmatic markers (phatic, hesitant, discourse organization, and modal functions) summarized in the example below:

Example 4.48

<p>A. Ehi, c’è qualcosa che al momento non so (l. 45)</p>	<p>A. Hold on, there’s something I don’t think of now (l. 45)</p>
<p>B. Non mi tocchi, la prego, le dico, non mi tocchi” (l. 77)</p>	<p>B. Don’t touch me please—I say, don’t touch me, please. (l. 77)</p>
<p>C. Avanti, carte in tavola, Provi la buonafede: (l. 85-86)</p>	<p>C. Le’s have a show down as an evidence Of good faith (ll. 85-86)</p>
<p>D. Ma prima—aspetti—cosa volevo chiederle?” (l. 162)</p>	<p>D. But first—let’s see—what was I going to ask you (l. 161)</p>
<p>E. Davvero, amico, non posso permettere. Forse... (l. 165)</p>	<p>E. Really, friend, I can’t let you. You—may need them. (l. 165)</p>
<p>F. Ma davvero, mi creda...ne ho gia tanti (l. 168)</p>	<p>F. But really I—I have so many collars. (l. 167)</p>

Further examples of mimetic devices are hesitation phenomena (“a meno che...,” l. 20; “Ah quei colletti...,” l. 162), interjections (“**Beh**, un letto mi ci vuole,” l. 32; “**Ah**, lo conosco,” l. 26; “**Ah** quei colletti...,” etc.), low lexical variation (“a meno che non voglia / dormire in stanza con un **altro**,” ll. 23-24; “Lafe, qui un **tale** vuol fare a metà della stanza,” l. 36), fixed expressions (“**mi sentivo un po giù**,” l. 54; “**mi da ai nervi**” l. 72), plain colloquial language (“l’unico **guaio**,” l. 107; “Anche se in quella casa io **non ho niente da fare**,” l. 143), and exophoric deixis (“Busserò **in questo modo** e farò capolino alla porta,” l. 174). As a result of this combination of devices, and despite the use of the third person singular as a form of polite address among strangers, the characters’ language takes on colloquial and informal overtones that are often perceived as even closer to communicative immediacy than the colloquial nuances of the characters’ voices in the source text.

As in ‘La morte di un bracciante’ (‘The Death of the Hired Man’), the shift of the narrator’s language toward the pole of communicative distance changes both the inner balance among the different voices of the poem and the perception of the narrator’s point of view. However, an analysis of the remaining translations of target group 3 shows that the mimetic effects produced to characterize the narrator’s and the characters’ language are not always divergent. In the poem ‘La paura’ (‘The fear’), we still detect inversions characterizing the narrator’s voice, creating as a consequence a slight difference in register between the language of the narrator and that of the characters. However, in the rest of the poems of the target group a standard colloquial overtone closer to the pole of communicative immediacy dominates in both narrator and characters, as can be seen in poems like ‘La strega di Coös’ (‘The Witch of Coös’), ‘La riparazione del muro’ (‘Mending Wall’), and ‘Due guardano due’ (‘Two Look at Two’). On the whole, the combined and frequent use of almost the entire array of features of orality described in Koch and Osterreicher’s framework conveys to target text readers the impression of an identifiable spoken language, which acquires on some occasions informal overtones not present in the source text. This impression is a consequence of the use of words or fixed expressions which in Italian suggest communicative situations with a higher degree of informality or familiarity among the speaker.

4.4 Conclusions on the linguistic analysis of the target text

In order to draw our first tentative conclusions based on the linguistic analysis of the target text, I turn back to the set of initial questions motivating the study. The results of the linguistic analysis may support my answers to the set of *what*-questions (what are the changes in mimesis of orality between source and target text? What the similarities? What are the consequences of these phenomena on the text? What is the contribution to the evocation of orality of other rhetorical features? etc.), but cannot help me with the *why*-questions (why are there these changes?), which call for a wider contextualization of the translations, presented in section 5.5, where the focus shifts to the processes and causes of translation.

The comparison between the frequency of use of mimetic features in source and target texts has shown that Giudici's translations present mimetic features similar to those in Frost's poems. We have seen, however, an increase in the use of devices such as the lack of syntactical agreement and diminutives. As for the main differences, we have observed a more frequent use of participial constructions and syntactical inversions, which do not always carry out a mimetic foregrounding function but often introduce a more literary register.

The longitudinal perspective made it possible to understand how the similarities, increases, and decreases in the frequency of mimetic features affect the perception that target text readers may have of mimesis of orality. It also helped verify whether the grouping proposed for the poems of the source text and the labels given to the mimesis of orality evoked in each group or sub-group could still be applied to the target text. Like in the source text, in the target text the notion of gradation allows for a subtler description of mimesis of orality. In fact, a gradation in the frequency and intensity of the mimetic effects employed has been observed in all three groups of translations. It is true that mimesis of orality in the source text also assumes different shades within poems of the same group. However, in the target text, the variation is higher, and the features are not always homogeneously employed. I have argued, in fact, that the target mimesis of orality moves along a wider segment of the continuum between the poles of communicative immediacy and communicative distance than does the source mimesis. Moreover,

the presence of literary inversions, or inversions producing unfamiliar effects, and past participial constructions juxtaposed with highly mimetic features may puzzle readers, making them wonder what kind of orality is being reproduced in the text. As a consequence of this phenomenon, I observed that the label given to the mimetic impression produced in group 1 of the source text (modern storyteller orality), though still valid for the target group, appears at times stretched. The presence of literarily connoted features reduces the “modernity” of the narrator’s voice (or at least introduces different kinds of disruptive modern attitudes towards the language) while still preserving its oratorical features. In groups 2 and 3, a similarly heterogeneous use of these devices leads occasionally to a change in the point of view and the way the relationship between narrator and characters (and their emotional involvement) may be perceived by readers.

A second reflection is prompted by the results of the contrastive analysis. As we have seen, Frost does not often employ mimetic features like *anacolutha*, *constructio ad sensum*, or phonic devices that are perceived as more unusual in the written medium. Giudici follows a similar pattern in his translations, even though he occasionally changes it, for example through more frequent use of lack of agreement, especially in the form of the polyvalent connector *che*.

As is clear by now, both translating and the creation of a certain mimesis of orality in a written text are metonymic operations, since they are both based on a selection of elements, made by translators and authors respectively, and are both the consequence of a hermeneutic process. Moreover, we have observed that features of orality employed in an oral context may not have the same mimetic function as in a written context. I am referring to the phenomenon of diastatic shift, according to which elements of standard orality once imported into a written text are perceived by readers as generating a diastatically lower language than their oral counterparts. This is a consequence of the symbolic meaning generally attributed to certain written conventions. For example, the suppression of vowels within a word, a very recurrent phenomenon in oral production at all social levels, becomes in a text the symbol of a certain kind of speaker, or of certain cognitive attitudes of the speaker. These conventions are culturally bound, which helps us

understand why Giudici occasionally omits a specific mimetic device detected in the source text, using a different one or compensating it by introducing the same device in a different position of the text. The phenomena of increased, decreased, and similar use of mimetic devices should not be considered in mere quantitative terms, as I have done during the phase of the analysis in which I have compared the frequency of mimetic features in source and target texts. They should also be treated in terms of the mimetic impact that these devices, inasmuch as they are conventions, have on the language of the text. This new perspective contributes to describing better why mimetic devices which in Frost evoke a standard colloquial language may, in the target text, heighten the spoken quality of the language or introduce informal nuances in it. This reflection links the linguistic analysis to the study of the wider context of the translation.

Finally, the analysis has also prompted a general reflection on mimesis of orality in connection with the polyfunctional nature of its features and the consequences that it may have in translation. We have observed, in fact, that the balance between different mimetic functions carried out by a single feature of orality may change in translation. Priority may be given, for example, to a function related to specific aspects of one linguistic field (for example, the pragmatic field) over those pertaining to another. The polyfunctionality of most of the features of orality problematizes the interpretation of the role they play in the evocation of a specific form of orality. On the other hand, their versatility may be a valuable instrument for translators, allowing them to achieve a multiplicity of effects, some of which may be used with compensatory function.

Since the focus of the analysis I have carried out in the previous sections is on mimesis of orality, I have intentionally disregarded the relationship that mimetic features may have with other elements of the poem, at any level, though I have occasionally made reference to the potential impact that the presence or absence of formal constraints like rhyme, meter, or alliteration may have on the recreation of spoken language in the target text. This perspective

will be studied in more detail in the following section, in relation to the translator's decisions, priorities and restrictions.¹⁸⁹

4.5 The need for contextualization

A deeper understanding of the translational phenomena detected during the linguistic analysis calls for an investigation into the multiple causes of these phenomena and their interrelations. In chapter 1 I introduced the causal model which this part of the analysis draws from (Pym 1998; Chesterman 1998, 2000 and 2002; Brownlie 2003). The model includes the linguistic approach adopted so far, but shifts the focus of attention from the translational to the translatorial level, that is, from the text to the translator. The shift of focus makes it possible to address the set of *why*-questions raised in the analysis (which can be summarized in the question *why is the translator translating mimesis of orality in the way described during the textual analysis?*). I am aware that these questions can be answered from different perspectives and in different degrees of detail. The range of causal explanations is potentially unlimited. In my study, I focus mainly on those causes related to the habitus of the translator, (Bourdieu 1977 and 1996), that is, the internalization of the social fields of activity that refers to their ideology, culture, personal experience that have intervened in the translation. More in general I also focus on the broader socio-cultural context. Both notions are wide and multi-tiered, encompassing observations on Giudici's roles as a poet and as a translator, his professional experience, political creed, and religious convictions. All these features are of course interconnected but it is convenient to disentangle them momentarily to better outline the nodes which are relevant to the present research. In this study I shall focus especially on the relationship between Giudici's roles as a

¹⁸⁹ As for the meaning attributed to the terms *priority* and *restriction*, I follow Zabalbeascoa (2001; 2006). Both priorities and restrictions act as obstacles (or constraints) to the translation. However, restrictions are non-hierarchical whereas "constraints that *can* be ranked in order of importance are surely more clearly seen as priorities; they form a hierarchy of more important and less important factors, bringing out the idea of relative importance, of interdependence between factors. Priorities of a higher order are obstacles that are in the way of lower-ranking priorities, but not viceversa. So priorities act as restrictive forces, too. But they also provide directionality much more clearly than the notion of self-inflicted restrictions, or even norms." (Zabalbeascoa 2006: 99)

translator, as a poet, and as a recognized representative of the Italian literary scene of the second half of the twentieth century.

Giovanni Giudici (Porto Venere, Italy, 1924 – La Spezia, Italy, 2011) is a well-known Italian poet whose poetic career spans over the second half of the twentieth century and the first decade of the twenty-first century. His prolific poetic production has proceeded in parallel with his activity as a literary translator. Translating poetry was for Giudici a way of approaching foreign authors and achieving a more intimate knowledge of their work. Both activities were also accompanied by a constant meditation on the nature and dynamics of the languages of poetry and of translation, often presented in essays which, together with numerous other writings on a great variety of literary issues, are collected in four books: *La letteratura verso Hiroshima e altri scritti* (1976), *La dama non cercata* (1985), *Andare in Cina a piedi* (1992), and *Per forza e per amore* (1996). Finally, Giudici also worked actively as a journalist for various Italian periodicals and magazines, as well as editing books on a wide range of literary subjects.

4.5.1 Giovanni Giudici as a translator: an overview

Giudici's early interest in translation is described in both the introduction to his anthology of translated poems, *Addio, proibito piangere* (Giudici 1982: v-xv) and in his essay 'Da una officina di traduzioni,' first presented during a conference on poetry translation ('La traduzione del testo poetico') held in Bergamo in March 1988 and later on collected in the book *Per forza e per amore* (Giudici 1996: 20-33). The introduction to the anthology, significantly titled 'Per amore e su commissione' [For love and on commission], stresses the different occasions from which his poetical translations originate. The translator of poetry becomes in Giudici's imagery an explorer who embarks on a voyage motivated by his personal thirst for knowledge, his passion, and his ambition, a voyage that ultimately turns into a discovery of one's inner self:

L'ideale traduttore di poesia al quale penso [è] uno che traduce prima che per gli altri per se stesso, sulla spinta di un suo proprio affetto o diletto, di una sua ambizione o curiosità, fosse pure per frugare, attraverso la lingua di una persona amata, l'anima e il mistero della stessa. (Giudici 1982: 22)

[The ideal translator of poetry who comes to my mind is someone who translates more for himself than for others, propelled by a personal affection or pleasure, ambition or curiosity, even if only to delve, through the language of some beloved person, into the soul and its mystery.]

Not all of Giudici's translations, however, were produced as a reaction to his passion for the poet or his willingness to take on a challenge and to embark on the exercise that the task represents. Other translations, in fact, were a consequence of a translation commission (as was the translation of Frost's poems), which turned most of the time into a new passion.¹⁹⁰

An overview on Giudici's activity as a translator reveals at a first glance important aspects of his poetics of translation. For example, despite the fact that French was the first foreign language he had studied and the one that he practiced for longer, he never translated anything from French into Italian, with the exception of his first attempt as an amateur translator of Baudelaire's *Élévation* and *L'albatros*, carried out when he was about eighteen, and never published, and a short *scherzo* (a madrigalian song) by an anonymous author of the sixteenth century, published in the anthology *Lodi del corpo femminile* (1984). On several occasions Giudici himself explains his decision to avoid translating from languages closely related to Italian, like French or Spanish, by referring to the notion of *strong difference* or *distance* between translators, their language, and their culture and the translated authors, their language, and their culture. Giudici clarifies that his notion of distance, interpreted as a favorable condition for the

¹⁹⁰ “Così con Frost (e anche con Ransom e, piú recentemente, con Coleridge) la *commissione* finiva per trasformarsi ancora una volta in *passione*: il che non mi accade, e non per difetto del Poeta, con le traduzioni da Sylvia Plath [...] o perché disturbato dal clamore pubblicitario che del suo nome e del suo doloroso caso umano si è fatto o perché sento che quel lavoro non mi ha lasciato addosso alcun segno” (Giudici 1982: ix). [So, with Frost, (and also with Ransom, and, more recently, with Coleridge) the *commission* ended up turning once again into *passion*: which did not happen, and not through any fault of the Poet's, with my translations of Sylvia Plath [...] either because I was annoyed by the journalistic clamor stirred around her name and her painful personal case, or because I feel that that work has left no mark upon me.]

translation of poetry, does not imply a *radical* difference with the target language (as he considers to be, for example, the distance between alphabetic and logographic languages). It is rather a gap “che sia sufficientemente apprezzabile da invogliare allo sforzo di colmarlo e nel quale si colloca appunto lo *spazio* ideologico-motivazionale-operativo della traduzione” (Giudici 1996: 22) [that is significant enough to prompt the effort of filling it, and in which the ideologic-motivational-operative *space* of translation is situated]. While the notion of *gap* appears to my view questionable and rather slippery, it helps understand the logic behind the choice of authors whom the Italian poet decided to translate throughout his life, as well as his general idea of translation.

Giudici’s first significant translation is the one he made in 1947 of the first two sections of T.S. Eliot’s *Ash Wednesday*. With this translation, which remained unpublished, the poet tried his hand at translating from English, of which he had acquired a very basic knowledge while working as an auxiliary in the kitchens of the Royal Air Force in Rome, during the years 1944-45, and later as an editorial clerk in the Roman office of the United States Information Service.¹⁹¹ Giudici would continue to take on this challenge in the following years with translations from English of poems by John Donne, Emily Dickinson, Wallace Stevens, Robert Lowell, Hart Crane, Richard Wilbur, and Karl Shapiro among others. These translations from English are collected in two anthologies of translated poems: *Addio, proibito piangere* (1982) and *A una casa non sua* (1997). While the majority of the translations included in the two books are from English, the first collection also contains poems translated from Czech (Jiří Orten, František Halas and Jiří

¹⁹¹ Giudici writes: “Le mie nozioni di lingua inglese erano, lo ripeto, di una desolante povertà; non ero ancora passato attraverso i sei e più anni in cui avrei lavorato come traduttore (di prosa, ahimé, di propagandistica prosa!) in un ufficio americano dove l’inglese lo appresi, sì, abbastanza bene, ma un inglese, comunque, soltanto scritto e letto in silenzio...E invece sappiamo di quali sfumature foniche sia ricca quella lingua specialmente, trattandosi di poesia, in funzione della rima” (Giudici 1996: 23) [My knowledge of English was, I repeat it, desolatingly poor; I still had not gone through the six and more years working as a translator (unfortunately of prose, of propagandistic prose!) in an American office where I learned English, for sure, rather well, but still an English only written and read in silence... And we know, on the contrary, how rich in phonic nuances that language is, especially in relation to rhyme, since we are dealing with poetry.]

Kolář) and Russian (Pushkin). The second anthology includes a translation from Latin (Thomas Aquinas's *Pange lingua*), more translations from Czech (Vitezlav Nezval, František Halas, Jaroslav Seifart, and Vladimir Holan), from French (the above mentioned *scherzo*), and from Chinese (Po Chü-I and Mao Zedong).¹⁹² Giudici's initial contact with these poets was for the most part accidental. A significant example of this relative casualness is Giudici's approach to Ezra Pound's poetry, whom he had never read until 1955. The occasion was offered by the publication in Italy of Pound's latest *Cantos*, and by the turmoil raised in the intellectual world by the American poet's reclusion in the psychiatric hospital of St. Elizabeth, in Washington, and his release in 1957. In 1958 Giudici started working on a translation of Pound's *Hugh Selwyn Mauberely*, which was published in 1959. The translation is important since in it we are able to outline for the first time a convergence between Giudici's own poetics and the poetics of the translated text. As Satta Centannin observes (1996: 104), the innovative potential of the source text, with the presence of different languages and intertextual references, the criticism of a decaying culture, and the formal tension it establishes between tradition and innovation, are transmitted to Giudici's translation. As the Italian critic remarks: "l'asperità del testo diventa occasione di riflessione sulle proprie scelte espressive" (1996: 104) [The roughness of the text becomes an occasion for a reflection on his own expressive choices]. Furthermore, the translation of *Hugh Selwyn Mauberely* leads Giudici to ponder the dynamics implied by the translation of poetry and the series of choices, constraints, and renunciations which the translator is compelled to make in order to preserve those traits of the text which he considers essential. The translator, for Giudici, is no powerful Prometheus, who brings the light of foreign poetry into a different culture. There is a gap between his language as a poet and as a translator of poems. As a consequence, "il traduttore saprà anche che il risultato del suo lavoro sarà comunque, rispetto all'originale, qualcosa di meno o di diverso" (Giudici 1996: 26) ["the translator will also know that the result of his or her work will be, in any case, something less or different compared to the original"].

¹⁹² Most of these translations are indirect, in the sense that Giudici often worked in co-operation with mother-tongue speakers (as in the case of Czech) who provided him with a first a word for word translation.

The very limited knowledge that the Italian poet had of Ezra Pound both as a poet and as a translator makes any direct association between Giudici's attitude toward translation and Pound's praxis and "theories" of translation somewhat arbitrary. It is inevitable, though, to think of the polemical but still remarkable indirect translations from Chinese which, as Eliot ironically said, made Pound "the inventor of Chinese poetry for our time" (quoted in Raffel 2005: 293). The association is fostered especially by Giudici's reference to a certain cultural distance between the target and the source text as an ideal condition for the translation of a poetic text. Pound's translations from Old English of 'The Seafarer,' his collection of poems translated from Chinese on the basis of the posthumous notes of the North American scholar Ernest Fenollosa (who was an expert in Japanese rather than Chinese literature), and his translations from numerous other languages (Italian, Provençal, Japanese, Latin and Egyptian, among others),¹⁹³ suggest a point of contact between the two poets. Both Pound and Giudici did not turn down the idea of indirect translations, since, as I have already hinted, and as I shall describe later in the section, Giudici also translated from languages that he only knew superficially, like Russian, or did not know at all, like Czech. For these translation tasks he availed himself of literal translations by native speakers, complemented by recordings of the poems in the source language, listened to carefully to grasp the rhythm and the sound effects of the source texts. The theoretical validity of the notion of distance seems, however, questionable due to its high degree of subjectivity. We end up wondering to what extent Giudici's notion of cultural gap in his essays can be applied to the study of his translations and used as a tool of investigation into his own translations. Does the notion refer, in fact, to occasional motives which may have partly influenced the Italian poet when determining the poetic texts on which to focus his attention as a translator? Or is it an *a posteriori* justification of choices determined by other sets of causes? The fuzziness of Giudici's notion of distance (linguistic, cultural and even poetic distance, interpreted as affinity or lack thereof with the translated poet) in

¹⁹³ For a compendium of Pound's translations see Pound (1963). For further information on Pound as a translator see Raffel (1984 ; 1988: especially 157-186).

relation to indirect translation or translation from languages he did not master may even appear a justification of the translator's deficient knowledge of the source language and culture. It should be stressed, however, that for Giudici the notion of distance is applicable not only to poetic translation, but to the very act of poetic creation for two reasons. First, according to him, any poetic language is already different and distant from the common language of communication, both written and oral. In poetic language, in fact, lexical and syntactical elements acquire their own special signification, not for their meaning but for the relationship they establish with elements such as rhythm, sound, and semantic associations and contaminations (Giudici 1985: 28): "La lingua poetica è lingua straniera di un paese strano, ma nostro" (Giudici 1985:31) [Poetic language is a foreign language of a strange country, which is still ours]. Second, the translation of poetry should also strive to be poetry in its own right. As a consequence, translating poetry ultimately means translating from a doubly foreign language into one's own poetic language, "lingua straniera in grado ulteriore (o lingua strana *tout court*)" (Giudici 1982: v) [language foreign to a further degree (or foreign language *tout court*)].

Although the notion of cultural and linguistic distance between source and target language is debatable and may not be taken up as an instrument of translation analysis, it represents the thread uniting the translations of poetry that Giudici carried out on his own initiative. Before moving the focus of the analysis back to the contingencies leading to the production of *Conoscenza della notte*, it is interesting to spend some more time on two of Giudici's other translations, as they are good examples of *distant* translations, which clarify the translation criteria adopted by Giudici. I am referring to the translation of a selection of poems by the Czech poet Jíří Orten, and to the translation of the verse novel *Eugene Onegin* by the Russian poet Alexander Pushkin. The idea of translating *Eugene Onegin* into Italian occurred to Giudici after a business trip to Russia in 1966. The enthusiasm with which his Russian friends spoke to him about this masterpiece encouraged the Italian poet to become acquainted with the work of the Russian poet in a more personal way, that is, by translating it as an absolutely

private project.¹⁹⁴ Since Giudici did not know Russian, he began to study it in a grammar written in French. Moreover, he bought a series of LP recordings of the original verse novel read aloud by the Russian actor Vsevolod Aksënov. However, the project was temporarily interrupted, partly due to the objective difficulty of the task and partly because a trip to Prague in 1967 leads Giudici to focus on the translation of a Czech poet, Jíří Orten, who had died in 1941 at the age of twenty-two. What stimulates the Italian poet is his personal interest in the Czech language, which appears to him impenetrable, “come una pietra nera, durissima, levigata al punto da non consentire il minimo punto di appiglio” (Giudici 1996: 30) [like a black stone, so hard and polished as not to allow any grip]. The lack of any cultural mediation between Czech and Italian makes the gap between the two languages even larger than the one existing between Italian and Russian, whose culture had already entered the Italian literary panorama through the existing translations of Russian literature. In order to translate Orten’s poems, therefore, Giudici listens to the word-for-word translation carried out by Vladimír Mikeš,¹⁹⁵ who also comments on word connotations and poetic features like rhyme, rhetorical devices, and semantic ambiguities. Translating in this way is perceived by Giudici as being led by the hand through a thick forest while blindfolded (Giudici 1996: 31). The result of this cooperation, which lasted only one month and a half, was the publication of a short anthology of translations of Czech poets under the title *Omaggio a Praga* (1968), and an anthology of Orten’s poetry titled *La cosa chiamata poesia* (1969). After this experience, Giudici resumed his project of translating *Onegin*, with the aid of the above-mentioned recordings and the Italian translations in prose and in verse by Ettore Lo Gatto. He worked on the translation for five years, and the book was finally published in 1975 (with a second revised edition in 1983).

¹⁹⁴ “Si era fatta strada nella mia mente il fumoso, e soprattutto utopistico, progetto di conoscere un mio Puškin, un Puškin di prima mano, traducendo io stesso e soltanto per me il suo capolavoro, *Evgenij Onegin*” (Giudici 1996: 30). [The fuzzy, and above all utopist, project had crept into my mind to know my own Pushkin, a first-hand Pushkin, by translating his masterpiece *Eugene Onegin* by myself and for only myself.]

¹⁹⁵ As a matter of fact, a more immediate motive behind the choice to translate Jíří Orten, as Giudici himself writes, was the need to obtain the authorization for a short sojourn in Italy for Giudici’s friend, the poet Vladimír Mikeš.

Faced with the challenge of translating the intricate formal structure of the verse novel, Giudici set himself two main objectives:

Volevo proprio fare un *Onegin* «italiano», nel senso di conquistare alla forse troppo smaliziata e disincantata poesia moderna quello che nell'*Onegin* mi pareva essere un rapporto più libero, più spontaneo, più nobilmente ingenuo fra autore e testo e alla nostra prosodia italiana un verso poco consueto e il meno lontano possibile dall'incantevole tetrapodia giambica puškiniana. (Giudici 1996:32)

[I really wanted to create an “Italian” *Onegin*, in the sense of gaining for a perhaps too shrewd and disenchanted modern poetry what I considered in *Onegin* to be a freer, more spontaneous, more nobly ingenuous relationship between author and text, and for our Italian prosody a less common line, as little distant from Pushkin’s enchanting iambic tetrapody as possible.]

The first broad objective, regaining a spontaneous relationship between author and text, is complemented by the intent to propose an Italian line form which, though unusual in Italian, could imitate the rhythmic effects of Pushkin’s iambic tetrameter and the intricate rhymed structure of the original work, composed of 389 fourteen-line stanzas with the rhyming pattern AbAbCCddEffEgg, with alternating feminine and masculine rhymes (the uppercase and the lowercase letters identifying feminine and masculine rhymes respectively). Faced with the problem of translating iambic tetrameter, Giudici decides to make use of the Italian *novenario*, a nine-syllable line with three strong accents, rather than the *hendecasyllable*. Both lines belong to the Italian poetic tradition; the hendecasyllable, however, is the line *par excellence* of Italian poetry and had been used by Lo Gatto for his canonical translation from 1950 of the same work. Giudici’s use of a flexible nine-syllable line (which in actuality could range from seven to eleven syllables) represents Giudici’s strong stance toward the Italian poetic tradition, and an attempt to renew its forms without destroying them. The translation becomes for the Italian poet the vehicle through which mainly linguistic forms and effects belonging to another culture are imported into one’s own culture. This operation is not carried out acritically, however. As Prete (2001: 907) observes, Giudici’s infractions and modifications of the

original form, which included not only anisosyllabism, but also his renouncing the alternation of feminine and masculine rhymes and his use of assonances, “è un modo di dialogare, sul piano formale e esegetico, con il poeta da cui si traduce” [is a way of conversing, on a formal and exegetical level, with the poet who is being translated], and a way of avoiding a passive submission to the prosodic and metrical systems of the source text as well. The result, as Folena says in his introduction to Giudici’s translation, is not “un Puškin italianizzato ma, *si licet*, un italiano (in quanto lingua poetica) puškinizzato” (1983: xii) [an Italianized Pushkin, but, if we may, a Pushkinized Italian (at least the poetic language)].

Beside the interest and appreciation shown by many well-known representatives of the Italian literary criticism, such as Gianfranco Folena and Gianfranco Contini, as another contemporary critic, Giovanni Raboni (1999), remarks, Giudici’s translation also provoked harsh criticism. Apart from the discussion occasioned by the translator’s limited knowledge of the source language and literary culture in general, the main source of criticism was his very choice of the nine-syllable line as equivalent measure for Pushkin’s iambic tetrameter rather than a more settled metrical structure of the Italian tradition. Danilo Cavaion (1981) for example sees in this choice a contradiction between Giudici’s intention to put his translation in relation with his poetic activity and his maintaining a link with the Russian metric form. Without going into detail on the vicissitudes of the debate, which are not relevant to the present study, the discussion that developed around this translation underlines the points of contact between Giudici’s work (as a poet and as a translator), and the wider literary current within which his work both as a translator and as a poet can be inscribed. As we shall see later on, and as part of the criticism has pointed out, the translation choices made in Giudici’s translation of *Onegin* can be traced back to his translation of Frost’s poems in *Conoscenza della notte*.

4.5.2 “Per commissione”: translating Robert Frost

The translation of an anthology of poems by Robert Frost was Giudici’s first translation commission. In 1961, the Italian scholar Franco Fortini asked him to select and translate a number of Frost’s poems for an anthology to be published by Einaudi. In the already

quoted essay 'Da un'officina di traduzioni,' Giudici describes with extreme frankness his approach to the task of translation. At that time, we read, his knowledge of English language was extremely limited, and he only knew Frost for his reputation as *the* contemporary North American poet. Without any previous reading of the entire body of Frost's poems, and with no pre-selection of the compositions to be included in the anthology, he started translating one poem after another, giving priority to those texts that offered a lower degree of difficulty during the translation.¹⁹⁶ The result is a book composed of sixty-four translations with facing original text published in 1965 (Frost 1965). In 1988 the anthology was enlarged to seventy translations, revised by the poet in cooperation with Massimo Bacigalupo, and published with the same title by Mondadori (Frost 1988).

Giudici's initial claims regarding his knowledge of English, hardly ideal for the translation of literary texts, have the appearance of a humorous joke, a provocation, maybe not altogether conscious, addressed by the translator to his detractors. I am not arguing that Giudici's words are intentionally misleading. Indeed, his English at the beginning of the sixties was certainly defective, as testified by the numerous semantic shifts in the first edition of the anthology that I identified as deriving from a misunderstanding of the source text or a calque. However, the relatively long period of preparation of the anthology, completed in 1964 and published in January 1965, the national renown of the publishing house, and the respect Giudici pays to the translated author, are clues of a much greater attention to accuracy in translation than either the casual lightheartedness or the naiveté of Giudici's words in the essay 'Da un'officina di traduzioni' might suggest. This impression is confirmed by the different tone of the words used in his 'Premessa del traduttore,' the prologue to *Conoscenza della notte*, in which, while confirming his lack of specialist knowledge of English and North American

¹⁹⁶ "A guidare la mia scelta fu quasi esclusivamente il criterio della più facile traducibilità, oltre all'esigenza di tradurre un numero di poesie sufficiente a mettere insieme un libro che fosse, fra traduzioni e testi a fronte, di decente spessore" (Giudici 1996: 27)

[My choice was almost exclusively guided by the criterion of the easiest translatability, in addition to the need to translate a number of poems large enough to put together a book that, between the translation and facing original texts, would be reasonably thick.]

literature, Giudici gives clearer hints of the activity of consulting and anthologizing carried out when he approached the translation task:

Frost ho imparato a conoscerlo traducendolo. Non sono, infatti uno specialista; e debbo premettere onestamente che, a parte qualche sporadico precedente incontro, la mia conoscenza dei testi originali è andata facendosi, giorno per giorno, mese per mese, nelle fasi in cui solitamente si distingue un lavoro del genere: una prima rapida lettura dei *Complete Poems*, alcune prove, una selezione compiuta sulla scorta delle mie reazioni personali, ma anche delle indicazioni critiche più note, la traduzione sistematica delle poesie prescelte, la revisione (e talvolta la riscrittura) di ogni singolo testo tradotto. (Giudici 1965: 5)

[I have learned to know Frost by translating him. As a matter of fact, I am no specialist; and I must honestly say beforehand that, apart from some sporadic previous encounters, I have formed my knowledge of the original texts day by day, month by month, in the phases into which a task like this is usually divided: a first rapid reading of the *Complete Poems*, some trials, a selection made on the basis of my personal reactions, but also based on the more established critical opinions, the systematic translation of the chosen poems, the revision (and sometimes the re-writing) of each individual translated text.]

