

# TRANSLATING COLLOQUIAL IDIOMS/METAPHORS IN *THE CATCHER IN THE RYE*: A COMPARISON OF METAPHORICAL MEANING RETENTION IN THE SPANISH AND CATALAN TEXTS

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In spite of the novel's position among the American Library Association's list of the one hundred most frequently censored books, *The Catcher in the Rye* (1951), by J.D. Salinger, is widely considered to be one of the most significant literary works of the twentieth century, frequently found in high school literary curricula throughout Europe and North America. The controversy concerns its alleged profanity, vulgar language and treatment of sexual themes, elements that typify Holden's use of the English language, or his idiolect.

Idiolect refers to individual speech. It is based on grammar, word selection, phrases, idioms, and includes pronunciation. Of particular note is the author's use of italics to denote emphasis, or where accents fall when considering rhythm in, and among, certain words. It is possible that this practice was brought almost to perfection in *The Catcher in the Rye*, in replicating speech patterns in written language. Quite possibly, it has not been matched since. The author's ability to capture rhythm and colloquial speech is, indeed, quite remarkable. This is especially obvious for readers who are fluent in, or are native speakers of American English. Consider how the author stresses groups of words:

"Wuddaya mean *so what?*" (p. 41)

"You don't do *one damn thing* the way you're supposed to" (p. 41)

"She was blocking up the *whole goddam traffic* in the aisle" (p. 87)

Other times, certain words are stressed:

“What the hellja do *that* for?” (p. 41)

“Well, don't get *sore* about it...” (p.82)

“Which is something that gives me a royal pain in the ass. I mean if somebody *yawns* right while they're asking you to do them a goddam favor” (p.28)

Finally, and perhaps most characteristic, the author stresses parts of words:

“I mean I'm not going to be a goddam surgeon or a violinist or anything *anyway*” (p. 39)

“It's not *paradise* or anything...” (p. 55)

“For *Chrissake*, Holden. This is about a goddam *baseball* glove” (p.41)

58 Preserving the uniqueness of Holden Caulfield's idiolect has been a challenge for translators seeking to preserve the effect and the flavor of the discourse using the techniques that Salinger originally used, namely, stream of consciousness and dramatic monologue in which, directly and intimately, Holden tells his story in retrospect to the readers. This technique has the effect of reproducing the inner workings and thought processes of Holden —disjointed and random— and also provides dialogs that are remarkably fluid and natural. To represent Holden and his frustrations using the same register in another language is a daunting chore, indeed, especially since Holden attaches his own meanings to the language that he uses. Costello<sup>1</sup> reminds us that Holden appropriates common expressions from his period and makes them his own. For example, his free and loose use of "and all" to end thoughts along with the affirmative "I really did" or "It really was" are repeated throughout the novel, helping to forge Holden's own distinct personality. Other authors have commented upon the importance of Holden's speech in defining his character in relation to the readers: "... his language, his own idiolect, full of idioms and colloquialisms, is the main feature that will contribute to Holden's development as a character in his transition from adolescence to adulthood and his relationship with the reader"<sup>2</sup>. Although translating Holden's idioms may present challenges, it may be one of the most important aspects of preserving the flavor of his idiolect and effect it has on readers.

### Holden Caulfield's idioms

Like other languages, English is full of idioms such as "to break a leg" and "to pull someone's leg". An idiom is

a form of expression, grammatical construction, phrase, etc., peculiar to a language; a peculiarity of phraseology approved by the usage of a language, and often having a signification other than its grammatical or logical one.<sup>3</sup>

Idioms generally have three characteristics:

1. Their meaning cannot be deduced from their components or any arrangement thereof, and must be learned as a whole. If one were to interpret 'to break a leg' solely on the basis of its components it might be very difficult to realize that the actual meaning is positive, meaning to have a good time, not incur injury, especially when used in the imperative. Likewise, nowhere in the expression 'to pull someone's leg' there appears any element that would suggest joking, or specifically, having someone believe things that are not true.
2. None of their constituents may be substituted with words of similar meaning. For example, if one were to substitute the word 'fracture' for 'break' in to 'break a leg', the meaning would be lost. Likewise, upon being the object of joking one could not say that he or she had had his or her leg 'stretched'.
3. Finally, idioms cannot be syntactically modified. One would probably not be understood if one were to say 'I had my leg broken' meaning 'I had a good time'; it would be similarly confusing to say 'I had my leg pulled yesterday' if one were to communicate that they were joked with yesterday.

