

GRAU D'ANGLÈS
Treball de Fi de Grau

Borges Translation of The Purloined Letter: An
Analysis

Nerea Rodríguez Gijón

Tutor: Nerea Tera Faba



UNIVERSITAT ROVIRA I VIRGILI
DEPARTAMENT D'ESTUDIS ANGLESES I ALEMANYS

2022

Abstract

This paper focuses on Borges's translation theory, and how he applies this theory in the translation of Edgar Allan Poe's short story, "The Purloined Letter". Jorge Luis Borges used a peculiar method to translate works of great authors like Poe or James Joyce; it could be said that the method was even controversial. The reason is that he used to change some content of the original stories, but being faithful to the general message of the story. In order to explain Borges's translation theory, I examine the three essays that Borges published explaining his theory, which are "The Two Ways to Translate" (1926), "The Homeric Versions" (1932) and "The Translators of the Arabian Nights" (1936). Moreover, I use essays of other academics that have studied Borges translation theory, and that have also analyzed the translation of "The Purloined Letter". Some important aspects that characterize this translation is Jorge Luis Borges' interpretation of the source text, which causes him to make shifts of content or style according to what he considers appropriate. Some reasons to change aspects of the source text are to cut verbosity, to eliminate excessive details, to avoid references that the reader does not understand, among others.

Keywords: Jorge Luis Borges, The Purloined Letter, analysis, shift, target text, source text, translation theory.

Table of Contents

Introduction.....	1
Jorge Luis Borges’s Biography.....	2
Edgar Allan Poe’s Biography	3
Detective Stories and Edgar Allan Poe.....	4
Origin of Detective Stories	5
Borges’s Translation Theory.....	6
The Two Ways to Translate.....	6
The Homeric Versions	7
The Translators of the Arabian Nights.....	8
General Characteristics of Borges’s Translations.....	9
The Purloined Letter	10
Analysis of the Purloined Letter	12
Stylistic Shifts	12
Omissions.....	12
Linguistic Compressions.....	17
Semantic Shifts	20
Other Stylistic Shifts	25
Shifts in Word Order.....	25
Coined Equivalent.....	25
Modulation.....	26
Content Shifts.....	26
Omissions.....	26
Linguistic Compressions.....	27
Semantic Shifts	28

Conclusions.....	32
References.....	34

Introduction

Translation is a particularly interesting branch of the language, where you can analyze texts, sentences and words in depth. It has a big amount of research work, with which you can acquire great knowledge of the language. This is the main reason why I am satisfied with the topic I have dealt with in this paper, which consists of analyzing Jorge Luis Borges's translation of "The Purloined Letter". The purpose of this work is comparing Borges's translation with the source text in order to see the different shifts in vocabulary and content, and analyze how these shifts are connected with the translation theory of Borges. To do it, the first thing I did was find information about Borges's translation theory. The bibliography I used was "The Two Ways to Translate" (1926), "The Homeric Versions" (1932) and "The Translators of the Arabian Nights" (1936), which are texts that are written by Borges himself and where he explains his own translation theory. However, he had his own style of writing and sometimes it was difficult to understand what he was trying to say in his essays. This is why I also studied the analysis of other authors about Borges's translation theory.

After I did the theoretical framework using the bibliography I just explained, I analyzed the source text and the target text. The first step was doing a first reading of the source text and an investigation of the bibliography. The second step was doing a second reading of the source text and comparing it with the target text. After this, I classified all the shifts I found in the analysis according to the translation techniques list created by Amparo Hurtado Albir, which consists of variation, adaptation, linguistic extension, omission, linguistic compression, semantic shifts, description, among others. Finally, I analyzed the results and evaluated the possible links with Borges's personal conception of translation.