Over and above the information pointing to the contingent causes of the translation, Giudici's introduction allows us to infer interesting information on the priorities set by the translator and the restrictions imposed on him by the language and the poetic nature of the text. One of the central priorities established in the translation of Frost is the preservation, whenever possible, of the same number of lines as in the source text. We have already pointed out this phenomenon during the textual analysis of the translations and have observed how the target text not only maintains, in general, the same number of lines of the source text, but also respects the semantic limits of the lines. The adoption of this principle, to which Giudici adhered almost instinctively in the 1960s, guided by the conviction that the visual aspect of a poem is a fundamental part of the poetic language (Giudici 1996: 28), finds *a posteriori* theoretical justification in

Jurij Tynyanov's essay *The Problem of poetic language*, which Giudici translates from Russian in cooperation with L. Kortikova in 1968 (*Il problema del linguaggio poetico*). According to the Russian scholar, the line is the basic unit of poetry, and it becomes, for Giudici, the fundamental unit of translation. The essay would become a reference text for the Italian poet, helping him clarify and give theoretical foundations to elements of both his poetic and translational activities. A further reason behind the priority attributed to the line unit can be found, according to Giudici, in one of the goals of the translation of Frost's poems, which, being produced under commission, and being presented with the parallel source text, must allow more expert readers to follow a parallel reading of the source and target text without depriving the translated text of its poetical value and of the possibility of being read as an independent text.

Any priority generates constraints, though. In this case, the need to respect the source line unit and its semantic content raises the problem of how to compress the latter within the target line, especially when the translation is, as in our case, from a language rich in monosyllables or disyllables with lexical meaning, like English, into a less concise language like Italian. Giudici, aware of this constraint, solves it by increasing the number of syllables in the line. Thus, for example, Frost's iambic pentameter, composed of ten syllables, is not translated by adopting the canonical hendecasyllable, but by employing a line with a flexible number of syllables, ranging up to seventeen. We have been able to observe this phenomenon during the textual analysis (see also appendix 2), and can now integrate our initial observations made in sections 4.2 to 4.3 with further comments on the consequences of Giudici's translation decision. If we focus on mimesis of orality, the adoption of a longer line unit allows the translator more space to maneuver, that is, more syllables to achieve the semantic and stylistic unity of the source line (which includes the recreation of a spoken language stylistically equivalent to that of the source text). However, Giudici's longer lines, despite the lack of a regular pattern, should not be equated with free verse, as they are rather the result of the combination of two shorter line measures (for example, an heptasyllable and a pentasyllable, or a nine-syllable line and a pentasyllable). Despite the presence of identifiable metrical structures, the risk is high of loosening the rhythmic tension that

was enhanced by the combination of metric and mimetic rhythms in the source text. In order to reduce this risk, Giudici decides to focus no longer on values of syllabic duration of the line, but rather on its “prosodic” duration, which makes possible the association of this line form and its anisosyllabism to the idea of sprung rhythm,¹⁹⁷ as Folena comments (1983: x). Earlier in my analysis, I observed (in subsection 4.3.4) that the rhythmic tension of the line occasionally shifts towards the rhythm of prose. I was referring to the fact that the rhythms and intonations of colloquial speech end up prevailing over the rhythms of poetic language, diverging from the effects produced in the source text by the dynamic tension between meter and speech rhythms. While the phenomenon can be observed with a certain degree of objectivity, any evaluation of its poetic effects enters the realm of subjectivity and would lead to a discussion of the aesthetic value of the translation, which is beyond the scope of this study. What interests me here is how Giudici’s translation decision can be seen as a clue to Giudici’s interpretation of Frost’s mimesis of orality in translation, and the consequences of this decision for his future activity as both a translator and as a poet. The Italian poet underlines in more than one essay the importance of his decision. Here is one example:

Sarà banale, sarà ingenuo, confessarlo: ma proprio nel tradurre Frost, puntigliosamente sforzandomi di tenermi sullo stesso numero di righe dell’originale, mi capitò di liberarmi dalla (non saprei dire altrimenti) maledizione di quell’endecasillabo

¹⁹⁷ The term *sprung rhythm* or *sprung verse* was created by the British poet Gerard Manley Hopkins (1844-1889). According to Hopkins every foot was composed of one heavily stressed syllable and a maximum of three more or less lightly stressed syllables. The importance attributed to heavy stresses in the line made the scansion of light stresses almost unimportant and produced lines with different length in which light syllables in each foot could be pronounced with varying time. The higher the number of light syllables in a foot, the shorter the time spent for the utterance of each. As Hobsbaum (1996: 54) remarks, *sprung rhythm* is very close to the tradition of English verse: “What Hopkins described [...] is, however, the manner in which the rhythm of English verse, when effective, has always proceeded. So, far from being an innovator, he pointed to a traditional process of verse which his own period, and that of the early twentieth century which succeeded it, was in danger of forgetting.” Sprung rhythm is, however, alien to the Italian tradition, characterized by a line scansion based on an established number of syllables and on accents in relatively fixed positions within the line.

sardina-sott'olio (ossia automatizzato, prevedibile) in cui a prima vista si penserebbe di rendere il *Blank verse*. Benissimo rispettare numero di sillabe e posizioni di accenti: ma il resto? Come risolvere in quella scolastica misura la superiore densità semantica della lingua inglese? Belli o brutti che siano, sono grato a certi versi irregolari ai quali ero felicemente costretto e in cui riscopro però il senso di una durata prosodica che poteva essere equivalente tanto in un verso di undici quanto in uno di tredici o sedici o diciassette sillabe. Cambiava dunque qualcosa anche nel mio fare poesia, inteso proprio nel senso artigianale [...].¹⁹⁸ (Giudici 1982: ix)

[It is probably banal and ingenuous to confess, but it was actually in translating Frost, while I was meticulously endeavoring to adhere to the same number of lines as the original, that I happened to free myself from the (I don't know how else to phrase it) curse of the prepackaged hendecasyllable (that is, automated, predictable) into which one would at first glance think of translating blank verse. It is fine to respect the number of syllables and the position of the accents: but the rest? How to resolve the superior semantic density of the English language into that formal measure? No matter how beautiful or ugly they may be, I am grateful to certain irregular lines to which I was happily forced, and in which I rediscovered the meaning of a prosodic duration which could have the same value in an eleven-syllable line as in a thirteen-, sixteen-, or seventeen-syllable line. Something was changing, therefore, also in my making of poetry, understood in the sense of craftsmanship.]

¹⁹⁸ Another interesting example is the essay on translation of poetry included in *Andare in Cina a piedi*. There Giudici writes: “La traduzione poetica che più di ogni altra, salvo forse l’*Oneghin*, ha influito sulla mia esperienza è stata quella di Frost. [...] Da questo lavoro imparai, quasi senza avvedermene, diverse cose: una è che un poema [...] deve avere nella traduzione lo stesso numero di versi dell’originale, anche se ciò richieda di fare dei versi più lunghi. Ma la misura e il senso poetico di un verso non dipendono esclusivamente dal numero delle sue sillabe” (Giudici 1992: 82-83) [The poetic translation that has influenced my experience more than any other, except perhaps *Oneghin*, was Frost’s translation. [...] From this task I learned, almost without realizing it, several things: one is that a poem in translation must have the same number of lines as in the original, even if this requires longer lines. But measure and the poetic sense of a line do not depend exclusively on the number of syllables.]

Paradoxically, therefore, the translation of Frost's wide range of traditional meters, which are generally considered an emblematic aspect of his poetry, achieves in Giudici the opposite effect of helping the Italian poet free himself from the weight of the traditional meters of Italian poetry. The second element Giudici prioritizes in his translation, which we might call the second "fundamental constructive principle" of Frost's poetry, to employ the terminology Giudici himself adopts from Tynjanov, is the rigorous selection of words, a "lexical meticulousness" (constituted by New England idiotism and specific names of plants that have no immediate correspondence in Italian) that make up for Frost's "pigrizia o indifferenza prosodica" (Giudici 1965: 7) [laziness or prosodic indifference], to which I referred in section 4.3. Considering the dexterity and consciousness with which Robert Frost used deviations from an established metrical rhythm to achieve spoken effects in his poems, the notion of "prosodic laziness" or "prosodic indifference" can only be accepted and applied to Frost if we take into account, as Giudici seems to do, its "apparent," that is, seeming, nature. Moreover, despite Giudici's focus in the paratext on the lexical level of language as the main instrument of recreation of orality, in the translation itself we have also noted that he tends to reproduce pragmatic and syntactical features of orality similar to those appearing in the source text, when not hindered by language-specific constraints.

It does of course happen that the priorities explicitly formulated in the paratext of a translation are not thoroughly applied in the actual translation. In the case of Giudici, the relationship between his paratextual claims and their application to the target text needs to be analyzed from different perspectives in order to be better understood. The textual analysis has shown a consistent coherence in the use of features of orality in translation, the main difference from the original being more a matter of intensity of the spoken register and of variation at a diastatic level. A second element that makes it possible to infer that the translator is consistently aiming at mimesis of orality derives from the comparison between the two editions of *Conoscenza della notte*. In the textual analysis the results achieved are based on the latest revised edition of the book. However, a comparison between the two editions reveals the presence of numerous changes in most of the compositions. These modifications, acknowledged by Giudici in the introduction to the

second edition, vary. In section 3.3 I began to analyze the changes between the two editions of the translation of a single poem ('The Death of the Hired Man'); this question can now be addressed more fully. Having collected more information on such changes, a tentative classification of the changes can be proposed, distinguishing between *semantic shifts* and *oral shifts* from the 1965 to the 1988 edition. The former shifts refer to the translator's numerous changes in the second edition of *Conoscenza della notte*, often following Massimo Bacigalupo's revision notes, aimed at correcting semantic shifts introduced in the 1965 edition, mainly as a consequence of structural calques or misunderstandings of the source text because of Giudici's limited knowledge of English. These first changes represent an important improvement of the target text as they eliminate contradictory or simply unclear elements in the text and facilitate its reading. The term *oral shift* refers to the changes which do not affect the meaning of sentences and are partly a consequence of the poet-translator's stylistic evolution. These latter changes are particularly interesting for our study of mimesis of orality, since a comparison between the 1965 and 1988 versions often shows a shift towards a more clearly defined colloquial register. I shall present some examples of these shifts below. In order to give some context to better appreciate Giudici's stylistic changes towards communicative immediacy, I also quote contiguous lines that remain unchanged. The translations are followed by the source lines:

Example 4.49

From 'La morte di un bracciante'	From 'La morte di un bracciante'
«A casa», ironico egli fece (<i>Conoscenza della notte</i> 1965, l. 113)	«A casa» disse lui con un lieve scherno (<i>Conoscenza della notte</i> 1988, l. 113)

From 'The Death of the Hired Man'	"Home," he mocked gently (l. 113)
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In example 4.49 (1965 version) we observe an anastrophe, the literary quality of which is heightened by the use of the personal pronoun "egli" (used in situations of communicative distance and

confined to the written medium).¹⁹⁹ In the second edition the anastrophe is erased and the more colloquial personal pronoun *lui* is used.

Example 4.50

From 'Cento colletti'	From 'Cento colletti'
A. Attento, c'è qualcosa che al momento non so (<i>Conoscenza della notte</i> 1965, l. 45)	A. Ehi, c'è qualcosa che al momento non so (<i>Conoscenza della notte</i> 1988, l. 45)
B. Fairbanks mi dice – è il direttore – “Ascolta il sentimento pubblico, mi dice. (<i>Conoscenza della notte</i> 1965, ll. 105-106)	B. Fairbanks mi dice – è il direttore – “Cava fuori Quel che pensa la gente” – dice lui (<i>Conoscenza della notte</i> 1988, ll. 105-106)
From 'Hundred Collars'	A. Hold on, there's something I don't think of now (l. 45) B. Fairbanks, he says to me— he's editor— Feel out the public sentiment—he says. (ll. 105-106)

In both versions of example 4.50A the language used is plain and close to communicative immediacy. However, the use of the interjection *Ehi* in the revised version increases the oral quality of the sentence. In example 4.50B we observe the use, in the 1988 edition, of an idiomatic expression with colloquial overtones (*cavar fuori*), a more common formulation of the meaning of the sentence (“quel che pensa la gente,” compared to “il sentimento pubblico” of the first edition), and an oral inversion verb-subject with foregrounding function (“dice lui”).

¹⁹⁹ In 1965, however, the use of “egli” was certainly more common than it is now.

Example 4.51

From 'La strada non presa'	From 'La strada non presa'
Io dovrò dire questo con un sospiro in qualche posto fra molto molto tempo (<i>Conoscenza della notte</i> 1965, ll. 16-17)	Questa storia racconterò con un sospiro Chissà dove fra molto molto tempo (<i>Conoscenza della notte</i> 1988, ll. 16-17).

From 'The Road not Taken'	I shall be telling this with a sigh Somewhere ages and ages hence: (ll. 16-17)
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The changes introduced in the 1988 version of example 4.51 are both semantic and oral. The sentence in the first translation sounds awkward in Italian since it calques the English sentence structure ("I shall be telling this with a sigh / somewhere"). In the second version, the expression is translated by foregrounding the term "questa storia," eliminating the calque of the auxiliary verb "shall" and introducing a more oral expression ("chissà dove") instead of the more literal "in qualche posto."

Example 4.52

From 'Verso la terra'	From 'Stringendosi alla terra'
Nessuna gioia adesso che mi piaccia se non sia soffusa di dolore, di spossatezza e di errore: per questo io amo la traccia (<i>Conoscenza della notte</i> 1965, ll. 17-20)	Nessuna gioia adesso che mi piaccia Se non mischiata al dolore, a sfinimento e ad errore: Per questo io amo la traccia (<i>Conoscenza della notte</i> 1988, ll. 17-20)

From 'To Earthward'	Now no joy but lacks salt That is not dashed with pain And weariness and fault; I crave the stain (ll. 17-20)
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The changes introduced in the sentence of the 1988 version reported in example 4.52 consist of the substitution of words belonging to a higher register (“soffusa,” “sposatezza”), with words belonging to everyday language (“mischiata,” “sfinimento”). As for the change of the poem’s title, the 1988 version contains an explicitation of the meaning of the source title, whereas the 1965 version is a more literal translation. That change is not related to a shift in the mimetic effect of the segment.

These examples were chosen almost randomly among the numerous changes that I have detected in the majority of the poems found in both the 1965 and the 1988 editions of *Conoscenza della notte*. It is not easy to define these shifts, since semantic shifts sometimes also imply a shift in register towards communicative immediacy, and with diastatically lower connotations. I have also detected changes between the 1965 and the 1988 edition, however, that are not immediately related to any increase of the impression of orality, nor are they an adjustment of a previous semantic shift. These changes may be a consequence of other decisions made by Giudici, such as the introduction of a different rhythm or the heightening of an alliterative effect. Regardless of their variety, all changes tend toward a clearer formulation of the sentences.

In the afterword Bacigalupo wrote to Giudici’s anthology of translated poems, *A una casa non sua* (Giudici: 1997), the scholar defines Giudici as “un poeta e traduttore prosaico” [a prose poet and translator] (in Giudici 1997: 207), and clarifies his definition immediately afterwards: “Salvo che nella sua prosa del mondo tutto è poesia, e che la sua sensibilità linguistica vede al di là della consuetudine e della stanchezza della lingua d’uso. Questo conferisce alle sue traduzioni autorità” (in Giudici 1997: 297) [except that, in his prose of the world, everything is poetry, and that his linguistic sensibility goes beyond the customs and the weariness of the language of daily use. This lends authority to his translations]. In a note to this text Bacigalupo quotes an example of Giudici’s *prose* translation, which I find emblematic of the stylistic changes introduced in the second edition of *Conoscenza della notte*. Bacigalupo observes how the Italian poet translates the title of Wallace Stevens’s *An Old Man Asleep*, with *Un vecchio che dorme*, rather than the more literal *Un vecchio addormentato*. The use of a less economic (in terms of words, though not in terms of syllables)

relative clause instead of the adjective *addormentato* (“asleep”), is evocative of a language with an inferior degree of lexical density, closer to communicative immediacy. It is significant, moreover, that in the same footnote Bacigalupo also refers to Giudici’s revision of the second versions of Frost’s poems, observing: “Partendo da miei suggerimenti tendenti alla letteralità, lui faceva nascere il verso” (in Giudici 1997: 210) [Taking his cue from my suggestions that encouraged literalness, he created the line].

The translation criticism on *Conoscenza della notte* underlines Giudici’s qualities as a translator and a poet, although these translations, like the translation of *Eugene Onegin*, have also been criticized. Even though the critical literature on *Conoscenza della notte* is not as extensive as that on the translation of Pushkin’s masterpiece, it is interesting to consider its different perspectives, since both negative and positive criticism is revealing of the peculiar traits of *Conoscenza della notte*. Paola Loreto (1999c) presents an overview of Frost scholars and translators in Italy, including a harsh critique of *Conoscenza della notte*.²⁰⁰ Loreto’s criticism of the book may be summarized as follows:

- 1) Frost’s poetry has been little translated into Italian. His translations “have been practically monopolized” (1999c: 105) by Giudici.
- 2) Giudici’s two editions of *Conoscenza della notte* present no major differences (they are “only slightly revised” (1999c: 105)).
- 3) Giudici’s comments on the *essentials* of Frost’s poetry (Frost’s alleged “prosodic indifference” and “extreme rigor of lexical definition”) make Frost’s poetry easily translatable according to Giudici. This is a misjudgment of Frost’s poetry, one of the essentials of which is the variety of intonations entangled in the syntax and meter of the poem. “These, though, cannot be directly transferred into another language, because they are non-verbal features, and each

²⁰⁰ Loreto’s criticism addresses (with few exceptions) the entire bulk of translations of Frost’s poems into Italian: “So how should one judge the nearly monopolized, too few, unrepresentative translations of a poet’s output, an essential part of which has a very low degree of transferability into another language? Given the premises, the most likely answer would be ‘Not well!’” (Loreto 1999c: 108).

language has a paralinguistic system of its own” (Loreto 1999c: 108). As a consequence, Frost’s poetry, for Loreto, has a low degree of translatability.

- 4) Giudici misunderstands Frost’s formal effects as “a matter of word precision.” He thus sometimes uses obsolete or archaic words and awkward syntactical inversions. The latter device gives an impression of formality to the text that alters the speech quality from that of the source text’s language (1999c: 108). Some of the inversions are a consequence either of calques or of the translator’s limited knowledge of English, which also leads to translation mistakes.
- 5) The difficulty in the translation of the colloquial overtones of Frost’s poetry derives partly from the fact that Italian is a highly rhetorical language compared to English (the first is *synthetic*, the second is *analytic*),²⁰¹ and partly from a different poetic tradition. Average North American readers are more used than Italian readers to understanding colloquial poetry (Loreto 1999c: 111).

Some of the points of the Italian scholar’s criticism have already been addressed in my analysis (especially points 2 and 3), though they have not always led to the same conclusions. The amount of revision and correction carried out between the first and the second edition of *Conoscenza della notte*, the addition of seven poems, and the translation of Frost’s essay *The Figure a Poem Makes*, carried out by Bacigalupo, implies a thorough revision of the 1965 edition. Loreto attributes Giudici’s monopolization of Frost translation in Italy to general cultural and historic circumstances. Probably, however, more information should be gathered in order to justify this position, related to issues like editorial interest in another translation or translation proposals by other translators. Loreto also stresses that the mechanisms through which Frost evokes spoken intonations in his poems do not rely solely on lexical devices, as Giudici’s observations seem to suggest, and as I have also outlined above. However, her position is very close to general stances on the untranslatability of poetry, which are debatable, and to the notions

²⁰¹ As an example of a synthetic phenomenon in Italian, Loreto mentions the use of suffixes for the formation of diminutives, which cannot be found (or at least is not so frequent, as I have stressed before) in English (Loreto 1999c: 110).

of fidelity or infidelity to the original, which can lend themselves to too many interpretations. The scholar also stresses another aspect of Giudici's translation, also mentioned in our analysis: the presence of calques and, above all, syntactical inversions. In the previous sections I have noted how syntactical inversions in Giudici's translation may acquire oral connotations if they have a foregrounding function. However, in *Conoscenza della notte*, most of these inversions can be considered rhetorical devices like anastrophe and hyperbaton, adding literary connotations to the text, or marking the language as awkward, that is, not common. The phenomenon certainly hinders a homogeneous recreation of mimesis of orality in the translation, as Loreto also points out. One of the drawbacks of Loreto's analysis, however, is that no suggestion is given of the possible causes generating the inversions in *Conoscenza della notte*. This fact is understandable since Loreto's study is source-text centered and does not focus just on Giudici's translations but aims at an overview of Frost's translations in Italy. However, the frequent occurrence of the phenomenon of syntactical inversion in our target text points to an intentional translation decision and invites further reflections on the relationship between the language of translation and the poetics behind it. The *why*-question related to this aspect of Giudici's translation, an answer to which we can neither find in the analysis of the target text, nor in its paratext, is tackled in the following section by taking into account the relationship between Giudici's work as a translator and his work as a poet, as well as his wider socio-cultural context.

4.5.3 The poet and the translator

Questions regarding the relationship between Giudici's style as a translator and as a poet can be split in observations about the influence of Frost's language both on Giudici's translation of Frost (where it is normally expected to predominate) and on Giudici's own poetic language, and, conversely, about the influence of Giudici's poetic language on his translations of Frost's poetry. The Italian poet addresses the issue in his essay 'Da un'officina di traduzioni.' His words, however, lead to no real answer, since they both deny and immediately afterwards admit a certain mutual influence:

Io dirò, per quanto mi riguarda, che spero di essere andato abbastanza esente dall'una cosa e dall'altra; ma subito aggiungendo che, senza dubbio, sulla mia scrittura ha influito il mio «modo di tradurre» poesie di altri, e che le mie traduzioni riflettono probabilmente quel «modo di tradurre» assunto come la via meno improbabile a convogliare il senso poetico degli originali a me stesso e ad altri lettori nella mia lingua. (Giudici 1996: 28-29)

[As for me, I would say that I hope to have been rather exempt from both; but I would immediately add that, without a doubt, my “way of translating” other people’s poetry has influenced my writing, and my translations probably reflect that “way of translating” I adopted as the less unlikely way of transmitting the poetic meaning of the originals to myself and to readers in my language.]

Research into Giudici’s cultural context and its relationship with his poetic production provides some explanation of the causes of the apparently opposing translational phenomena described above, pointing both to a recreation of common language and to a use of elements that mark a clear distance from it (like syntactical inversion). First, we observe that although *Conoscenza della notte* was Giudici’s first important translation commission, it was carried out in the early sixties, and ultimately published in 1965, that is, when Giudici had already achieved poetical maturity. A confirmation of this claim is provided by the fact that in 1965 Giudici also published *La vita in versi*, a collection of some of his poems written before that date which gained critical recognition and made his name well-known among readers of poetry in Italy. As critics have often pointed out (Zucco 1997, Colella 2006, Bertoni 2001, and Testa 1999, among others), the innovative strength of the book resides, among other elements, in the intent to build his own poetic language, distancing himself from the literary language of the time, by drawing it closer to spoken Italian. This movement of his poetic language towards the pole of communicative immediacy is mainly carried out, at a linguistic level, through the wide use of features of orality such as a lexical choice encompassing a variety of registers, from common to low; theme-rheme dislocations; the use of polyfunctional particles (e.g. the polyvalent *che*); and lack of

agreement.²⁰² The language, however, cannot be labeled as colloquial *tout court* since it includes other stylistic formal and literary structures belonging to communicative distance. Enrico Testa (2005 and 1999) has studied the correlations between the use of low and high registers in Giudici's poetry and the causes behind it. He observes that Giudici's recreation of different variations of spoken Italian in his poems is a constant feature of his poetry, which, with the exclusion of *Salutz* (1986), a sophisticated modern *canzoniere* drawing on troubadour poetry, becomes even more evident in other books after *La vita in versi*, from *Il male dei creditori* (1977) until at least *Quanto spera di campare Giovanni* (1993). However, Giudici's mimetic devices, though prominent, are intermingled with other linguistic materials such as archaic or literary words, specialized lexis (belonging to the bureaucratic, juridical, economic, liturgical, scientific, and sports sectors, for example), foreign words, calques of foreign structures, and neologisms (Testa 1999: 112-124). Further emblems of the variety of linguistic materials composing Giudici's poetic language are the use of three nominal forms of the verb: the nominalized infinitive, the present participle, and the gerund. The use of indefinite verbal modes is, according to Testa, a central constructive element of Giudici's syntax. Moreover, they are often related to rhetorical devices based on word iterations, such as anaphora, anadiplosis, and polyptoton. They are also constitutive elements of syntactical inversions like anastrophe and hyperbaton, elements that cause the disruption of the usual word order in a clause (Testa 1999: 124-128). The variety of linguistic modules and structures in Giudici's poems does not lead, however, to dissonances or contrasts. The tonal homogeneity would be a consequence, according to Testa, of the enunciative frame of the poem:

Gran parte sia della compattezza formale che dell'assoluta originalità della scrittura di Giudici nel panorama della poesia italiana sta proprio nell'uso stilistico di quei fenomeni d'enunciazione che la tradizione letteraria destinava quasi esclusivamente al genere teatrale e ai momenti dialogici di quello narrativo. (Testa 1999: 129)

²⁰² An overview of the features of orality in Giudici's poetry can be found in Colella (2006: 13-18).

[A large part of the formal tightness and absolute originality of Giudici's writing in the panorama of Italian poetry lies in the stylistic use of those elements of enunciation which literary tradition almost exclusively reserved to theater and to the dialogic moments of the narrative genre.]

As Testa goes on to clarify, the multiplicity of both mimetic and rhetorical devices and their alternation in the text suggest that the ultimate effect which the poet aims to achieve is not realism. Giudici's intentions are stylistic more than mimetic. Furthermore, the dialogic frame in which the different devices are used becomes the backdrop against which elements of mimesis of orality and other linguistic materials create a polyphony of contrasting voices that questions the monologic character of the language of traditional lyric, and finds its internal coherence in its very plurality, a clear allusion to the plural character of reality (Testa 1999: 133).

At a wider socio-cultural level, these observations on Giudici's poetic language can be directly linked to the movement of regeneration of the Italian poetic language which starts at the end of the nineteen-fifties and which sees, among its main representatives, apart from Giudici himself, other contemporary poets like Attilio Bertolucci, Giorgio Caproni, Mario Luzi, Vittorio Sereni, and Andrea Zanzotto, all of whom Giudici appreciated and knew personally. The common denominator of this generation of poets is the need to find distance from certain monolithic positions of the tradition and of preceding hermetic poetic expressions, by introducing, as we have seen, a plurality of voices, effects, and registers. A further consequence of this shift is the progressive abandonment of the centrality of the lyrical subject, interpreted as an expression of the poet's self, and the introduction, through different characters and different mimetically recreated voices, of different points of view that fragment reality and its supposed unity.²⁰³

²⁰³ Testa observes however that the abandonment of the centrality of the lyrical subject in Italy is not as radical as in other countries where the text was opened up earlier and more effectively to a plurality of figures and registers. In Italy the subject continues to be the hegemonic figure of lyrical poetry well into the eighties (Testa 1999: 11-12).

4.5.4 Final remarks on Giudici's translation of Frost

These observations on Giudici's poetic language and on the socio-cultural context within which it develops help to outline some of the efficient and final causes of translation. They allow us to identify potential points of contact between the language of Frost and that of Giudici and lead to hypotheses on the influence of the translation of Frost's poems on Giudici's subsequent translations and on his own poetic production. Giudici's interest in the use of common language, the dialogic and polyphonic dimension of his poetry, and the ironic questioning of the centrality of the lyrical subject by presenting a plurality of fully sketched characters are elements of fundamental importance in the translation of Frost's poems. These elements point to a certain poetic affinity between Frost and Giudici, as well as to the influence of Frost's poetics on Giudici's own poetic production. The intensification of these linguistic features in Giudici's poetry and in his translations after 1965 allows us to argue that the translation of Frost's poems plays an important role in Giudici's poetic development. This hypothesis is supported by scholarly comments on the issue and by Giudici's own comments (in his essays) on Frost's poetry and the importance of his translation of Frost's poems. In light of these elements of affinity it is now possible to understand better the analogies detected between the use of mimetic features in the source and target texts. Features like common lexis, oral syntactical structures, and phatic markers, hesitation phenomena, reformulation, and modal mechanisms (among the most recurrent textual-pragmatic devices) are in fact fundamental features of Giudici's own poetry.

The plural character of Giudici's poetics makes it possible, moreover, to grasp better the differences in the frequency of mimetic effects in the target text. Above all, they make it possible to find at least one set of causes related to those linguistic phenomena, such as syntactical inversions and participial constructions, detected in the target text, and so far left without any explanation. These elements are constitutive parts of Giudici's poetic language. Their consistent use in the translation and their partly disruptive effect on mimesis of orality point to the translator's intention to question the absolute authority of the translated poet and to continue, through translation, the renovation of the Italian poetic language that his mature poetic production was carrying out. It is difficult to

determine the degree of intentionality behind Giudici's translation decisions, since they are intermingled with numerous other factors of different nature (e.g., psychologic, cognitive, and social) condensed under the general fuzzy label of translator's taste. However, the coherence in the use of these devices not only in his subsequent poetic production but also in other important translation works, stresses the act of importation of elements of the translated author into the poet-translator's poetic production. In addition to this, this use also points to Giudici's active adaptation and personalization of the devices. In translation, in fact, they combine with personal linguistic preferences and undergo a transformation, becoming an occasion for the renovation of poetic language. In his study of Giudici's translation of *Eugenio Onegin*, Luca Lenzini makes a similar observation about the frequent use of gerunds, anastrophe, and hyperbaton in the translation and about their analogous use in Giudici's book *O Beatrice* (1972), concluding that "la posizione strategica dell'*Onegin* ne risulta confermata, e non mancano le prove che indichino nella versione un puntuale registro dell'evoluzione stilistica di Giudici" (Lenzini 1981: 215) [the strategic position of *Onegin* is confirmed by it, and there is no lack of proof indicating in the version a specific register of Giudici's stylistic evolution]. The translation thus represents a fundamental stage of the poet's own production since it becomes the place in which both his poetic identity and the legacy of tradition are questioned (226). Lenzini's conclusion makes it possible to infer the importance, though indirectly, of *Conoscenza della notte* as the immediate predecessor of Giudici's translation of *Onegin*, and as a work in which these translation phenomena can already be clearly observed.