Without any contextual information a learner of English might have little idea what these expressions mean. Clearly, the meaning in these phrases is figurative, or "expressing one thing in terms normally denoting another"<sup>4</sup> and metaphorical where "a figure of speech in which a word or phrase denoting one kind of object or idea is used in place of another to suggest a similarity between them (as in the ship plows to sea)".<sup>5</sup> For this reason, the idioms in question found in the book could be referred to as colloquial metaphors<sup>6</sup> as some authors prefer: metaphors for the aforementioned semantic arguments and colloquial because they are metaphors which exist in the more informal registers, in this case, slang. But the term 'colloquial idiom' seems to be preferable in most research contexts<sup>7</sup>. For this reason I will refer to them as colloquial idioms/metaphors. This study focuses primarily on the pragmatic purpose of these metaphors since it is the idiolect of Holden Caulfield that is to be examined in its aesthetic effect and 'flavor'. Therefore, not all metaphors found in Holden's idiolect were chosen. In fact, some metaphors are so common that it has been forgotten that they are metaphors, having been accepted into standard use. Such is the case with the great majority of phrasal verbs in English: 'get up', 'get over', etc. Also, there are many examples of colloquial word combinations repeated with some frequency in the novel, but they have not been included in the study as their metaphorical qualities are more abstract<sup>8</sup> and might rather, and more appropriately, be studied as collocations, or words that are found to occur together, to examine their restrictions of usage in relation to other components (prepositions, verbs, etc.). Here are some examples that use the word 'hell':

hell of it	29, 61, 73,210	
as hell	34,35, 37, 38, 94, 113	
The hell out	52, 179	
to bang hell (as a noun)	53, 115,	
The hell with it	69	
in hell	146	

TABLE 1: Common word combinations not included in the study and their page numbers

## Theoretical framework

We are in agreement with Lorenzo, M. et al., in that the first step a translator must take is to clearly define his objective before producing a translation which is as true as possible to the original text. One of the aspects of Hans Vermeer's concept of *skopos* (1989:227) is the establishment of a clearly defined objective or purpose for translation:

Any form of translational action, including therefore translation itself, may be conceived as an action, as the name implies. Any action has an aim, a purpose. The word *skopos*, then, is a technical term for the aim or purpose of translation.

This said, we are in agreement with Lorenzo et. al (1999: 324) in the translators' role to "preserve the purpose of the ST (source text) without any gratuitous alteration. The main objective of any translation should be that of faithfulness to the original text with close attention to coherence. With this objective in mind, any translation of *The Catcher in the Rye* must consider the possible purposes the author had in using colloquial idioms/metaphors in the first place. Paul Newmark proposes that there are two purposes that metaphors serve: a referential purpose, which describes "a mental process or state, a concept, a person, an object, a quality or an action more comprehensively and concisely than is possible in literal or physical language"<sup>9</sup> and a pragmatic purpose "which is simultaneous, is to appeal to the senses, to interest, to clarify "graphically", to please, to delight, to surprise. The first purpose is cognitive, the second aesthetic."<sup>10</sup> Although Holden's colloquial metaphors/idioms do have referential significance, it is arguable that much of their significance in forming an integral part of his idiolect derives from their pragmatic or aesthetic purpose, their contribution to the flavor of Holden's discourse. Any translation of *The Catcher in the Rye* would have to be sensitive to the effect that they produce on readers, and try to produce the same effect in the

translation (Nida's Equivalent Effect). This would entail, whenever possible, locating in the target language a metaphor used in informal registers whose semantic content overlaps as closely as possible the meanings of the original metaphor. This would require a parallelism between form and meaning or a principle of identity as Lorenzo et al. (1999) describe where:

... any element in the ST [source text] should be translated and translatable into the TT [target text] by paying close attention not only to the content but also to the form. Accordingly, there should be a close structural and meaningful parallelism (=identity) between the source and the target language. The translator, then, should stick to the ST itself as the only base for the process of translation. The TT, therefore, will be the result of a close analysis of the ST by following the identity principle and an attempt at further interpretation or deviation should be discarded.<sup>11</sup>

For the sake of simplicity in this research, I will be using López's (1997) definition<sup>12</sup> of lexicalized structures with a slight modification: her definition encompasses idioms and clichés which can be understood in a broader sense as 'word combinations', 'fixed expressions' and 'phrasal lexemes'. Although they are distinctive elements in the idiolect of Holden as well, I propose to exclude *routine formulae* (*you could tell, if you know what I mean*) and *non-canonical expressions*, understood by Lyons (1968: 178) in López as 'schemata' (*How about...?*), to focus the research specifically on Holden's colloquial idioms/metaphors and the methods that were used in their translation. These will be described according to López's model<sup>13</sup>, which was derived in part from Baker (1992), who describes four principal methods: **literal** translation, translation by **equivalence**, translation by **modification** and translation by **omission**.

**Literal** translation involves the use of a lexical structure in the target language that is similar in form and meaning. These correspondences are rarer, but they do occur. For example when Holden says "I damn near dropped dead" (p. 31) the colloquial idiom/metaphor "to drop dead" is translated using the literal translation method as there exists a correspondence in form and meaning in both Spanish "Casi me caigo muerto" (p. 46), and Catalan "Va anar de poc que no caigués a terra mort" (p. 51).

Translation by **equivalence** is a method that is often employed when there is no complete correspondence between structure and form between the source and target language. It involves the use of another lexical structure in the target language that is similar in meaning but different in form. "I wouldn't have the guts to do it" (p. 89) is translated into Spanish as "no habría tenido agallas para hacerlo" (p. 116) and into Catalan as "no tindria pebrots de fer-ho" (144). The structures themselves are practically identical; the difference resides in the fact that while the noun 'guts' can express courage idiomatically in English, the same is not true in

Spanish or in Catalan and is realized by different nouns, namely, 'agallas', literally 'gills' or 'tonsils' in Spanish and 'pebrots', or literally, 'peppers' in Catalan.