Jorge Luis Borges's Biography

According to Fernando Savater in his essay "Vidas Literarias: Jorge Luis Borges", Jorge Luis Borges was a recognized writer, poet and essayist that was born the year 1888 in Buenos Aires, Argentina. His father, Jorge Guillermo, was a teacher of psychology in *La Escuela Normal de Lenguas Vivas*, and he also worked as a lawyer. Therefore, Borges lived comfortably during his first years of life. Jorge Guillermo's mother was English, so he had a great knowledge of the English language. This is something that he instilled in his children, and he made them learn English since they were very young. Jorge Guillermo was the beginning of the intellectual endeavour of Borges, who taught him philosophy and literature. His mother, Leonor Acevedo, is also important because she deeply marked Borges's life. She lived until her nineties, so she was a long support that Borges could count on, especially when he went blind because of a genetic degenerative illness. When Borges was a child he was withdrawn and shy, so he preferred staying at home reading than going out. This made him read books in the English language like Huckleberry Finn, all Poe's works, among others, and, as you can see in this paper, this literature marked the work of all his life. When Borges was only ten years old he published his first translation named *El Príncipe Feliz* by Oscar Wilde in the newspaper *El País*. In 1914, his family was forced to leave Buenos Aires because of the degenerative illness his father was suffering in the eyes. They travelled to Ginebra to find a doctor who could help him, and the start of World War I caused them to stay in Europe for four years. When this happened, Borges was a teenager that was drowned by French literature and he read the work of Voltaire and Victor Hugo. He was also interested in German expressionism, so in this period he began to study German. In 1919, his family decided to return to Buenos Aires, and on their way back home they visited Spain and stayed there for more than one year. His stay in Spain is relevant because he met important writers like Ortega y Gasset, Ramón Gómez de la Serna or Rafael Cansinos-Asséns, with whom he established a long friendship. This relationship with other writers stimulated his literary ideas and, before going back to Argentina, he wrote an essay and a book of poems. In 1923, Borges wrote his first book of verses named "Fervor de Buenos Aires" (Fervor of Buenos Aires). However, it was not until the thirties that Borges began to emerge and make a name for himself in the literary world. During that time he was not famous for his books because he was more interested in collaborating with distinguished magazines and newspapers like *El Hogar* and *Sur*. Nonetheless, in 1935 he published a series of short stories reunited in one book named "Historia universal de la infamia" (Universal story of infamy). In 1932 he wrote

“Las versiones Homéricas” (The Homeric Versions), and in 1936 he published “Historia de la eternidad” (Story of Eternity), which consists of a series of essays where he explores the old Norse literature or the important role of the metaphors. However, the most important essay that this book contains is “Las mil y una noches” (The Arabian Nights), where Borges discusses the different ways to translate, exemplifying different translators that, according to him, improved or worsened the original work. In 1937, Borges obtained his first job as a library assistant in the municipal library *Miguel Cané*. He used this time to write some of his best work. Although everything seemed to be on a roll in his life, a terrible event happened in 1938: his father died. However, this problem did not dampen his spirit. By 1945, he had held the position of English literature professor in the University of Buenos Aires, of academic speaker, he was president of the Argentine Society of Writers, and he even accomplished being a member in the Argentine Academy of Letters. In 1961 he shared with Samuel Becket the International Prize of Literature, which motivated his spread in a more international context. If we talk about his personal life, Borges married Elsa Astete Millán in 1967, but the marriage was not fortunate and they ended their relationship in 1970. In 1986, Borges was diagnosed with cancer and he decided to stay in Geneva until his death on the fourteenth of June of that same year (Savater, 2008).

Edgar Allan Poe’s Biography

According to Nikola Benin in his essay “Edgar Allan Poe (1809-1849)”, Edgar Allan Poe was a famous American writer of short stories, critical theories and poems. He is established as the creator of the modern short stories for his works. He lived a turbulent life, full of misfortunes from a very young age. His life started in 1809 and when he was only three years old his parents died. This is when the figure of John Allan appeared, the man that took care of Poe when he was a child. John Allan was an exporter from Virginia, and his wealthy life was the engine that allowed Poe to have an optimal education. In 1825, Poe was admitted to the University of Virginia. He was a good student, and he came to the fore very quickly. However, John Allan was not financially supporting him and he was forced to leave because of the debts. In 1827, Poe went to Boston so he could enlist in the army, and during that period he published his first poems. Unfortunately, these poems did not become famous. He tried again in 1829, and he published poems like “Al Aaraaf” or “Tamerlane”. These were more recognized than the first. Also, that year he left the army, where he accomplished the rank of regimental sergeant major, and he entered the United States Military Academy at