ROBERT FROST, AGUSTÍ BARTRA, AND MIQUEL DESCLOT

5.1 Introduction

The present chapter studies the translation into Catalan of Frost's poems, as carried out by two Catalan poets and translators: Agustí Bartra (1908-1982) and Miquel DescLOT (1952-). Bartra belongs without doubt to the canon of contemporary Catalan poetry. He was born in Barcelona but spent thirty-one years of his life in exile (1939-1970), first in France, then in the Dominican Republic, Cuba, and finally, and for a longer period, Mexico. DescLOT is known in the contemporary Catalan literary scene as a poet, a literary translator, and a writer of poetry and prose fiction for children. Before proceeding to the textual and contextual analysis of the translations, a brief explanation is necessary on my decision to choose the work of these two translators from the entire corpus of Catalan translations of Frost's poems. First, it should be observed that each of the two poets only translated a selection of poems by Frost. In *Una Antologia de la lírica nord-americana* (henceforth *Una antologia...*), published in Mexico in 1951, Bartra included a selection of eleven translations of Frost's poems. DescLOT translated nine poems by Frost in a monographic publication titled *Al nord de Boston*, published in 1994. To date, there is no translation into Catalan of Frost's complete poems. Even though a number of his poems have been translated into Catalan by other translators, the only other monographic book devoted to a translation of a selection of Frost's poems into Catalan was published by Josep Maria Jaumà in 2003 (Frost 2003). Jaumà's book is the most extensive publication of Frost's poems into Catalan, including 50 compositions taken from all his books, with the exception of *North of Boston*, which was considered to be sufficiently well represented by DescLOT's book.²⁰⁴ Why then choose Bartra and DescLOT? Bartra

²⁰⁴ In the introduction to Jaumà's translation, Sam D. Abrams comments on the selection made in the book: "De fet, el present recull és el complement ideal de la versió de DescLOT, perquè entre tots dos representen les dues cares de l'obra de Frost: DescLOT s'ha dedicat exclusivament als poemes dialogats i dramàtics, mentre que Josep Maria Jaumà s'ha limitat a traduir només els poemes breus de caire líric" (Abrams quoted in Frost 2003: 30) [In fact, the present collection is

was the first translator of Frost's poems into Catalan, as well as the person accountable for the introduction of North American contemporary poetry to the Catalan literary circle of his time, having been the first to translate an anthology of North American contemporary poets into Catalan. His influence on successive Catalan poets, as well as on other translators who approached North American poetry, is generally recognized. That he carried out his translations in exile adds interest to an investigation on translation of poetry and of mimesis of orality in poetry, as it raises questions on the relationship between his recreation of orality in the translation of Frost's poems and the linguistic, political, and ideological implications behind it. There are a number of factors to be taken into account in order to achieve a satisfactory understanding of the role that his translations into Catalan played not only at a literary level but also at the political and social levels. We should bear in mind that the poet had been living in exile for almost a decade when he started working on the Catalan and Spanish translations of contemporary North American poets, at the end of the 1940s. In 1939 he had fled Franco's dictatorship in Spain, which would engage in a systematic operation of suppression and negation of the Catalan culture and language (by declaring the use of Catalan illegal, by prosecuting Catalan sympathizers, by changing the historical names of the streets of Catalan cities, etc.). Furthermore, the poet was bilingual Catalan-Spanish, like most educated Catalan people. During his exile, Bartra often had to revert to Spanish, the language of the oppressor, in order to survive. Like many Catalan (and Spanish) writers and scholars in exile, he had to work as a translator from English into Spanish. Moreover, he also had to self-translate his own work from Catalan into Spanish in order to assure their wider circulation in Latin America. During the study, I shall take these contextual elements into account, as they shed light on the relationship between the literary features of the target texts and their intended or unconscious political and social functions.

the ideal complement to Desclot's version, since between the two both faces of Frost's work are represented: Desclot dedicated himself exclusively to the dialogues and dramatic poems, whereas Jaumà limited himself to the translation of the short lyrical poems].

The decision to analyze Desclot's *Al nord de Boston* is a consequence of several chained reflections. Desclot published his book in 1994 in a significantly different cultural and political context than that of Bartra. Spain had been a democracy for almost twenty years, since Franco's death in 1975. Catalonia, as a *comunidad autónoma*²⁰⁵ of the Spanish state was politically empowered and could, to a certain extent, independently manage its economic resources and socio-economic system. Catalan was granted the status of co-official language of the Spanish state in Catalonia by the third article of the Spanish constitution. The Catalan language itself, which, by the time Bartra had translated Frost's poems, had only just begun to be standardized, was a more settled language. There still existed problems regarding its social use, but the language could certainly be considered as a potentially rich instrument. Catalan could treasure decades of tradition leading to the development of a settled model of literary language. Despite this, as scholars like Pericay and Toutain have pointed out (1996), the influence of the *noucentista* language especially in prose translation can still be detected in contemporary translations.²⁰⁶ The debate about the state of Catalan and the appropriate use of Catalan in literature (and, as a consequence, in literary translation) is not over yet, and I will give more details of this debate later on in the chapter. Studying Desclot's book is an occasion to re-examine these issues in relation to the translation of mimesis of orality in poetry.

²⁰⁵ A *comunidad autónoma* [autonomous community] is an area of political division within the Spanish kingdom. According to the second article of the Spanish Constitution, a *comunidad autónoma* is granted the right to self-government within the unity of the Spanish nation.

²⁰⁶ The term *noucentista*, it refers to *Noucentisme*, a cultural movement with political overtones partially overlapping with the previous movement called *Modernisme*. It is usually considered to begin in 1906, when Eugeni d'Ors coins the term in his *Glosari* (glossary), which appeared regularly in the daily paper *La Veu de Catalunya*, and ends in 1923, the year of general Primo Rivera's *coup d'état*. *Noucentisme* ratifies the modernization of Catalan culture brought about by *Modernisme* (to which I will also make reference later on in the chapter). The term *Modernisme* identifies the Catalan cultural movement that lasts from the last decade of the nineteenth century to the beginning of the twentieth century. It can be associated to similar cultural and artistic currents which spread in other European countries under the names of *Art Nouveau*, *Modern Style*, *Jugendstil*, and *Stile Liberty*, among others. Though *Modernisme* in Catalan literature followed a subjectivist and symbolist reaction common to the European literary panorama, it also promoted an action of social regeneration through a critical and programmatic approach to literature.

In this sense, Jaumà's translations could also have been used as an equally valid case study, having been published just a decade later. What persuaded me to focus on Desclot's translations, however, were two additional factors. The first is the potential relationship between the translations of Bartra and Desclot. Desclot himself, in his introduction to *Al nord de Boston*, stresses the importance of Bartra's work for contemporary Catalan culture.²⁰⁷ The study of his translations may indicate potential points of contact between the poetics of translation of the two poet-translators, suggesting common traits and differences in the translation of mimesis of orality, and pointing to more general considerations on approaches to translation of mimesis of orality in Catalan over the years. Furthermore, the poems included in Desclot's anthology are all taken from *North of Boston*, with the exception of "Out, Out-." That book, one of Frost's most popular volumes, is also the one containing the highest number of dramatic poems. As a consequence, we may assume that it offers consistent material for the study of the translation of mimesis of orality.

5.2 Agustí Bartra

En tes hores millors ajunta vers i vida
talment el doble tors d'uns immortals amants.
La nit no esgota el flanc, l'ala no dilapida.
No t'oblidis de tu: dóna't ja als altres cants
(Agustí Bartra, 'Ars poètica', *L'evangeli del vent*)

Bartra's work as a writer consists mainly of poetry, though he also wrote novels, plays, and essays. He wrote most of his works in Catalan during his exile, but wrote exclusively in Catalan once he went back to Catalonia. The works composed originally in Spanish

²⁰⁷ "L'aparició, l'any 1951, a Mèxic, d'*Una antologia de la lírica nord-americana*, d'Agustí Bartra, va representar l'obertura d'una fascinant finestra al món, veritablement nou per a nosaltres, de la poesia en anglès de l'altra banda de l'Àtlantic." (Desclot 1994: 17) [The publication in Mexico in 1951 of *Una antologia de la lírica nord-americana* by Agustí Bartra represented the opening of a fascinating window, for us absolutely new, on the world of poetry in English from the other side of the Atlantic]. Desclot also analyzes the role of Bartra as a translator, and the importance of his translations, in an article titled 'Agustí Bartra, traductor de poesia nord-americana' (Desclot 2007a). Finally, he also edited Bartra's complete poetic works (Desclot 1983).

are the poems *Quetzalcoatl* (1960) and *Deméter* (1961), and the novel *La luna muere con agua* (1968).

When approaching Bartra's work as a translator, it is interesting to distinguish, as Ruiz Casanova does (2007: 201), between the body of translations, mostly into Spanish, which the poet carried out in order to earn a living for himself and his family, and those which were initially motivated by his personal interest. Among the former are his translations of Capote's *Breakfast at Tiffany's* (*Desayuno en Tiffany's*, 1959), Swift's *Gulliver's Travels* (*Viajes de Gulliver*, 1961), Aragon's *La Semaine Sainte* (*La Semana Santa*, 1960), and various detective novels.²⁰⁸ Among the translations primarily inspired by a personal interest in the original work we should mention Rilke's *Die Weise von Liebe und Tod des Cornets Christoph Rilke* (*Canto del amor y de la muerte del corneta Christoph Rilke*, 1961), a selection of poems by Apollinaire (*Poesía*, 1967), a selection of Blake's *Prophetic Books* (*Primeros libros proféticos*, 1961), Hart Crane's *The Bridge* (*El puente y otros poemas*, 1973), and T.S. Eliot's *The Waste Land* (*La terra eixorca*, first included in *Una antologia de la lírica nord-americana* in 1951 and reedited in 1977), which was the first published Catalan translation of the poem.

5.2.1 *Una antologia de la lírica nord-americana*: a textual analysis

In 1951 Bartra published an anthology in Catalan titled *Una antologia de la lírica nord-americana* [An Anthology of North American Poetry], followed in 1952 by the Spanish *Antología de la poesía norteamericana* [Anthology of North American Poetry]. The book is the result of a translation project for which he had earned a Guggenheim fellowship in 1948. Thanks to the economic support of the fellowship, he was able to travel to the United States, settling first in Brooklyn and then in New Jersey, where in 1949 and 1950 he pursued both poetic translation and poetry writing.²⁰⁹ The book's

²⁰⁸ For more details about Bartra's translations see Lafarga and Pegenaute (2009: 100-101), and Abrams (2009).

²⁰⁹ His wife and biographer, Anna Murià (Murià 1990: 189), observed that even though Bartra's translation project was the object of his application for the fellowship, the Guggenheim Foundation granted him the fellowship without any

relevance is manifold. At a personal level it represents the culmination of Bartra's first important approach to North American poetry, as the poet himself says in the introduction to the anthology:

Vull fer constar, finalment, que entre la idea inicial d'aquest llibre i la seva realització hi ha un lapse de més de deu anys. El primer desig d'incorporar al català alguns poemes de poetes nord-americans data dels mesos que vaig viure a Agde (França), i fou suscitat per la lectura de l'antologia *The Albatross [sic] Book of Living Verse*, aplegada per Louis Untermeyer, que m'envià un amic de Londres. (Bartra 1951: 7)²¹⁰

[Finally, I would like to make it clear that between the initial idea of this book and its realization there is a lapse of more than ten years. My desire to translate into Catalan some of the poems of North American poets dates back to the months when I was living in Agde (France), and it was stirred by reading the anthology *The Albatross Book of Living Verse*, by Louis Untermeyer, which a friend in London sent me.]

Bartra's anthology is remarkable for the poetic quality of its translations, of which the selection of poems by Robert Frost is only one part. The book, moreover, is an instrument of meta-reflection on Bartra's sensibility as a poet and as a literary critic. In fact, what attracts the attention of the scholar above everything else is the choice of poems Bartra decided to include in his anthology, and, linked to that, the criteria that informed his choice. In the very first lines of his introduction the poet says:

Tota antologia és provisional. Aquesta meva, fruit d'un acostament apassionat, només és una antologia, és a dir, és tant la conseqüència d'unes normes prefixades, d'unes tendències i preferències que, sense adonar-me'n en el moment de la tria, han d'haver vinclat el disseny d'objectivitat, com d'atzars de lectures,

binding obligation, with the generic objective of supporting the poet's "creative work in the poetical field." "Però ell [Bartra] sí que es considerava obligat a fer allò que havia promès, i ho féu" [but he [Bartra] did feel obliged to do what he had promised, and he did it].

²¹⁰ Bartra's first contact with North American literature, however, can be traced back to 1937 (March 25) when he published the article "El poeta de l'home mitjà: Walt Whitman" in the *Mirador* literary journal (Ruiz Casanova 2007: 191).

estudis i inesperades troballes. [...] Per damunt de tot, he volgut que aquesta antologia fos una panoràmica de l'ànima nord-americana a través dels seus poetes. (Bartra 1951: 5)

[Every anthology is provisional. Mine here is the result of a passionate approach and is just an anthology, that is to say, it is both the consequence of pre-existing norms, of trends and preferences which, without my realizing it at the moment of the selection, have bent the intention of objectivity, and of casual readings, studies, and unexpected findings. [...] Above all, I wanted this anthology to be a panorama of the North American soul through its own poets.]

Ruiz Casanova (2003: 56-57) observes that Bartra's anthology brings together not only some of the already famous poets of the canon of North American modern contemporary poetry, such as Walt Whitman, Emily Dickinson, Edwin Arlington Robinson, Edgar Lee Masters, Robert Frost, Carl Sandburg, Wallace Stevens, Ezra Pound and T.S. Eliot among others, but also younger and at the time relatively unknown poets like Karl Shapiro. Bartra also added a final section on aboriginal poets called "La veu aborigen" [the aboriginal voice], which included Papago, Shoshona, Hopi, and Navajo songs, all of them translated from English translations. Finally, in order to understand Bartra's criteria better, we should also mention what he considered to be the main features of North American poetry: "Consciència social, voluntat més o menys concreta de crear el mite d'Amèrica i necessitat d'expressar-se usant temes de validesa humana" (Bartra 1951: 6) [Social conscience, a more or less concrete desire to create the myth of America, and the need to express oneself using themes of human validity].

At a wider literary and historical level, Bartra's *Una antologia...* is the first anthology of North American poetry translated into Catalan. The influence of the Catalan anthology on its public was not immediate, however. The U.S. State Department rejected Bartra's proposal to have the book published with a state subsidy,²¹¹ thus making its distribution on a larger scale more difficult.

²¹¹ In a note dated August 26, 1950, Murià remembers: "Ahir rebérem una carta de la secció de publicacions del Departament d'Estat en la qual diuen que no poden ajudar la publicació de l'*Antologia* perquè el català es parla per poca gent i

At a very general level, Bartra's Catalan anthology represents an act of political resistance in itself, since it defied Franco's prohibition of translating any work into Catalan.²¹² The translation of the poems composing the anthology was carried out in exile, and it aimed to keep alive a language that had been banned from its own land by the dictatorial Spanish regime. Bartra's work can be inscribed in the wider movement of Catalan resistance through translation. In fact, during the decades spanning from 1939, the year of the end of the Spanish Civil War and the beginning of Franco's dictatorship, to the end of the 1950s, when Spanish censorship started to relax and the use of Catalan began to be unofficially tolerated, a fervent translation activity into Catalan continued both abroad and within Spain. The publishing and distribution of these works in Spain was carried out, under the threat of imprisonment and with economic difficulties, by small publishing houses which used subterfuges such as pre-dating books to years prior to 1939, or presenting them as the products of imaginary Latin American publishing houses.²¹³

perquè davant la situació internacional [the war with Korea] no disposen de fons per a coses d'aquestes. Ahir mateix el Congrés votava el préstec de 100 milions a Espanya. Quina amarguesa! Quin destí, el nostre!" (Murià 1990: 204) [yesterday we received a letter from the publishing section of the State Department, saying that they cannot support the publishing of the *Antologia* since Catalan is spoken by very few people and because, considering the international situation [the war with Korea], they have no funds available for things like this. Yesterday, however, the Congress voted a loan of 100 million to Spain! How sad! What a lot is ours!].

²¹² During the first part of Franco's dictatorship, until the mid-1950s, the prohibition was strict. The only exception to this rule was constituted by the translation activity of the Bernat Metge Foundation which, however, was marginal, having been reduced to few books for a limited number of private subscribers (Lafarga and Pegenaute 2009: 433-434).

²¹³ There is an extensive bibliography on the subject of Spanish and Catalan exile and translation. On the topic of Catalan exile and translation I refer to Montserrat Bacardí (2009), and Bacardí and Godayol (2011). Other well-known Catalan poets and writers who worked as translators in exile are Josep Carner, Salvador Espriu, and Josep Maria de Sagarra, to name just a few. It should be stressed that translation (into Catalan) was just one of the activities that these intellectuals used in order to resist Spanish oppression. Other forms of activism included the foundation of journals and the publication of essays and other literary works.

5.2.2 Robert Frost translated by Agustí Bartra

Having introduced, though necessarily in only a few words, the poet-translator in his historical context, I shall now focus my analysis on the poems by Frost translated by Bartra in the Catalan anthology. Frost is one of the poets best represented in the anthology, in terms of number of poems translated.²¹⁴ It is important to stress that Frost's translated poems in the Catalan anthology do not correspond exactly to those in the Spanish one. In the Catalan *Una antologia...* we find 11 titles, while in the Spanish *Antología...* Robert Frost is represented by 12 poems. Only eight of the poems are translated both into Catalan and into Spanish. This fact suggests that even when a poem is translated into both Spanish and Catalan, the Spanish version should not necessarily be considered as deriving from the Catalan one (Ruiz Casanova 2007: 204-205). We might expect that a Spanish translation carried out by a Catalan translator would be influenced by that same translator's own Catalan translation. In Bartra's case, however, a textual analysis reveals neither the presence of calques from Catalan nor the use of the same punctuation (Giugliano forthcoming). These issues make a contrastive analysis of the translated poems all the more interesting and introduce questions regarding the genesis and the originally planned size of both the Catalan and the Spanish anthologies.

In the brief preface to the poems, Bartra introduces Frost, providing the reader with basic biographical data and a description of the most prominent features of Frost's poetics, or, rather, Bartra's own interpretation of those features. He presents the North American poet as a realist, who, together with Edgar Lee Masters and Carl Sandburg, opposed classicism, although each poet did it in his own personal way. According to Bartra, Sandburg's opposition is more vehement, exalting poetry as an effective instrument to achieve brotherhood among people and human regeneration. Masters, on the other hand, would show with his small country epics the immutability of man's life and destiny. As for Frost, the Catalan poet argues:

²¹⁴ In the 1951 edition of *Una antologia...* Frost is the fourth, with 11 poems, preceded by Dickinson (14 poems), Whitman (12), and Sandburg (12).

Dels tres, Frost és el més terrestre i el més densament humà. Les seves descripcions de la naturalesa tenen una màgia quieta, un ritme lent; els seus col·loquis giren entorn d'una acció o d'una experiència, no d'un somni o d'una intuïció, per bé que quan més tard li revé en poesia, quan comença a escriure els primers versos d'un poema, ho faci sota la impressió “de recordar una cosa que no sabia que sabés”.²¹⁵ (Bartra 1951: 75)

[Of the three, Frost is the most earthly and the most densely human. His descriptions of nature have a quiet magic, a slow rhythm; his conversations are about an action or experience, not about a dream or intuition, even though when he recollects it in his poetry, when he starts writing the first lines of a poem, he does it under the impression of “remembering something I didn't know I knew.”]

Bartra's idea of Frost's poetry may seem initially reminiscent of Wordsworth's well-known definition of poetry as “the spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings,” whose origin is found in “emotion recollected in tranquillity” (Wordsworth 2003: 21). However, as Bartra (1951: 76) observes, even though Frost's poetry originates in experience, from the observation of real life, it has within itself “un llast misteriós, una feixuguesa [*sic*] tranquil·la i impersonal” [a mysterious ballast, a tranquil and impersonal heaviness] that projects poetry outside the realm of spirit to objectify it “com si la seva última ventura fos esdevenir també una cosa, acabada, perfecta, amb el seu volum i el seu silenci peculiar” [as if its ultimate fortune were to become a finished thing, perfect in itself, with its own volume and special silence].

5.2.3 Mimetic features in Bartra's translations of Frost: a contrastive analysis

I shall now present a short summary of the results obtained from the contrastive analysis of the original texts and Bartra's translation of Frost's poems in his Catalan *Una antologia...* I focus here on the mimetic devices employed in both source and target texts and on other formal aspects of the composition not immediately related to mimesis of orality, like the genre into which each poem can be

²¹⁵ Bartra's quotation is from Frost's essay 'The Figure a Poem Makes.'

inscribed, the main theme of the poems, and the rhetorical devices employed. The titles of the poems are presented in table 5.1. It should be observed beforehand that the Catalan anthology does not include the source text poems opposite the translations. The translations themselves, which belong to different books of poems written by Frost, are not presented in chronological order of the composition of the source poems. For this reason I have indicated in brackets in table 5.1 the original title of each poem and the collection they belong to.

TABLE 5.1 Bartra's translation of Frost: *Una antologia de la lírica nord-americana*

<p>'Tarda de neu al bosc' ['Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening,' from <i>New Hampshire</i>]</p> <p>'El telèfon' ['The Telephone,' from <i>Mountain Interval</i>]</p> <p>'El lloc nadiu' ['The Birthplace,' from <i>West-Running Brook</i>]</p> <p>'Pols de neu' ['Dust of Snow,' from <i>New Hampshire</i>]</p> <p>'Amor i una pregunta' ['Love and a Question,' from <i>A Boy's Will</i>]</p> <p>'Foc i gel' ['Fire and Ice,' from <i>New Hampshire</i>]</p> <p>'El poltre abandonat' ['The Runaway,' from <i>New Hampshire</i>]</p> <p>'Bedolls' ['Birches,' from <i>Mountain Interval</i>]</p> <p>'La pastura' ['The Pasture,' from <i>North of Boston</i>, later as epigraph to <i>Collected Poems</i>]</p>
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‘La nit d’hivern d’un vell’
 [‘An Old Man’s Winter Night,’ from *Mountain Interval*]

‘El vent del desgel’
 [‘To the Thawing Wind,’ from *A Boy’s Will*]

During the analysis of each source and target text I have quantified those devices of mimesis of orality whenever they could be singled out without ambiguity, that is, whenever it was possible to clearly establish their mimetic function or functions. The comments already made in the introduction of the study and in chapter 4, regarding the limits of the quasi-quantitative approach of this part of the analysis, are applicable here as well. In the case of personal deixis, I have focused on it whenever the deictic element introduces a specific oral or dramatic effect, even though I have not quantified its occurrences. Neither have I carried out any quantitative study of the category of syntactical complexity (parataxis and hypotaxis), though I have paid attention to the overall effect of these constructions in each text. A category like *low lexical variation and colloquial register*, though important for the overall mimetic effect of a text, is also a very large one, since it may refer to most of the lexical material composing the text. While paying attention to the elements of this category whenever they unmistakably evoke oral colloquial communicative situations, I have not quantified their occurrences. I shall provide a brief overview of the results obtained by comparing the mimetic elements detected in the source text and in the target text, summarized in table 5.2 below.

TABLE 5.2 Frequency of mimetic devices in Bartra’s translations

Features of orality	Comparison	Source text occurrences	Target text occurrences
Pragmatic level			
Markers of discourse organization	Decrease	3	1
Markers of turn-taking	Similar	0	0

Phatic markers	Increase	1	3
Hesitation phenomena	Similar	4	4
Reformulation mechanisms	Similar	0	0
Interjections	Increase	0	2
Modal mechanisms	Increase	3	8
Oral narrative: <i>verba dicendi</i>	Increase	6	8
Oral reproduction of reported speech	Similar	6	5
Syntactical level			
Lack of agreement and <i>constructio ad sensum</i>	Similar	0	0
Contaminations, postpositions, funnel technique	Similar	2	2
Incomplete or holophrastic utterances	Similar	8	7
Literary transpositions	Increase	3	6
Oral transpositions	Similar	4	5
Dislocations of theme-rheme order and inversions	Similar	1	2
Syntactical complexity: parataxis and hypotaxis	Not quantified		
Lexico-semantic level			
Low lexical variation and colloquial register	Not quantified		

Lexical iteration	Decrease	12	8
Omnibus words	Increase	0	2
Presentatives	Increase	1	4
Personal deixis	Not quantified		
Spatial deixis	Decrease	16	9
Temporal deixis	Similar	5	4
Demonstrative deixis	Similar	5	4
Emotional implication and expressive-emotive processes	Similar	3	3
Phraseology	Decrease	3	1
Phonic level	Decrease	2	0
Paralinguistic graphic elements	Similar	10	13

On a pragmatic level we observe no significant change in the frequency of use of devices such as markers of turn-taking and reformulation mechanisms (absent in both texts), hesitation phenomena, *verba dicendi*, and oral reproduction of reported speech. Phatic markers, the frequency of which increases slightly in the target text, are the only ones used by Bartra in a more creative way, that is, in positions of the target text having no correspondence in the source text. This phenomenon is probably due to the more eclectic nature of phatic markers, which can carry out more mimetic functions at one time than the other mimetic devices listed above. I have detected a slight but not significant increase in the use of interjections and *verba dicendi* in the target text, whereas a more

substantial increase has been observed in the use of modal mechanisms, that is, of those expressive elements which help readers infer the speakers' point of view, their convictions, their objectives, and the reaction they may want to cause in their listeners. As we know, modal markers are not characteristic solely of communicative immediacy. I have taken into account above all those markers which, due to their concise nature, their relative spontaneity, and their grounding in the extralinguistic situation and in the immediacy of the communicative act connote the language as belonging to communicative immediacy. The modal element used most frequently in the target text, and marking the difference with the source text, is the quantifier *ben*, as can be seen, for example in the poem 'El lloc natiu' ['The Birthplace']: "i sembla **ben** lluny de l'esperança" (l. 2); "I ara **ben** plena d'arbres és sa falda" (l. 14). Even though Koch and Oesterreicher (2007: 102) specify that intensifiers should not be counted as oral markers, I have decided to include *ben* in the category. It seems to me that the quantifier *ben* (as in the expression "Ben lluny d'aquí," found in line 2 of the poem 'El telèfon' ['The Telephone']) in a written text does actually add oral nuances to the text. In fact, it cannot be considered as a simple equivalent of the quantifier *molt* [very], since it introduces additional shades of meaning referring to an emphatic or evaluative attitude of the speaker. The oral connotations of the particle, its polyfunctionality (considering that it is not just a quantifier), and the fact that it suggests the speaker's point of view seem sufficient reasons to include it as a modal marker. Finally, I have detected a decrease, though not significant, in the use of markers of discourse organization with vague referentialization. In a poem like 'Birches,' for example, a marker of discourse organization with relatively vague referentialization, such as *then* ("Then he flung outward, feet first, with a swish, / Kicking his way down through the air to the ground," l. 39-40), is translated with the more time specific term *de cop i volta* [suddenly] ("De cop i volta, bellugant els peus, / davalla rapid fins a tocar a terra," ll. 40-41). In this case at least, however, the oral quality of the target sentence is increased by the fixity of the expression ("De cop i volta").

As for the syntactical devices used by Bartra, I will focus on the categories of syntactical inversions (or transpositions) and syntactical complexity, since no important variation of frequency between source and target text has been detected in the remaining

categories. Syntactical inversions are the only phenomenon whose use increases in the target text. However, their increase does not imply an increase in our perception of orality in the text. In fact, while a phenomenon like theme-rheme dislocation tends to carry out foregrounding and mimetic functions, many of the inversions Bartra introduces in his translations have a literary flavor. A difference should also be drawn, moreover, between the transposition of word order in a noun phrase (adjective-noun) and the inversion of the elements of a clause (verb-subject-adverb-noun phrase). I shall consider some examples highlighting in bold the mimetic devices on which I intend to focus:

Example 5.1

From ‘Tarda de neu al bosc’	From ‘Stopping by Woods...’
A. Jo sé prou bé de qui són aquests boscos (1. 1)	A. Whose woods these are I think I know. (1.1)
B. I també sé, al poble , quin fogar és el seu (1. 2)	B. His house is in the village though (1. 2)
C. D’un arbre cau un esponjós focall (1. 11)	C. of easy wind and downy flake (1. 12)

Example 5.2

From ‘Amor i una pregunta’	From ‘Love and a Question’
A. un capaltard, i amb el nuvi parlà (1. 1)	A. And he spoke to the bridegroom fair (1. 2)
B. i un verd bastó a la mà (1. 4)	B. He bore a green-white stick in his hand (1. 3)
C. Ses baies eren blaves lluïssors (1. 14)	C. The woodbine berries were blue (1. 13)
D. Tardor, l’hivern en el vent alenava (1. 15)	D. Autumn, yes, winter was in the wind (1. 15)
E. La ruta fosca el nuvi contemplava (1. 21)	E. The bridgroom looked at the weary road (1. 21)

<p>F. Però si un home realment tenia el dret de malmenar l'amor d'una parella a casa seva, sí que s'ho preguntà.</p> <p>(ll. 29-32)</p>	<p>F. But whether or not a man was asked To mar the love of two By harboring woe in the bridal house, The bridegroom wished he knew.</p> <p>(ll. 29-32)</p>
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The source text sentences represented in examples 5.1A and 5.2F are two cases of word order transposition (in 5.2F a whole clause is foregrounded). While for the first example it is more difficult to determine the mimetic effect of the stark transpositions of elements in the sentence, since it may be attributed both a literary and a mimetic function, depending also on the intonation with which the line is read, the second example is a clearer case of oral foregrounding. Bartra does not reproduce the first transposition in his translation, but, in case of 5.1F, he introduces a left dislocation that evokes an impression of orality. Examples 5.2B-E of the target text represent cases of transpositions that add literary flavor to the lines, with no correspondence in the source lines, in which the register is colloquial (see, for example, the English line in 5.2D, in which the oral impression is reinforced by the modal particle with emphatic function *yes*).

As for the syntactical complexity of the sentences, which has not been quantified, the study has observed no significant change in the overall mimetic effect of both source and target text.²¹⁶ The only exception to this tendency is represented by the poem 'An Old Man's Winter Night.' In the source text it is possible to observe an alternation of complex, intricate syntactical constructions and simple paratactic structures.²¹⁷ In the target text ('La nit d'hivern

²¹⁶ Even though the syntactical complexity of both source and target text has not been quantified, each poem/translation has been studied individually and the effect of paratactical and hypotactical structures has been considered in relationship to the overall mimetic effect in each text.

²¹⁷ On this aspect of the poem, Mark Richardson (2001: 248) observes: "In lines 18-23, metrical variations lend lightness of movement to lines whose grammatical and syntactical complexity might otherwise embarrass us. Frost manages the suspended grammar delicately and with a colloquial indirection that sorts well, though unusually, with the Miltonic subtleties."

d'un vell') Bartra exemplifies the syntactical structures of the composition, especially in the part presented in lines 18-21 (shorter than the source segment):

Example 5.3

<p>I confià a la lluna —a la lluna tardana Que havia eixit rompuda, però que malgrat tot Era millor que el sol— la neu de la teulada, Els caramells del mur. I l'envaí la son. (ll. 18-21)</p>	<p>He consigned to the moon, such as she was, So late-arising, to the broken moon As better than the sun in any case For such a charge, his snow upon the roof, His icicles along the wall to keep; And slept. [...] (18-23)</p>
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As in the source text, in the final part (ll. 21-27), the sequence of either coordinate clauses connected through the iteration of the connector *i* or of clauses connected by asyndeton contribute to defining the language of the external narrator as that of a storyteller, with clear oral nuances.