Translation by **modification** involves paraphrasing or explaining the metaphorical meaning of a lexicalized structure. The result is the loss of figurative meaning; the idea is no longer expressed in metaphorical terms. This method is usually employed when no equivalent or near equivalent structure can be found in the target language. Baker argues that this technique is also used when "it seems inappropriate to use idiomatic language in the target text because of differences in stylistic preferences of the source and target languages".<sup>14</sup> For example, "Old Stradlater was one of his pets..." (p. 43) is translated in Spanish as "Stradlater era uno de sus favoritos..." (p. 60) and Catalan as "L'Stradlater era un dels seus preferits..." (p. 71). In English 'pet' has the following meanings: "1: a domesticated animal kept for pleasure rather than utility; 2a: a pampered and usually spoiled child; b: a person who is treated with unusual kindness or consideration: darling".<sup>15</sup> The meanings of this word in Spanish (animal doméstico" or "mascota") and in Catalan ("animal domèstic") are not usually extended to describe people who are treated with "kindness and consideration". Here, a similar metaphor in meaning but not in form could be used, or, as is the case in this example, the metaphor might be paraphrased or explained.

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The last method, **omission**, is used when a metaphor in the source language is not translated since an equivalent cannot be found, or because it is not easy to explain, or for stylistic reasons is not deemed appropriate for inclusion. This last method introduces some interesting concerns: it is quite possible that there is no similar structure in the target language to explain the paraphrasing of a metaphor, but if such similar or equivalent structures were to exist, there might be other elements within the greater cultural context of the target language (elements absent in the greater cultural context of the source language) that could impact the appropriateness of their use. Perhaps, what should be considered is whether the possible connotations that the metaphor could have or produce outside its culture of origin might distract the reader from the original field of reference of the metaphor, or introduce secondary meanings that are not necessarily present in the circumstances of the original metaphor.

Source text colloquial metaphors and their target text representations: Description

	METAPHOR ST (P.)	SPANISH TT (P.)	CATALAN TT (P.)
1	... I got pretty run-down... (1)	... me quedara bastante hecho polvo... (9)	... d'acabar ben desinflat... (7)
		<b>Equivalence</b>	<b>Equivalence</b>
2	It killed me. (2)	Me dejó sin habla. (10)	En va deixar de pedra. (8)
		<b>Equivalence</b>	<b>Equivalence</b>
3	Strictly for the birds. (2)	Bobadas. (10)	Sense comentaris. (8)
		<b>Modification</b>	<b>Modification</b>
4	So I got the ax. They give guys the ax quite frequently at Pencey. (4)	Así que me expulsaron. En Pencey expulsan a los chicos con mucha frecuencia. (12)	O sigui que em van fotre al carrer. Foten la gent al carrer ben sovint, a Pencey. (11)
		<b>Modification</b>	<b>Equivalence</b>
5	I have no wind,... (5)	No tengo nada de fuelle... (13)	No aguanto gens... (13)
		<b>Equivalence</b>	<b>Modification</b>
6	They got a bang out of things,... (6)	Pero se lo pasaban bomba con sus cosas,... (16)	S'ho passaven bé,... (15)
		<b>Equivalence</b>	<b>Modification</b>
7	... though – in a half-assed way, of course. (6)	... un poco a lo tonto, claro. (16)	... però a mig gas, és clar. (15)
		<b>Equivalence</b>	<b>Equivalence</b>
8	It gets on your nerves sometimes (7)	A veces te ponía nervioso. (17)	A vegades et posava nerviós. (16)
		<b>Modification</b> <sup>16</sup>	<b>Modification</b>
9	That knocked him out. (8)	Se hizo una gracia tremenda. (17)	Això el va fer petar de riure. (17)
		<b>Equivalence</b>	<b>Equivalence</b>
10	I mean he didn't hit the ceiling or anything. (8)	Vamos, que no se puso como una fiera ni nada. (18)	Vull dir que no va pujar per les parets ni res d'això. (18)
		<b>Equivalence</b>	<b>Literal</b>

	<b>METAPHOR ST (P.)</b>	<b>SPANISH TT (P.)</b>	<b>CATALAN TT (P.)</b>
11	So I shot the bull for a while (12)	... así que me enrollé un buen rato. (23)	Així que vaig xerrar una estona. (24)
		<b>Modification</b>	<b>Modification</b>
12	They were coming in the goddam window.(13)	Los había a patadas. (24)	Es ficaven pel coi de finestra i tot. (24)
		<b>Equivalence</b>	<b>Literal</b>
13	That story just about killed me. (18)	Esa historia por poco me deja sin habla. (31)	Aquesta història em va deixar ben de pedra. (32)
		<b>Equivalence</b>	<b>Equivalence</b>
14	... and I read a lot of war books and mysteries and all, but they don't knock me out too much. (18)	... y leo un montón de libros de guerra y de misterio y todo eso, pero no me vuelven loco. (31)	... i lleigeixo molts llibres de guerra i de misteri i etcètera, però no m'entusiasmen gaire. (33)
		<b>Equivalence</b>	<b>Modification</b>
15	"... I'll be up the creek..." (28)	"... me la cargo..." (43)	"Suaré sang..." (47)
		<b>Equivalence</b>	<b>Equivalence</b>
16	I get a bang imitating them. (29)	... lo paso bomba imitando a... (44)	... m'ho passo de por imitant-les. (49)
		<b>Equivalence</b>	<b>Equivalence</b>
17	I have hardly any wind at all (29)	Tengo muy poco fuelle. (44)	No aguanto res de res. (49)
		<b>Equivalence</b>	<b>Modification</b>
18	I damn near dropped dead. (31)	Casi me caigo muerto. (46)	Va anar de poc que no caigués a terra mort. (51)
		<b>Literal</b>	<b>Literal</b>
19	And they weren't just shooting the crap. (38)	Y no lo decían por decir. (54)	I no ho deien només per dir. (63)
		<b>Modification</b>	<b>Modification</b>
20	It drove him crazy... (41)	Le sacaba de quicio... (59)	El feia tornar boig... (69)
		<b>Equivalence</b>	<b>Equivalence</b>
21	Old Stradlater was one of his pets... (43)	Stradlater era uno de sus favoritos... (60)	L'Stradlater era un dels seus preferits... (71)
		<b>Modification</b>	<b>Modification</b>



