

# The translation of a glossary based on a novel as a means of studies on the Amazon.

## A tradução de um glossário baseado em um romance como um meio de estudos sobre a Amazônia.

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*Abstract:* The research project that motivated this work aims to address the various aspects of Amazonian literature, culture, identity, language, and fauna to English speakers. Its primary objective is to disseminate this knowledge by translating a glossary written entirely in Portuguese by the reviewer André Fillipe Fernandes, which is an integral part of the novel *Wolvesland* by Dalcídio Jurandir. To achieve this, we have adopted Britto's methodology (2006c), which strives to capture as many significant characteristics of the source text as possible in the target language. This

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approach is influenced by the fidelity concerns discussed in Britto (2002), emphasizing the importance of maintaining a high degree of correspondence between the source and target texts for a faithful translation. The purpose of this presentation is to examine the translation strategies employed, including omission, addition (MENEZES 2017), and word class alteration, which can be valuable for other translators and researchers. Additionally, we created a *pictionary*, images incorporated alongside specific glossary entries, facilitating the construction of their meaning.

*Keywords:* Translation; Glossary; Dalcídio Jurandir; the Amazon.

*Resumo:* O projeto de pesquisa que motivou este trabalho visa abordar os vários aspectos da literatura, da cultura, da identidade, da língua e da fauna amazônica para falantes da Língua Inglesa. Seu principal objetivo é disseminar esse conhecimento por meio da tradução de um glossário escrito inteiramente em português pelo revisor André Fillipe Fernandes, que é parte integrante do romance *Chão dos Lobos*, de Dalcídio Jurandir. Para isso, adotamos a metodologia de Britto (2006c), que busca captar o máximo possível de características significativas do texto-fonte na língua-alvo. Essa abordagem é influenciada pelas preocupações com a fidelidade discutidas em Britto (2002), enfatizando a importância de manter um alto grau de correspondência entre os textos de origem e de destino para uma tradução fiel. O objetivo desta apresentação é examinar as estratégias de tradução empregadas, incluindo omissão, adição (MENEZES 2017) e alteração de classe de palavras, que podem ser valiosas para outros tradutores e pesquisadores. Além disso, criamos um *pictionary*, com imagens incorporadas ao lado de verbetes específicos do glossário, facilitando a construção de seu significado.

*Palavras-chave:* Tradução; Glossário; Dalcídio Jurandir; Amazônia.

## Introduction

Before we discuss what a literary translation would be, we will first highlight, according to observations from the book *A Tradução Literária* (Literary Translation) by Britto (2012), the literary text as that which serves as an aesthetic object for those who study it, idem to the study of a literary text to recognize the historical record dated to the period in which it was produced, and consequently, “literary translation would be that which recreates in another language a literary text in such a way that its literariness is, as far as possible, preserved”<sup>1</sup> (BRITTO 2012: 47-48, *own translation*) and it means, according to the author’s examples, that a novel must result in a novel, a poem in a poem, as well as records of rhythms, rhymes, must contain similar effects.

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<sup>1</sup> Tradução literária: é a tradução que visa recriar em outro idioma um texto literário de tal modo que sua literariedade seja, na medida do possível, preservada.

Literary translation originates, of course, from the activity of translating, and it is present in interactions between cultures and different languages. Also, it occurs, supposedly, to deliver a corresponding meaning of the source text in the target language. However, we cannot suppose that the only problem of a translator is knowing the names used to name certain concepts, objects, etc. in another language (BRITTO 2012). Laranjeira (1993: 18) states that “each language can be considered both a product and a vehicle of a culture, whose specificities are carried by this language. This means that cultural differences represent one of the many translation barriers.”<sup>2</sup> In addition, according to Laranjeira (1993: 21), “Language varieties, in general, bring elements of difficult solutions in translation”<sup>3</sup>. When it comes to the theme of this study, we can point out the regionalisms, which are permeated by culture, as some of the most important challenges, as well as a literary text, could be used to study the society in which the story was originated (BRITTO 2012).