On a lexico-semantic level, I have detected in the target text a decrease of the use of spatial deixis which, at the micro-level, leads to a decrease of the oral effect of the fragment, though it does not seem to affect mimesis of orality at the macro-level of the text. A decrease of frequency is also detected in the elements of phraseology. This phenomenon, however, is limited in number of occurrences and does not provoke any considerable change in the target text's mimetic effect. The mimetic device of lexical iteration is also used less frequently in the Catalan translation than in the source text. One of the causes of this phenomenon is Catalan's lower degree of tolerance to repetitions than English. As for the remaining lexico-semantic mimetic devices, no important difference in the frequency of use in source and target texts has been detected. And even though some of the devices have been used creatively, as for example spatio-temporal and demonstrative deictic elements or omnibus words, the overall number of their occurrences does not vary significantly. The only slight increase corresponds to the use of

presentatives, relatively frequent in Catalan language in general in situations of communicative immediacy, that is, in situations of less planned communication. This phenomenon can be seen in the examples below in which the presentative *hi ha*, though not characterizing the lines as oral, suggests a lower degree of formality since it introduces a new element in the discourse in a concise, less specific form.

Example 5.4

From 'Bedolls'	From 'Birches'
A. Per a l'amor no hi ha res més com a la terra (l. 55)	A. Earth is the right place for love (l. 52)
B. En aquest món hi ha coses molt pitjors que ser un gronxaire de bedolls (l. 62-63)	B. One could do worse than be a swinger of birches (l. 59)

The contrastive textual analysis of the translation of Frost's poems included in *Una antologia...* and the source compositions has allowed me to spot an increase in Bartra's use of the category of lexical variation, and a decrease in use of words with colloquial connotation, compared to the source poems. The category has not been the object of a quantitative study; however, an evaluation of the main differences detected within it is still possible for two reasons. First, the comparison is with a source text presenting a relatively uniform lexical selection, since the great majority of the lexical items composing it belong to a plain, colloquial lexis, as studies like the one by Borroff (1971) have pointed out in detail. As a consequence, any different lexical selection in the target text can be more easily spotted. Second, despite the lack of quantification, I have taken into account for each target poem the mimetic impression produced by its lexis, carefully considering any variation in register. This approach has allowed me to detect the use, in Bartra's translation, of a large presence of elements that evoke a more literary language, even according to the standards of the time in which Bartra was writing. They can be roughly grouped as follows:

- Nouns with literary connotations, as for example *fogar* [hearth/home].
- Archaic words such as *àdhuc* [even], *las* [tired], etc.
- Atonic possessive (as, for example: “**sos** boscos,” instead of the more common form *els seus boscos*, both expressions meaning ‘his woods’), considered archaic nowadays.²¹⁸
- The non-periphrastic form of the past tense, which in Catalan is used only in written texts, thus characterizing the language as belonging to communicative distance.²¹⁹

A few examples of each phenomenon should suffice to show how these devices affect the language of the target text, when compared to the English counterpart:

Example 5.5: Nouns with literary connotations and archaic words

A. D’un arbre cau un esponjós flocall (‘Tarda de neu al bosc,’ l. 11)	A. of easy wind and downy flake (‘Stopping by Woods...,’ l. 12)
B. Ses baies eren blaves lluïssors (‘Amor i una pregunta,’ l. 14,)	B. The woodbine berries were blue (‘Love and a Question,’ l. 13)
C. I romania allà, las , voltat de barrils (‘La nit d’hivern d’un vell,’ l. 9)	C. He stood with barrels around him at a loss. (‘An Old Man’s Winter Night,’ l. 8)

²¹⁸ In fact, though rediscovered by writers and poets of the Catalan Renaixença (19th century) and of the 20th century, their use in everyday language has become less frequent since the 13th century, reduced mainly to family designations (*ma mare*, my mother, *ton pare*, your father, etc.) (Colomina i Castanyer 2002: 553-554).

²¹⁹ The past perfect in Catalan has two semantically equivalent forms: the periphrastic past (which is formed by the indicative present tense of the verb *anar*-to go, used as an auxiliary, and the infinitive of the main verb), and the simple past. The former can be used both in oral and in written communication, and is diastatically and diatopically neutral, i.e. it does not necessarily characterize a context of communicative immediacy. However, the use of the simple past is exclusively consigned to a formal written context, and introduces a higher register, thus approaching the pole of communicative distance (however, this is not the case in the Catalan spoken in Valencia) (Perea 2002: 640-641).

Example 5.6: Atonic possessive adjectives

A. sotjant sos boscos tots coberts de neu (‘Tarda de neu al bosc,’ l. 4)	A. To watch his woods fill up with snow (‘Stopping by Woods...,’ l. 4)
B. entra dins de ma cofurna (‘El vent del desgel,’ l. 11)	B. Burst into my narrow stall (‘To the Thawing wind,’ l. 11)
C. fins a llevar-los llur entercament (‘Bedolls,’ l. 30)	D. Until he took the stiffness out of them (‘Birches,’ l. 31)

Example 5.7: Use of the non-periphrastic past tense form

A. El celler tremolà sota son pas feixuc (‘La nit d’hivern d’un vell,’ l. 10)	A. And having scared the cellar under him (‘An Old Man’s Winter Night,’ l. 9,)
B. el nostre pare construí la casa. Per a l’herba deixà la terra rasa, excavà un pou, feu grans cleses de pi i a tota la família obrí camí (‘El lloc nadiu,’ ll. 3-6)	B. My father built, enclosed a spring, Strung chains of wall round everything, Subdued the growth of earth to grass, And brought our various lives to pass (ll. 3-6, ‘The Birthplace’)

Example 5.5 shows how the use of words with literary connotations (*flocall*, *lluïssors*) shifts the register of the language towards the communicative-distance end of the continuum. A similar effect is triggered by the use, in the translation, of atonic possessive adjectives (example 5.6) and the non-periphrastic past tense form (example 5.7). However, it should also be observed that while these latter two devices are frequently found in Bartra’s translations, they are not the only forms used. In fact, in the target text it is also possible to find both possessives currently used in spoken language and the periphrastic past tense form of verbs. While this alternation of literary and non-literary forms may potentially provoke a certain clash in the overall mimetic effect of the composition, it also becomes an instrument through which the translator differentiates the various voices appearing in the poems. In a purely dramatic dialogue, like the poem ‘El telèfon’ (‘The telephone’), we only find

the periphrastic past tense form, used coherently with the intimate colloquial language of the poem. On the other hand, in the poem 'El lloc natiu' ('The Birthplace'), the form of the past tense which is more frequently used is the non-periphrastic one. This device, however, is not perceived as a dissonant note, at least in the context of the target poem. If we compare it with the source text we can certainly observe a shift in the language of the target text towards the pole of communicative distance. However, the source text's mimesis of orality itself is not as close to communicative immediacy as in other poems of the anthology. The source mimetic effect relies mainly on lexical devices (Frost's plain language), deixis, and paratactical constructions. On the other hand, other formal and non-formal features of the source composition, such as the rhyming couplets, the tetrameters with a predominantly iambic rhythm, and the subject matter (the distant setting, the mythical presence of the mountain as a feminine and motherly element) contribute to defining the voice of the speaking subject as that of a modern storyteller, in which the rhetorical devices are clearly perceptible by readers and listeners. In Bartra's translation of the poem, the mimetic effect characterizes a language midway between communicative immediacy and communicative distance, but there is no clash of effects. The non-periphrastic form blends in well in a text in which other devices, such as atonic possessive particles and rhyming couplets, add a literary flavor and song-like rhythm.

At a phonic level, there is a decrease in the target text of the use of phonic mimetic devices. This result is in part to be expected, considering the higher frequency of standard shortened subject-verb or verb-negation forms in English. Bartra does not introduce in the target text any phonic device playing with the possible contraction of phonemes in one or more words. It should be stressed again, however, that Frost does not use this device frequently, apart from the already mentioned standard short form of subject-verb and verb-negation, as we have seen in the previous chapter.

Finally, in both source and target texts we observe a similar use of graphic devices. The em dash in the translation corresponds to suspension marks in the source text; the aim of both is to suggest the intonational profile of a sentence, stressing at times a hesitation phenomenon already evoked by an incomplete utterance.

5.2.4 In search of translation causes

Material causes: Bartra's mimesis of orality and its relationship with other non-mimetic features

The general observations on the frequency of use of mimetic devices in the target text, compared to the source text, make it possible now to relate the phenomena just described to a selection of other non-mimetic elements of the poems, such as the genre into which the poetic composition can be inscribed (dramatic dialogue, dramatic monologue, lyrical composition, etc.), their subject matter, the meter chosen in the translation, and the presence of other rhetorical devices, with a particular focus on phonic rhetorical devices like rhyme and alliteration, which may represent important constraints on the translation and affect the recreation of mimesis of orality in the target texts. The impression derived during the study of the features of orality in Bartra's translation is that the poet-translator achieves his own evocation of the spoken language mainly through a combination of devices such as plain lexis (composed of common words belonging to a neutral register rather than an explicitly colloquial one), spatio-temporal and demonstrative deixis, and simple syntactical structures made of short sentences and few subordinations. The genre of the original poems affects the choice of register as well. Thus the impression of orality is clearer in poems with a dramatic structure, where pragmatic mimetic features abound, such as 'El telèfon' ('The Telephone'), 'El poltre abandonat' ('The Runaway'), and, to a lesser degree, 'Amor i una pregunta' ('Love and a Question'), where a meditative lyricism seems to prevail. In the poem 'La pastura' ('The Pasture'), which, despite its shortness, still suggests a dramatic situation, Bartra even intensifies the oral effect. The English poem is composed of two quatrains presenting a combination of a plain vocabulary and short sentences. Each quatrain ends with a sentence, "You come too," which Poirier has defined as a "bucolic diaeresis" (1977: 16). Bartra adds a second repetition in the middle of each quatrain (the question "Em sents?" [Can you hear me?]) that is linked to the second repeated sentence ("també véns" [you come too]) and increases the overall oral quality of the composition. The repetition may be interpreted, in fact, as a contact marker, that is, an element the speaker uses in order to keep

the attention of the listener during the conversation, typical of communicative immediacy.²²⁰

In the longer and more meditative poems, such as ‘Bedolls’ (‘Birches’) and ‘La nit d’hivern d’un vell’ (‘An Old Man’s Winter Night’), the register moves towards communicative distance. The change of register seems coherent with the more introspective mood of the compositions. It is of some significance that in these cases the source text, while devoid of clear colloquial overtones, recreates a plain everyday language. The same segments in the target text become richer in words with literary connotations (*asters, las, aura*), sonorous terms (*sondrolla*), archaisms (*llur, àdhuc, adés, devers*), and the use of the simple past (*tremolà, confià*). Thus, the variation in register serves to characterize and distinguish situations and speakers, especially in Frost’s dramatic compositions.²²¹ An example can be seen in lines 11 and 12 of the poem ‘Tarda de neu al bosc’ (‘Stopping by Woods...’): “D’un arbre cau un esponjós flocall / i el vent regolfa i xiscla llargament” [a spongy flake falls from a tree, and the wind whirls and squawks at length]. The more literary register of the two lines is stressed by the noun *flocall* and noun-adjective inversion *esponjós flocall*. The register accompanies a lyrical passage of the poem (corresponding to an equally lyrical moment in the source text), where the speaker becomes aware of the surrounding silence and the sounds of the natural elements.

As for the phonic rhetorical devices employed in his translations, and their interaction with the spoken language evoked in the text, Bartra establishes clear, though not explicitly asserted, priorities. He aims to reproduce the rhythmic effect achieved in the source text by

²²⁰ It should be remarked, however, as Deborah Tannen does (1982: 2), that features such as repetitions of sounds or words and syntactic parallelisms, are often shared by spontaneous conversation and literary discourse.

²²¹ The variation of registers characterizing different psychological situations and different voices is observable in the source text, and is a device often used by Frost himself, as we have seen in chapter 3, during the analysis of ‘The Death of the Hired Man.’ In a similar way, Poirier (1977: 183), when commenting on the poem ‘Stopping by Woods...’, observes how the change in the language suggests a psychological state of the speaker: “He is in danger of losing himself; and his language by the end of the third stanza begins to carry hints of a seductive luxuriousness unlike anything preceding it—‘Easy wind and downy flake...lovely, dark and deep.’ Even before the somnolent repetition of the last two lines, he is ready to drop off.”

the combination of meter, rhyme, alliteration, assonance, and other occasional rhetorical devices such as anaphora and epizeuxis. To do so he translates the source metric form by adopting a metric form of the Catalan poetic tradition, and recreates a rhyme pattern in the target text, whenever rhyme appears in the source text, even though the target and source rhyme patterns are not similar in sound and structure. The dominant metric form in the target text is the decasyllable. This meter is defined by Bargalló (2007: 118) as the line *par excellence* of Catalan poetry. The line used by Bartra is, on some occasions, as in ‘Tarda de neu al bosc’ (‘Stopping by Woods...’), the decasyllable with a caesura ‘a minore,’ i.e. a verse divided into two hemistichs, the first of four syllables, usually with ‘masculine’ ending (that is, with the stress on the last syllable of the word), the second of six (4+6).²²² However, we also find other shorter and longer measures and combinations. For example, when the original poem presents an alternation of tetrameters and dimeters, mainly iambic, with the rhyming pattern abab cdc dc, Bartra alternates longer lines (mainly 12 syllables) with shorter ones (up to four syllables) with the rhyming pattern abba ccdee. Another interesting example is the translation of the poem ‘El vent del desgel’ (‘To the Thawing Wind’). The source text is a short poem composed of fifteen end-stopped trochaic tetrametric lines with the rhyme pattern aabb ccdd eeff gh. The overall rhythmic impression of the poem is the result of the short marked tetrameters, the couplets and the trochaic rhythm, which invest the composition with a joyful, light tone.²²³ The translation recreates a similar marked rhythm using a regular line structure alternating octasyllables and heptasyllables and a rhyme pattern that comes closer to the chained rhyme scheme (abca defe ghij lmn). In order to clarify the way these elements interact in Bartra’s translations, and the parallels we can trace with similar dynamics in the source text, I shall briefly

²²² According to Oliva (2008: 111-113), this kind of decasyllable ‘a minore’ cannot be considered as divided into two hemistichs with a caesura, but rather into two colons with a cut (*tall* in Catalan). The different terminology would allow for decasyllables with a feminine ending in the first hemistich. Such a distinction introduces a taxonomy of the decasyllabic line based on a decreasing degree of separation within the two parts of the line: a decasyllable with a caesura, one with a cut, and one without separation.

²²³ “Over the centuries, the trochee has been used successfully for various short poems and for brief passages of poetic dialogue, but it’s particularly effective for light verse and incantatory (often macabre) poetry” (Baer 2006: 20)

analyze the meter and rhetorical phonic devices used in the emblematic ‘Tarda de neu al bosc’ (‘Stopping by Woods...’).²²⁴ Bartra adopts the decasyllable with a caesura ‘a minore’ to translate Frost’s iambic tetrameter. Moreover, the type of line used by Bartra preserves the iambic pattern of the original poem. The second element of rhythmic regularity is provided by the rhyme pattern of the quatrains *abcb dcde fgfh iiii*. Within this pattern, the strictly non-rhyming lines are nevertheless equated by assonance (the stressed vowels in *boscós-lloc*, [bóskus-łóc] at the end of lines 1 and 3; *bosc-tothom* [bósk - tutóm] at the end of line 5 and 8).

Further phonic rhetorical devices like alliteration and assonance within the same line create chains of sounds linking words to each other and echoing through the lines. Here are some examples (accompanied by the source line and by my back-translation in square brackets):

Example 5.8

<p>A. Jo sé prou bé de qui són aquests boscós [I know well whose woods these are] (1. 1)</p>	<p>A. Whose woods these are I think I know (1. 1)</p>
<p>B. L’aturament entre el llac blanc i el bosc [the halt between the white lake and the woods] (1. 6)</p>	<p>B. Between the woods and frozen lake (1. 7)</p>
<p>C. Sotjant sos boscós tots coberts de neu [keeping watch on his woods all covered with snow] (1. 4)</p>	<p>C. To watch his woods fill up with snow (1. 4)</p>
<p>D. Bell i profund és el bosc per a mi [The woods are beautiful and deep to me] (1. 13)</p>	<p>D. The woods are lovely, dark and deep (1. 13)</p>

²²⁴ See digital appendix 1 for the whole text of the poem.

In example 5.8A there is an internal rhyme between /sé/ and /bé/ and an alliteration of /s/. Example 5.8B presents an alliteration of /b/, and an assonance of the sound /a/. Example 5.8C presents an alliteration of /s/. Example 5.8D presents a near-alliteration of the voiceless plosive /p/ and the voiced plosive /b/.

Finally, the repetition of the same ending line of the poem (“i ésser molt lluny, lluny, abans de dormir / i ésser molt lluny, lluny, abans de dormir ...!,” ll. 15-16) reproduces the scheme of the source text (“And miles to go before I sleep, / And miles to go before I sleep.” ll. 15-16) with the variation of the suspension marks and a final exclamation mark. The repetition seems to define and polish the regularity of the rhythmical pattern which the sound effects scattered throughout the composition had previously suggested. The evenness of the rhythm, like that of a lullaby, helps justify in part the impression of engrossment or of a hypnotic effect that influences both the speaker in the poem and readers outside of it.

There is even an oblique reference in the translator’s introductory words on Frost to how the phonic effects I have analysed so far in Bartra’s translations are related to his mimesis of orality. In the final lines of his foreword, Bartra focuses, though briefly, on Frost’s individual poetic language. To explain its features to readers he paraphrases Frost by saying:

Frost, per bé que hagi escrit cançons d’una gran delicadesa musical, no és un poeta que canta, sinó un poeta que parla. I per a fer-ho sap esperar —com diu ell mateix— que l’emoció trobi el seu pensament i que el pensament trobi les paraules. (Bartra 1951: 76)

[Despite having written songs of great musical delicacy, Frost is not a poet who sings but rather one who speaks. To do so he is ready to wait —as he himself says— for the emotion to find its thought, and for the thought to find the words.]

The Catalan poet is referring to Frost’s statement about the “speaking tone of voice somehow entangled in the words and fastened to the page for the ear of the imagination” (Frost 1995: 713), though his words also remind readers of Wordsworth’s

“emotion recollected in tranquillity.” A similar strained relationship between the metrical structure and the speaking intonation seems to be found in the translation. The metrical structure of the Catalan line, together with the phonic devices described, certainly creates a regular rhythm, but this rhythm never turns into doggerel, as it seems to mould its pattern to certain rhythms of orality of the Catalan language, which however, blend in well with a more poetic evocative language.

Efficient causes: Bartra’s mimesis of orality in translation and his personal style as a writer

If Frost’s poems speak, and do not sing, the same can be said of Bartra’s translations. However, the translations also give voice to the Catalan poet’s original voice, and as such show elements that can be attributed to his personal style. Two studies by Vallverdú (1985 [1971]; 1988) support this position. In his work, Vallverdú creates a list of the main lexical and morphosyntactical features of Bartra’s literary language, and observes within the lexical features a “predilecció marcada per mots no usuals caracteritzats per la seva sonoritat (romboll, esmolall, estretall, orenola, invarsós [*sic*], etc.)” (Vallverdú 1988: 63) [a marked preference for unusual words, characterized by their sonority (whirlwind, edge [of a blade], strait, swallow [bird], rapid [if *ivaçós*], etc.)]. Within the morphosyntactical features, Vallverdú identifies the use of the atonic possessives (*mon, ton, son*, etc.). The Catalan scholar observes, however, that the use of atonic possessive adjectives is not constant in Bartra’s work, and may be partly due to metrical needs (Vallverdú 1988: 65). During the textual analysis we could observe how often the elements in the translations which were considered as belonging to the communicative distance or to a literary register fell into one of the groups of lexical or morphosyntactical characteristics outlined by Vallverdú’s article. As for the meter adopted in Bartra’s translation, it is possible to relate it to the poet’s predilection for the alexandrine and the decasyllabic lines in his poetry. An article written by Miquel Desclot (2008) on the peculiar features of Bartra’s poetics confirms the relationship between Bartra’s language in his translations of Frost’s poems and his own voice as a poet. Desclot starts by observing Bartra’s position as an outsider in the literary scene of his youth. His lower social background and his lack of formal university studies differentiate him from the major literary figures

of his time, who mostly belong to well-off Catalan families. This fact allows him to elude the influence of the dominant cultural trends of his times.

Va començar a escriure poesia, doncs, segons els models que l'havien impressionat fins aleshores. Maragall, pel que fa a la tradició pròpia, i Whitman, introduït a Catalunya pel modernista Cebrià Montoliu, pel que fa a la tradició universal (un món completament a part del que habitaven els seus companys formats en l'òrbita ribiana, malgrat el sempre declarat maragallisme de Riba). (Desclot 2008: 44)

[He started writing poetry according to the models that had impressed him until that moment. Maragall, regarding his own tradition, and Whitman, introduced in Catalonia by the *modernista* writer Cebrià Montoliu, regarding the universal tradition (completely different from the tradition followed by his companions, who developed within the orbit of Riba, despite the alleged *maragallism* of the latter).]

Bartra's different approach to poetry is consolidated during the experience of exile, which, despite its harshness, contributes to the development of a mature poetry, "rica de crits i despullada dels preciosismes heretats del Simbolisme" ["rich in cries and stripped of the preciousness inherited from Symbolism"] (Desclot 2008: 46). Apart from these general affinities, however, more specific points of contact between Bartra's poetic language and the language of his translations of Frost's poems (and of his translations in general, with of course certain differences) can be found in two identifiable elements: the dramatic quality of his poetry, which offers him the possibility to present themes through other voices; and the coinage of a personal literary language in which neologisms and archaisms cohabit. As for the first point, Desclot links Bartra's language to the construction of myth, which is a central factor in his poetry, and observes:

D'entrada, l'elecció del mite per donar estructura a les seves visions ofereix al poeta la possibilitat de produir-se dramàticament en segones veus, com cap altre poeta català de la seva generació no faria (Bartra és, de fet, d'aquells pocs poetes

que, com Shakespeare, donen el millor de si mateixos quan parlen per boca d'un altre). (Desclot 2008: 48)

[To begin with, the choice of myth as an element giving structure to his visions offers the poet the chance to perform through second voices, as no other Catalan poet of his generation would do (Bartra is among the few poets who, like Shakespeare, give their best when they speak through other people's voices).]

The dramatic quality of Bartra's poetic style certainly helps highlight its affinities with the style of his translations and sheds some light on the personal causes that may have led the poet-translator to differentiate the voices in his translations (especially the voice of the speaker-narrator and the voices of the characters) by means of different registers (the first more literary, the second more colloquial), as we have seen during the analysis (section 5.2.3). On the other hand, Desclot's second remark on Bartra's personal literary language may contribute to identifying at least some of the causes behind the shift detected in the target text as a consequence of a higher number of archaisms and words with literary connotations. Desclot draws a link between Bartra's personal style and the isolation suffered during the exile:

Allunyat durant trenta anys de la llengua parlada per la gent, el poeta es veu abocat a construir-se intuïtivament una llengua literària on els arcaïsmes acaben fent costat als neologismes, on les rareses lèxiques brillen com descobertes enlluernades, on els possessius simples senyoregen extemporàniament com en un autor de la Renaixença, on les rimes difícils a la manera de Guerau de Liost sonen com conquestes avantguardistes. Val a dir, tantmateix, que el retorn a Catalunya (1970) va suscitar, com era natural, una certa suavització en aquesta excepcionalitat estilística. (Desclot 2008: 49)

[Having been separated for thirty years from the language spoken by people, the poet is urged to build intuitively a literary language where archaisms end up side by side with neologisms, where lexical oddities shine like dazzling discoveries, where simple possessives extemporaneously dominate like in the work of a *Reinaxença* author, where difficult rhymes in the style of Guerau de Liost sound like avant-garde conquests. It should be

said, though, that his return to Catalonia (1970) provoked, as it is natural, a softening of this stylistic exceptionality.]

Desclot's causal link between Bartra's linguistic isolation during his exile and the development of his personal poetic style should be attenuated, in my view, by the fact that Bartra remained in contact with other Catalan intellectuals in exile and participated in the activities organized by them to keep Catalan language and culture alive. Nonetheless, Desclot's comment is interesting since it confirms the connection, suggested above and also supported by Vallverdú's study, between Bartra's style of original writing and his style of translating. However, the generally plain style of Bartra's translations allows us to perceive Frost's recreation of orality behind his own. Finally, it is necessary to take into account the diachronic dimension of both the target language and the target literary systems. We should bear in mind that the idea of the colloquial or even the neutral discursive register in Catalan has changed in the last sixty years. Similarly, the acceptability of oral colloquial language has also shifted within the Catalan literary system.²²⁵

5.2.5 Reflections on the role of Bartra's translations in the Catalan socio-political context

So far I have focused on linguistic and stylistic aspects of Bartra's translations. The study has enabled me to identify elements which can be considered peculiar to his poetic style. It also reveals the translator's choice to produce a text recreating in Catalan an impression of orality similar to that perceived in Frost's poems. We should now question how the results of our previous textual analysis of his translations, the micro-level of the study (Lambert and Van Gorp 2006 [but written in 1985]), relate to the poet-translator's historical context.

My linguistic and textual analysis has shown the translator's attention to both the spoken quality of the source text and the interplay of the devices of mimesis of orality with the metrical structure of the composition. The translation choices lead to a translation which may be considered acceptable (Toury 1995), that

²²⁵ See Marco (2000) for more details.

is, a translation that abides by the linguistic and stylistic norms of the target culture. As we could see from the examples provided during the analysis, the Catalan employed in the target text is normative in that it does not diverge from standard language. This observation is hardly a surprise, though, since Frost's very mimesis of orality does not correspond to any specific linguistic variation and creates the impression of a general American colloquial register. It is with the combination of the register, the imagery, and the dramatic form of the poems that he conveys the impression of oral speech characteristic of the New England region. Frost's particular stylistic footprint, as a consequence, does not confront translators with problems of translation related to specific linguistic diatopic or diastratic variations, as could be the case of the translation of some poems by Robert Lowell, Frank O'Hara or, to cite a more contemporary example, Ntozke Shange.

Moreover, the normative reform of modern Catalan carried out by Pompeu Fabra in 1913 with his work *Normes ortogràfiques*, established in 1918 with the *Gramàtica catalana*, had set a model of language whose authority had not yet been questioned when Bartra was writing. Briguglia (2009) describes the role played by translation in Catalonia during *Modernisme* and *Noucentisme*. During this period, the writers' engagement with the development and definition of the Catalan language becomes stronger and translation comes to be considered an instrument of empowerment of the language itself, as it is able to restore the ancient social, cultural, and literary prestige that Catalan had enjoyed during the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries (Briguglia 2009: 217-18). The Bernat Metge Foundation (created in 1922, at the end of *Modernisme*), which was responsible for a seminal translation activity, stressed the importance of a necessary adaptation of the language to the grandeur of translated works: "el llenguatge tenia que aconseguir elasticitat i abundància, i trobar la seva forma natural i enriquida de tot el lèxic perdut en el temps" (Briguglia 2009: 219) [the language had to achieve elasticity and abundance, and had to find its natural form while being enriched by the lexical body which had been lost during the past]. Marco (2000: 31-37) observes, with special reference to the translations done by the Catalan writer Josep Carner (1884-1970), that translation activities were used, especially during the first thirty years of the twentieth century, to defend the recently developed language model. Translation was

considered the ideal vehicle for the transmission of both the stylistic orthodoxy and the moral values supported by *Noucentisme*. Understandably, this position ended up assuming purist overtones during the Civil War, when the threat of the dictatorship to the Catalan language, and to the cultural identity that a language can represent, was more painfully felt. In relation to these observations we find a study by Pujol on Bartra's translation of T.S. Eliot's *The Waste Land*. Pujol observes that

El desajust entre el registre oral de l'original d'Eliot i el registre literari de la traducció que en fa Bartra és degut al model de llengua del Bartra escriptor, un model de llengua que tendeix al conservadorisme segurament a causa de l'exili que va patir el poeta, que sentia la necessitat —com altres escriptors, per exemple Pere Calders— de conservar la llengua literària tot evitant de no caure en l'anarquia del 'català que ara es parla.' (Pujol 2009: 295)

[The disparity between the oral register of Eliot's original and the literary register of Bartra's translation is a consequence of the linguistic model of Bartra as a writer, a linguistic model that tended toward conservatism probably because of the poet's exile. Bartra felt the need —like other writers, such as, for example, Pere Calders— to preserve the literary language while avoiding falling into the anarchy of 'Catalan as it is now spoken.']

As Pericay and Toutain observe (1996), the general conservative attitude, drawing on the contrived, artificial language used in translation of prose by Carner (so different from the agile, ironic language often close to communicative immediacy which the Catalan writer used in his own prose production) would eventually become a distinctive stylistic trait of Catalan translators and writers in the following decades, even after the end of the dictatorship. More than once, however, the writers clarify (Pericay and Toutain 1996: 95; 167; 199) that their criticism of the extremes to which the doctrine of *Noucentisme* had brought the Fabrian reform cannot be applied to the language of poetry:

Si és evident que en la prosa els *noucentistes* no van saber o no van voler fixar un model de llengua prou madur, és a dir, capaç de servir de vehicle a una diversitat de gèneres i estils, en la

poesia sí que sembla que aquest objectiu es va aconseguir d'una manera rotunda, i només cal llegir *Salvatge cor*, les *Elegies de Bierville* o *Nabí* per adonar-se'n. (Pericay and Toutain 1996: 167)

[While it is clear that, in prose, *Noucentista* writers could not or would not establish a model of sufficiently mature language, that is, a language able to serve as a vehicle for a variety of genres and styles, in poetry they did seem to achieve this objective in an accomplished way. Reading *Salvatge cor* or the *Elegies de Bierville* [by Carles Riba], or *Nabí* [by Josep Carner] is enough to become aware of it.]

The comment quoted above is fundamental to understanding the quality of Bartra's language in his translations of poetry. The model of poetic language of *Noucentisme* had achieved maturity, that is, had produced common models of language which granted continuity while safeguarding freedom of style (Pericay and Toutain 1996: 167). In light of this observation, the conservative attitude detected in Bartra's translations should be divested of any negative connotation since it does not result in an artificial language. In his Catalan translations of Frost's poems, Bartra succeeds in smoothly combining oral, neutral, and literary features and registers, achieving stylistic unity.