Translating colloquial idioms/metaphors in *The Catcher in the Rye*

	<b>METAPHOR ST (P.)</b>	<b>SPANISH TT (P.)</b>	<b>CATALAN TT (P.)</b>
22	I'd been given the ax... (51)	... me habían expulsado... (71)	... m'havien fotut fora... (85)
		<b>Modification</b>	<b>Equivalence</b>
23	-and here I was getting the ax again. (52)	... mientras me estaban expulsando otra vez. (71)	... i jo estava aquí, expulsat una altra vegada. (85)
		<b>Modification</b>	<b>Modification</b>
24	She doesn't have all her marbles any more... (52)	Está un poco ida... (72)	No hi toca gaire... (86)
		<b>Equivalence</b>	<b>Equivalence</b>
25	That killed me. (55)	Me dejó sin habla. (76)	Això em va deixar clavat. (91)
		<b>Equivalence</b>	<b>Equivalence</b>
26	That killed me. (55)	Me dejó sin habla. (76)	Això em va matar. (91)
		<b>Equivalence</b>	<b>Literal</b>
27	Then I <i>really</i> started chucking the old crap around (56)	Entonces fue cuando <i>de verdad</i> empecé a meter bolas. (77)	Després vaig començar a deixar anar la llengua de debò. (92)
		<b>Equivalence</b>	<b>Equivalence</b>
28	... and it gave me a chance to quit shooting it. I'm glad I shot it for a while, though. (57)	... me dio la oportunidad de dejar de largar. Pero me alegré de haber largado un rato. (78)	... i vaig poder descansar la llengua. De totes , maneres no em sap greu haver-la fet anar una estona. (93)
		<b>Equivalence</b>	<b>Equivalence</b>
29	... after all the crap I shot, (57)	... después de todo el rollo que le largué... (78)	... després del que li vaig deixar anar... (94)
		<b>Equivalence</b>	<b>Equivalence</b>
30	Which was really a hot one... (58)	Ésa sí que era buena... (80)	Que n'era una de ben grossa... (95)
		<b>Modification</b>	<b>Equivalence</b>
31	I felt like giving somebody a buzz. (59)	Tenia ganas de llamar a alguien. (81)	Tenia ganes de trucar algú. (97)
		<b>Modification</b>	<b>Modification</b>
32	Then I thought of giving Jane Gallagher's mother a buzz,... (59)	Luego pensé en llamar a la madre de Jane Gallagher... (81)	Després vaig pensar de trucar a la mare de Jane Gallagher... (97)

	<b>METAPHOR ST (P.)</b>	<b>SPANISH TT (P.)</b>	<b>CATALAN TT (P.)</b>
		<b>Modification</b>	<b>Modification</b>
33	... you shouldn't horse around with her at all,... (62)	... no deberías hacer el indio con ella... (85)	... no hi hauries de fer el ximple... (102)
		<b>Equivalence</b>	<b>Equivalence</b>
34	I spent the whole night necking with a terrible phony... (63)	Me pasé toda la noche besándome y todo eso con una chica falsísima... (85)	Vaig passar-me tota la nit festejant amb una hipòcrita terrible... (103)
		<b>Modification</b>	<b>Equivalence</b>
35	I started toying with the idea,... , of giving old Jane a buzz... (63)	... empecé a jugar con la idea de llamar a Jane,... (86)	... vaig començar a jugar amb la idea de trucar a la Jane,... (103)
		<b>Modification</b>	<b>Modification</b>
36	Anyway, I went over to the phone and gave her a buzz. (63)	Bueno, pues fui al teléfono y la llamé. (86)	És igual, vaig agafar el telèfon i li vaig trucar. (104)
		<b>Modification</b>	<b>Modification</b>
37	... I damn near gave my kid sister Phoebe a buzz,... (66)	... estuve casi a punto de llamar a mi hermana Phoebe. (90)	... , va anar de ben poc que no truco a la Phoebe,... (110)
		<b>Modification</b>	<b>Modification</b>
38	But I couldn't take a chance on giving her a buzz,... (66)	Pero no podía arriesgarme a llamarla... (90)	Però no podia arriscar-me a fer-li una trucada,... (110)
		<b>Modification</b>	<b>Equivalence</b>
39	... I certainly wouldn't have minded shooting the crap... (67)	Pero no me habría importado pegar la hebra... (90)	... no m'hauria fet res xerrar una estona amb la Phoebe. (110)
		<b>Equivalence</b>	<b>Modification</b>
40	Allie had this sailboat he used to like to fool around with... (68)	Allie tenía un barquito de vela con el que le gustaba jugar... (92)	... L'Allie tenia en barco de vela i li agradava jugar-hi... (112)
		<b>Modification</b>	<b>Modification</b>
41	I knew she wouldn't let him get to first base with her,... (80)	Sabía que no le habría dejado llegar hasta el final con ella... (105) <sup>17</sup>	Sabía que no el deixaria anar gaire lluny amb ella... (130)
		<b>Modification</b>	<b>Modification</b>