The frequent use of regional words and the introduction of beings from the Amazon fauna, flora, and folklore can be considered the main components of the scenes described by Dalcídio Jurandir (FARIAS 2009), and they represent the most thought-provoking aspects to be worked on in the book *Wolvesland*<sup>4</sup>. This article aims to discuss some of the choices made and strategies used in the translation of *Wolvesland*' glossary, made by the reviewer André Fernandes in the second edition, to provide resources to those who are interested in the translation of both regionalisms and literary translation and of words related to the Amazon trees, animals and myths. This research can contribute greatly to the enrichment of the English language, cultures, and literature of English speaking countries. This can be done through the borrowing of words, metaphors, and new syntax patterns, according to some of Lefevere's (1975)'s

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<sup>2</sup> É, pois, consabido o fato de que cada língua, produto e veículo de uma cultura, mantém dela as especificidades. Isso significa que as diferenças de cultura constituem outras tantas barreiras à tradução.

<sup>3</sup> As variantes da língua, as formas dialetais ou simplesmente idioléticas trazem elementos de caracterização de difícil solução em tradução.

<sup>4</sup> *Chão dos Lobos - Wolvesland*. This title from one of Dalcídio Jurandir's writings refers to the surname of a family who rents rooms in a boarding house, and it also serves as a wordplay with the situation: the rooms in the boarding house, the floor, do not belong to the tenants; they only belong to the owners of the place, the *Lobos* - Wolves.

ideas. Furthermore, translations can bring new ideas and concepts, especially when it comes to the regionalisms present in the book.

This work is composed of the translation from Portuguese to English language of glossary entries related to one of Dalcídio Jurandir's writings, *Wolvesland*. This author was chosen due to his literary contributions to the Amazon identity since Jurandir was responsible for the series of books named *The Far North Cycle*. The writer brings us a new version of the Amazon, different from the one conveyed by the Peak of rubber activity,<sup>5</sup> without opulent buildings or perfect nature-related images from the Amazon (FURTADO 2002).

The author Jurandir, a great writer from Pará, was born in Ponta de Pedras, Marajó, on January 10th, 1909 (FURTADO; BARBOSA 2010). He was the son of Alfredo Pereira, who got married three times. Pereira, with his first wife, Antônia Silva, had seven children. Margarida Ramos, Jurandir's mother, had seven children with Pereira. And five more children were born from the union of Jurandir's father and Isabel Trindade.

The Pereira name, during Brazil's Empire, received lands from the Brazilian Crown:

Benefiting from the notice of August 2, 1758, from the Marques de Pombal, the Pereiras became one of the families best benefited with the shredding of the Jesuits' farms, soon after the dismissal of the friars, under the allegation of not having the land titles (FARIAS 2018: 22, *own translation*)<sup>6</sup>

However, with the end of the imperialist government in Brazil in 1889, Dalcídio Ramos Pereira <sup>7</sup>and his family had to face many difficulties. Alfredo Pereira, his father, had only a list of acquaintances who helped him get some jobs, and it made Pereira a man who took on many professions, and some of his

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<sup>5</sup> The rubber became the main product of the *Paraense* economy at the end of the 1860s: more than 70% of the state's exports. Between 1868-1869 it reached the 72.9% mark, moving the amount of 7.8 thousand contos de réis (LEANDRO; MARCONDES; SILVA, 2015)

<sup>6</sup> Esses novos locais habitados, o exercício de diferentes funções, bem como as novas formações familiares assumidas por Alfredo Nascimento Pereira são atravessadas por consideráveis transformações sociais, políticas, econômicas que o Brasil e em particular a Amazônia passou.

<sup>7</sup> Dalcídio Jurandir

professions were as public prosecutor, filing clerk, municipal secretary, and teacher.