These considerations certainly help frame Bartra's translations within the poet's wider political context. In fact, Bartra's translations of Frost's poems (and, indeed, in the whole *Una antologia...*), apart from being a testimony of the Catalan poet's poetic preferences, personal style, and poetics of translation, can ultimately be considered a stance against the cultural oppression of Franco's regime. Despite the very limited distribution of his translations, they can nevertheless be considered pro-active acts that aim at achieving a social, political, and cultural goal. The term *activism*, as defined by Tymoczko (2010: 12-15), entails the notion of social accountability and the translator's perception of empowerment that the act of translation implies, aiming at cultural change, language protection or reform, and the building or preservation of a national identity. I have already mentioned that Bartra's act of translation was intended to protect the Catalan language (the second point in the description of activism).

Moreover, the translation of a selection of contemporary North American poets starting with Walt Whitman served to introduce different voices of modernity into Catalan culture (the first point). It is interesting to describe the link between the building or preservation of a national identity (the third point) and the poet's translations. In order to do so, we should first clarify Bartra's position towards the regime. According to his son Roger, from the outbreak of the Civil War in 1936 until Franco's death in 1975 "la vida d'Agustí Bartra es defineix per la lluita i la resistència contra el franquisme. El 70% de la seva vida adulta va transcórrer sota l'ombra ominosa de Franco" (Bartra and Abrams 2009: 316) [Agustí Bartra's life is defined by the fight and the resistance against Franquism. 70% of his adult life was spent under Franco's ominous shadow]. However, later on Roger Bartra clarifies his words, claiming that his father did not have a defined political position, which caused him problems with his Catalan compatriots. "Certament, era un humanista d'esquerres, però rebutjava tot compromís militant" (2009: 318) [Of course, he was a left-wing humanist, but he rejected any militant commitment]. In a similar way, his works showed a deeper political and social commitment, grounded in his land, his culture, and his epoch, without following specific political trends of the moment (2009: 322).²²⁶ In his study of translation and national identities, Venuti (2005: 180) observes that "translation can support the formation of national identities through both the selection of foreign texts and the development of discursive strategies to translate them." Venuti studies the cases of Catalan translators Josep Carner and Joan Sales, who produced at different times different kinds of translations, the first being foreignizing, the second domesticating (2005: 199). What both translators had in common, however, was their militant position and

²²⁶ Asked in an interview in 1965 what his position was on "committed poetry," Bartra answered: "No hi ha exemple d'una gran poesia que vagi contra l'home. Els Nazis no varen tenir ni un sol gran poeta. Considero el poeta com un home de veritats i de fundació. Com tot home, ha de triar. La poesia, però, en la seva llibertat infinita, només està 'engagée' amb ella mateixa, la qual cosa no vol dir que rebutgi de ser condicionada per la circumstància i la temporalitat" (Bartra 1980: 88) [There is no example of great poetry that goes against men. The Nazis did not have any single great poet. I consider the poet to be a man of truth and foundation. Like every man, he has to choose. Poetry, however, in its infinite freedom, is only committed with itself, which does not mean that it refuses to be conditioned by the circumstances and temporality].

the fact that their translations are mainly from prose texts. The lack of open political militancy in the case of Bartra makes it more difficult to identify the possible link between his desire to contribute to the formation of a national identity and the choice of foreign texts. We can hypothesize, however, that the choice to translate only modern North American poets may have been in part a consequence of the fact that the North American culture and poetic ideals could be used to inspire the strengthening of the Catalan national identity. The affinity is subtle, and may be seen in the cultural independence that North American literature, and especially poetry, was in process of achieving from European and British influences. This idea appears more clearly if we assume Bartra's perspective, that is, the perspective of a non-anglophone European reader.²²⁷

Bartra's description of the essence of contemporary North America and his decision to work on a Catalan translation of an anthology of North American poets point to the poet's admiration for this culture. By contributing to the establishment of a Catalan canon of North American contemporary poets he is also proposing a model which younger Catalan generations may follow as an example in the definition of their identity, undermined by the dictatorial regime in Spain. The choice of the subject, contemporary North American poetry, could also bring the attention of a leading political power, the USA, to a Catalan cultural reality and the Catalan cause.²²⁸ The

²²⁷ Ruiz Casanova (2011: 219-249) provides a detailed overview of the formation of an identifiable canon of North American literature in Hispanic cultures through the publication of anthologies. He makes a distinction between anthologies edited in English and translations into Spanish. Moreover, within the latter category, he distinguishes between anthologies of Anglo-American literature and anthologies of North American literature. According to the scholar, among the anthologies in English, only *New Poetry* (1917) by Alice Anderson, and much later, Matthiessen's *Oxford Book of American Verse* (1950) (which may have influenced Bartra himself) included in their selections voices and aesthetics of the twentieth century (2011: 226). It is no surprise, therefore, that the formation of a North American canon of poetry translated into Spanish becomes relevant only later, during the forties, first in Latin America, and then in Spain (2011: 226-227).

²²⁸ The fact that Bartra chose to translate contemporary North American poets has certainly much to do with his contingent economic needs and with the fact that he was applying for a Fulbright scholarship. This observation, however, neither contradicts nor excludes the previous observation on the active role of his translations. First, because he had already been working on the project before

disappointment deriving from the US State Department's later refusal to support the publication and distribution of the Catalan anthology and its decision to send economic help to Spain (described by the words of Anna Murià, quoted before in footnote 211), is not simply a consequence of the poet's missed opportunity for economic gain (which he might have achieved through a larger scale publication of the anthology in the USA). Bartra's disappointment confirms the poet's implication in the Catalan cause and his frustration at its lack of recognition. The US State Department's denial certainly affected the cultural, social, and political impact of the anthology (at least in the short term), since only a limited number of copies of the book were published in 1951 by Letres Publishing House,²²⁹ and the distribution of the book was mainly limited to Mexico. However, this fact does not nullify its political and social impact altogether. Many other acts of generally recognized political activism, like the institution of Catalan poetry contests (the *Jocs Florals de la Llengua Catalana*)²³⁰ and of Catalan

winning the scholarship. And second, because in life ideals often need to come to terms with the needs of reality in order to be at least partially fulfilled. Any moral system has contradictions within itself (Maria Tymoczko, private conversation, 2010).

²²⁹ I cannot give at the moment the exact reference of the number of copies published in 1951. In her study on Catalan editions in Mexico, Ferriz Roure (1998: 27-34) stresses the problems of publication and distribution in Mexico of books in Catalan which only achieved a limited number of readers (a few hundred). The sales of a book written in Catalan did not often recoup the economic effort of its publication and promotion.

²³⁰ The *Jocs Florals* were first established in Toulouse in 1323 and celebrated there since 1324 on May 1st. They drew inspiration from classic Roman festivals. In 1393 John I of Aragon introduced the games in Catalonia. The celebration of the contests, abandoned in the fifteenth century, was reestablished in Barcelona in 1859 under the name *Jocs Florals de Barcelona*. The outbreak of the Civil War in 1936 interrupted them once again until 1970. During this time a private commemoration in Barcelona substituted the actual contest. However, its celebration continued abroad under the name of *Jocs Florals de la Llengua Catalana* [Floral Games of the Catalan Language], from 1941 to 1970. Their role as an instrument of political activism is described by Manent (1989: 84), among others, who observes: "Van néixer en 1941, quan la llengua de Catalunya era reduïda per decret a l'àmbit purament familiar i privat, i una altra llengua privava, públicament, desafiadorament, com l'única de les manifestacions cultural i, en general, públiques. Els Jocs Florals de la Llengua Catalana responien, doncs, a la necessitat de proclamar des de l'exili que l'opressió d'un país trobava un altaveu de denúncia en allò que habitualment només hauria d'ésser una festa literària" [They were born in 1941, when the Catalan language had been reduced, by

journals, had an equally limited distribution and were more than once accused of carrying out a culturally endogamic and elitist activity. Moreover, though probably confined to the Catalan community in exile, Bartra's anthology also achieved resonance by being granted the Cebrià de Montoliu Award at the *Jocs Florals* celebrated in New York on October 6th, 1951.

The linguistic and stylistic analysis of Bartra's translations into Catalan which I carried out in the initial section of this chapter has shown how the Catalan poet integrated and adapted some of the features of Frost's language in the target texts. Here, the points of convergence and divergence from the original reveal the main features of Bartra's language in translation, indicating what the poet-translator prioritized (for example the original rhythm), what he chose to adapt, what he kept, and what he changed. The results of the textual analysis are fundamental, as they allow a better understanding of the causal relationship between the language of Bartra as a translator and as a poet and his condition as an exiled Catalan intellectual who had lost his land, could not publish in Catalan in Catalonia, and was witnessing the gradual disappearance of his mother tongue from the literary and public sphere under Franco's linguistic repression and censorship. By taking into account Bartra's socio-political context, I have described a causal relationship between certain linguistically more traditional translation choices that not only Bartra, but most Catalan translators made during the years of the dictatorship and their reaction to the political situation. Bartra's linguistic conservatism, as an act of defensive closure of the language against a direct threat to it, is counterbalanced by the longer term effect which the translations brought about: the opening up of Catalan culture to modern poetic trends and sensibilities coming from anglophone literature. It is certainly also through Bartra's translation, in fact, that contemporary Catalan poets like Miquel Desclot and Joan Margarit became acquainted with and were influenced by Frost's work.

decree, to the purely familiar and private circle, and another language was publicly and defiantly dominating as the only language of cultural and, in general, public manifestations. The *Jocs Florals de la Llengua Catalana* answered the need to declare from exile that the oppression of a country had found an instrument of denunciation there, where normally only a literary festival had been.]

Today, Bartra's translations of the works of North American poets (including T.S. Eliot's *The Waste Land*) are considered important literary texts and a necessary point of reference for Catalan translators who engage in new translations of the poems.²³¹

5.3 Miquel Desclot

Perquè, mentre vaig treballar en català, vaig tenir la sensació de fer sempre equilibris damunt la corda fluixa, sense xarxa protectora.

(Desclot, *Traducció i tradició*)

In 1994, Edicions 62, a publishing house based in Barcelona, published *Al nord de Boston*, an anthology of nine poems by Robert Frost with parallel translations into Catalan by Miquel Desclot and an introduction written by the Spanish poet Ángel Crespo. As the translator informs his readers in his 'Nota sobre la traducció' [Remarks on the translation], eight of the nine titles of the anthology (summarized in table 5.1) are taken from Frost's book *North of Boston*, while the last one, "Out, Out—" ('«Apaga't, apaga't...»') belongs to the collection *Mountain Interval*.

²³¹ However, this comment should be clarified. The relationship between Bartra's translation of Eliot's *The Waste Land* (*La terra eixorca*) and successive translations of the same poem carried out in Catalan (as, for example, Joan Ferraté's *La terra eixorca*, published in 1952 and re-edited in 1977 with the title *La terra gastada*) is not straightforward. This lack of contact among the translations is in part a consequence of the limited distribution of Bartra's anthology in Catalonia. Ruiz Casanova (2011: 238-248) also points to a potential strategy of esthetic appropriation of Eliot's poetic voice, which led a group of intellectuals of Barcelona in the 1950s to ignore Bartra's translations, thus assuming the role of introducers of the American poet's work in Catalonia. Recent studies, however, have dedicated more and more attention to the relationship between Bartra and Eliot, their poetic affinity, and its consequences in Bartra's translations as well as in his own poetic activity (see Pujol 2009 and Julià 2009). These studies contribute to a clarification of the position occupied by Bartra's translations of Eliot in the reception of the North American poet in Catalonia.

TABLE 5.3 Desclot's translation of Frost: *Al nord de Boston*

1. 'Refent paret'	'Mending Wall'
2. 'La mort del mosso'	'The Death of the Hired Man'
3. 'La muntanya'	'The Mountain'
4. 'Enterrament domèstic'	'Home Burial'
5. 'Serventa de servents'	'A Servant to Servants'
6. 'Després de collir pomes'	'After Apple-Picking'
7. 'El codi'	'The Code'
8. 'La pila de llenya'	'The Wood Pile'
9. '«Apaga't, apaga't...»'	““Out, Out—””

The book is the expanded version of a translation task which Desclot had received from the *Faig arts* journal in 1989 consisting of the translation of four poems published in 1991. While the translator comments that a selection of just nine poems cannot suffice to provide a satisfying knowledge of Frost's poetry, he also argues that these poems are among Frost's longest compositions and are taken from the best-known of his books. When justifying the selection of titles for the anthology, Desclot inscribes his work within the translation tradition of Frost established by Agustí Bartra.²³²

Desclot's comments on Frost's poetic language are brief, since the task of describing the North American poet, his work and poetics is mainly carried out by the interesting introduction written by Crespo. However, he does make a number of meta-poetic comments from his perspective as a translator. Desclot argues:

²³² "A l'hora de fer la selecció, vaig tenir en compte els onze poemes traduïts per Bartra, per tal de no coincidir en la tria. Finalment, em vaig decidir per alguns dels poemes més estimats pel públic lector americà, pertanyents al segon llibre del poeta, *Al nord de Boston*, de 1914, que la crítica anglesa havia saludat, en aparèixer, com la desclosa d'una gran personalitat poètica, i del qual Bartra no havia escollit cap poema." (Desclot 1994: 19) [When making the selection, I took into account the eleven poems translated by Bartra, in order not to coincide with him in my choice. In the end, I chose some of the poems American readers loved most, belonging to the poet's second book, *North of Boston*, from 1914, which English criticism had welcomed at the time of its first appearance as the revelation of a great poetic personality, and from which Bartra had not selected any poem.]

Ara bé, tot i les dificultats que havia trobat a Amèrica per fer conèixer els seus versos, Frost no era, ni en els primers poemes ni més tard, un poeta revolucionari o experimental. Però en efecte, la seva poesia, realista i discursiva, havia de resultar xocant per al públic de primers de segle, aviciat pel sentimentalisme ensucrat i cançoner que prevalia. (Desclot 1994: 19)

[Now, despite the difficulties he met in America in order to promote his poetry, Frost was no revolutionary or experimental poet, in his first poems or later. However, his poetry, realist and conversational as it was, must have appeared shocking to the public of the beginning of the century, spoiled by the dominant sugary and dawdling sentimentalism.]

Desclot draws then a parallel, which had also been drawn in Bartra's introduction, between Frost and Wordsworth, stressing that both poets were concerned with the language of common people. Both poets were interested in testing the limits of this language when used as the language of poetry. Finally, after stressing this concept by quoting Gibson's comments on the spoken quality of Frost's characters in his poems, he concludes hinting at his self-assigned translation priorities:

És per aquesta raó que, després de donar-hi moltes voltes, vaig renunciar a la rima en l'únic poema que en anglès era rimat ['After Apple-Picking']: tenia por que l'esforç per aconseguir les consonants no m'allunyés traïdorament, ni que fos una mica, d'aquell llenguatge d'aparença tan natural que és la peculiaríssima substància d'aquests poemes. (Desclot 1994: 20)

[For this reason, after thinking it over and over again, I gave up the rhyme in the only rhymed poem in English: I was afraid that the effort to achieve the consonant sounds would treacherously move me away, even if only little, from that apparently natural language that is the very special substance of these poems.]

These are interesting comments, since they stress the importance that Desclot, like the translators whose work we have analyzed so far, attributes to the recreation of orality in his translations of

Frost's poems. Later on in the chapter I will come back to these comments, as they can be adopted as a benchmark during and after the analysis of the translations.

5.3.1 *Al nord de Boston*: a textual analysis

The limited number of poems included in the anthology *Al nord de Boston* makes it easier to achieve an overview of the textual mimetic features of both source and target compositions, of their common traits and their more specific aspects. Focusing on the source text first, and on the poetic genres in which the texts can be categorized, we observe the presence of four dramatic dialogues ('The Death of the Hired Man,' 'The Mountain,' 'Home Burial,' and 'The Code'), a dramatic monologue ('A Servant to Servants'), two interior monologues ('Mending Wall,' sharing traits also with the dramatic monologue, and 'After Apple-Picking'), and a narrative poem describing an episode with a brief first person narrator's intrusion ("Out, Out—"). There are no examples in the anthology of shorter lyrical compositions describing a scene almost impersonally, as in 'An Old Man's Winter Night' or 'Spring Pools,' or of short aphoristic, epigrammatic or philosophical compositions, like 'Fire and Ice.'

Examples of the mimetic phenomena detected in the source text have already been given before in the study (section 4.3.1), since most of these poems also belong to Giudici's anthology. In order to avoid redundancy, I will give just a brief overview of the source mimetic devices. More specific examples will be given later on in the section, when I focus directly on the contrastive analysis of the prevailing mimetic devices detected in the source and target corpora.

In the source text, pragmatic mimetic devices prevail in the dramatic compositions, with frequent use above all of markers of discourse organization, phatic markers, hesitation phenomena, interjections, and modal mechanisms. We also find numerous occurrences of reproduction of reported speech and the presence of *verba dicendi*. There are no examples of markers of turn-taking. At a syntactical level, we observe the presence of simple paratactic constructions, like sequences of coordinate clauses. The hypotactic constructions are simple. We also observe the use, especially in the

dramatic dialogues, of incomplete or holophrastic clauses, with emphatic effect. We occasionally find examples of lack of agreement, and theme-rheme dislocation, or the foregrounding with emphatic effect through transpositions of fragments of the clause. At a lexico-semantic level, mimesis of orality is achieved by employing the complete range of lexico-semantic devices. We observe the use, on two occasions, of phonic mimetic devices (if we exclude, of course, the generalized use of the shortened verb-subject-negation form). The first occurrence of the phenomenon is found in the poem ‘The Mountain’: “**Twouldn’t** seem real to climb for climbing it” (l. 88). The aphaeresis contributes to the oral characterization of the voice of the farmer. A second occurrence of the phenomenon is detected in the poem ‘The Code’ and appears on several occasions throughout the poem: “Thinks I, **D’ye** mean it?” (l. 64); “I asked out loud, **so’s** there’d be no mistake” (l. 65); “If **ye** want him, **ye** can go and dig him out” (l. 85); and “He had gone to the house **so’s** not to meet me” (l. 105). In this poem the phonic mimetic device presents more variation, since it appears as an apocope (*D’ye*), an aphaeresis (*so’s*), and a weak form “ye” of the strong form *you*. Also in this case, the device is used to characterize the voice of a hired man, that is, a person who, as in the poem ‘The Mountain,’ occupies a lower position in the social ladder than his interlocutor. The reproduction of the phonic distortions uttered by the character cannot be considered a characteristic of a specific New England dialect. It suggests a lack of accuracy in the articulation of words which is generally associated with the way of speaking of people with a lower degree of education, as can be expected in a hired man. Finally, we also find occurrences of graphic elements (hesitation marks and em dashes) employed to stress suprasegmental features of an utterance such as a certain intonation or the prolongation of a sound, most of the time evoking hesitation phenomena (as, for example, in ‘A Servant to Servants:’ “And I looked to be happy and I was / As I said, for a while—but I don’t know!,” ll. 152-153).

I shall now present the features of orality detected in Desclot’s translation into Catalan. As I proceed with the analysis, I shall also compare these data with those gathered during the study of the source text. The contrastive parameters used are, as in the analyses of Bartra’s and Giudici’s translations, the increasing, decreasing, similar, or divergent use of the mimetic features provided by Koch

and Oesterreicher's framework. Prior to a more discursive presentation of the outcome of the contrastive analysis, however, I present an overview of the results of the quasi-quantitative approach, applied to the target text, summarized in table 5.3. We should bear in mind that the same limitations of this approach already outlined for the translations of Giudici and Bartra can be applied to this case.

TABLE 5.4 Mimetic effects in Desclot's translation

Features of orality	Comparison	Source text occurrences	Target text occurrences
Pragmatic level			
Markers of discourse organization	Increase	11	15
Markers of turn-taking	Increase	0	3
Phatic markers	Similar	9	9
Hesitation phenomena	Increase (++)*	4	12
Reformulation mechanisms	Similar	1	2
Interjections	Similar	21	20
Modal mechanisms	Increase (++)	7	15
Oral narrative: <i>verba dicendi</i>	Similar	31	31
Oral reproduction of reported speech	Increase	25	28
Syntactical level			
Lack of agreement and <i>constructio ad sensum</i>	Increase (++)	2	8
Contaminations, postpositions, funnel technique	Similar	0	0

Incomplete or holophrastic utterances	Decrease	70	63
Literary transpositions	Similar	1	3
Oral transpositions	Increase	6	8
Dislocations of theme rheme order and inversions	Increase (++)	1	7
Syntactical complexity: parataxis and hypotaxis	Not quantified		
Lexico-semantic level			
Low lexical variation and colloquial register	Not quantified		
Lexical iteration	Decrease (--)	24	17
Omnibus words	Decrease	27	21
Presentatives	Decrease (--)	20	11
Personal deixis	Not quantified		
Spatial deixis	Decrease (--)	41	22
Temporal deixis	Similar	10	9
Demonstrative deixis	Decrease (--)	30	18
Emotional implication and expressive-emotive processes	Increase	6	9
Phraseology	Decrease	34	27

Phonic level	Decrease (--)	9	1
Paralinguistic graphic elements	Increase (++)	32	46

* The symbol ++ indicates a substantial increase in the occurrences of the device, the symbol -- a substantial decrease.

As can be inferred from the table above, many of the mimetic features of the framework have been used as frequently by Desclot as by Frost in his poems. At a pragmatic level, I have detected an increase in the frequency of use of hesitation phenomena, usually characterized, like in the source text, by incomplete sentences or anacolutha, and stressed by the use of suspension marks substituting the em dash of the English text (as we can see in the example below).

Example 5.9

From 'La muntanya'	From 'The Mountain'
A. No hi ha poble... just masos escampats (l. 24)	A. There is no village—only scattered farms (l. 24)
B. No ho dic per ara... per una altra estona (l. 36)	B. Not for this morning, but some other time (l. 36)
C. Sempre he volgut pujar-hi a mirar-ho, però... ja ho comprendreu (ll. 80-81)	C. I've always meant to go And look myself, but you know how it is (ll. 80-81)

It is interesting to remark, moreover, that this graphic device is often used by Desclot to increase the impression of hesitation of the speakers even on those occasions where the sentences uttered are complete in themselves, and as a consequence evoke hesitation phenomena without using anacolutha.

As for the use of phatic markers, the result is a similar use in both source and target text. It is interesting to observe how the translator introduces phatic elements to substitute for devices with a different

mimetic function in the source text. It should also be stressed that the category of phatic markers is a large one, including single elements, fragments, and whole clauses which may carry out other functions beside the phatic one. Several examples can be found in the poem ‘Serventa de servents’ (‘A Servant to Servants’):

Example 5.10

<p>A. A vós no us passa? (1.10)</p> <p>B. Com va ser que en sentíssi a parlar? Vaja, el coneix tothom, oi? (ll.33-34)</p> <p>C. tenim un tros de riba que bé deu valdre alguna cosa, oi? (ll. 42-43)</p> <p>D. Cruel, oi? (1.124)</p> <p>E. altra gent l’ha de fer; per què no jo? (1.160)</p>	<p>A. Did you ever feel so? (1. 10)</p> <p>B. How did you hear of it? I expect, though, everyone’s heard of it (ll. 33-34)</p> <p>C. We have a good piece of shore That ought to be worth something, and may yet (ll. 42-43)</p> <p>D. Cruel—it sounds (1. 124)</p> <p>E. Other folks have to, and why shouldn’t I? (1. 160)</p>
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In example 5.10A of the target text, the translator uses a phatic device similar to the one in the source text, in the form of a rhetorical question that helps the character maintain contact with her listener. The device is used by Frost to increase the impression of physical communicative proximity among characters (this being an element often used in dramatic monologues, where readers “hear” just one voice but must be made aware of the presence of a mute character, in order for the dramatic frame to be triggered). The same observations can be applied to example 5.10E. Examples 5.10B to 5.10D present the same phatic marker (*oi*) that carries out a rhetorical function similar to the one represented in examples 5.10A and 5.10E. At the same time, the device is also used to strengthen other mimetic effects also present in the source text: in example 5.10B it reinforces the dubitative attitude of the speaker, which in English is stressed by the verb *expect* and the intensifier *though*. In example 5.10C the marker *oi* introduces a phatic function

beside the modal one, not present in the source text. Finally, in example 5.10D the phatic marker substitutes the em dash of the source text and the sentence “it sounds,” which suggests a meditative pause by the speaker. The use of *oi* may, as a consequence, introduce a slight change in the point of view, and contributes to the representation of nuances of the character’s personality not present in the source text. It may imply, on certain occasions, a closer contact with the listener, and a less meditative attitude of the speaker. However, from the point of view of mimesis of orality, the marker, which in Catalan is used mainly in oral conversations and in informal communicative conditions, immediately evokes a language belonging to communicative immediacy.

No significant divergence has been detected in the frequency of interjections in the target text, compared to their occurrence in the source text. Primary interjections like *au*, *ui* (as in the poem ‘Serventa de servents’ [‘A Servant to Servants’]: “—**Au**, ara et toca a tu d’anar a la gàbia—,” l. 146; “**Ui!**,” l. 171) or *vinga* (as in ‘El codi’ [‘The Code’]: “Passa-me’l, **vinga!**,” l. 63) recreate the impression of a spontaneous, informal language. Secondary interjections in the source text are also functionally translated either with primary or secondary interjections so as to preserve their mimetic role, as in ‘Serventa de servents’: “**Ui!**, com m’entreteñiu de fer la feina...” (l. 171), corresponding to “**Bless you**, of course you’re keeping me from work” (l. 171) in the source text. Another example taken from the same poem is the translation of the fundamental secondary interjection “but I don’t know,” repeated three times in the source poem (ll. 4, 38 and 153) with two variants with equal mimetic effect: “Però és clar” (l. 4) and “Però no ho sé!” (ll. 38 and 153).²³³

²³³ Giugliano observes: “The adversative clause ‘but I don’t know’ is not logically linked to the previous one and represents, rather, a secondary interjection which is repeated three times during the monologue, and indicates the speaker’s disorientation whenever she needs to reflect upon her current situation. [...] It is clear and touching, and creates an intonational climax with its iterative nature [...] The expression ‘Però no ho sé!’ [but I don’t know], appears only twice in the Catalan text, compared to the three occurrences in the source text. The first instance of the secondary interjection ‘but I don’t know’ is rendered by the translator through the expression ‘però és clar’ [but it’s clear]. The oral quality of the speech is preserved, while the psychological function of the interjection becomes less evident” (Giugliano, forthcoming).

A slight increase has been observed in the use of markers of discourse organization in the target text, including reformulation mechanisms, which are not often employed in either the source or target texts and which may carry out both structural and pragmatic functions. An example of markers with solely pragmatic functions can be found in line 76 of the poem ‘The Death of the Hired Man’: “‘Well, those days trouble Silas like a dream.’” In this case, the marker *well* is translated as *doncs* (“—**Doncs** l’home està obsedit per aquells dies,” l. 76). An example where the marker may carry both a pragmatic function of discourse organization and a structural function may be seen in line 119 of ‘A Servant to Servants’ (I quote the previous two lines as well in order to provide context): “Anything they put in for furniture / He’d tear to pieces, even a bed to lie on. / **So** they made the place comfortable with straw.” The marker *so* has a structural function, inasmuch as consecutive connector, and at the same time a pragmatic function. Desclot translates the line using a similar strategy: “Van arreglar-li, **doncs**, un jaç de palla” (l. 119).

Verba dicendi are also used with a similar frequency, which is a consequence of the translation following a pattern of discourse organization similar to that of the source text. It is possible to observe a slightly wider range of synonyms among the *verba dicendi* used in the Catalan text (such as *dir*, *respondre*, *fer*), replacing the English verb *to say*, which is repeated more often. This characteristic, however, corresponds to a higher tolerance of lexical repetition in English than in Catalan (which I have already mentioned in chapter 4 with reference to Italian). It is interesting, nonetheless, to observe a divergence in the use of the tense employed for the narration, either by the narrator or by a character in the reproduction of reported speech during a dialogue. In the source poems Frost occasionally uses the narrative present, as, for example, in ‘A Servant to Servants,’ where the speaker reports her husband’s words by saying: “Len **says** one steady pull more ought to do it. / He **says** the best way out is always through” (ll. 55-56), or, in ‘The Code’: “Combed it down with a rake and **says**, ‘O.K.’” (l. 52); “But the old fool **seizes** his fork in both hands / And looking up bewhiskered out of the pit, / **Shouts** like an army captain, ‘Let her come!’” (ll. 61-63); “**Thinks I**, D’ye mean it?” (l. 64).” ‘Damn ye,’ **I says**” (l. 77); “One of the boys **sings out**, ‘Where’s the old

man?’” (l. 83). The present tense heightens the spoken quality of the characters’ language, since this device is mainly used in oral conversations, above all when reporting someone else’s speech (as is evident from the examples just quoted). However, especially in those parts of the poems which have been defined as narrative asides, that is, parentheses where the narrator describes a scene and the characters in it, the prevailing tense is the past. Desclot’s use of the narrative present diverges from Frost’s use in these situations. The lines reported below are good examples, in my view, of the Catalan translator’s strategy:

Example 5.11

From ‘La mort del mosso’	From ‘The Death of the Hired Man’
Mary, a la taula, seu davant el llum, absorta (l. 1)	Mary sat musing on the lamp- flame at the table (l. 1)

Example 5.12

From ‘La muntanya’	From ‘The Mountain’
Passo el riu per fer el tomb de la muntanya I topo un hom que tan lent anava amb el parell de bous i la carreta que no em fa cap angúnia d’aturar-lo. (ll. 15-18)	I crossed the river and swung around the mountain. And there I met a man who moved so slow With white faced oxen, in a heavy cart, It seemed no harm to stop him altogether. (l. 15-18)

Example 5.13

From ‘El codi’	From ‘The Code’
[...] De sobte Un dels macips llença la forca a terra I se’n va cap a casa. L’altre es queda. I el pagès, que és de vila, no ho entén. (ll. 6-9)	[...] Suddenly One helper, thrusting pitchfork in the ground, Marched himself off the field and home. One stayed. The town-bred farmer failed to understand. (ll. 6-9)

Example 5.14

From 'La pila de llenya'	From 'The Wood Pile'
<p>A. Anant, un dia gris, pel fred marjal, M'aturo i dic: —Deixa'm fugir d'aquí... (ll. 1-2)</p>	<p>A. Out walking in the frozen swamp one grey day I paused and said, "I will turn back from here." (ll. 1-2)</p>
<p>B. La neu dura em sosté, tret d'algun punt On cedeix sota el peu. Només veig línies (ll. 4-5)</p>	<p>B. The hard snow held me, save where now and then One foot went down. The view was all in lines (ll. 4-5)</p>
<p>C. Davant meu un ocell s'envola amb cura (l. 10)</p>	<p>C. A small bird flew before me. He was careful (l. 10)</p>
<p>D. Pensa que el caçaré per una ploma (l. 14)</p>	<p>D. He thought that I was after him for a feather— (l. 14)</p>

Example 5.15

From '«Apaga't, apaga't... »'	From "“Out, Out—”"
<p>A. La serra ronca al pati fent estesa de serradures i tions d'estufa (ll. 1-2)</p>	<p>A. The buzz saw snarled and rattled in the yard And made dust and dropped stove-length sticks of wood, (ll. 1-2)</p>
<p>B. Qui n'aixequi la vista comptarà quatre carenes, l'una rere l'altra (ll. 4-5)</p>	<p>B. And from there those that lifted eyes could count Five mountain ranges one behind the other (ll. 4-5)</p>
<p>C. El vailet xiscla una planyent rialla (l.19)</p>	<p>C. The boy's first outcry was a rueful laugh D. (l. 19)</p>

In the source text, the past tense lends the fragments the quality of a narrative remote in time both from the narrator and the readers. In the translation, the narrative present adds vividness to the scene, and re-defines the position of the narrator, who is felt as being more emotionally involved in the scene he describes, since the episode, though belonging to the past, is nevertheless narrated as if present to him or her. This effect can be more clearly perceived on those occasions, as in ‘La muntanya’ (‘The Mountain’), where the narration switches somewhat abruptly from the past tense (“La muntanya? **embolcava** el poble d’ombra,” l. 1; “Em **semblava** propera: com un mur,” l. 5; “Aleshores, el riu **baixava** prim,” l. 10) to the present tense (“**Passo** el riu,” etc., quoted in example 5.12), suggesting that the narrator has moved from a descriptive parenthesis to the focus of his narrative. Finally, we may also hypothesize that the use of this device plays a compensatory role in translations where other mimetic devices do not appear as frequently as in the source text. I have considered this possibility in ‘La pila de llenya’ (‘The Wood Pile’). In the translation the plain colloquial language of the original is present though attenuated. There are fewer mimetic devices than in the source text, intermingled with words belonging to a higher register. All in all, however, the tone is still neutral and the colloquial overtone can be perceived in some observations of the speaker, which, through the use of modal mechanisms, deictic elements, and the narrative present, give an impression of personal meditation expressed with terms and structures pertaining to a wider communicative immediacy.