West Point. However, the story was repeated again. He had to leave the Military Academy because Allan was not financially supporting Poe enough. This is when Poe decided to go to New York City, and during this period he published “Poems”, his third collection of poems. Shortly after this, Poe went to Baltimore to live with his aunt, Maria Clemm, and his cousin. During those years, he published some short stories in the Philadelphia Saturday Courier. Despite that, he could not raise enough money to live independently. However, this situation took a turn when he was offered an editorship in The Southern Literary Messenger in Richmond. In 1836 Poe married his thirteen year old cousin and he started to make a name for himself, not only in The Southern Literary Messenger, but in many other newspapers. After ten years of work, he established himself as an exemplary man of letters in the United States. Despite his success, Poe did not earn much money, so he kept working as an editor. During these ten years of work, he published famous short stories like “The Raven” (1845), “The Purloined Letter” (1844), “The Gold-Bug” (1843), among others. After his wife’s death due to tuberculosis in 1847, Poe’s life went downhill. In September of 1849, he traveled to Baltimore and at the beginning of October he was found ill and died four days later (Benin, 2020).

Detective Stories and Edgar Allan Poe

The detective stories are, according to C. Hugh Holman in his book “A Handbook to Literature”, short stories or novels where a crime has taken place and the criminal is unknown. The story follows the investigation of a detective, who, thanks to the different clues that he or she finds during the evolution of the plot, manages to think about coherent interpretations to solve the mystery. There are different characteristics that help us know that what we read is a detective story. First of all, the story has a crime that is important enough to catch the attention and interest of an indelible character: the detective. However, the detective usually is someone renowned and has an intelligence beyond compare. This quirky character has to confront a criminal that is cast in the same mold. Moreover, what is really attractive about detective stories is that the readers can attempt to guess who the criminal is. This is why it is important that all the details of the investigation are explained since the beginning of the story. Finally, the mystery is solved in a logical and possible way, and it should be obvious by the end of the plot (Holman, 1999).

The detective stories are highly famous nowadays. We do not see them only in books, but also in television and video games. This is why the question of when did this genre appear and who the inventor was is, undoubtedly, very interesting.

Origin of Detective Stories

Important authors like Arthur Conan Doyle, the creator of Sherlock Holmes, wrote in his book “Adventures of Sherlock Holmes” the following:

“Edgar Allan Poe, who, in his carelessly prodigal fashion, threw out the seeds from which so many of our present forms of literature have sprung, he was the father of the detective tale, and covered its limits so completely that I fail to see how his followers can find any fresh ground which they can confidently call their own... On this narrow path the writer must walk, and he sees the footmarks of Poe always in front of him” (Doyle, 1902, Preface).

To sum up, Edgar Allan Poe is considered the father of detective stories. He was thirty two years old when he published “The Murders in the Rue Morgue”, in the *Graham's magazine*. This short story follows the investigation of the detective Dupin in his effort to solve the murder of two women in Paris.

However, according to Sasha Newborn in her book “The First Detective” it is known that deduction novels like “Zagid” by Voltaire were written before Edgar Allan Poe published his work. Then, how do we know that Poe was the creator of this genre? The answer is simple: before Poe the mystery or deduction novels formed part of a bigger category named adventure novels, where the individual was not the most important thing. Other factors like the settings or the actions were more emphasized. What Poe did in his short story “The Murders in the Rue Morgue”, however, is that the essential essence of the story was the intelligence of the detective. The story focuses on the reflections and interpretations of the main character. Furthermore, another thing that Poe did was introduce the figure of the detective (Newborn, 2000). According to Ismael Marinero, editor of the newspaper “El mundo”, the private detectives started to become popular in the mid nineteenth century. This event caused authors like Poe to get interested in known detective figures like François-Eugene Vidocq. He was a French criminal that changed the course of his life and became a famous police chief (Marinero, 2020). It is not odd to think that Poe could have looked at

these people and feel inspired to write his short stories. Another way to see this is that the literature could not have detective stories before Poe because the detectives did not exist until the nineteenth century, as I stated before.

