



UNIVERSIDAD  
DE BURGOS

***The Country Girls* land in Spain: Translation  
strategies to overcome cultural leaps**

**Elena Alcalde-Peñalver / María Amor Barros-del Río**  
**May 2017**

# Table of contents

## **1. INTRODUCTION**

Contextualisation of the novel

## **2. METHODOLOGY**

2.1 Cultural references and strategies in literary translation

2.2 Categories of analysis

## **3. TRANSLATION ANALYSIS OF CULTURAL REFERENCES**

3.1. Cultural references through linguistic aspects

- Regionalisms / Orality in language / Irish accent

3.2. References related to landscape

3.3. References related to sexuality

3.4. References related to Irish religion and history

## **4. ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION OF RESULTS**

## **5. CONCLUSIONS**



# 1. Introduction

## Contextualisation of the novel

- First novel of Irish writer Edna O'Brien. **Published in London** in 1960, **banned in Ireland**.
- Winner of the **Kingsley Amis Award** in 1962.
- Sequels: *The Lonely Girl* (1962), later renamed *Girl With Green Eyes*, and *Girls in Their Married Bliss* (1964). ***The Country Girls Trilogy and Epilogue* (1986)**.
- Translations in **other languages**:
  - German: *Die Fünfzehnjährigen*, 1961.
  - Italian: *Ragazze di campagna*, 1961.
  - Swedish: *Två flickor på Irland*, 1962.
  - Polish: *Czekając na miłość*, 1974.
  - French: *Les filles de la campagne*, 1988.
  - Dutch (The complete trilogy): *De Buiten Meisjes Trilogie*, 1998, and Lithuanian *Kaimo Mergaičių Trilogija ir Epilogas*, 2006.
  - Portuguese: *Girls of Province*, 2010.

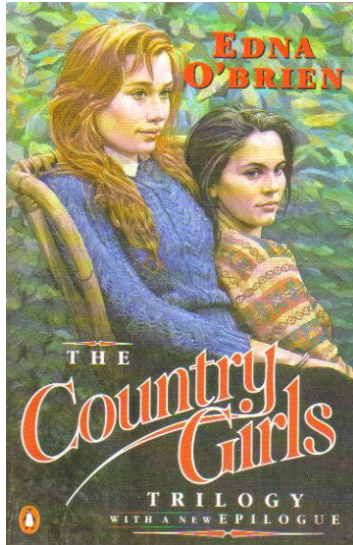


# 1. Introduction

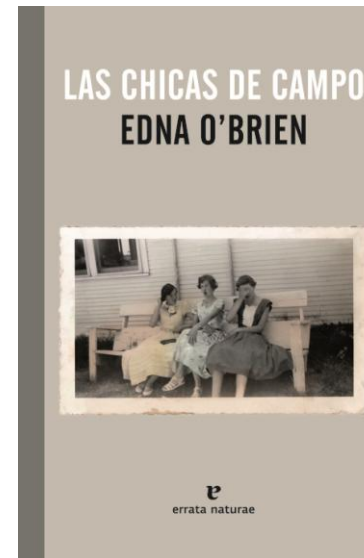
## Contextualisation of the novel

- The Spanish translation *Las Chicas de Campo*, did not reach bookstores in Spain until 2013, more than half a century after its publication. (Translator: Regina López Muñoz). Errata Naturae Publishing House. Madrid, Spain.

1960



2013



UNIVERSIDAD  
DE BURGOS

# 1. Introduction

## Contextualisation of the novel

Some reasons for this delay:


- **Cultural and geographical distance** between Spain and Ireland : weak level of relations between both countries during the central decades of the twentieth century.
- The **marginality of Irish studies** in relation to the British metropolis in the field of English philological studies: attention to Irish studies had to wait until the beginning of the 21st century, when the Spanish academic community began to admit the singularity of the Irish artistic, literary and cultural production as a discipline of study.
- **Social and political coincidences** between Spain and Ireland : political regimes characterized by a lack of freedom and a strong presence of the Catholic Church.

# 2. Methodology

## 2.1 Cultural references and strategies in literary translation


- Barriers imposed by **non-existent cultural references** for the reader who is unfamiliar with the **Irish culture**.
- **Tripartite approach**: contextualisation, descriptive study and analysis.
- **Techniques** for translating cultural references:

### Foreignisation vs. Domestication

- 
- Specification
  - Loans
  - Addition of information
  - Literal translation



UNIVERSIDAD  
DE BURGOS

- 
- Generalization
  - Substitution
  - Neologism
  - Transposition
  - Omission
  - Compensation

# 2. Methodology

## 2.2 Categories of analysis

- **Linguistic aspects:** novel written in an elegant and precise language that reflects the daily rural and urban life of postwar Ireland.

- **Irish landscape:** great lyricism and descriptive ability of Edna O'Brien.