As for the modal mechanisms employed in the translation, their use increases in the target text, even though they may change grammatical category. The increase is due to the relatively frequent use of a marker like *és que* with modal function, as in line 172 of the poem ‘Serventa de servents’ (‘A Servant to Servants’): “Ui! Com m’entreteniu de fer la feina... / però **és que**, tanmateix, ho necessito” (ll. 171-172) (“Bless you, of course you’re keeping me from work, / But the thing of it is, I need to *be* kept,” ll. 171-172 [emphasis in the original]). In Catalan, the marker *és que* immediately characterizes the discourse as oral. The difficulty consists in interpreting the function (or functions) it may carry out in the discourse, in view of the marker’s polyfunctionality.

I have found no instance of markers of turn-taking in the source text, and three instances in the target text that can be distantly associated to this phenomenon (in ‘La mort del mosso’ [‘The Death of the Hired Man’] and ‘Enterrament domèstic’ [‘Home Burial’]). This difference between source and target text has no consequences for the construction of a target mimesis of orality.

At a syntactical level, we find no example of funnel technique in the target text. We observe, however, an increase in the use of lack of agreement between clauses or clause parts. We can apply here the same remarks made on this aspect during the contrastive analysis of the English text and its Italian translation in chapter four. We have seen that these features are not frequently found in the source text either. Devices like the lack of syntactical agreement and *constructio ad sensum* may have a more disruptive effect on the flow of reading than aural comprehension, since to preserve or establish meaning they normally rely on contextual non-linguistic elements, whose absence in a written text may hinder an understanding of the message. Moreover, they may also trigger in readers impressions of orality diastratically lower than the one intended. These remarks may be among the reasons why Frost does not frequently use these devices when creating his mimesis of orality. The increase in Desclot’s translation is most of the times a consequence of the use of the polyvalent *que*, of which I give examples later on in the section. We also observe a similar frequency in the use of incomplete or holophrastic expressions in Catalan, the majority of which are found in the dramatic compositions of the corpus. The Catalan translation also employs more often simple paratactic than hypotactic constructions, in a way similar to that of the source text. The syntactical structure of the target text remains basically simple and evokes a language of immediacy. However, the devices used to achieve this simplicity vary slightly from those found in the source text. We certainly find occasions where the paratactic construction of the source text is closely reproduced in the target text, as, for example, in ‘Després de collir pomes’ (‘After Apple-Picking’), where Desclot translates in a similar way the sequence of polysyndetically coordinated clauses found in the source text:

Example 5.16

From ‘Després de collir pomes’	From ‘After Apple-Picking’
<p>Les puntes de l’escala entre les fulles assenyalen al cel, i a la vora hi ha un cove sense omplir, i potser en una branca encara queda alguna poma més per abastar. (ll. 1-5)</p>	<p>My long two-pointed ladder’s sticking through a tree Toward heaven still, And there’s a barrel that I didn’t fill Beside it, and there may be two or three Apples I didn’t pick upon some bough. (ll. 1-5)</p>

However, the general tendency in the target text points to a decrease in the repetition of sequences of clauses connected through the connector *and* and *or*, as we can see in the two examples below:

Example 5.17

From ‘La pila de llenya’	From ‘The Wood Pile’
<p>És una càrrega d’auró, tallada i apilada d’acord amb la mesura. No en sé veure cap altra per allí. Ni hi ha petjades a la neu del volt. I no és pas tallada d’aquest any, Ni tan sols del passat, o fins de l’altre. La fusta és grisa i se’n desprèn l’escorça, la pila es clava a terra. (ll. 23-30)</p>	<p>It was a cord of maple, cut and split, And piled—and measured, four by four by eight. And not another like it could I see. No runner tracks in this year’s snow looped near it. And it was older sure that this year’s cutting Or even last year’s or the year’s before. The wood was gray and the bark warping off it And the pile somewhat sunken. (ll. 29-30)</p>

Example 5.18

From ‘«Apaga’t, apaga’t...»’	From “‘Out, Out—”
<p>A. La serra ronca al pati fent estesa</p>	<p>A. The buzz saw snarled and rattled in the yard</p>

<p>de serradures i tions d'estufa,</p> <p>de dolça flaire si l'airet hi alena.</p> <p>Qui n'aixequi la vista compararà (ll. 1-3)</p> <p>B. La serra brunz i ronca, brunz i ronca</p> <p>segons si roda lliure o talla fusta.</p> <p>I res no passa: el dia ja s'acaba. (ll. 7-9)</p> <p>C. Tot d'una, el qui li pren el pols s'esglaià.</p> <p>Ningú ho pot creure. Li escolten el cor.</p> <p>Poc... menys... no gens! Això ho acaba tot. (ll. 30-32)</p>	<p>And made dust and dropped stove-length sticks of wood, Sweet-scented stuff when t he breeze drew across it.</p> <p>And from there those that lifted eyes could count (ll. 1-2 and 4)</p> <p>B. And the saw snarled and rattled, snarled and rattled</p> <p>As it ran light, or had to bear a load.</p> <p>And nothing happened: day was all but done" (ll. 7-9)</p> <p>C. And then—the watcher at his pulse took fright. No one believed. They listened at his heart. Little—less—nothing!— and that ended it. (ll. 30-32)</p>
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In addition to this, Desclot achieves syntactical simplicity by using the polyvalent *que*. The device, which is typical of Romance languages like Catalan, Italian, and Spanish, does not make explicit the logico-semantic function it carries out as a connector between two clauses, entrusting its interpretation to the situational context. These characteristics of the polyvalent *que* explain why it is often used in situations of communicative immediacy and why it is an effective device in the construction of mimesis of orality. Examples of the device can be found in several poems:

Example 5.19

From 'Serventa de servents'	From 'A Servant to Servants'
Sóc en un punt que ja no sé del cert	It's got so I don't even know for sure
si estic contenta o trista, o com	Whether I <i>am</i> glad, sorry, or

estic (ll. 11-12) [relative pronoun function]	anything. (ll. 11-12) [emphasis in the original]
Allà us hi tenen els mitjans que calen, I no amargues la vida a l'altra gent... que ni tu els fas cap bé, ni ells a tu, en l'estat en què et trobes; [...] (ll. 98-101) [causal function]	There they have every means proper to do with, And you aren't darkening other people's lives— Worse than no good to them, and they no good To you in your condition; [...] (ll. 98-101)

Exemple 5.20

From 'Enterrament domestic'	'Home Burial'
Déu del cel, quina dona! Vet aquí que no puc ni parlar del meu fill mort. (ll. 69-70) [conjunction introducing a subordinate clause indicating a statement (it can be omitted)]	["]God, what a woman! And it's come to this, A man can't speak of his own child that's dead" (ll. 69-70)

Example 5.21

From 'Després de collir pomes'	From 'After Apple-Picking'
Deu mil milers de fruites per palpar, acaronar, collir i no deixar caure. Que totes les que hagin tocat terra encara que no tinguin macadures, van de dret a la pila de la sidra com a rampoines. (ll. 30-36). [causal function]	There were ten thousand thousand fruit to touch, Cherish in hand, lift down, and not let fall. For all That struck the earth, No matter if not bruised or spiked with stubble, Went surely to the cider-apple heap As of no worth (ll. 30-36)

Examples 5.19 and 5.20 are taken from poems that are characterized by a language rich in oral mimetic devices, evoking with realistic

effects their characters' speech. However, the same device can also be found in a poem like 'Després de collir pomes' ('After Apple-Picking,' example 5.21) in which mimesis of orality both in the source text and in its Catalan translation acquires more neutral tones.

The only syntactical mimetic device which seems to undergo a significant increase in Desclot's translation compared to the source text is theme-rheme dislocation. In example 5.22 below we note a similar use of the device in source and target text, whereas examples 5.23 to 5.26 show the increase of use in the translation:

Example 5.22 (similar use of the device in both source and target text)

From 'Refent paret'	From 'Mending Wall'
[...] Els esvorancs que jo dic ningú mai no els ha vist fer (ll. 9-10)	[...]The gaps I mean, No one has seen them made or heard them made (ll. 9-10)

Example 5.23

From 'La muntanya'	From 'The Mountain'
per això aquest vessant no us l' aconsello (l. 79)	That's why I don't advise your trying this side (l. 79)

Example 5.24

From 'Serventa de servents'	From 'A Servant to Servants'
A. Jo ja en vaig tenir prou, del vell sistema (l. 103)	A. I've heard too much of the old-fashioned way (l. 103)
B. Qualsevol tros de moble que hi posaven el feia a miques, fins i tot el llit. (ll. 117-118)	B. Anything they put in for furniture He'd tear to pieces, even a bed to lie on. (ll. 117-118)
C. El menjar l'hi dònarem sense plats (l. 121)	C. Of course they had to feed him without dishes. (l. 121)

D. De feina prou n’hi ha; no me l’acabo. (l. 173)	D. There’s work enough to do—there’s always that; (l. 173)
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Example 5.25

From ‘El codi’	From ‘The Code’
Jo ja n’hi havia vistes fer una pila, d’aquell color. L’havia observat bé. (ll. 47/48)	I’d seen about enough of his bullying tricks (we call that bullying). I’d been watching him. (ll. 47-48)

Example 5.26

From ‘«Apaga’t, apaga’t...»’	From “‘Out, Out—’”
Però, de fet, de mà ja no n’hi queda (ll. 25-27)	So. But the hand was gone already (ll. 25-27)

Among the material causes (Pym 1998: 150) behind the increase in the frequency of the dislocations, we can certainly mention the higher frequency of theme-rheme dislocations and of foregrounding mechanisms in Catalan than in English, as a consequence of Catalan’s more flexible syntactical structure.²³⁴ This characteristic

²³⁴ “En anglès, l’ordre sintàctic canònic és Subjecte + Verb + Complements, per la qual cosa ens veiem abocats a contradir la noció que el rema és l’últim mot accentuable de la clàusula. El fet és, però, que en anglès predomina el fet entonatiu: independentment de la seva posició, el rema es pot reconèixer pel cim tonal, que marca el punt d’inflexió, mentre que el tema es detecta per la manca de prominència tonal i per la pronunciació en la part descendent de la corba entonativa. La sintaxi, un xic més rígida, no permet canvis respecte de l’ordre canònic i tots els constituents resten al lloc que els correspon per la funció sintàctica.

En català, la sintaxi hi té un paper molt més central i ofereix un ventall de possibilitats més gran. [...] Així doncs, a l’hora de distingir el rema del tema, en català és més important la posició sintàctica que l’entonació. El rema es coneix perquè no és un element dislocat i situat als marges de l’oració, sinó que apareix dins de la matriu de l’oració. Els constituents de caràcter temàtic, en canvi, sí que solen aparèixer dislocats, sigui cap a l’esquerra, o cap a la dreta” (Ainaud, Espunya and Pujol 2003: 186-187).

[In English, the canonical syntactic order is represented by Subject + Verb + Noun clauses. As a consequence, we are obliged to contradict the notion

may have brought Catalan translators and writers to consider the device as particularly effective for the evocation of orality. Finally, I have also found a slight increase in the occurrences of hyperbaton or anastrophe which, while they may also carry out a mimetic function, introduce in specific cases a more literary register, as in the examples below:

Example 5.27

From 'La mort del mosso'	From 'Death of the Hired Man'
Mary, a la taula , seu davant el llum, absorta (l.1)	Mary sat musing on the lamp- flame at the table (l. 1)

Example 5.28

From 'La muntanya'	From 'The Mountain'
A. i topo un home que tan lent anava (l. 16)	A. And there I met a man who moved so slow (l. 16)
B. Es veia, entre fullosos cortinatges (l. 57)	B. [“]Clear to the top.” I saw through leafy screens (l. 57)

Example 5.29

From 'Enterrament domestic'	From 'Home Burial'
D'aterrida mudant a esmaperduda. (l. 9)	And her face changed from terrified to dull (l. 9)

As for the contrastive analysis of the lexico-semantic devices employed by Desclot, as compared to Frost, we note a general

according to which the rheme is the last stressable word of the clause. Instead, in English, intonation predominates: irrespective of its position, the rheme can be recognized for the pronunciation in the descending part of the intonation curve. The slightly more rigid syntax does not allow changes of the canonic order, so that all constituents remain in the position corresponding to their syntactic function.

In Catalan, syntax plays a much more central role and offers a wider range of possibilities. [...] So, when distinguishing the rheme from the theme, the syntactic position in Catalan is much more important than the intonation. The rheme is recognized because it is not a dislocated element, placed in the margin of the sentence, but it appears within the matrix of the sentence. The thematic constituents, on the contrary, usually appear dislocated, either on the right or on the left.]

decrease of frequency in the target text. I shall focus especially on the categories of deixis, diminutives as expressive procedures, lexical variation, colloquial register, omnibus words, and phraseology. As for the categories labeled as lexical iteration and presentatives, the changes detected have not been considered relevant to the analysis, as they do not bring any significant change in the recreation of mimesis of orality in the translation.

At a micro-level, the decrease in the use especially of spatial and demonstrative deixis produces a shift of the mimetic effects of the segments towards neutral registers. An example of this phenomenon can be seen in the poem ‘Enterrament domèstic’ (‘Home Burial’):

Example 5.30

Jo veia prou, de la finestra estant, Com tu feies saltar els grumolls enlaire, (ll. 74-75)	I saw you from that very window there , Making the gravel leap and leap in air, (ll. 74-75)
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In the source text, the use of exophoric demonstrative deixis (“that window”) and spatial deixis (“there”) contributes to the evocation of an oral conversational context. In the target text the lack of these elements distances the language of the fragment from the pole of communicative immediacy.

Like in the Italian translation, in the target text there is an increase in the use of diminutives, compared to the source text. The phenomenon is a consequence of the possibility in Catalan to attach an evaluative or expressive dimension to an already existing unit by adding certain suffixes (Cabr  2002: 743). Most of the times the device introduces an identifiable colloquial register in the sentence, as we can see in the examples below:

Example 5.31

From ‘El codi’	From ‘The Code’
En James ho ha rosegat una estoneta (l. 18)	James would take time, of course, to chew it over (l. 18)

Example 5.32

From ‘«Apaga’t, apaga’t...»’	From ‘«Out, Out—»’
de dolça flaire si l’ airet hi alena (l. 3)	Sweet-scented stuff when the breeze drew across it (l. 3)

The contrastive analysis of the elements belonging to the interconnected categories labeled as low lexical variation and colloquial register (which have not been quantified in table 5.3, but which have been taken into account for the achievement of the overall mimetic effect of the text), and omnibus words have produced diverging results. Each poem of the target text presents occurrences of plain lexis and low lexical variation, with neutral or colloquial connotations. It should be borne in mind that not all occurrences in the target text correspond to similar ones in the source text. I shall give a few examples:

Low lexical variation and omnibus words

Example 5.33

From ‘Refent paret’	From ‘Mending Wall’
Hi ha alguna cosa que detesta els murs (ll. 1 and 35)	Something there is that doesn’t love a wall (ll. 1 and 35)

Example 5.34

From ‘El codi’	From ‘The Code’
A. Ja veieu quina cosa més senzilla (l. 55)	A. You understand that meant an easy job (l. 55)
B. No digueu mai cap cosa per l’estil (l. 68)	B. Never you say a thing like that to a man (l. 68)

Example 5.35

From ‘«Apaga’t, apaga’t...»’	From ““Out, Out—””
se’n tornen a les seves coses (l. 34)	turned to their affairs (l. 34)

Colloquial register

Example 5.36

From 'Enterrament domèstic'	From 'Home Burial'
<p>A. Dos que no es volen, no se'n poden passar mai,</p> <p>però els que sí, se n'han de passar sempre.— (ll. 54-55)</p> <p>B. vaig fer cap a espiar-te amb els meus ulls (l. 83)</p>	<p>A. Two that don't love can't live together without them. But two that do can't live together with them. (ll. 54-55)</p> <p>B. But I went near to see with my own eyes. (l. 83)</p>

Example 5.37

From 'La muntanya'	From 'The Mountain'
<p>A. Per recollir un bon doll de més enlaire (l. 70)</p> <p>B. Jo poc hi pujaria sense ganes (l. 89)</p>	<p>A. To have some head of water from above (l. 70)</p> <p>B. "I shouldn't climb it if I didn't want to—["] (l. 89)</p>

Example 5.38

From 'El codi'	From 'The Code'
<p>A. —Fot-te—dic—, ja el tens!" (ll. 77-78)</p> <p>B. On és el vell? (l. 83)</p>	<p>A. "Damn ye," I says "That gets ye!" (ll. 77-78)</p> <p>B. "Where's the old man?" (l. 83)</p>

The presence of common words, especially in the dramatic passages, contributes to the overall oral impression of the language of the translations. At the same time, however, I have also detected the presence in all Catalan translations of words belonging to a higher register, to a literary register, or to a less common, more specific lexis, with no correspondence in the source text. These aspects of the analysis ask for further refinement, as they point to important differences in the construction of mimesis of orality

between source and target text at a lexico-semantic level, and raise questions (the so-called *why*-questions) regarding the causes leading to this translation decision, which cannot be answered by simple reference to the material causes. As can be expected, due to the setting of most of the poems of the corpus, specific lexis refers to the rural world, mainly to orographic features and to agricultural activities. Compared to the source text, the words used to denote these objects or activities present a higher degree of specificity, that is, they are less commonly used in conversations. A few examples should clarify the idea:

Example 5.39

From ‘La muntanya’	From ‘The Mountain’
A. Vaig percebre-ho abans d’anar a dormir: faltaven tot d’estrelles a ponent, on la còrpora negra talla el cel. (ll. 2-4)	A. I saw so much before I slept there once: I noticed that I missed stars in the west, Where its black body cut into the sky (ll. 2-4)
B. xaragalls en els prats, i damunt l’herba (l. 13)	B. Good grassland gullied out, and in the grass (l. 13)
C. damunt, només capçades , i penyals (l. 31)	C. After that only tops of trees , and cliffs (l. 31)
D. Lleixes de roca mig assolellades (ll. 57-58)	D. Great granite terraces in sun and shadow (ll. 57-58)

In the poem ‘La muntanya,’ the speaker, referring to the mountain profile against the starred sky, uses the word “còrpora” (5.39A), while in the source text we find the common term “body.” The Catalan term corresponds to the English word *trunk* and is a slightly more learned version of the Catalan word *tronc*, with the same meaning. The translation adopts the same rhetorical device used in the source text (the metaphor), but with a more specofoc term. The use of “xaragalls” and “capçades” (5.39B) is an example of lexical precision, that is of specific, but not uncommon, words describing a natural phenomenon, approximately corresponding to the trickles

created by water in the soil out of which grassland gullies out, and to the more common expression “tops of trees,” in the source text. Further examples of lexical precision are found in the poem ‘La mort del mosso’ (‘The Death of the Hired Man’), where the word “agarbar” (l. 100) refers to the tagging of the forkfuls of hay, done in order to identify them precisely later; “birbaria la quintana” (l. 57) is a more technical word for the expression *to clear the upper pasture*; “lleixa” refers to a “porció de roca planera que surt lateralment d’un cingle i per la qual poden passar els isards, però difícilment les persones (Pobla de L., Plana de Vic)” (<http://dcvb.iecat.net/>) [a part of flat rock jutting out laterally from a cliff, where mountain goats may pass, but hardly people], and translates “Great granite terraces” (l. 58); and “llebrer” (l. 126) (greyhound) is a hyponym for “hound,” a more general term for hunting dog. In order to understand how the use of lexical precision in translation may affect the mimesis of orality, we should consider each poem individually as we need to find out how the individual voices change in the target text. This kind of analysis would not be feasible here, even though the number of poems analyzed is limited. However, we can remark, in general terms, that the target mimesis of orality differs from that of the source text to varying degrees, depending on whether the more specific lexis is used in a dialogue, a monologue, or a narrator’s aside. If specific lexis is used during a dialogue or monologue, that is, if it is part of the character’s idiolect, results may vary more drastically. In fact, while readers could expect to find specialized common terms referring to agricultural activities in the speeches of people working in the field, the use of these terms would be less realistic if they represented a less common term (as in the case of the farm laborer’s speech in ‘La muntanya,’ ‘The Mountain’). On the other hand, specialized terms used in the descriptive asides or in a narrator’s introduction would not necessarily diverge from the source mimesis of orality, since the language of the narrator in the source text is more neutral, though still belonging to the area of communicative immediacy.

Similar reflections can be applied to the use of terms belonging to literary or high registers. Occurrences of this kind of term have been detected in all target poems, though with different frequency in each poem. Their presence may affect the evocation of the original mimesis of orality, creating at times clashing contrasts with words belonging to colloquial, familiar, or popular registers that are

present in the same composition. On other occasions no contrast of registers is produced, though the perception of the characters' voices (and personalities) may change slightly. I shall consider a few representative examples, which I describe below in more detail: Literary register or higher register (compared to the source text)

Example 5.40

From 'La mort del mosso'	From 'Death of the Hired Man'
A. Sigues-hi amable (l. 7)	A. Be kind (l. 7)
B. Ella, de sota estant , li nega ajut (l. 13)	B. She, in her place, refused him any help (l. 13)
C. Veus d'aquest punt estant? Ho vull saber.— (l. 7)	C. [" From up there always?—for I want to know." (l. 7)
D. Però ell, res: vinga capcinejar (l. 43)	D. Nothing would do: he just kept nodding off (l. 43)
E. Retreia en Harold Wilson (l. 63)	E. He ran on Harold Wilson (l. 63)
F. Mai no el veuràs maldant damunt el fenc Per alçar-se, amb la garba, a si mateix (ll. 104-105)	F. You never see him standing on the hay He's trying to lift, straining to lift himself (ll. 104-105)
G. Casa és l'indret on si t'hi cal anar, Han d'acceptar-t'hi (ll. 128-129)	G. "Home is the place where, when you have to go there, They have to take you in" (ll. 128-129)

Example 5.41

From 'La muntanya'	From 'The Mountain'
A. M'havia errat : el poble on m'estatjava (l. 20)	A. Then I was wrong : the town of my sojourn (l. 20)
B. No del tot amagats pel verd fullam (l. 32)	B. Imperfectly concealed among the leaves (l. 32)

<p>C. Es veia, entre fullosos cortinatges, Lleixes de roca mig assolellades (ll. 57-58)</p>	<p>C. [...] I saw through leafy screens Great granite terraces in sun and shadow (ll. 57-58)</p>
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Examples 5.40A-G are taken from the poem ‘La mort del mosso’ (‘The Death of the Hired Man’), and are analyzed in full in chapter three. The examples are representative of a range of words belonging to the formal, high, learned and literary registers, not always detectable in the source text. In example 5.40A we observe the use of the second person imperative of the verb *ser* (to be), accompanied by the pronoun *hi*, (“sigues-hi”). The back-translation of the whole expression “Sigues-hi amable” is “be kind with him.” In spoken language, even in situations of communicative distance, that is, on more formal occasions, the imperative would be generally pronounced *sigue-hi*, eliminating the sound /s/ (or even *sigue-li*, introducing a *constructio ad sensum*). Similar cases would be the imperative *digues-me* [díʎəsmə] (tell me), generally pronounced *digue’m* [díʎəm]. It may be argued that Frost himself makes very little use of phonic mimetic devices in his poems, apart from the shortened forms subject-verb and verb-negation, generally accepted in oral language and in the recreation of orality in written texts, even in his day. However, the phonologic change that the second person of the verb *to be* undergoes in the Catalan expression *sigues-hi* when accompanied by a pronominal suffix is widespread in oral language and is being adopted more and more frequently in written fiction when orality needs to be evoked. While it is possible to draw a parallel between the oral connotations of the Catalan and the English phonological changes, the two phenomena cannot be equated, since the Catalan phonological change has not yet achieved the same degree of acceptability in the written medium as the English one had, as the contemporary literature on proposals for standard oral Catalan (referring to this form, as well as other similar phenomena) reported by the Institut d’Estudis Catalans (1990) testifies.

Examples 5.40B and C present two similar expressions based on the same construction with the same gerund form of the verb *estar* [to stand/to be], which, though also used in spoken language, evokes a

situation of communicative distance due to its higher formality instead of the more neutral *aquí* (Institut d'Estudis Catalans 1990). The corresponding expressions in the source text belong to a neutral and to a colloquial register respectively

Examples 5.40D-G (*capcinejar* [to nod], *retreia* [reproached], *maldant* [striving], and *indret* [place]) are terms belonging to a higher, or to a literary register. The first two corresponding terms in the source text are colloquial: *nod off*, *run on someone*. As for the third example, the source text conveys the impression of someone striving to do something (“He’s trying to lift, straining to lift himself,” l. 105) by repeating the concept using a device similar to the funnel technique (“trying, straining”) with emphatic effects. Finally, the word *indret*, meaning *place*, which in English is neutral, has more formal connotations than the term *lloc*, more commonly used with the same meaning.

Examples 5.41A-C are taken from the poem ‘La muntanya’ (‘The Mountain’). They refer to words belonging to a more formal, literary register (*errat*, [mistaken], *m’estatjava*, [I was sojourning], *fullam*, [foliage]) to which probably only the second term finds a similarly formal correspondence in the source text, with the speaker’s reference to “the town of my sojourn” (l. 20), instead of *the town of my stay*.

Another element that determines the different degree of evocation of oral language in the target text is the alternative use (and omission) of the definite article before anthroponyms (personal names, surname, nicknames). In Catalan, this is standard usage in informal speech, with variations regarding the form of the singular masculine article (*el*, *en*); this applies to Catalonia and the Balearic Islands, but does not apply to the Valencian Community. However, as Martí i Girbau observes,

L’ús de l’article personal és un tret característic del català i, a diferència d’altres llengües com ara el castellà, mai no pressuposa cap matís de vulgaritat o de menyspreu. Sí que dona un to de familiaritat i per això les gramàtiques o manuals preceptius en desaconsellen l’ús davant noms de personatges històrics o famosos —especialment si són estrangers— en registres més o menys formals. (Martí i Girbau 2002: 1304)

[The use of the definite article is a characteristic feature of Catalan. Unlike other languages like Spanish, it never presupposes any vulgar or contemptuous nuance. It does convey a familiar tone, and for this reason grammars or prescriptive manuals advise against its use before names of historic or famous characters—especially if they are foreigners—in more or less formal registers.]

In the Catalan translations, like in the source text, anthroponyms appear in four poems: ‘La mort del mosso’ (‘Death of the Hired Man’), ‘Enterrament domèstic’ (‘Home Burial’), ‘Serventa de servents’ (‘A Servant to Servants’), and ‘El codi’ (‘The Code’). Desclot chooses to use the definite article before personal names whenever they appear in a dialogue among characters, referring to a third character, as in the following examples:

Example 5.42

From ‘La mort del mosso’	From ‘The Death of the Hired Man’
i prevenir-lo: — En Silas ha tornat— (l. 5)	And put him back on his guard. “Silas is back” (l. 5)

Example 5.43

From ‘Serventa de servents’	From ‘A Servant to Servants’
Un esforç més, fa en Len, i ja estarà (l. 55)	Len says one steady pull more ought to do it (l. 55)

Example 5.44

From ‘El codi’	From ‘The Code’
En James ho ha rosegat una estoneta (l. 18)	James would take time, of course, to chew it over (l. 18)

The use of definite articles before personal names in the conversation heightens the spoken quality of the characters’ speech and evokes a situation of intimacy and communicative immediacy among them. When personal names are found in narrative asides,

however, Desclot omits the definite article. Examples of this variation can be found only in the poem ‘La mort del mosso’ (‘The Death of the Hired Man’):

Example 5.45

From ‘La mort del mosso’	From ‘Death of the Hired Man’
Mary, a la taula, seu davant el llum, absorta esperant Warren. I en sentir-li els passos (l.1-2)	Mary sat musing on the lamp- flame at the table Waiting for Warren. When she heard his step (l. 1-2)

The decision not to use the definite article in this case adds a more literary nuance to the text. This strategy seems coherent with other translation strategies used by Desclot tending to heighten the difference in register between the language of the characters and that of the narrator. The literary connotations that the article’s omission may evoke, moreover, blend in with the lyrical content of the narrative asides in the poem.

Finally, Desclot draws extensively from Catalan phraseology for the evocation of orality in his translations. The study of the target text has revealed the presence of idiomatic expressions in all translations. On some occasions they derive from a literal translation of source expressions, as in the poems ‘Refent parets’ (“Bona tanca, bons veïns” [good fence, good neighbours], ll. 27 and 45) or in ‘Serventa de servents’ (“que el millor per sortir-ne... és passar-ho,” l. 56, which translates the English proverb “the best way out is always through”). In these cases, the need for a translation conveying the semantic content of the sentence may attenuate the impression of idiomaticity of the target sentence, as can be perceived in the second example, just quoted above. This fact also helps to understand the relative decrease in the use of fixed expressions detected in the target text. The impression of orality in the target texts is heightened, conversely, when idiomatic expressions are used in a more creative way, that is, when they are introduced anew in the text and are genuinely Catalan fixed colloquial constructions. An example can be found in the poem ‘El codi’ (‘The Code’), where “L’amo no ens agradava gens ni mica” (l. 32) translates the neutral source sentence “No one liked the boss”

(l. 32). The fixed expression *gens ni mica* [not in the least] allows readers to identify the sentence as colloquial, adding emphatic overtones which may often characterize oral narratives.