During his childhood, Jurandir was both humble and poor, and his experiences in life were fundamental to his writing years later. It is possible to establish some relations between Jurandir's and Alfredo's lives. The latter is the main character in *Wolvesland* and has the same name as Jurandir's father. Some similarities we can highlight are the following: both Jurandir and Alfredo moved to bigger cities to pursue professional growth opportunities; Jurandir had experienced the poverty of his city and state, just like Alfredo - the author was able to bring his perceptions of this reality to his text. Also, between 1906-1907, Jurandir's father wrote a modest newspaper called *O Arary*. In 1910, it was circulated under a different name and a better presentation, *A Gazetinha*, in the town of Cachoeira. Consequently, this Alfredo Pereira's occupation influenced his son regarding Jurandir's growing interest in writing. This specific time in Jurandir's life may have been extremely important for the author, since he portrayed Cachoeira, in his novels, as Alfredo's hometown.

Furthermore, these aspects, such as the new places where the Pereira Family lived and the different jobs Jurandir's father had, this life instability in general, which also characterizes the protagonist's life in *Wolvesland*, is a consequence of the "[...] social, political and economic transformations of Brazil, and, in particular, of the Amazon" <sup>8</sup>(FARIAS 2018: 26, *own translation*). These facts cross Jurandir's writings in many points, for instance, when the main character Alfredo travels to Cachoeira town and Belém city, as a student and then a teacher, even though he was not graduated, similar to Alfredo Pereira, Jurandir's father. The latter did not have the chance to conclude his major in Law, and they both had mothers who always encouraged their studies (FARIAS 2018).

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<sup>8</sup> [...]sociais, políticas, econômicas que o Brasil e em particular a Amazônia passou.

# 1. Methodology

Concerning the glossary translation, this study considered some of Britto's and Menezes' ideas. A concept adopted in this enterprise is the one about *fidelity* between the source work and its translation, which is suggested by Britto (2002: 65-66, *own translation*): "The greater the correspondence between each component of the source text and its translation, the smaller the loss"<sup>9</sup>. Bearing this in mind, we intended to identify the most significant features in the text; assign priorities to each feature, considering its higher or lower degree of contribution to the total meaning of the text; and recreate features, considering the priority assigned to each and their importance in the text (adapted from BRITTO 2006c: p.4).

Regarding the analysis of the choices made in the glossary translation, this research uses annotation (MENEZES 2017), which is an activity borrowed from Computational Linguistics, based on the identification and classification of certain linguistic phenomena. In this article, this task is carried out by categories, which represent translation strategies: a) omission; b) addition (MENEZES 2017: 171-174). These categories are pervaded by Britto (2006)'s approach. The results originating from the annotations can be considered a tool for sharing and discussing these research findings with other collaborators, who also study Jurandir's texts, for instance. When it comes to different approaches to translation, we can also point out the use of pictures taken from *Google Images*: some were added to some glossary entries so we could illustrate some specific definitions.

This research can also be classified as proposed by Silva and Menezes (2001): applied in its nature, since it aims to provide practical solutions regarding the translation of regionalisms and other aspects in literary works from the Amazon, for instance; qualitative because it describes the translation process using categories of analysis, rather than statistical methods or techniques; exploratory in its objectives, since it exposes hypotheses and

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<sup>9</sup>Quanto maior a correspondência ponto a ponto entre os componentes de um dado elemento do original e os componentes da contraparte na tradução, menor terá sido a perda.

possible solutions about the translation in question; and finally, concerning its technical procedures, it can be seen as a case study, once it is focused on the in-depth analysis of the glossary translation of a Jurandir's writing.

## 1.1 Research Steps

The process of annotation was made by using Word tools in Google Drive. We created folders in the application cloud and organized the material of studies in files as note-taking. There is a single document we used to write the entries from the Wolvesland glossary and their translations which, at times, were compared to definitions from English dictionaries. Then we shared the files with the members of the Project, so they could have access anytime to include, change, or comment on each other's notes. These remarks were made taking into consideration the annotation categories omission and addition.

We planned a schedule to agree on deadlines and give attributions to each member, such as writing the entries of the glossary and their translations and adding the results of the research made as comments. We also arranged meetings to discuss these solutions and to share opinions or questions about them.

In addition, we used note-taking based basically on the readings of translation theories from Professors Paulo Henriques Britto and Juliana Cunha Menezes, and studies from Professor Fernando Farias regarding Jurandir's life. Also, other translation researchers were studied, such as Laranjeira (1993) and Costa (2021). All these authors helped us in this study, providing resources for the comparison of ideas and justification of individual and shared uses of the annotation categories.