Borges's Translation Theory

Jorge Luis Borges started his career as a translator when he was ten years old and the newspaper "El País", located in Buenos Aires, published his text. Since then, Borges translated many texts that were published in different magazines or newspapers. Moreover, he was a literate person that, thanks to his experience, had the right to write commentaries about the translation of other authors and give his point of view. If that were not enough, Borges also created his own translation theory and discussed the matter of translation in three different essays. These essays are "Las dos maneras de traducir" (The Two Ways to Translate, 1926), "Las versiones homéricas" (The Homeric Versions, 1932) and "Los traductores de las 1001 noches" (The translators of the Arabian Nights, 1936). In this section I will explain Borges's translation theory focusing on these three texts and on interpretations of academics that studied them. This information will support my subsequent analysis of "The Purloined Letter". According to Margarita Rigal Aragón in her essay "The influence and reinvention of Edgar Allan Poe in Spanish America", Borges analyzed the different works of Poe in over 130 essays or articles and he translated some of his work. Borges, therefore, was the one who caused Poe to start being read in South America (Aragón, 2016).

The Two Ways to Translate

The matter of translation has generated many controversies for decades. There are many theories about how to translate a text: there are people who support the idea that a translation should adhere to the source text the maximum possible. Other intellectuals affirm the idea that translations are related to creative creations. Jorge Luis Borges in his essay "Las dos maneras de traducir" explains these two different ways to translate and he designates them as Romantic mentalities, that support the literalness, and Classical mentalities, that support the periphrasis (Borges, 1926). According to Sarah Simpson in her essay "Borges as Translator: A Preliminary Examination", Borges affirmed that Romantic mentalities focused on the writer of the source text rather than the text itself. The translator is so faithful to the author that it does not think about the possibility of improving the author's work by doing some

changes. The Classical mentality, on the other hand, affirmed that the piece of work should be independent from the author (Simpson, 2019). Here is when the concept of creative infidelity appears. According to Borges, a text is worth more for its meaning than for its details. Therefore, if the translator can make any changes to improve the source text, then it is free to do it. Of course, according to Suzanne Jill Levine in her essay “Borges sobre la traducción”, the creative infidelity comes from an interpretation of the source text. Every reader interprets the source text in their own way, so there are many different methods to translate and many possibilities of translation of one text (Levine, 2012).

The Homeric Versions

In “The Homeric Versions”, Borges resumes and addresses the two different ways to translate again. This time, however, he exemplifies the controversy with the famous Arnold-Newman discussion about translation. Borges used this event to explain and exemplify his translation theory. According to Efraín Kristal in his essay “Borges y la traducción”, Francis W. Newman was a professor at the University of London. He published an English translation of the “Iliad” by Homer that was so faithful to the source text that it practically used the literal translation letter by letter. Newman tried to capture the original meaning of the “Iliad” and, at the same time, he tried to ensure that the pure essence of Homer did not disappear when translating his work. Of course, Newman took for granted that his translation of the “Iliad” was unbeatable, and he did not expect Matthew Arnold to immerse himself in his manner of translation. Arnold did several conferences where he destroyed Newman’s manner of translation. He accepted that Newman was a prodigy of Classical Greek and that his translation of words from Greek to the English language was excellent. However, Arnold believed that translation is something deeper than that; translation is also the optimal judgement to know what to omit or modify in the source text so that the translation preserves the general sense of the work. It is impossible to respect all the minimal details of the source text if the translator wants to recreate all the effects of the original work in the translation. According to Arnold, the Greek of Homer was simple and fluid and Newman’s translation, on the other hand, was confusing. This is caused by the disagreement of two different languages and the great challenge that implies translating from Classical Greek to English. Arnold believed that a good translator would cross the barriers this entails and provide an English translation that is as simple and fluid as the original “Iliad” of Homer.

According to Kristal, Borges gathered from this discussion his own opinion: he supported both points of view because translation for him was a combination of omissions and emphasis. For him it was important that a translation conserved the sense of the source text, as Newman defended, but it also requires originality and incentive to know when to change or omit something from the source text with the objective of boosting the understanding of the original work, as Arnold stated. According to Kristal, Borges believed that the translation that uses changes of emphasis does not have to be immediately inferior to the source text, and the literal translation does not have to be faithful to the original work. Borges even said that the changes and the creative infidelity that can be conducted in a translation can even surpass and improve the source text (Kristal, 1999):

“Presuponer que toda recombinação de elementos es obligatoriamente inferior a su original, es presuponer que el borrador 9 es obligatoriamente inferior al borrador H ya que no puede haber sino borradores. El concepto de texto definitivo no corresponde sino a la religión o al cansancio” (Borges, 1932: 94).