Two brief notes on the phonic and graphic mimetic features of the translations conclude the contrastive description of mimetic devices in source and target text. We have found just one example of phonic device in Desclot's translation, in the poem 'Serventa de servents' ('A Servant to Servants'). Line 140 ("Jo ni tan sols vaig arribar a **conèixe'l**") should normatively read "Jo ni tan sols vaig arribar a **conèixer-lo.**" The phonological change reproduced in the line corresponds to the common change taking place in oral communication in almost all registers when this combination of infinitive verb and pronoun particle appears. In the written text the impression of orality is immediate. As observed above with reference to oral imperative forms (example 5.40A), the translator does not use this device at all, apart from this example, relying instead on other mimetic devices for the recreation of spoken language effects. We have observed, however, that the evocative power of phonic changes in the source text, such as the one we detect in 'The Code' (quoted at the beginning of the section), is considerable, as it effectively suggests a diastratic linguistic variation, that is, the talk of a person belonging to the low (in the sense of less learned) social class of the hired men. The translation of the poem, while being rich in mimetic devices at all levels, shows a decrease in the use of terms or forms characterizing the spoken quality of the language of the hired man as diastratically lower than that of the farmer. The gap is kept, however, between the higher register of the narrative asides, which we can suppose to be uttered by the farmer, and the dialogic part, much closer to communicative immediacy. An increase has been detected in the use of graphic mimetic devices. Suspension marks are used to suggest hesitation phenomena, and correspond to em dashes in the source text, which, however, do not always carry a mimetic function. Desclot does not use italics (since in Catalan this device is not used for emphasis) and while this decision has no major consequences in some cases, in others the source emphatic effect is lost. In the final line of 'Home Burial,' for example, italics, used to stress the word *will* ("I'll follow and bring you back by force. I *will!*—," l. 116), trigger multiple interpretations regarding the intonation with which the word is imagined to be uttered, and the intentions behind it. In the

Catalan translation (“Vindré a buscar-t’hi per la força. Ho sents?!...,” l. 116) the use of italics would not be helpful to produce any additional interpretation. On the contrary, they would lead to a marked reading of the sentence. On the other hand, in line 71 of the poem ‘The Mountain’ (“And a *good distance* down might not be noticed,” l. 71) italics suggest that an emphatic intonation has to be added to the reading. This effect is not immediate in the target text, where the graphic device is not used (“i un llarg tret més avall pot no semblar-ho,” l. 71).

5.3.2 Pondering on the linguistic analysis

In the previous section I summarized the data collected during the textual analysis of the Catalan target text, focusing on the features of orality used by Miquel Desclot for his personal recreation of Frost’s colloquial language. Many of the devices employed by Frost have been used with a similar frequency by Desclot, even though some divergences from the source text have been detected in terms of frequency of use of mimetic devices. The questions regarding the cause of these divergences inevitably raised by the study can be tackled at different levels of analysis. In the previous section I pointed out the material causes of some phenomena, mainly related to the different structural characteristics of English and Catalan. I stressed, for example, how the increased use of diminutives in the target text is a consequence of the more frequent use of such expressive and affective devices in Catalan than in English, or how the frequent use of the *polyvalent que*, often used in colloquial Catalan, does not have a corresponding English structural equivalent. I also observed, however, that not all divergences imply a shift in the evocation of orality between source and target text at a macrotextual level, especially because mimetic devices can also be used creatively to evoke orality in certain fragments of the target text in correspondence to source fragments in which no specific mark of orality can be found. It seems that mimetic devices in those cases have a compensatory effect, aiming at the overall oral flavor of the text.

Among the most significant differences between the English and the Catalan texts outlined by the linguistic analysis, I have mentioned the use of a more specific lexis in the target text, and of a lexis belonging to a high, literary register intermingled with one closer to

communicative immediacy. This phenomenon is relevant to our study for two reasons. First, it affects the overall orality evoked in the target text. Second, its explanation involves research into the personal and ideological causes of translation, since there are no potential material causes behind the translation choice that would provide a satisfying reason for the phenomenon. The identification of at least some of these sets of causes behind the translator's decisions is the object of the following section.

Before moving on, several more observations are required to complete the textual analysis. Since the focus of the study is on mimesis of orality, no stress has been placed on the semantic shifts present in the target text. I am aware that potential semantic shifts may affect in part the target mimesis of orality. In fact, semantic shifts may cause a change in the point of view of characters, and of the narrator, in a dramatic composition, or of the lyrical subject in shorter personal compositions. They may certainly imply a different representation of the characters' personality, affecting the way their voice is perceived by readers. In Desclot's translation, however, no drastic semantic shifts have been detected. Remarks on minor shifts producing different shades of meaning in the target text have been omitted because, while certainly interesting, they would not have added relevant additional information on the construction of orality in the target text.

A final comment is necessary on those formal elements of the composition which, though not mimetic devices themselves, affect the translation and may indirectly affect mimesis of orality. As in Frost's poems, mimesis of orality in Desclot's translations needs to be studied in close relation to the metric form within which, and in tension with which, it develops. All source poems included in the book *Al nord de Boston* are written in blank verse, with the exception of 'After Apple-Picking,' which is rhymed and presents an irregular line length. In the target text, Desclot consistently translates blank verse with the decasyllable, adopting a more hybrid line length in the poem 'Després de collir pomes' ('After Apple-Picking'), in a way similar to Frost. Moreover, his translations have exactly the same number of lines as the source texts. The self-imposed formal constraints, or, in other words, Desclot's priorities on form need to be taken into account when considering his translation choices, even though it is not possible to draw a direct

relationship (unless we ask the translator directly) between his selection of mimetic features during the translation and the number of syllables into which he has to fit the translation. These priorities and the constraints represented by them in the translation of Frost's poetry, however, may shed light on matters of style related to the translator's personal taste and poetic convictions, on his idea of translation, on the ideology guiding his choice, and, even though in a more vague way, on the socio-political context of the Catalan language at the time of the translation. I shall address these points in the following section.

5.3.3 Extra-textual causes of translation

It seems convenient to start the section by articulating once again the questions that the contrastive textual analysis of source and target texts have raised but could not answer: why does Desclot translate Frost's mimesis of orality using a language that is a mixture (though not indiscriminate) between a colloquial and a more formal register? Why does he decide to adopt the decasyllable as the metric equivalent of Frost's blank verse, and what correspondence is there between the two line forms? What relationship can be found, if any, between Desclot's translation and Bartra's earlier translation of other poems by Frost? How can we inscribe Desclot's activity as a translator within the Catalan tradition of literary translation, and, more generally, within the Catalan literary tradition? Further questions could certainly be formulated, but I prefer to stop here, since any satisfactory and detailed answer to them may already include answers to other potential questions. It is interesting to observe that the list of questions above ranges from a more specific level of analysis, focused on the text and on the translation as a product, to a wider level, focused on the translation process. An approach that moves from the specific to the general follows the pattern of analysis already adopted during the study of the translations of Giudici and of Bartra. It inevitably involves observations and reflections on the translator and his social, political, ideological, and cultural background, but at the same time makes clear that its link with the textual analysis is not incidental. The stylistic analysis of the source and target text is, in my study, the foundation on which any further theoretical reflection is built.

Miquel Desclot is well known in the contemporary Catalan literary panorama and is particularly appreciated as a poet, a writer of literature for children, and a literary translator.²³⁵ He started his career as a poet very early, publishing his first book of poems, titled *Ira és trista passió*, in 1971, when he was nineteen. Since then, he has published seven more collections of poems, one of the best-known being *Cançons de la lluna al barret* (1978). His most recent collection, *Fantasies, variacions i fuga*, is dated 2006. In his short review of this book, the Catalan poet and critic Jordi Llavina (2006: 13) observes how the collection condenses the two sources of inspiration characterizing Desclot's poetic production from the very beginning: "la de la cançó popular—més ben dit, la cançó d'autor que reproduïx la gràcia del poble quan compon— i la de la poesia culta que entronca, d'una manera molt evident, amb la tradició canònica" [that of the popular song—or rather, the songs of authors reproducing charm of the popular when composing— and that of learned poetry, obviously connected with the canonical tradition]. Llavina goes on to explain that the popular element is particularly dominant in Desclot's first book of poems but that it is also present in his work as a writer of poems for young readers, especially *Més música, mestre!* (2001) and *Bestiolaris de la Clara* (1992). While the aspect of learned inspiration of the book can certainly be found in his own lyrical production, it has many features in common with Desclot's anthology of translations of poetry *De tots els vents. Selecció de versions poètiques* (2004), which presents a wide selection of translations of poetry carried out throughout his career as a translator (including his translations of Frost's poems). Llavina's comments are interesting for two main reasons. First, his allusion to the presence of both popular and poetic inspirations is similar to our own observation of Desclot's mixed language in his translations of Frost's poems, and points to the fact that we are on the right track in understanding this phenomenon. Second, his reference to Desclot's work as a poet, a writer for children, and a translator stresses the symbiotic relationship existing for the writer between these activities. In fact, Desclot's activity as a writer of

²³⁵ Desclot is also an essayist, a playwright, and a literary critic, though these activities occupy a more marginal role in his professional life. A complete list of Desclot's work can be found online on the website of the association of writers in Catalan language: <http://www.escriptors.cat/autors/desclotm/index.php> (date of retrieval 23.12.2011).

literature for children follows a path parallel to his activity as a writer for adults. His first book for children, *El blanc i el negre* (1971), in prose, appeared in the same year as his first book of poetry for adults. Since then he has gained a wide recognition as a writer for children in Catalonia, publishing twenty-six more books of prose fiction (the latest is *Pallufet & Ventaflocs*, dated 2008) and five books of poetry for children. In an interview published on-line, Desclot explains how he hardly sees any difference between literature for children and for adults (Ventura 2005).

Desclot is also a prolific and established literary translator, who has specialized in translating poetry. The list of his translations is long and the authors and poetic genres he has dealt with are numerous. Among the most important titles one should mention his translations of Italian poets like Dante, Petrarca, Michelangelo (*Sap la terra on floreix el llimoner*, 1999), Vincenzo Cardarelli, and Umberto Saba. Among his translations from the English there are versions of Blake's *Prophetic Books* (*Llibres profètics de Lambeth*, I, 1987 and 1989), and of Wordsworth's poetry (*L'Abadia de Tintern i altres textos*, 1986); from German he has translated Goethe (*Poesies*, 2000) and from French Jaques Prevert (*Preversions*, 2001). Particularly interesting is the already mentioned anthology *De tots els vents. Selecció de versions poètiques* (2004), which is a collection of translated poems from authors of different cultural traditions (including Chinese, Japanese and Russian, among others), and the anthology of indirect translations of Japanese poems (*Per tot coixí les herbes*, 1995). Even before going into detail about his ideology and poetics of translation, which is our main concern at the moment, this overview makes clear once again the close relationship in Desclot's writing between poetry and translation. Translating becomes for the Catalan poet a way of approaching and becoming deeply acquainted with artists of other periods and other cultures. At the same time, it also becomes an instrument of cultural commitment, since it helps spread the poetic work of both known and less known writers in Catalonia. As an example we can mention his latest translation of Michelangelo's poems, published in June 2011. Among the main objectives and motivations for this translation, Desclot makes reference to his intention to make the Catalan literary public aware of the relatively little known poetic facet of the Renaissance artist, that underlines its non-secondary importance and degree of esthetic

quality, still underestimated even by Italian criticism. For similar reasons, Desclot also translated poems from the Japanese, prompted by his intellectual curiosity about different poetic genres (haiku and tanka). This attitude is reflected in the production of his own compositions in these verse forms, stressing once again the link between his translation work and poetic activity. A similar relationship can be drawn between the translation of literature for children and the beginning of his own production of poetry for a younger public. It seems significant for example that his first translation of poems for children (*Versos perversos*, by Roald Dahl, 1986) and his first poetic compositions for children (*Música, mestre!*, 1987, but later revised and enlarged) almost coincide chronologically.

The close relationship that can be inferred from Desclot's different literary activities finds confirmation in those writings in which the Catalan poet ponders the meaning and status of literary translation. He draws a parallel between literary translation and musical variations on a theme. In music a variation on a theme consists of a composer's modification of a theme that has been either originally composed by the very composer or by someone else. Variations may achieve a high degree of complexity and attain almost total independence from the original theme, while still preserving some traits of it. Translation can be considered, according to Desclot (2007b: 42), as a form of variation that keeps close to the original theme while at the same time achieving a poetic status of its own. As the Catalan writer points out, the metaphor of variations on a theme, by representing a potentially infinite chain of independent modifications of a theme, erases the very concept of *original* and becomes an allegory of literary tradition in general, in which literary translation occupies a specific position:

Tots els poetes són fills d'altres poetes i tot poema és hereu d'altres poemes. El grau de variació en un poema respecte dels seus avantpassats pot ser més intens o menys, però això en realitat no afecta gens ni mica la qualitat estètica intrínseca de la variació, perquè qualsevol estadi de variació és tan legítim com qualsevol altre; però, en definitiva, el que em sembla inapel·lable és que tots escrivim variacions sobre temes manlevats conscientment o no a la tradició literària. [...] La traducció poètica, doncs, és una forma d'escriptura poètica com qualsevol

altra, on el poeta traductor necessita desplegar tots els seus recursos per aconseguir desvetllar en el receptor una emoció estètica determinada, talment com en un poema propi; la diferència és que en la traducció el poeta s'ha de fixar uns límits més estrets que en altres formes de variació... però també que el text estímul li pot revelar recursos nous que ni ell mateix es coneixia. (Desclot 2007: 45-46)

[All poets are children of other poets, and each poem is the heir of other poems. The degree of variation of a poem with respect to its predecessors may be more or less intense, but this fact does not affect at all the intrinsic esthetic quality of the variation, since any stage of variation is as legitimate as any other. All in all, however, what seems incontrovertible is that we all write variations on themes borrowed, consciously or not, from literary tradition. [...] Poetic translation is therefore a form of poetic writing like any other, where the poet-translator needs to unfold all his devices in order to awake in receivers a determined esthetic emotion, like in one of his or her own poems. The difference is that in the translation the poet has to establish narrower limits than in other forms of variation... but also that the text giving the stimulus may reveal new devices which not even the translator was aware of.]

In theoretical writings, the use of metaphors, such as the one represented by the notion of musical variation, has advantages and disadvantages. On the one hand, it lacks the semantic precision and the unambiguousness which would certainly be helpful in our task of understanding Desclot's translation activity. In a study like the present one, interested in revealing the potential causes behind the translation process and product, it would be important to understand, for example, what Desclot precisely means with the expression "some narrower limits" when referring to the peculiarities of literary translation as a form of variation. On the other hand, the use of a metaphor is productive in its suggestiveness and evocative power. This advantage indirectly highlights the central interconnected aspects of Desclot's poetics of translation: the importance of recreating in a literary translation the communicative and evocative power of the devices used in the source poem and the status of a literary translation as a literary composition in its own right. Desclot's observation on all poetic

production as variation refers to the act of writing as an act of translation in itself, whereas translation is presented as an act of reading, interpreting, and re-writing, which Lefevere (1992) contributed to spread in scholarly circles on translation studies. Literary translation turns into a creative act with its own identity. In order to arrive at this conclusion Desclot starts by considering the special essence of translation of poetry, which does not reside in the semantics of a text, but rather in the personal transformation exerted on the semantics of the text, “amb el desplegament de tots els recursos al seu abast començant pels musicals, els menys racionalitzables, per tal que, així forçades i violentades, les paraules s’avinguin a dir allò que fins aleshores no sabien dir —i que per això semblaran noves, inventades de fresc” (Desclot 2004: 30) [by employing all the devices within their reach, starting with the musical ones, the least rationalizable, so that words, thus forced and violated, succeed in saying what they could not say until then, and so that they sound new and freshly invented]. If the translator achieves this aim, and avoids being a simple translator of words, he becomes *ipso facto* a poet, in particular a kind of poet very close to the dramatic one since his voice is expressed indirectly through the voices of others. And translation of poetry becomes, as a consequence, poetry in its own right.²³⁶

It cannot be claimed that the notion of literary translation presented by Desclot is an innovative one. Rather, by referring to the ineffable essence of poetry, he introduces a cliché often mentioned in relation to poetry and to the translation of poetry. Desclot however makes

²³⁶ “La traducció poètica és per a mi, doncs, un veritable gènere. Un gènere peculiar, això sí, en el qual les regles del joc canvien desconcertantment cada vegada. Perquè és un gènere poètic que exigeix una capacitat literalment proteica, fregoliana, de modular i canviar la veu a cada punt, a cada escomesa, la qual cosa aproxima el poeta traductor molt més del que podria semblar a primera vista al poeta dramàtic” (Desclot 2004: 31-32) [Translation of poetry is for me a real genre. A special genre, true, in which the rules of the game change disconcertingly each time. Because it is a poetic genre requiring a real protean, fregolian capacity to modulate and change at each point, at each attack, which brings the poet translator much closer to the dramatic poet than it might seem at first sight]. This position is a constant in Desclot’s critical writing on translation. As far back as 1988 in an article on the Catalan poet and translator Marià Manent (Desclot 1988), Desclot argues that Manent’s numerous translations of poetry into Catalan should be considered as part of his poetic production, irrespective of what Manent himself said on this issue.

no claim of originality in his writings on translation. He is concerned above all in presenting to readers the idea of literary translation that guides his activity and justifies his translation choices. In relation to his translation of Frost's poems, and to his recreation of mimesis of orality, these words still cannot help us understand the causes of his translation choices. We still do not know much about his priorities or the motivations behind his translation decisions, even though we begin to outline issues related to the poet-translator's personal taste. If I have emphasized his words at this point of the study it is because they lead to other considerations that reveal, at least in part, the ideological and cultural motivations behind his translations. In fact, Desclot's notion of literary translation as a poetic genre leads him to an open criticism of a translation trend toward philological translations.²³⁷

According to the Catalan poet, philological translations may have certain didactic utility for target text readers who want to read poetry in the source language and who use literal translations as a linguistic support during their reading. However, the spread of this fashion has negative consequences on several other fields related to literature. First, once this translation trend becomes a dominant norm and not an exception, translation of poetry as a poetic genre is seriously affected and the important tradition of the translation of poetry in Catalonia (which included some of the great names of the Catalan literary canon such as Josep Carner, Carles Riba, Josep Maria de Sagarra, Marià Manent, Josep Vicenç Foix, and Agustí Bartra) is endangered (Desclot 2004: 34). Second, the loss of the genre of poetic translation negatively affects original literary production as well. According to Desclot, the crisis of poetry translation is a symptom of the general crisis among Catalan writers who seem to have lost

la generosa voluntat d'aixecar entre tots plegats una literatura al nivell de la resta de literatures europees: és a dir, hem perdut el

²³⁷ I am attributing to the term *philological translation* the same meaning that is given by Tymoczko (2007: 64) to a certain kind of scholarly translation from Irish into English: "there are translations that are almost tortuous in their discursive strategies, having as their translation unit the word, the clause, or the sentence at most. This is the case with many philological translations, not just those of the nineteenth century but scholarly treatments in the second half of the twentieth century as well."

coral sentit de col·lectivitat, l'ambició política de ser alguna cosa més que una remota província literària" (Desclot :2004: 34)

[the generous willpower to raise our literature together to the level of other European literatures: that is, we have lost the choral sense of collectivity, the political ambition to be something more than a remote literary province].

Finally, renouncing translation of poetry as a poetic genre means giving up the guiding role that poetry used to have in the literary field, in favor of fiction.

At this point it seems possible to go back to the questions presented at the beginning of this section and start drawing together the threads linking what has been said so far with our textual analysis of Desclot's translation of Frost's poems and his recreation of the North American poet's mimesis of orality. Our first question focuses on the causes behind Desclot's blending of a colloquial and a more formal register in his translation of Frost's common speech. The Catalan poet-translator does not go into detail regarding the priorities adopted during the translation of *Al nord de Boston*, and makes only a vague reference to the balance in Frost's poetical language between poetry and common speech, and his interest in keeping this balance. However, it seems possible to find a touchstone to the understanding of his translation strategies and to the detection of the efficient and final causes of his translation decision in a paper Desclot wrote for his intervention in a talk organized by the Center of Catalan Studies of the University Paris-Sorbonne (Desclot 2000). In the paper, Desclot explains how the main difficulty he had to face when translating Molière's *Amphitryon* into Catalan for the stage was the lack of an established Catalan theatrical tradition. As a consequence, when he had to choose the target form for the piece (written in polymetric lines and complex rhyme combinations), Desclot found that the reproduction of a similar form was accepted with skepticism by the director, who expected the translator to renounce the stricter form of the original and produce "un Molière a la carta, servit en un llenguatge molt planer i, sobretot, molt 'invisible', és a dir, que no molestés gens l'acció" (Desclot 2000 online) [a Molière a la carte, served in a language that was very plain, and, above all, very "invisible," that is, that did not disturb the action at all]. The same translation

strategy adopted for the Spanish translation which was later commissioned of him did not cause similar negative reactions from the director or the actors, who welcomed his rhymed translation, finding it natural despite its fixed form. Desclot considers that the causes of this apparent contradictory behavior could be found in the different traditions behind the two translations. While the Spanish translation is backed up by a well-established theatrical tradition whose authors belong to the world literary canon (Tirso de Molina, Lope de Vega, Calderón de la Barca, etc.), the Catalan translation lacks a respected autochthonous tradition. The consequence is that rhymed translations of a theater piece evoke simple folkloric theater performances (*Els pastorets*) and the plays by Serafí Pitarra (the pseudonym of Frederic Soler i Hubert, 1839-1895) who wrote his work adopting the *català-que-ara-es-parla*.²³⁸ As a consequence, the moderately learned and classicizing language adopted in Desclot's Catalan translation of Molière had appeared unacceptable, while the same strategy, in Spanish (or in English translations, such as Richard Wilbur's translation of *Amphytrion*) leads to a translation which is welcomed with enthusiasm. Desclot claims that this attitude is a consequence of the "alarming provincialization" of Catalan culture and considers that his translation strategy can contribute to the almost non-existent genre of theater translation in Catalonia, regardless of the risks of open criticism to which he was exposing himself with his creative translation activity.

Despite the fact that Desclot's focus in his article is on theater and theater translation in Catalonia, to a certain extent his observations can be applied to his translation of Frost's poems, and shed light on some of its features. First, the translator himself claims in his paper on the translation of Molière that the problems he presents are limited neither to his translations of Molière nor to linguistic matters, but encompass more general issues related to theatrical and educational traditions.²³⁹ Second, he also points to the poetic

²³⁸ The expression refers to a linguistic trend born in the 19th century, supporting the standardization of Catalan based on linguistic rules inspired by the language of the people, that is, the language as it was actually spoken. Serafí Pitarra, whom Desclot mentions, was one of the main defenders of the model. This linguistic model opposed a linguistic reform based on an academic Catalan, that is, a language with the least possible number of Spanish loan words.

²³⁹ "Malgrat tot, els problemes que vull sotmetre a la vostra consideració són més generals que no pas particulars d'una peça o de dues, i em faig la il·lusió que

dimension implied in dramatic art: “sóc dels que creuen que l’acció dramàtica té lloc a les paraules fins i tot abans que a l’escenari, això és, que en definitiva el teatre no ha perdut mai la seva dimensió poètica original” (Desclot 2000: online) [I am among those who believe that dramatic action takes place in words even before they take place on the stage, that is to say, that theater never lost its original poetic dimension]. Finally, it is important to bear in mind that the majority of the poems included in *Al nord de Boston* have a dramatic structure that justifies a comparison with a theater piece and that made their representation on stage possible on several occasions in Frost’s time. Thus, even if Desclot’s translations of Frost can be inscribed in the rich Catalan poetic tradition (attributing, as the translator does, the status of poetry also to his translation of poetry), and do not present the limitations of Catalan drama translation, the dramatic structure of the source poems and the spoken quality of their language may bring the question of tradition back on the table. Suggesting extralinguistic causes behind the phenomena observed during the textual analysis becomes now easier. The numerous similarities detected between the mimetic devices adopted by Frost and by Desclot, as well as the translator’s decision to adopt a precise metric structure, the decasyllable, which occupies a canonical position in the Catalan poetic tradition equivalent to that of the blank verse in the Anglo-American tradition, correspond to Desclot’s intention to keep his translations as close as possible to the original structure. The decision is coherent with his idea of translation as a kind of first degree variation on a theme, and with his decision to recreate the balance of Frost’s language between poetry and common language. As a consequence Desclot decides not to translate the rhyme in the only rhymed poem of the source text in *Al nord de Boston*. This decision is understandable if one considers the relatively little importance that the rhymed composition has in the anthology, or even compared to other rhymed poems by Frost, in which rhyme plays a

no els exposaria de manera gaire diferent en el cas que hagués traduït molts més títols. I és que els problemes que us vull plantejar no són tant d’índole estrictament lingüística com de tradició teatral i tradició escolar” (Desclot 2000) [Despite everything, the problems I wish to submit for your consideration are more general than specific to one or two pieces, and I believe that I would not present them much differently had I translated many more titles. The problems I would like to bring up are not strictly linguistic, but are related to the theatrical tradition and the educational tradition.]

much more fundamental role. For the same reason, for example, Desclot does not forgo this device in translations of other poets where rhyme has traditionally a stronger role, as in his translations of the poems of Dante or Cavalcanti. That said, however, it should also be remarked that Desclot refers to Frost's balance between common speech and poetic devices in generic terms, thus leaving enough room for his own reading of the poems and his *variations*, in which his personal taste as a poet appears. Hence the more conscious literary quality of his language, detected during the textual analysis, which achieves its *raison d'être* in the role of cultural, literary, and ideological activism that Desclot attributes to it. On more than one occasion I have mentioned the not altogether enticing picture that Desclot paints of the current situation of Catalan translations of poetry, and in general, of the Catalan literary panorama. His personal recreation of mimesis of orality in Frost's translation can be interpreted as the translator's reaction to such a situation. His use of a language which is, on the one hand, certainly plain in syntax and in its frequent use of pragmatic devices, and, on the other, more elaborate, though not archaic or stereotypically literary in lexis corresponds to the translator's decision not to give in to a form of spoken Catalan (*el català que ara es parla*).

These observations, initially labeled as efficient and final causes of translation, interweave personal and wider ideological, cultural, and socio-political causes. Desclot's observations in fact shift the focus from the translation to the still controversial status of Catalan language in literary translation and Catalan literature in general. Through his translations and through his theoretical work, Desclot occupies a position within the Catalan cultural system that is distanced from the position occupied by scholars such as Pericay and Toutain (1996). The Catalan linguists criticize the language of *Noucentista* writers, identifying in Carner's translation style the origins of the dominant archaic prose style of Catalan fiction. While these scholars do not refer to the language of poetry, which had achieved according to them maturity and better results than prose during *Noucentisme* (as already seen during the analysis of Bartra's translations), they support the development of a Catalan language closer to the language of the common people. Desclot criticizes this tendency, observing that since the end of the Franco regime, published translations into Catalan, despite an increase in number, have seen a decrease in literary quality. The phenomenon may

correspond to a more globalized phenomenon in a world where economic and commercial interests prevail over the literary ones. However, this tendency is hardly desirable in the precarious conditions of the Catalan culture (Desclot 2010: 216). In the article, the Catalan translator takes a position against the current literary trends supporting a model of language closer to the common spoken language:

Mentrestant [i.e. during the period 1975-2005] bons escriptors i traductors de la *vella escola*, com ara Bonaventura Vallespinosa, Carme Serrallonga, Manuel de Pedrolo, Ramon Folch i Camarasa o Jordi Arbonès, van continuar treballant amb regularitat i solvència (sovint des de la distància), tot i que els últims anys han estat discutits pels seus models de llengua (en una nova manifestació virulenta del nostre recurrent *català-que-ara-es-parlisme*, tan característic d'una cultura anormalitzada, desposseïda dels mecanismes naturals de la regulació i autocontrol generats per la normalitat social: la dels mitjans de comunicació, l'ensenyament, l'administració, el món de l'espectacle, etcètera). (Desclot 2010: 216)

[In the meantime [i.e. during the period 1975-2005] good writers and translators of the *old school*, like Bonaventura Vallespinosa, Carme Serrallonga, Manuel de Pedrolo, Ramon Folch i Camarasa or Jordi Arbonès, kept working with regularity and solvency (often from a distance), even though in the latest years they have been criticized for their model of language (in a new virulent manifestation of our recurrent *català-que-ara-es-parlisme* [*Catalan-now-spokenism*], characteristic of a non-normalized culture, dispossessed of the natural mechanisms of regulation and self-control generated by social normality: that of mass media, teaching, administration, showbusiness, etc.)]

Finally, in the same article Desclot stresses the important role that *Modernisme* and *Noucentisme* played in the development of literary translation and praises those translators who still produce translations of high literary quality despite the trend towards philological translations. Even though *Al nord de Boston* was published in 1994, at the end of the golden decade of Catalan

translation of poetry (according to Farrés 2010: 111),²⁴⁰ and almost twenty years after the end of the regime, Desclot's observation on Catalan translation of poetry and his translation decisions, aiming at taking action in favor of a reinvigoration of Catalan literature and the building up of a more stable tradition of translation, suggests that the Catalan translation tradition and Catalan culture and language are still in a precarious position.

Reflections on the ideological and socio-cultural causes behind Desclot's way of translating Frost's poetic language raise further issues related to translation into Catalan as a minorized language, and bring in further complex questions concerning the very definition of minorized culture and the problems of translation in a bilingual community, among others. These issues cannot be tackled here as they exceed the research frame of the present study, focused mainly on the translation of Frost's mimesis of orality, and the more immediate causes triggering certain translation decisions in the target culture. The reference to the current trends of translation of poetry into Catalan, as well as the inner linguistic tensions between different currents of the Catalan scholarly world, have allowed us to achieve a more thorough understanding of Desclot's translations and of some of the processes leading to them. Finally, the implicit

²⁴⁰ In his article Farrés gives an overview of Catalan translation of poetry from 1975 to 2005, presenting the most important foreign authors who have been translated and the number of translations published. He observes: "Cal dir que l'època daurada de les traduccions de poesia al català –d'aquest període i potser de tota la història– correspon a la dècada central, és a dir a la que va de 1985 a 1995. [...] En aquesta segona etapa, que va durar justament fins al 1995, es van incorporar altres noms importants com Anna Akhmatova, Eugènio de Andrade, Marina Tzvetiaeva, Robert Frost o Eugenio Montale. Encara caldria afegir-hi, en aquesta dècada prodigiosa, les aportacions d'altres segells com Quaderns Crema (Du Fu, Mallarmé, Auden, Lowell), Empúries (Keats, Pound, Saba, la poesia completa de Trakl), Alfons el Magnànim (Éluard, Elytis, Enzensberger, la poesia completa de Bachmann) i altres" (Farrés 2010: 111-112). [It is necessary to say that the golden period of translations of poetry into Catalan –of this age and probably of all history– corresponds to the central decade, that is, the one spanning from 1985 to 1995. [...] During this second phase, which lasted until 1995, other important names were added like Akhmatova, Eugènio de Andrade, Marina Tzvetiaeva, Robert Frost and Eugenio Montale. We should further add, in this prodigious decade, the contributions of other editorial houses such as Quaderns Crema (Du Fu, Mallarmé, Auden, Lowell), Empúries (Keats, Pound, Saba, the complete poetry of Trakl), Alfonso the Magnanimous (Éluard, Elytis, Enzensberger, the complete poetry of Bachmann) and others].

criticism of Spanish linguistic hegemony in Catalonia, and of the Spanish state's lack of support of linguistic diversity that can be inferred from Desclot's writings (as in Desclot 2010, to mention just one of the works cited above), point to the still open debate on the relationship between the Catalan and the Spanish culture within the Spanish state.