## 2. Discussion and Results

In this section we will discuss the translating solutions considering Britto's approach and Menezes' categories. Those were applied to André Fillipe Fernandes' text, the Wolvesland's reviewer, so that we were able to recreate, in the English language, the ideas from the source glossary entries. In this

project we used *omission* and *addition* (MENEZES 2017: 171-174), and we also created the category *word class alteration (WCA)* to classify some solutions. The cases include, for instance, unclear points concerning the translation of regionalisms and other cultural words, as well as fauna-related terms of the Amazon. Furthermore, we will write about the *pictionary*: the use of pictures, in some glossary entries, to clarify their meanings even more.

## 2.1 Omission

*Omission* consists of the exclusions of semantic elements present in a source term or its definition (MENEZES 2017). Some entries have a lot of synonyms in their explanations in Portuguese, a situation that cannot always be mirrored by English, for instance.

Equivalent words can be omitted from the definitions in the glossary entries due to the existence of only a few informal correspondent words in English, as follows:

- I. (OR) *Canarana: Vegetação que dá nos lugares alagadiços, nas margens dos rios e lagos, própria para a alimentação do gado, sobretudo na época das enchentes. É também usada na medicina caseira, popular, em forma de chá, para curar infecções urinárias. É uma falsa cana.*

(TR) *Canarana: Scientific name: Costus spicatus - a plant similar to the spiked spiral flag ginger or Indian head ginger: Vegetation that grows in swampy places, on the banks of rivers and lakes, suitable for cattle feeding, especially during the flood season. It's also used in traditional medicine, as a kind of tea, to treat urinary infections.*

There is the exclusion of '*é uma falsa cana*' - 'it's a fake sugar cane' - to avoid misunderstanding. In this case, we can also point out that "canarana" has the suffix *-rana* which, in Tupi, has the same function as "like", in English (NASCIMENTO 2014). Therefore, "canarana" can mean "just like *cana*", "as if it were *cana*", which could correspond to a *fake sugar cane*. However, the plant in question - *Costus spicatus* - has nothing to do with the sugar cane - *Saccharum officinarum* - as it can be seen in the translation above. Hence, it has been decided to omit the expression 'it's a fake sugar cane', since we thought some



readers would not understand the idea that *Costus spicatus* could have a misleading appearance, which could be seen as similar to the one of the *Saccharum officinarum*.

- II. (OR) *Cacuri: armadilha para pegar peixes, curral, caiçara.*  
(TR) Kakuri: trap to catch fish.
- III. (OR) *Coio: Esconderijo, valhacouto, abrigo de malfeitores; cói.*  
(TR) Hideout: a hiding-place for evildoers.

When it comes to the examples above, we have the exclusions of the semantic elements present in “curral, caiçara” (II), “valhacouto”, “cói”, “abrigo” (III) because we have only few informal English synonyms for each word.

- IV. (OR) *Bacurau: Ave também conhecida como acuraua.*  
(TR) Bacurau: Weew - check the number 6 in this glossary.

When there are synonyms previously present in the Glossary, the first translated solution is used in the description as a reference, so the explanation is omitted and replaced by “check the number”.

## 2.2 Addition

The *Addition* consists of the inclusion of semantic elements that are not present in the source term/description (MENEZES 2017), whether replacing a simple noun by a compound noun/noun phrase or adding further explanations to clear an obscure point:

- I. (OR) *Paneiro: cesto de talas, protegido por palhas, com a medida de “alqueire” e “quarta” (antigas medidas portuguesas de capacidade), usado no acondicionamento da farinha. Há, porém, paneiros para outros misteres e de todos os tamanhos.*  
(TR) Strawy pannier: a kind of basket used to store flour. There are panniers for other purposes and of different sizes.

Since “pannier” in English can be made of different materials, to clarify the specific one that pannier was made from, 'strawy' was included to qualify the object.