Translating colloquial idioms/metaphors in *The Catcher in the Rye*

	METAPHOR ST (P.)	SPANISH TT (P.)	CATALAN TT (P.)
42	... and a lot of other very tricky stuff that gives me a pain in the ass. (84)	... y un montón de florituras de esas que me dan cien patadas. (110)	... i tota una altra pila de filigranes que em fan venir mal d'estómac. (137)
		<b>Equivalence</b>	<b>Equivalence</b>
43	I'm one of these very yellow guys (88)	Soy un tío de lo más cobarde. (115)	Sóc un d'aquells tios força gallines. (143)
		<b>Modification</b>	<b>Equivalence</b>
44	I wouldn't have the guts to do it. (89)	... no habría tenido agallas para hacerlo. (116)	... no tindria pebrots de fer-ho. (144)
		<b>Equivalence</b>	<b>Equivalence</b>
45	It's no fun to be yellow. Maybe I'm not <i>all</i> yellow. I don't know. I think maybe I'm just partly yellow... I'm partly yellow... what you should be is not yellow at all. (89)	No tiene gracia ser cobarde. Aunque quizá no sea cobarde <i>del todo</i> . No sé. Creo que en parte soy cobarde... en parte cobarde... No se debe ser cobarde en absoluto; (117)	No és pas gens divertit ser gallina. Potser no sóc gallina del tot. No ho sé. Em sembla que potser sóc només una mica gallina... sóc una mica gallina... El que no s'hauria de ser és gallina. (145)
		<b>Modification</b>	<b>Equivalence</b>
46	It's a funny kind of yellowness... but it's yellowness, all right (90)	... es un tipo de cobardía bastante raro, pero aun así es cobardía. (117)	És ser gallina d'una manera molt curiosa... però és ser gallina, i tant. (146)
		<b>Modification</b>	<b>Equivalence</b>
47	He got stinking,... (90)	El acabó curda perdido... (118)	Ell va quedar ben torrat... (146)
		<b>Equivalence</b>	<b>Equivalence</b>
48	Innarested in a little tail t'night? (91)	¿Te interesa echar un polvo esta noche? (118)	Tens ganes de sucar aquesta nit? (147)
		<b>Equivalence</b>	<b>Equivalence</b>
49	I know I didn't have to get all dolled up for a prostitute or anything... (91)	... no tenía que ponerme de punto en blanco ni nada de eso para una prostituta... (119)	... no m'havia de mudar ni res per una prostituta... (149)
		<b>Equivalence</b>	<b>Equivalence</b>
50	After you neck them for a while,... (92)	Después de que te has besado y achuchado y todo eso con ellas,... (120)	Quan fa una estona que les petoneges,... (150)
		<b>Modification</b>	<b>Modification</b>

	<b>METAPHOR ST (P.)</b>	<b>SPANISH TT (P.)</b>	<b>CATALAN TT (P.)</b>
51	When I'm horsing around with a girl... (93)	... cuando estoy enrollándome con una chica... (121)	... quan estic amb una tia... (151)
		<b>Equivalence</b>	<b>Equivalence</b>
52	I thought of giving old Jabe a buzz,... (105)	Pensé en llamar a Jane... (136)	Vaig pensar de trucar a la Jane,... (169)
		<b>Modification</b>	<b>Modification</b>
53	... if we hadn't necked so damn much. (105)	... si no nos hubiéramos besado y achuchado tanto. (137)	... si no ens haguéssim petonejat tant i tant. (170)
		<b>Modification</b>	<b>Modification</b>
54	... whoever I'm necking... (105)	... la persona con la que me estoy besando y todo eso... (137)	... la persona que estic petonejant... (170)
		<b>Modification</b>	<b>Modification</b>
55	She gave me a pain in the ass... (106)	Me caía como una patada en el culo... (138)	Em tocava molt l'oremus... (171)
		<b>Literal</b>	<b>Equivalence</b>
56	I got the ax again (107)	... me habían expulsado otra vez. (139)	... m'havien tornat a fotre fora. (173)
		<b>Modification</b>	<b>Equivalence</b>
57	... I'd give old Jane a buzz... (116)	... podía llamar a Jane... (149)	... faria una trucada a la Jane... (186)
		<b>Modification</b>	<b>Equivalence</b>
58	He could take something very jazzy... and whistle it so nice... it could kill you. (124)	Podía coger una canción muy de jazz... y la silbaba tan bien y tan suavcito... que te podías morir. (158)	Podia agafar alguna cosa ben jazzy... i xiular-ho tan fàcil i bé... que et podia deixar de pedra. (198)
		<b>Literal</b>	<b>Equivalence</b>
59	We horsed around a little bit in the cab... (125)	En el taxi... nos besamos y nos achuchamos un poco. (159)	Vam fer una mica de comèdia al taxi. (200)
		<b>Modification</b>	<b>Equivalence</b>
60	You give me a royal pain in the ass... (133)	... me caes peor que una patada en el culo. (169)	Ets pitjor que un gra al cul... (212)
		<b>Literal</b>	<b>Literal</b>