“Assuming that every recombination of elements is necessarily inferior to the original work is assuming that the draft nine is necessarily inferior to the draft H since there can only be drafts. The concept of definitive text corresponds only to religion or exhaustion”

Borges discussed and reflected on all this information, but, in the end, he understood that the different types of translation, the classical or the romantic, the Arnold or the Newman, are not important. The key matter with translation is the reader. Any changes done in the translation, either stylistic or content shift, have to answer the simplest truth of all: the translation is done for the reader, and what the reader wants is to understand the text and enjoy their reading. Any action done for that purpose is accepted and welcomed (Borges, 1932).

The Translators of the Arabian Nights

Borges in this essay does not elaborate on his translation theory, but more on the relationship between the translators. To exemplify this, Borges uses the “Arabian Nights”, a collection of short stories whose origin goes back to spoken literature. The stories were transmitted from generation to generation, so there is no author. Many academics have tried to translate these

short stories to multiple languages, and there are acceptable translations and dissatisfactory translations. Translating texts that have their origin in a culture that is different from the one the translator is exposed to, is very difficult. According to Suzanne Jill Levine, there are cultural mistakes in some translations that are curious. In connection with this, Borges explains that the matter of translation always arouses controversy. Two translators named Burton and Lane tried to translate the “Arabian Nights”, and each one did this their own way. Here Borges argues that a translation can also be literary criticism: a translator attempts to impose their interpretation of the source text to other translators who have worked on the same text. Between Burton and Lane, Borges preferred the translation of Burton. However, in this essay Borges claims to be against the false flattery that exists in many aspects of our lives. Many people approved Burton’s translation when, according to Borges, it lacked consistency and was confusing. However, he concluded that, in the case of the “Arabian Nights”, many different cultures have appropriated these short stories and, for that reason, the best translations of the Arabian Nights contributed to the literature of the culture the translator was from (Levine, 2012).

General Characteristics of Borges’s Translations

As I already mentioned, every translator has their own manner of translation. Borges translated many texts, and each one has their own characteristics. However, according to Sarah Simpson in her essay “Borges as Translator: A Preliminary Examination” we can find similarities or patterns among these works:

- The most repeated one is the omission and the condensation. The extent of Borges’s translations are shorter than the one in the source text. If we focus on Poe, Borges found that his writing style was extremely verbose. This is why Borges tends to eliminate excessive details, some statements and is more concise. One way to do it, according to Efraín Kristal, is the use of synonyms when he translates repetitions in the source text (Kristal, 1999). He even omits full sentences or paragraphs when he translates because he is interested in the information he considers is the most important (Simpson, 2019).
- According to Luisa Fernanda Rodríguez in her essay “Jorge Luis Borges and the Debate of Translation”, the changes or the deviations of content are directly related to

the aesthetics of the time the source text was written (Rodríguez, 1992). Language, like people, evolves and changes over time. This is why it is important to adapt the language when you are translating so the readers can understand the text. In the following analysis we will find many examples of this.

These changes in the translation, according to Sarah Simpson, cause the portrayal of characters or even the story itself to change under the scrutiny of Borges (Simpson, 2019).