- II. (OR) *Boi-bumbá - Bumba-meu-boi. Auto popular brasileiro tido como o mais importante auto não só por sua legitimidade temática como por seu caráter genuinamente nacional.*

(TR) Boi-bumbá / Bumba-meu-boi: An interactive play celebrated in Brazil which has, as its theme, the death and resurrection of an ox. It's considered the most important folk play in the country not only for its thematic legitimacy, but also for its genuinely national character.

Explanations can be included when the descriptions are not clear about an important point, as the theme of a popular event, such as in the example above - “the death and resurrection of an ox”, is not in the source text.

- III. (OR) *Acuraua - Bacurau: Ave de hábitos noturnos.*

Weew: scientific name: *Nyctidromus albicollis*) - Nightjar. A nocturnal bird.

In this case, as well as in others throughout the glossary, we added the scientific name of the fauna-related term. This procedure was used to specify the animal being translated, with information regarding its genus and species, and this can also provide extra information to research in other sources for those who are interested in the term.

- IV. (OR) *Guariba - Coqueluche, tosse forte e violenta, às vezes sufocante; espécie de macaco.*

(TR) 1. Howler-cough - Any condition in which one coughs one's head off.  
2. Howler Monkey (Scientific name: *Alouatta guariba*) - a monkey from South and Central American forests. They are famous for their loud howls, which can travel more than one mile through dense rainforests, so, in the North of Brazil, people usually say: “Howler Cough” when someone is coughing long and hard.

In this example, we rephrased an expression attributed to a severe type of cough relating it to the loud sound that the species *Alouatta guariba* makes. Therefore, our approach included: adding the scientific name to the explanations; also, some information on the monkey, such as its place of origin, South and Central America.

### 2.2.1 WCA

Word Class Alteration (WCA) consists of the change of word class in the translation process. It is chosen when we can maintain the main semantic elements of the source text by picking a word/expression in the target language which belongs to a different word class from the one of the source word/expression.

I. (OR) Aquele-um: Forma de se referir a qualquer pessoa.

(TR) John Doe (for men) / Jane Doe (for women). It can be used to address anyone.

The expression formed by the relative pronoun '*aquele*' - "that", and the last word with the meaning of the pronoun '*um*' - "one", was replaced by a proper noun - John/Jane Doe, an informal expression with the same meaning: it can also be used to address anyone.

We also adopted the replacement of a noun by a verb in II and III:

II. (OR) Bubuia: Ação de flutuar.

(TR) Float: to stay on the surface of a liquid and not sink.

In this case, '*bubuia*' is a noun which means 'the action of floating in water' and its English correspondent is a verb - 'float', due to the fact that there are more verbs to define movements in English than in Portuguese (BRITTO, 2006), such as the next vocable with other example:

III. (OR) Muxoxo: Um levantar de ombros, um estalar de línguas e lábios, para mostrar desdém.

(TR) Shrug: raise your shoulders and produce a kind of "click" with your tongue and lips in order to express disregard.

The term ‘*muxoxo*’ is a noun and has the same uses and meanings as the verb ‘shrug’.

IV. (OR) Trinque: Luxo, elegância.

(TR) Classy: used to refer to someone who is elegant, and luxurious in dress.

The last example is the substitution of the noun ‘*trinque*’ by the adjective with a similar idea in English: ‘classy’.

## 2.2.2 Pictionary

The *Pictionary* is a kind of “pictorial dictionary” used to explain, with photos, some unclear points in the glossary, especially when it comes to very specific Amazonian characteristics. Therefore, we can say that the glossary, regarding some entries, can also be considered a pictionary. In this subsection, we considered three examples, glossary entries related to the Amazon’s: legends/culture, flora and fauna, according to the three example below:

I. (OR) *Matintaperera - Matinta - Matinta Pereira: Personagem do folclore brasileiro, mais precisamente do Norte do país. Trata-se de uma bruxa velha que à noite se transforma em um pássaro agourento que pousa sobre os telhados das casas a assobiar, para quando o morador, já incomodado pelo estridente assobio, promete a ela algo para que pare (geralmente tabaco, mas também pode ser café, cachaça ou peixe). Assim, a matinta para e voa, e no dia seguinte vai até a casa do morador perturbado para cobrar o combinado. Caso o prometido seja negado, uma desgraça acontece na casa do que fez a promessa não cumprida.*