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	<b>METAPHOR ST (P.)</b>	<b>SPANISH TT (P.)</b>	<b>CATALAN TT (P.)</b>
61	<i>Boy</i> , did she hit the ceiling when I said that. (133)	<i>Jo</i> , cómo se puso cuando le dije aquello. (169)	<i>Hosti</i> , si va tocar el sostre quan vaig dir això. (212)
		<b>Equivalence</b>	<b>Literal</b>
62	I gradually cut it out. (141)	Dejé de ir poco a poco. (179)	Ho vaig anar tallant gradualment. (225).
		<b>Modification</b>	<b>Equivalence</b>
63	... the phonies are coming in the window. (141)	... hay tíos falsos a patadas. (179)	... els hipòcrites hi entren per les finestres. (225)
		<b>Equivalence</b>	<b>Literal</b>
64	I was only horsing around. (144)	Sólo estaba haciendo el indio. (182)	Només feia comèdia, jo. (229)
		<b>Equivalence</b>	<b>Equivalence</b>
65	I have to tear... (148)	Tengo que largarme... (187)	Me n'he d'anar... (235)
		<b>Modification</b>	<b>Modification</b>
66	He was strictly a pain in the ass... (149)	Era igualito que una patada en el culo... (187)	Era estrictament pitjor que un gra al cul... (236)
		<b>Literal</b>	<b>Literal</b>
67	... she beat it out of the room... (149)	... se largó... (188)	... va fotre el camp de la sala... (237)
		<b>Modification</b>	<b>Equivalence</b>
68	I was only horsing around... (153)	... sólo estaba haciendo el indio... (192)	Només feia comèdia, és clar. (243)
		<b>Equivalence</b>	<b>Equivalence</b>
69	... just sort of chew the fat with her for a while. (156)	... pegar la hebra un rato con ella. (196)	... i xerraria una estona amb ella. (248)
		<b>Equivalence</b>	<b>Modification</b>
70	Phoebe always has some dress on that can kill you. (160)	Phoebe lleva siempre unos vestidos que te dejan sin habla. (200)	... la Phoebe sempre porta algun vestit que et deixa de pedra. (253)
		<b>Equivalence</b>	<b>Equivalence</b>
71	Kids' notebooks kill me. (161)	Los cuadernos de los críos me dejan sin habla. (202)	Els quaderns dels nanos fan pixar de riure. (255)
		<b>Equivalence</b>	<b>Equivalence</b>
72	I was plastered (163)	Estaba curda (204)	Anava torrat... (259)

	<b>METAPHOR ST (P.)</b>	<b>SPANISH TT (P.)</b>	<b>CATALAN TT (P.)</b>
		<b>Equivalence</b>	<b>Equivalence</b>
73	She kills me. (164)	Me deja sin habla. (204)	Em va deixar de pedra. (259)
		<b>Equivalence</b>	<b>Equivalence</b>
74	She meant why did I get the ax again. (167)	Se refería a que hubieran vuelto a expulsarme. (209)	Volia dir per què m'havien fotut al carrer un altre cop. (264)
		<b>Modification</b>	<b>Equivalence</b>
75	She kills me. (175)	Me deja sin habla. (219)	Em feia pixar de riure. (276)
		<b>Equivalence</b>	<b>Equivalence</b>
76	We just horse around... (175)	Sólo hacemos el indio... (219)	Només fem una mica de comèdia a dins de casa. (277)
		<b>Equivalence</b>	<b>Equivalence</b>
77	That kills me. (175)	Me deja sin habla. (220)	Això em fa molta gràcia. (277)
		<b>Equivalence</b>	<b>Equivalence</b>
78	... I'd give her a buzz... (180)	... la llamaría... (225)	... li trucaria,... (283)
		<b>Modification</b>	<b>Modification</b>
79	... he was a little oiled up. (182)	... estaba un poco bebido... (227)	... anava una mica alegre. (287)
		<b>Modification</b>	<b>Equivalence</b>
80	... it gets on your nerves... (182)	... le pone a uno nervioso... (228)	... et posa nerviós... (287)
		<b>Modification</b>	<b>Modification</b>
81	He was pretty oiled up,... (188)	... estaba bastante curda. (234)	... anava força alegre. (296)
		<b>Equivalence</b>	<b>Equivalence</b>
82	I'm probably gonna give her a buzz... (191)	Probablemente la llamaré... (237)	Segurament li trucaré... (300)
		<b>Modification</b>	<b>Modification</b>
83	... but it killed old Phoebe. (197)	... pero a Phoebe le hizo muchísima gracia. (245)	... però la Phoebe es moria de riure. (310)