- **Sexuality:** the novel includes open allusions to female sexuality

- **Irish religion and history:** frank criticism



**Scandalous novel** at the time. But now?



# 3. Translation analysis of cultural references

## 3.1 Linguistic aspects: Regionalisms

ST: “Ask me nicely, Hickey, and call me dotey.” (Pg 4)

TT: ¿Por qué no me preguntas con un poco más de delicadeza, Hickey? Y llámame “reina”. (Pg 11)

ST: “An Irish colleen” (Pg 92)

TT: -Una moza irlandesa. (Pg 162)



# 3. Translation analysis of cultural references

## 3.1 Linguistic aspects: Regionalisms

ST: *I named him **Bull's-Eye** because his eyes were speckled black and White, like canned sweets.* (Pg 3)

TT: Le había puesto **ese nombre** porque en los ojos tenía unas manchitas blancas y negras que me recordaban a los caramelos mentolados\*. (Pg 10)

**Footnote:** Bull's-Eye means in Spanish “blanco de la diana” and because of its similarity famous sweets of circular form and concentric stripes were called after it: Bull's-Eye Candy. (Pg 10)

# 3. Translation analysis of cultural references

## 3.1 Linguistic aspects: Orality in language

ST: “There’s a play in the town hall, **missus**. You ought to go over,” Hickey said.  
(Pg 6)

TT: Hay una función en el ayuntamiento, **señora**. Debería ir a verla –propuso Hickey. (Pg 15)

ST: She was the best **mama** in the world. (Pg 6)

TT: Era la mejor **madre** del mundo. (Pg 14)

# 3. Translation analysis of cultural references

## 3.1 Linguistic aspects: Orality in language

ST: She rode off singing, **“I will and I must get married”**. (Pg 15)

TT: Se alejó cantando **“The Humour is on me Now”**. (Pg 30)

ST: The radio was playing –**“... where women are women, and French perfume that rocks the room.”** (Pg 49)

TT: Sonaba la radio -... ***“where women are women, and French perfume that rocks the room-.”*** (Pg 90)



# 3. Translation analysis of cultural references

## 3.1 Linguistic aspects: Irish accent

ST: Like the **eejits** who come over to Burren to look at flowers. (Pg 10)

TT: Como esos **imbéciles** que van al Burren solo para mirar las flores. (Pg 21)

ST: The two youngest were hanging over the wall saying “**Good afternoona**” to everyone who went by. (Pg 24)

TT: Los dos más pequeños estaban sentados en lo alto del murete y diciendo “**Buenaz tardez**” a todo el que pasaba. (Pg 45)

# 3. Translation analysis of cultural references

## 3.2 Irish landscape

ST: The sun was not yet up, and the lawn was speckled with daisies that were fast asleep. There was dew everywhere. The grass below my window, the hedge around it, the rusty paling wire beyond that, and the big outer field were each touched with a delicate, wandering mist. And the leaves and the trees were bathed in the mist, and the trees looked unreal, like trees in a dream. (Pg 3)

TT: Aún no había salido el sol, y el césped estaba moteado de margaritas dormidas. El rocío lo cubría todo. Una bruma leve y vacilante velaba la hierba bajo mi ventana, el seto, la herrumbrosa alambrada de más allá, el vasto campo. La neblina impregnaba las hojas y los troncos, y los árboles parecían irreales, como salidos de un sueño. (Pg 10)

# 3. Translation analysis of cultural references

## 3.3 Sexuality

ST: Baba and I sat there and shared secrets, and once we took off our knickers in there and tickled one another. The greatest secret of all. (Pg 8)

TT: Baba y yo pasábamos allí el rato y nos contábamos secretos; y, una vez, nos bajamos las bragas y nos hicimos cosquillas. Aquél era nuestro mayor secreto. (18)

ST: “Imagine”, said Baba,” she read out, ‘Father Tom stuck his long thing,’ (105)

TT: Figúrate – continuó- que ha dicho “El padre Tom le ha metido su enorme aparato...”. (184)

# 3. Translation analysis of cultural references

## 3.4 Irish religion and history

TO: “Who’s the archbishop?” I asked, as we had only a bishop in our diocese. “Who’s the archbishop! **Are you a bloody Protestant or what?**” she asked. (Pg 22)

TM: ¿Quién es el arzobispo? – quise saber, pues en nuestra diócesis sólo había un obispo.

¿Qué quién es el arzobispo? **¿Qué pasa, imbécil, es que ahora eres protestante?** (Pg 42)

# 3. Translation analysis of cultural references

## 3.4 Irish religion and history

ST: They called it a lawn because it had been a lawn in the old days when the big house was standing; but the **Tans** burnt the big house and my father, unlike his forebears, had no pride in land and gradually the place went to ruin. (Pg 10)

TT: Lo llamábamos “prado” porque en su día lo había sido, cuando la casa grande aún estaba en pie; pero después de que **los soldados británicos** prendieran fuego a la vivienda, mi padre que, al contrario de sus antepasados, no tenía ningún apego por la tierra, dejó que el lugar se echase a perder. (Pg 22).



# 4. Analysis and interpretation of results

**Linguistic references:** domestication as predominant technique



Neutralization and acceptability in Spanish

LOST

**Landscape:** lexical richness also present in Spanish. “The reader is soon aware of a typically rural Irish context” (Martini 2013: 110)

TRANSMITTED

**Sexuality:** the transgressivity of scenes of sexuality is reflected in Spanish.

TRANSMITTED

**History and religion:** the transgressivity of scenes of history and religion is reflected in Spanish.

TRANSMITTED



# 5. Conclusions

- No particular **cultural adaptation** strategy

- **Social aspects** lost

- **Sexuality, history and religion** are not altered in the translation

- Use of **footnotes**

- Possibility of an **introductory note**



**Have readers in Spanish appreciated the challenging “scandalous” nature of the novel?**





UNIVERSIDAD  
DE BURGOS

**Thanks you for your attention!**

**Elena Alcalde-Peñalver** [eapenalver@ubu.es](mailto:eapenalver@ubu.es)

**María Amor Barros-del Río** [abarros@ubu.es](mailto:abarros@ubu.es)

**May 2017**