5.4 Desclot and Bartra

The textual analysis of the translations of both Bartra and Desclot of Frost's poems has revealed common stylistic traits that allow us to hypothesize a potential link between the two poet-translators. Each translator's interpretation of Frost's mimesis of orality is characterized by a language which is rich in mimetic devices but which, at the same time, intermingles with them a vocabulary with literary connotations. If compared to the source mimesis of orality, the language certainly shifts towards communicative distance. However, considered as autonomous poetic texts, we do not detect a clash of registers. The translators' use of lexico-semantic and syntactical devices with literary connotations (for example word order transposition) contribute to characterizing the various voices in the poems. As a result, while the voices of characters in the dramatic poems often evoke the spoken language of common people, the voice of the narrator, especially of the extradiegetic narrator, acquires distinctive literary and poetic connotations. This phenomenon has been observed above all in those poems where narrative asides momentarily interrupt the dramatic action.

Another common element of the two translations is represented by the priorities established at a formal level. Both translators decide to translate the meters of Frost's poems by adopting meters belonging to the Catalan metrical tradition (primarily the decasyllable). Bartra also recreates a rhyming pattern in his translations, evoking the rhyming and overall rhythmic effects of the source text. Desclot does not attempt a recreation of the source rhyming pattern, which, however, is present in only one of the poems he selects for translation. Both poets also maintain the same number of lines as in the source text, with only a few exceptions in Bartra's translations.

During the analysis I have stressed how these translation choices are rooted in the ideological, socio-cultural, and political backgrounds of the two translators. They are a consequence of each poet-translator's personal idea of the translation of poetry. Both poets consider translation an instrument of literary development, of cultural and linguistic emancipation, and of political activism that can strengthen the position of Catalan language and culture on the international literary scene. While making the necessary distinctions between the two translators, it seems possible to consider the two poets-translators as representatives of two different chronological moments of a branch of tradition in translation of poetry which is far from having exhausted its potential within Catalan culture; a branch that seems in a tense relationship with the current trend of philological literary translation and that stresses its interest on certain formal aspects of literary translation in Catalonia.

CONCLUSIONS

I never felt easy till the raft was two mile below there and out in the middle of the Mississippi. Then we hung up our signal lantern, and judged that we was free and safe once more. [...] We said there warn't no home like a raft, after all. Other places do seem so cramped up and smothery, but a raft don't. You feel mighty free and easy and comfortable on a raft.

(Mark Twain, *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*)

Now that I have reached the concluding part of my research and can look back at the steps taken so far, I feel a little like Huckleberry Finn, who slides on his raft along the Mississippi, moving from adventure to adventure, from dialect to dialect, from idiolect to idiolect, recreated in the pages of the novel by Mark Twain's art. Robert Frost's poetry is the river along which I have sailed, acquiring different accents, different rhythms, and unexpected turns according to the cultures it has touched, into which it has been introduced through translation. The descriptive approach adopted during the research is my raft, the safe place from which I can observe the phenomena brought to the surface by the study of the translation of Frost's mimesis of orality into Italian and Catalan. And while I can feel "mighty free and easy and comfortable" from there, I do not forget that, like Huck's voice, my voice isn't neutral. The descriptive approach cannot eliminate altogether the cultural filter through which I describe the phenomena met during the study.

My research has been prompted by a series of questions that have supported and motivated each phase of it. The answers to these questions have allowed me to achieve partial conclusions, expounded through the study. In this final part of the study I look back at the work carried out so far and the partial conclusions already presented, and ask myself yet another question: what has my research contributed to? In order for the answer to this question to be satisfying, the partial results and tentative conclusions achieved in each chapter need to be briefly summarized, and the

study needs to be opened up to further research paths and hypothesis.

Contributions of the study to Frost's poetry and his mimesis of orality

The first focus of attention in the study has been Frost's evocation of orality in his poetry. The critical literature on the North American poet is extensive, and it is not easy to bring new perspectives on the investigation of his poetry, even though the studies that focus specifically on Frost's mimesis of orality are not numerous (as I have stressed in chapter 2). Moreover, my research has not analyzed Frost's complete poetical work but has focused on those poems which have been translated in the Italian and Catalan anthologies selected. Nonetheless, the sample of poems analyzed is representative enough to allow at least a number of observations on his poetic language. First, the analysis of a selection of poems and one of Frost's masques carried out in chapters 2 and 3, and, later on, the study of the entire corpus constituting the source text of the Italian and Catalan translations (chapters 4 and 5) have confirmed one fundamental trait of the poet's mimesis of orality, that is, its lack of elements belonging to the diatopic level of the language system. As commented on in chapter 2, this characteristic of Frost's poetic language had already been observed by several critics before (Borroff 1971, Gerber 1966, Lowell 1970, and Lynen 1960 among others). My study has contributed to a more detailed description of the components of Frost's mimesis of orality at a textual-pragmatic, syntactical, lexico-semantic, phonic, and graphic level. I have also shown that the mimetic elements belonging to the diastratic level of the language diasystem, that is, those elements characterizing the language of different social classes or groups, are rarely used in his poems. In fact Frost draws above all from what Koch and Oesterreicher define as universal categories of orality, which we could rename as *general* categories of orality, indicating with the term those features of orality that recur more frequently in the languages studied (and possibly in the majority of Indoeuropean languages). The detailed study of the mimetic strategies adopted by Frost has made it possible to refine this observation in order to understand better why and how the impression of New England talk or diastratic variations are evoked in his poems, even when no

specifically diatopic or diastratic device is used. I have argued (especially in chapter 2) that the impression of hearing New England people actually talk through a poem derives from the combination of these universal mimetic features of the language (what other critics have more or less generically defined as Frost's plain language) and the specific themes and settings of each poem. This combination contributes to creating a context that evokes a particular language variation, without its being actually reproduced. Furthermore, I have observed that, on some occasions, the impression of a diastratic variation is evoked by the use of specific mimetic devices which, though universal, produce in a written text a diastratic displacement—what Dargnat has defined as “*décalage des registres à l’oral et à l’écrit*” (2008: 14) [register's displacement towards the oral and the written]. The effect is a consequence of several factors. To begin with, we have the setting, in which different social origins are hinted at for the different characters. This fact predisposes the reader to expect them to talk in different ways. Second, Frost uses for these characters mimetic pragmatic and syntactical devices which carry out a more disruptive function on the structures described by normative grammar. I am referring, among others, to devices such as hesitation phenomena or reformulation mechanisms implying a lack of syntactical agreement and *constructio ad sensum*, incomplete expressions, dislocations, hyperbatons or anastrophe. These features are rooted in oral communication, and are often detectable even in contexts of communicative distance such as an academic conference. They rely more than other mimetic features on non-linguistic contextual elements which help both speakers and audience to follow the thread of what is being uttered. Once used in a written text, these devices cause a strong interruption of the reading flow, since they lack the para-linguistic support that oral communication would normally provide, and demand a bigger effort of inference from readers than in texts where these devices do not appear. As a consequence of this effect they are often interpreted as “not correct,” and tend to be attributed to the speech of characters whose social status allows readers to expect a low degree of education and a lower capacity to develop a planned and coherent discourse.

The study of Frost's poems has also made it possible to draw a distinction between the voices of the characters and the voice of the narrator or of the lyrical subject. The individual study of each poem

has stressed how a different combination of the same group of mimetic devices produces different impressions of orality in the different characters. This phenomenon has been described extensively during the analysis of Mary's and Warren's voices in the poem 'The Death of the Hired Man' (chapter 3). While both voices are characterized by the same set of mimetic devices, the increase in the use of fragmented expressions and hesitation phenomena characterizes the woman's voice as less rational and more empathic than that of the man. Criticism has already paid a good deal of attention to this aspect of Frost's poetry (Brower 1963, Kearns 1987 and 1994, Poirier 1977; among others). In my research, however, I have described the specific elements that make it possible to distinguish the oral quality of the narrator's voice from that of the characters. I have observed that, though this distinction varies greatly from poem to poem, at a general level it is still possible to detect recurring linguistic patterns in the narrating voice (and in the lyrical subject's voice in non-narrative poems), especially when the narrator is extradiegetic and heterodiegetic. First, this voice is characterized by a lower frequency of pragmatic mimetic markers. This phenomenon is not surprising, however, since these devices are usually expected in dramatic rather than in narrative contexts, as their power of evocation of the oral dimension seems stronger and more effective for the recreation of a conversational context. Moreover, the narrator's discourse presents a higher degree of planning, which is also coherent with his or her textual function, even though it also presents aggregative structures that are typical of descriptive sequences. What needs to be stressed, however, is that the narrator's discourse shares the main mimetic devices also present in the characters' voices. The difference between the narrator's and the characters' language then hinges on a matter of oral nuances or variation in frequency of the same mimetic devices rather than on issues of drastic changes in the structural features. In short, Frost's poetic language, both when it is attributed to the narrator's voice and when it represents the characters, is still a plain common language, as has often been stated. While this is nothing new, the analysis has allowed me to detect the subtle interplay between the voices of the narrator and of the characters, showing how the narrator, though extradiegetic, seems to feel involved in the scene and event which is being described. This impression suggests an empathic relationship with the characters and blurs the line between the extra- and intradiegetic

narrator. When the characters are absent from the poem, a similar empathic attitude of the narrator or of the lyrical subject can be interpreted as addressing readers directly.

The study has also outlined the interplay between Frost's mimetic devices and other rhetorical devices. In his poetry Frost aimed at establishing a balanced tension between the rhythms of common speech and those of poetry. The balance is achieved by using meter and certain rhetorical devices, such as rhyme, hyperbaton, and epizeuxis, which simultaneously activate aural or visual frames evoking a poetic context, while serving at the same time as mimetic devices. This phenomenon is a consequence of two peculiarities of mimesis of orality. On the one hand, we have observed that mimetic features have multiple functions and, as a result, can be interpreted as both mimetic and rhetorical devices. On the other, the indexical value of mimesis of orality allows other non-strictly mimetic features (such as certain metric patterns or a certain poetic genre) to evoke orality with similar efficacy. These observations lead to general considerations on the dynamics of the elements composing mimesis of orality, and are dealt with later on.

Different languages, different voices: shifts in the narrator's position

The textual analysis of the source text has shown that, in order to achieve a satisfying description of the impression of orality provoked by the text, it is not enough to enumerate the mimetic features detected in it. A further operation of contextualization that takes into account the combination of certain mimetic devices with the poem's setting, theme, and structure is needed, with the aim of determining, whenever possible, the communicative situations or the verbalization strategies employed by the very voices we want to characterize. This operation of contextualization has led to the individuation of two different kinds of voices: the voice of the narrator (and lyrical subject), which I have labeled as *modern storyteller*, and the voice of the characters in poems with a predominantly dramatic structure. The voices of the characters are generally closer to communicative immediacy and are often characterized by a richer use of pragmatic devices. As for the narrator's voice, my terminology must be clarified since the

category can include the portrayal of slightly different voices. The narrator can vary from an extradiegetic heterodiegetic narrator, as in 'An Old Man's Winter Night,' to an intradiegetic homodiegetic one, as in 'The Mountain.' Moreover, the category of narrator often blurs with that of lyrical subject, especially in those poems where there is very little narration, and the readership tends to identify the speaking voice with the voice of the poet. Despite the different roles that the voice of the narrator plays in each of the poems analyzed, I have argued that, as a general rule, this voice is more neutral. The use of a more standard common register is coherent with the fact that the narrator's and the lyrical subject's voices are often entrusted with lyrical or meditative asides, which often acquire symbolic meaning. However, these voices are still located in the area of communicative immediacy, since they are still characterized by simple syntax, common lexis, and personal and spatio-temporal deixis, among other mimetic devices. As a consequence, the mimetic effect triggered is often that of a plain voice describing a scene and commenting on it, in an intimate conversation with its audience.

Using these narratological categories in the study of the translations has facilitated a more encompassing description of the different varieties of mimesis of orality in the target text. It has allowed me to interpret the results of the textual analysis of the target texts and to reach conclusions on the way translators have construed these voices. The case study in chapter 3 has been a valuable starting point, since it has provided me with a set of questions which have guided my analysis of the corpus. In fact, the analysis of four translations into four different languages (Italian, Catalan, Spanish, and German) of a single poem ('The Death of the Hired Man') has allowed me to observe different translation solutions and describe some trends in the translations. On the one hand, I have observed that all translators have given priority to the recreation of spoken language in the text. On the other, I have noted that the Italian and Spanish translations present a freer metrical structure. As a consequence, I have argued that the rhythm of the translations loses regularity and shifts on some occasions towards the irregular rhythms of prose. The Catalan and German translations adopt the decasyllable and the blank verse respectively. These metric measures seem to provide a rhythmic structure and a poetic framework to which mimesis of orality has to adjust. The case study

has generated hypothesis on the material and formal causes of these phenomena. I have stressed potential similarities between Italian and Spanish (especially regarding the low number of monosyllables with lexical meaning in these languages), as well as between Catalan and German (in which these monosyllables are more numerous). The case study has also generated questions regarding further translation causes behind the different way of interpreting and translating the source mimesis of orality, which have been tackled and answered in chapter 4 and 5 by analyzing the complete Italian and Catalan corpora of translations.

The result has been that, in the case of the Italian translation, the tendency is towards an accentuation of the mimetic effects in the voices of characters and a decrease of the same effects in the voices of the narrator and the lyrical subject. In general, the use of common lexis close to communicative immediacy, of fixed expressions, and of simple syntax applied to the voice of characters triggers realistic mimetic effects with, at times, slightly popular overtones. The case study of chapter 3 has described this phenomenon in detail, and the textual analysis of the corpus (chapter 4) has confirmed it. The increase in the mimetic effects in the voice of the characters is in part a consequence of the lack of a rigorous metrical structure, which causes the rhythms of spoken language to prevail over the rhythms of meter. A further justification of this increase could also be, from the point of view of readers, that the lack of a more easily perceivable metrical structure does not challenge the readers' suspension of disbelief, since their awareness of the poetic dimension (which the presence of rhyme, for example, or of a defined metrical pattern would trigger) is not as strong as the mimetic one. As for the narrator's or lyrical subject's voice, the impression of orality created challenges the label of *modern storyteller* given to the source voice. In fact, the presence of fewer mimetic devices (also found in the source text) in combination with the translator's intentional use of rhetorical devices such as hyperbatons, anastrophes, and participial constructions introduce literary connotations that partly disrupt the evocation of a spoken language belonging to a storyteller whose voice is defined as modern in the source text because it still shares traits of orality with that of its audience.

In the translations of Bartra and of Desclot a divergence between the recreation of the spoken quality of the characters' voices and that of the narrator's or lyrical subject's voice is also perceivable, though the overall effect differs from the mimetic impression evoked in the Italian translation. In the two Catalan versions the translation tends towards an accentuation of poetic effects during the representation of the narrator's or lyrical subject's voice, which is still coherent with the generally lyrical or meditative content of the lines. Moreover, the use of metrical lines belonging to the Catalan poetic tradition provides a context in accord with the tone of the narrator's voice, which is more evocative and relatively formal. Metrical lines, on the other hand, also play an important role in the recreation of the characters' voices since they provide a counterpoint to the spoken "melody" (to continue with the musical metaphor) of the characters, in a way similar to the source text. Of course, there are differences between the recreations of orality of Bartra and Desclot. In Bartra's texts, for example, the use of literary terms is more frequent, as is the use of archaic terms (such as the use of archaic possessives) which are not found in Desclot's translation. This phenomenon is in part a consequence of the two poet-translators' styles and of the different times when the translations were produced. I have also found particularly interesting the change of perspective in the narrator's voice introduced by Bartra's translations in the poems 'Tarda de neu al bosc' ('Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening') and 'El telèfon' ('The Telephone'). In both cases the narrator's voice, generally identified with a man, often with the implied author, has been represented as being the voice of a woman. The interpretation of the narrator's gender as female triggers a different series of inferences in readers that produces a different perception of the voice. Despite this specific difference, I have argued that, in general, a certain line of continuity can be traced between the translations of Bartra and those of Desclot, pointing to a trend in the Catalan translation tradition of poetic texts. The identification of personal and socio-cultural causes behind Desclot's translation decisions, presented in chapter 5, has provided elements that support my claim. By criticizing a certain literary and translation current which supports a model of language closer to common spoken Catalan (the *català que ara es parla*), and by stressing the importance of the role played by *Noucentisme* and *Modernisme* in the development of literary translations, Desclot seems to take a clear stance in favour of a

translation tradition that can be traced back to *Modernisme* and *Noucentisme*. The hypothetical value of this conclusion points, however, to further research lines which may adopt as their object the investigation of potential trends in the translation of mimesis of orality in poetry within the Catalan translation tradition.

Frost's mimesis of orality in translation

The textual analysis of the translations carried out by Giudici, Bartra, and Desclot (as well as the translations of 'The Death of the Hired Man' into Spanish by Masó and into German by Vollert, presented in chapter 3) has made it possible to outline translation regularities, that is, traits that are shared by all translators, as well as diverging translation behaviors. The common traits refer to the way and frequency with which Frost's mimetic devices have been translated into Italian and Catalan.²⁴¹ The study has shown that textual-pragmatic, syntactical, and lexico-semantic mimetic devices have not constituted a major obstacle for translators. Indeed, the contrastive analysis between the frequency of these devices in source and target texts has shown little variation. As a matter of fact, the main divergences consist either of those language-specific phenomena, as, for example, the formation of diminutives in Italian and Catalan, and the use of shortened subject-verb and verb-negation forms in English, or of the translators' intentional use of other devices, such as hyperbaton or anastrophe, with no oral connotations. The relative regularity in the translation of the mimetic features detected in Frost's poems lends itself to a multi-tiered interpretation. It can be seen as a logical consequence of the fact that these features belong to the universal level of the diasystem. In fact, since they are common to culturally contiguous languages such as Catalan, English, and Italian, we can assume that the translation of these devices from one language into another does not represent any particular challenge for the translator (as would be, for example, the translation of linguistic diatopic varieties, such as geolects, or sociolects). The study of the translation of the mimetic devices detected in the source text has also brought to the fore the issue of the repercussions that the polyfunctionality of most mimetic devices can have on the target mimetic effects. As I have

²⁴¹ These patterns of translation could only be hinted at in the case of the Spanish and German one-poem translations.

shown during the analysis of the Italian translations (chapter 4), the fact that most of the features may carry out different mimetic functions at the same time demands an act of interpretation on the translator's part and, on some occasions, an act of selection among the various mimetic functions that the source device can have. As a consequence of this act a shift may occur in translation, from one mimetic effect (for example phatic) to another (for example emphatic) within the same area of mimesis of orality (close to communicative immediacy). In these cases we have observed that the impression of orality is in general preserved, though the shift from one mimetic effect to another may provoke changes in the point of view and in the illocutionary force of mimetic formulations. On several occasions I have stressed that mimesis of orality does not consist solely of a combination of certain mimetic features. The understanding of this broader phenomenon requires a holistic approach. As a matter of fact, only when the perspective of the research shifts from detailed work with mimetic devices to encompass those non-mimetic devices (rhetorical devices in general) with which mimetic features interplay, do we detect significant translation divergences the meaning of which can give us clues about the translator's strategies, priorities, and restrictions.

For Giudici, the translation of Frost's poetry has a liberating effect. The spoken tone of the language of the North American poet in fact deeply influences not only Giudici's translations in *Conoscenza della notte*, but also his subsequent translations, such as his version of *Eugene Onegin*. Its influence is clearly perceived in his own poetry even though Giudici's tendency towards the use of a common diction in poetry is also a stylistic trait already present in his poetic work before his translation of Frost. What is certainly significant is that, with the aim of recreating the rhythms of spoken language in the translations of Frost's poems, Giudici renounces the more established metrical structures of the Italian tradition, such as the Italian hendecasyllable, which would be closer in length to Frost's iambic pentameter. The Italian poet specifies, however, that he does not renounce metrical structure in favor of free verse, but rather he prefers longer lines of relatively regular length resulting from the combination of different meters (such as an heptasyllable and a pentasyllable). The result aims at recreating effects similar to those generated by sprung rhythm. In the analysis, I have mentioned the criticism that was made of Giudici's translation decision. His

translation strategy acquires further significance if projected onto the Italian literary backdrop of the time. It can be interpreted then as a conscious decision aimed in part at renewing the Italian poetic language by freeing it from the literary formulas of the Italian tradition.

As for the translations into Catalan, the study of Bartra's and Desclot's versions of Frost has ultimately enabled me to draw a link between two translators' styles and two relatively recent historical periods, stressing the points of contact and the main differences. We have seen that Bartra's translations of Frost's poetry, though limited in number, present certain recurrent linguistic patterns that can be better understood by referring once again to the poet-translator's style. Bartra translates Frost's mimesis of orality by resorting to mimetic devices similar to those found in the source text. At the same time, his translations are characterized by a lexis with clear literary connotations. Despite the clash that the combination between common and literary lexis might be expected to cause, I have argued that Bartra achieves stylistic unity. First, I have remarked that his combination of plain and literary language is a distinguishing feature of his poetry. Furthermore, I have stressed that the defined metrical forms he chooses for his translations, which belong to the Catalan metric tradition, contribute to the stylistic unity of Bartra's language in translation. They make it possible to locate his work as a translator in the Catalan tradition of translation of poetry of the time, which, as the linguists Pericay and Toutain maintain (1996: 167), had already achieved maturity, unlike the translation of prose.

The translation solutions adopted by Desclot present numerous elements in common with Bartra's translation. The analysis has pointed out that Desclot translates Frost's language of common people in the poems by adopting mimetic devices similar to those found in the source text. The main divergence can be seen in the use of devices at a lexical level, especially in Desclot's use of words with a higher degree of lexical precision and, occasionally, with literary connotations. The mimetic devices selected by the translator blend in well with other formal devices such as the use of the decasyllable as a formal equivalent of Frost's blank verse. This translation strategy follows the pattern established by the source

text and, at the same time, represents a point of contact with the translation of Frost's poetry carried out by Bartra.

The search for translation causes beyond the material and formal causes detected by the linguistic analysis has led me to focus on efficient and final causes both at the personal level and at a broader socio-cultural level. At a personal level the study has outlined the points of contact between the translation styles of Giudici, Bartra, and Desclot, their recreations of spoken language, and their own stylistic preferences. In itself this phenomenon is not new and numerous translation scholars have pointed out the superimposition of the style of the translator (Schiavi's implied translator [1996]) on the style of the implied author which, in poetry translation, becomes particularly evident due to the delicate balance of formal and semantic elements of a poem. Mona Baker (2000) has commented on the notion of the translator's style saying that the difficulty lies in disentangling the style of the author from the style of the translator. In the study I have partly "disentangled" Frost's style from those of Giudici, Bartra, and Desclot by pointing to linguistic and stylistic phenomena that can be detected in other poetic translations carried out by them, as well as in their own work as poets. This observation has allowed me to detect those regularities of pattern to which Baker refers when she defines the notion of translator's style.

The search for final and efficient translation causes at a broader socio-cultural level has highlighted fields of investigation which have been only partly tackled in the study. They have shown, however, how rich in answers and potential associations this aspect of the work can be. Both in the case of Giudici's translation and in the case of Bartra's and Desclot's translations, the search for causal explanations has pointed to a potential ideological position of the translators which could be described by using the notion of activism. However, activism assumes different shades of meaning for the three translators and needs to be better defined. As already mentioned above, Giudici's translation decisions hint at a sort of cultural, rather than political, activism. They aim at a renewal of the Italian poetic language and can be inscribed in the wider movement of emancipation of the language of poetry in Italy that started developing at the end on the 1950s and through the 1960s, and that found support in other well-known Italian poets of Giudici's

generation. The notion of activism in Bartra's translation acquires clearer political connotations. His translation of Frost's language has to be inscribed in the wider context of the anthology of Bartra's translations into Catalan of contemporary North American poets. His translations of Frost's poems become thus a contribution (as part of a larger whole) to the renewal of the Catalan culture by making that culture acquainted with modern trends in North American poetry. It is true that the diffusion of Bartra's anthology when it was first published was limited due to the difficult economic conditions in which the Catalan community in exile found itself. Its importance, however, has been stressed by later anthologizers (like Abrams [1994]). Bartra's translations are also an act of assertion of the Catalan language, endangered by Franco's suppressive measures. The term activism can also be applied to describe at least certain aspects of the ideology that motivates Desclot's translation decisions, even though, due to the different socio-cultural context, it can be attributed yet a different shade of meaning. As shown in chapter 5, the analysis of the translator's style, which, according to Baker (2000: 245), includes linguistic and metalinguistic elements such as prefaces, afterwords and footnotes, has allowed me to identify a causal relationship between Desclot's translation of Frost and his aim at establishing a certain standard of language in translation that draws from the ideals set up by *Noucentisme*. These ideals are controversial and are opposed by other cultural currents that either prioritize philological poetry translations or propose a different model of language that is closer to the Catalan presently spoken by the man in the street (this model applies especially to prose translation). This debate is well-known on the Catalan cultural scene. Desclot's translation of Frost's recreation of orality in poetry becomes in our case a pragmatic answer to it. Understanding Desclot's underlying ideology also sheds light on the asymmetrical relationship still existing between the Catalan and the Spanish cultures, deriving from the cohabitation of both languages within Catalonia, and from the hegemonic position of the Spanish language within the geopolitical boundaries of the Spanish state.

Contributions toward a better understanding of mimesis of orality

Looking back at the work carried out so far, one further question needs to be addressed with reference to the understanding of aspects of mimesis of orality which the translational perspective has brought to surface. My reflection takes as a starting point Freunek's remark (mentioned in section 1.7) on the way mimesis of orality works in readers as context-forming (2007: 30). In light of the phenomena detected during the analysis it is now possible to better define this remark. During the study I observed several cases in which the context-forming function of mimesis of orality is particularly evident. Among these, I found that a particularly relevant example of context-formation is represented by the presence in a poem of a dramatic situation, either explicit, as in a dramatic dialogue, or implicit, as in a dramatic monologue. The dramatic situation triggers in readers the expectation of some use of oral language, that is, a context in which communication moves towards the pole of communicative immediacy. This phenomenon is a consequence of the indexical value of the features of orality included in Koch and Oesterreicher's framework. In a dramatic situation in which two or more voices enter in conversation, a similar semiotic mechanism is triggered immediately. This remark is coherent also with Fowler's perspective, according to which the oral world is an idea grounded in speakers' minds (Fowler 1991: 59-65). As a consequence, a dramatic situation may evoke an oral context even if, ultimately, the voices involved in the scene are not characterized by the presence of numerous mimetic features. In terms of mimetic devices a fundamental role is played by personal deictics. We have seen that a dramatic situation is given whenever the *I-you* deictics occur in a text. The links drawn between the dramatic setting as context creator for the evocation of orality and the *I-you* pair as a fundamental element of the dramatic situation, and, further on, between this pair and its position within the wider range of deictic elements, raises the question of the centrality of deixis in the evocation of orality in a written text. Koch and Oesterreicher do not establish any priority among the various universal features of orality, nor do they rank the elements contributing to mimesis of orality. What I am claiming, however, is that in the study we have found occasions in which certain mimetic

devices, such as deixis or certain pragmatic devices, have more power in the evocation of a context of communicative immediacy than others. This claim however, has a hypothetical value and points to further lines of research, in which the initial corpus should be expanded and other genres should be included. It would be interesting to investigate whether such a ranking of mimetic devices can actually be created, to what degree it is linked to a certain language, and whether it can achieve a certain level of generalization. If a ranking could really be established, it would represent a useful tool for the interpretation of mimesis of orality in literature and for the investigation of potential changes occurring in translation as a consequence of the cultural grounding of the phenomenon. Limiting my discourse to the present study, it seems feasible to argue that deictic elements play a leading role in the creation of different shades of spoken language in Frost's poems. This conclusion finds support in the link I see between the mental nature of the mechanisms evoking orality and Furrow's note (1988: 375), quoted in section 4.2.1, on the function played by deictics as elements reinforcing *in the mind of readers* the ability to picture the events the narrator is presenting with the act of narration.

Reflecting on the context-forming potential of mimesis of orality introduces, however, other satellite considerations. I have stressed on several occasions (for example, in section 1.7, with special reference to the use of coordinating conjunctions), that mimesis does not correspond to the sum of mimetic features that can be detected in a text. Mimetic effects in fact can also be triggered by non-mimetic elements. Especially during the analysis of the source text it has been possible to observe how certain verse forms could evoke orality because they were traditionally employed in compositions that were sung and had popular or satirical connotations (like the ballad or the heroic couplet). In this case their mimetic force can be understood only if we consider that within the label of orality a wide array of different phenomena can be included. This consideration has made it possible to devise the label of *modern storyteller* (in chapter 4) for a particular kind of narrator's voice.

Potential developments in the methodology of research on mimesis of orality

Freunek's (2007) remark on mimesis of orality as context-forming, as well as my comment on the possibility of devising a ranking of mimetic features ranging from a milder to a stronger mimetic force, seem to disclose, in my opinion, the potential limits of a methodology that counts only on Koch and Oesterreicher's theoretical framework (which was developed for the study of orality) for the study of mimesis of orality. During the textual analysis I have had difficulties in determining the degree of efficacy that different mimetic features could have in the evocation of orality. In fact, while the detection of mimetic features in a text is a relatively objective operation (which still implies an act of interpretation), it was much more difficult to determine which of the various mimetic elements bore more weight in the evocation of orality. Furthermore, another difficult task consisted in the definition of the kind of oral impression recreated by the mimetic features detected in the text. This fact is in part a consequence of the different nature of mimesis of orality compared to orality, and has justified, from the very beginning of the study, a holistic approach to the phenomenon. However, there is still a need to establish a better defined relationship between clusters of mimetic features and the conceptional dimension they evoke in a written text. I have noted that often the presence of pragmatic mimetic devices is highest in texts in which the impression of a context of communicative immediacy is realistically recreated. This suggestion is similar to my hypothesis that the presence of the *I* and *you* personal deictics, as well as spatio-temporal deixis in a text, contribute to the creation of a dramatic context in which orality can be better recreated. However, these hypotheses call for further study in future research.

Finally, my study has also put to the test the very methodology I adopted, which was based on a holistic approach to mimesis of orality. Visually, the essence of this approach is represented by the checklist I have introduced in chapter 1, where, beside the list of mimetic features that I focused on during the textual analysis, I added non-mimetic elements (such as rhyme, verse form, and number of lines) and contextual elements, such as the potential

influence that other literary texts by other authors could have had on the source and target poems. This approach has allowed me to achieve a more precise definition of the communicative situations evoked and of the position of mimesis of orality along the conceptual axis of communicative immediacy-communicative distance. This method of investigation has proved useful during the linguistic analysis and seems to point to yet another direction that future research on mimesis of orality (and mimesis of orality in translation) may take. In fact, a methodology that takes into account the interrelation between the mimetic and non-mimetic elements mentioned above might guide scholars to identify features of orality in a text, to understand what relationships and what potential hierarchies are present among them, and, given certain co-textual conditions, what mimetic effects they achieve. The model would be useful not only as a tool for the description of the kinds of orality evoked in a text, but also as an instrument that allows scholars to formulate predictive hypotheses on the kind of impression of orality that may be evoked once a certain combination of elements is achieved. Both the descriptive and the predictive dimension of this model could be applied to translation and could help highlight potential differences in the mechanisms of evocation of orality in different cultures.

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