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	<b>METAPHOR ST (P.)</b>	<b>SPANISH TT (P.)</b>	<b>CATALAN TT (P.)</b>
		<b>Modification</b>	<b>Equivalence</b>
84	I'd go down to the Holland Tunnel and bum a ride... (198)	... iría al Túnel Holland, subiría a un coche... (246)	... aniria fins al túnel Holland i faria dit, fins que em carreguessin... (311)
		<b>Modification</b>	<b>Equivalence</b>
85	Like somebody'd just taken a leak on them. (200)	... como si alguien acabara de mear ahí. (248)	Com si algú hi acabés de fer un riu. (314)
		<b>Modification</b>	<b>Equivalence</b>
86	... some pervery bum that'd sneaked in the school late at night to take a leak or something... (201)	... un perverso que había entrado por la noche en el colegio a mear o algo así... (249) <sup>18</sup>	... algun desgraciat perversit que es devia haver ficat a l'escola de nits per pixar o alguna cosa així... (315)
		<b>Modification</b>	<b>Modification</b>
87	... I shot the breeze for a while. (201)	... estuvimos de charla un rato. (249)	... la vam fer petar una estona. (316)
		<b>Modification</b>	<b>Equivalence</b>
88	He turned around and beat it. (204)	Se volvió y salió corriendo. (252)	Es va girar i va fotre el camp. (319)
		<b>Modification</b>	<b>Equivalence</b>
89	He's got a yella streak a mile wide (204)	Es de un cobarde que no vea... (252)	És més gallina que un plat de caldo... (319)
		<b>Modification</b>	<b>Equivalence</b>
90	... those little tunnels that always smell from somebody's taking a leak. (210)	... esos túneles que siempre huelen como si alguien hubiera estado allí meando. (258)	... un d'aquells túnels que sempre fan pudor de pixats. (328)
		<b>Modification</b>	<b>Modification</b>

## Discussion of results

The purpose of this investigation was to determine which of the two translations, Spanish or Catalan, retains the greater degree of figurative/metaphorical meaning in their representations of the colloquial idioms/metaphors that Holden Caulfield uses, having said that the use of colloquial metaphors is one of the most unique and defining aspects of the idiolect of Holden Caulfield in *The Catcher in the Rye*. This is not an assessment of how diligently the translators strove or how successful they were in finding equivalents in the target languages and in no way implies a value judgement as to which translation is more 'accurate'. It is clear that translators work only with the tools that are available in their target languages and cultural contexts. Nevertheless, what this study attempts to provide is data that can help to clarify to what degree the metaphorical nature of ideas expressed using colloquial metaphors in the source text were preserved as such in the Spanish and Catalan translations.

Our results seem to suggest that the colloquial metaphors represented in the Catalan translation retain more of the original figurative meaning present in the source text. This translation employs on significantly more occasions the equivalence method of metaphor translation, used on 53 occasions in the Catalan translation and on 41 occasions in the Spanish version. These data are significant because when this method is used to translate an idea expressed as a metaphor in the source text, the idea retains its status as a metaphor in the target text, the only difference being in its form, or appearance. Since no two languages are alike, target languages cannot always provide correspondences in both form/structure and meaning. Our conclusion is also supported by the fact that the modification method of translation was used on significantly more occasions in the Spanish translation than in the Catalan version: it was used 44 times to produce the Spanish translation and 29 times in the production of the Catalan translation. In other words, the colloquial metaphors that Holden uses in the book are found to be explained or paraphrased significantly more in the Spanish translation than in the Catalan version, which represented these metaphors through either equivalence or the literal method. This last method, although to a lesser degree, supports our conclusion as well: it was found that the Catalan translation used a lexicalized structure similar in form and meaning on 8 occasions while it was found on 5 in the Spanish version. Put differently, although the difference is small (5-8), the Catalan translation uses the same or nearly the same metaphor on more occasions than the Spanish translation. Considered numerically, in the Spanish translation the most frequent method used was that of modification (44), followed by equivalence (41), literal translation (5) and finally omission (0); and in the Catalan translation the most frequent method used was equivalence (53), followed by modification (29), literal (8) and finally omission (0) as may be seen in Table 3:



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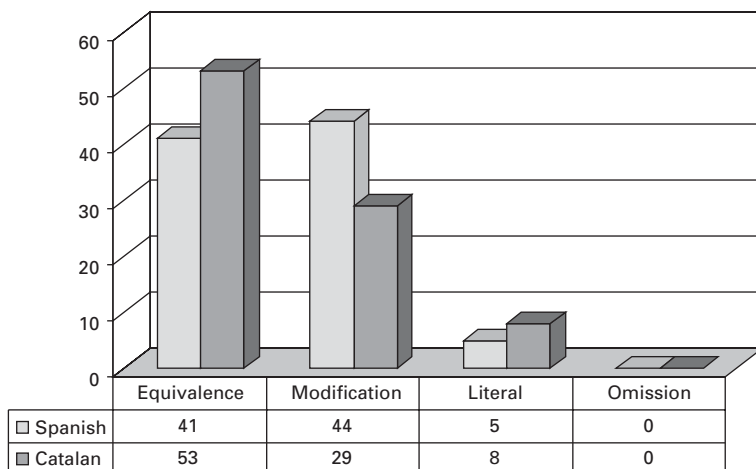