(TR) Matinta - Matintaperera - Matinta Pereira: Character present in Brazilian folklore, best known in Brazil’s northern region. It’s an old witch who, at night, turns into an ominous bird, the Barn Owl (Scientific name: *Tyto furcata*). This animal lands on the roofs of houses and whistles shrilly in order to disturb those who live there, forcing them to promise her something to make her stop (usually tobacco, but it can also be offered coffee, sugar cane rum, or fish). After this bargain, The Matinta stops whistling and flies away, but she comes back the next day

to get what was promised to her. If the promise is not fulfilled, a misfortune takes place in that house.

The Matinta is one of the characters from the northern region's folklore in Brazil, mostly present in the lives of the people from the countryside. It is represented by the singing of the Barn Owl, which would prove its existence. Therefore, the registration of Matinta in the Pictionary portrays the Brazilian beliefs in the supernatural and presents its personification: a kind of witch who shares some physical aspects with the Barn Owl:

Picture 1: Matinta



Source: <https://portalamazonia.com/images/p/36921/douglas-nogueira-matinta-pereira.jpg>

- II. (OR) *Aninga*: *Planta herbácea, abundante nas margens pantanosas dos lagos, rios e depressões de várzeas. É comum nas ilhas flutuantes da Amazônia. As flores e os frutos servem para isca na pescaria e, segundo o povo, é medicinal.*

(TR) *Aninga*: Scientific name: *Montrichardia linifera* - herbaceous plant, abundant along the marshy banks of lakes, rivers, and lowland depressions. This plant is common in the Amazon floating islands. Its

flowers and fruit are used as fishing lures and, according to folk knowledge, also for medicinal purposes.

In this other example, ‘*aninga*’ in Jurandir’s narrative is used to describe a kind of hair (this specific use is not mentioned in the glossary), so the fact that the *aninga* plant is native from Brazil, with some specific characteristics, could be an unclear point to the readers who are speakers of English and usually unfamiliar with some aspects of Amazonian flora and culture. The photo added to this entry shows the plant, helping readers compare its features to the ones of a hair type:

Picture 2: Aninga



Source: <https://www.flickr.com/photos/tarcisoleao/18478957961>

At last, a bird native to Central and South America, the curassow was added in the glossary to highlight visual features such as colors, body shape, and other special characteristics, making the description more understandable, and also for its few details include in the portuguese explanation:

III. (OR) *Mutum - Ave de cor preta.*

(TR) Curassow: Any of several long-tailed, crested South and Central American game birds of the family *Cracidae*, related to the pheasants and domestic fowl.

Picture 5 - Curassow



Source: <https://cdn.download.ams.birds.cornell.edu/api/v1/asset/146351051/1200>

## Final Remarks

Regarding the contributions of this research to varied fields of knowledge, we can point out, for instance, the one related to Translation Studies.

The description of the categories/ translation strategies used in the Wolvesland glossary (JURANDIR 2019), linked to a literary text, analyzes the recreation of meanings using *additions* and *omissions* in the search for the *fidelity* adopted by Britto and Menezes. These author's ideas address aspects that go beyond the 'simple' transposition of meanings from one language to another (BRITTO 2012), since they also worry about issues concerning culture, society, identity, nature-related matters of our region. The present study, thus, can be considered a means of study on the fauna, flora, myths, ways of living and speaking, and on other aspects which also pervade the Northern region of Brazil.

The Amazon Literary translation of Portuguese to English has a significant impact on the dissemination of Jurandir's, Amazonian, and Brazilian literature worldwide, as they can be included in the international media. In addition, the cultural enrichment of global readers, the preservation of our literary patrimony, and the promotion of intercultural dialogues through discussions on Amazonian realities can also be considered benefits from the present study.

Furthermore, the promotion of the descriptive and visual identities of Amazonian fauna and flora can bring attention to our region, attracting those who are interested in these studies. The explanations and demonstrations of Amazonian regionalisms as aspects of dialects from a particular time can contribute to research on the history and culture/behavior of that society.

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