TABLE 2: Translation techniques: frequency

Our results can be compared to similar studies such as López Rúa (1997) in “The translation of the idiolects in *The Catcher in the Rye*: An approach through lexicalized structures” and Lorenzo, M. et al., (1999): “Lack of meaning interaction between English, Galician and Spanish in Salinger’s *The Catcher in the Rye*”. Although the focus of neither study is the translation of colloquial idioms/metaphors, both studies discuss loss of meaning upon translation from English to Spanish and from English to Galician, and coincide in the need to maintain form and meaning between source text and target text. Specifically, López Rúa found that the most marked similarity in both translations is the misuse and misapplication of the technique of modification or paraphrasing:

Most of the inadequacies detected in the Spanish and Galician versions are related to the translations by paraphrase and by omission. In my view, they are due to the fact that the translators have *failed to recognize* the defining features of the characters’ idiolect (for example, the systematic use of some lexicalized structures). Apparently, they are not aware of the fact that the writer is *deliberately* resorting to trite and monotonous vocabulary in order to define the characters and their speech habits. Both translations (but particularly the Spanish one) seem utterly unable to render the characters’ idiolects accurately. Instead of trying to convey those idiolects whenever possible (of course, adapting them to the peculiarities of the TL), in most cases the translators resort to the systematic omission of recurrent structures, and some other times they translate those recurrent structures in many different ways

without taking into account the context, the style, and the character who uses them. As a result, the translation becomes expressionless.<sup>19</sup>

The results of Lorenzo et. al. (1999), can be applied as well to our study, especially in terms of the importance of a strict adherence to the identity principle<sup>20</sup>, from which the Spanish and Gallician versions could have benefited:

the majority of the possible errors just studied could have been avoided if the translators had taken into consideration the identity principle... In fact, the identity principle, since it is based on the parallelism between form and meaning in the ST and the TT, would have proved a more accurate mechanism when dealing with the process of translation from a given L1 to L2 and L3.<sup>21</sup>

## Notes

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1. See Costello (1959:173).

2. See Lorenzo, M., et al. (1999: 324).

3. See the Oxford English Dictionary's entry for 'idiom': [http://dictionary.oed.com/cgi/entry/50111256?single=1&query\\_type=word&queryword=idiom&first=1&max\\_to\\_show=10](http://dictionary.oed.com/cgi/entry/50111256?single=1&query_type=word&queryword=idiom&first=1&max_to_show=10).

4. Definition provided by *Webster's New Encyclopedic Dictionary* (1994: 374).

5. Definition provided by *Webster's New Encyclopedic Dictionary* (1994: 630).

6. The term 'colloquial metaphor' has been used before, especially in online sources: Answers.com, etc. It was found to be used in some non-linguistic academic contexts (legal) such as "Why originalism won't die – Common mistakes in competing theories of judicial interpretation", *Duke Journal of Constitutional Law and Public Policy*, Online Edition, 2007. Duke J. Con. Law & Pub. Pol'y 230, page 238.

7. In books that have been published on the subject the term 'Colloquial idioms' seems preferable: Ball, W.J. 1972. *A Practical Guide to Colloquial Idiom*, Wood, F.T. 1976. *English Colloquial Idioms*, etc.

8. Some of these word combinations have been the object of other studies. For example, see López Rúa (1997).

9. See Newmark (1988: 104).

10. *Ibid.* (1988:104).

11. See Lorenzo, M., et. al. (1999: 324).

12. See López Rúa (1997: 147).

13. *Ibid.* (1997: 148).

14. Baker, M. (1992:74) in López Rúa (1997: 148).

15. Definition provided by *Webster's New Encyclopedic Dictionary* (1994: 752).

16. While it is true that both translations of "It gets on your nerves sometimes" retain figurative/metaphorical meaning, they can be better understood as collocations—"ponerse" (Spanish) and "posarse" (Catalan) collocate with "nervioso" (Spanish) and "nerviós" (Catalan)— and their accepted use in both standard Spanish and Catalan is fairly widespread. Here they serve to clarify the original metaphor which in English is generally considered more informal.

<sup>17</sup>. The translation of the colloquial metaphor "to get to first base" with someone here is somewhat inaccurate. The Catalan translation is closer in meaning to the ST, where the metaphor is used in relation to romantic intimacy: first base refers to initial contacts such as kissing; a "homerun" generally refers to sexual intercourse.

<sup>18</sup>. The absence of a translation for the word "bum" in the Spanish translation may be considered somewhat inaccurate: although the word "bum" does not form a part of the metaphor itself, it does contribute to the atmosphere in which the metaphor is presented.

In this case, the "pervery bum" was left just as "un pervertido" in the Spanish translation, omitting the vital bit of information that the person is a "bum" i.e. a homeless and/or poor person. The Catalan version translates it as a "desgraciad" or unfortunate, unlucky, or even wretched person. One might suggest that a "pervery bum" is more in keeping with the idiolect of Holden than just a "pervert".

<sup>19</sup>. See López Rúa (1997: 149).

<sup>20</sup>. See Lorenzo, M. et al. (1999: 5).

<sup>21</sup>. Ibid. (1999:329).

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