The Purloined Letter

This short story was written by Edgar Allan Poe, as mentioned before, and was published in 1844. This story explains another investigation held by C. Auguste Dupin, a detective from Paris. This character appears in previous detective stories written by Poe, so it is not introduced in the story and the different events happen right when the story begins: there is no description of the main character. The story begins with a discussion between Dupin and his roommate about previous closed cases in which Dupin had worked. This roommate is the narrator of the story, but the reader does not know who he is and has no information about him. They were disrupted by an unexpected guest, the Paris Prefect of the police (who they refer to as G). The Prefect explained to Dupin that he had to take charge of an investigation that involved a purloined letter. This letter belonged to an unknown woman who was suspected to be blackmailed by the Minister D. himself. The Prefect believed that the information contained in the letter was a secret because it was used to abuse the woman. Of course, the letter had to be close to the Minister because it was the only way to use it against the woman and, moreover, it was beneficial because he could give a cursory glance at the letter once in a while and assure that it was where he wanted it to be. This is the reason why they did an inspection in the Minister's hotel, but it was unsuccessful. A detailed description of the letter was made when the Prefect and Dupin met for the first time in the story, and Dupin, following his detective instinct, made a note of it in his mind. After a month of searching, the Prefect, desperate, offered Dupin 50,000 francs if he could give him the letter. This was when Dupin, accepting the reward, gave the letter to the Prefect. Right after this, the Prefect left and Dupin started explaining how he obtained the purloined letter to his friend (and the narrator of the story). Dupin visited the Minister's hotel and he started a conversation with him. When they were in the Minister's office, Dupin saw the letter. However it was different from the Prefect description because the Minister changed the

address. Despite that, Dupin knew it was the letter they were looking for and he proceeded to swap out the purloined letter for another one.

The Purloined letter, according to Hamdi Ali Serdar in his essay “Dupin, the Purloiner of the Purloined Letter: A Hero? Or a Plagiarist?”, does not focus on the typical adventurous aspect of a detective story, but rather on the reflections of how the crime is committed. This is why this story is considered to be a story of “ratiocination” (Ridel, 1979:1168 in Serdar’s essay). This descriptive label differs from the other detective stories written by Poe. The main reason is that the detective in this story relies on his “logic, physics and math” (Serdar, 2021: 620) to solve the mystery of the purloined letter. Dupin guesses correctly how the Minister stole the letter and where he concealed it (Serdar, 2021).

Analysis of The Purloined Letter

As I mentioned in the introduction, this analysis is divided in two different sections: stylistic shifts and content shifts. Borges, as I mentioned before, was not an enthusiast of Poe's style of writing. This is why he changed many sentences or words related to either the content or the style. Of course, the shifts made do not correspond to only one justification: there are many different reasons to change the source text in the translation. In this analysis I will explain all these different shifts and their justification, and I will also explain some other shifts that are not as common.

Stylistic Shifts

The stylistic shifts are those changes that are related to the literary or artistic style of the writer and the translator. The translator, as a consequence of their interpretation of the original text or their interpretation of linguistic differences between the source and the target languages (among other reasons), may modify aspects of style during the translation process. Besides these reasons, Jorge Luis Borges also considered it legitimate to apply stylistic shifts to his translations if they improved the original text. In "The Purloined Letter", I found omissions, linguistic compressions and semantic shifts.

Omissions

This shift is the most repeated one. Poe's style of writing was verbose and sometimes, according to Borges, he went off on a tangent. One characteristic of Poe's style of writing was that he preferred being descriptive: he was comfortable using several adjectives and nouns in one sentence. However, Borges believed they were unnecessary because he focused more on the reflections and conversations among the different characters rather than on descriptions. For example in the following fragment:

(...) in company with my friend C. Auguste Dupin, in his little back library, or book closet, (...) (Poe, 1844: 1)

(...) en compañía de mi amigo C. Auguste Dupin, en su biblioteca, (...) (Borges, 1943:1)

The adjectives “little” and “back”, and the compound noun “book closet” are omitted in the translation. Borges interpreted that the use of these words were unnecessary when it comes to understanding the meaning of the sentence. The compound word “book closet”, for instance, is not essential in this context. It is just extra information that the reader does not need.

There are many more examples of elimination of adjectives and adverbs in the target text. Below we can see a few examples:

Source text	Target text
What is true of relation—of form and quantity—is often grossly false in regard (1844: 10)	Lo que es verdad respecto a las relaciones de forma y cantidad suele ser falso (1943: 14)
some miscellaneous letters and other papers, with one or two musical instruments and (1844: 12)	la que había unas cartas, unos papeles, uno o dos instrumentos musicales y (1943: 15)
said Dupin, amid a perfect whirlwind of smoke, (1844: 3)	dijo Dupin, arrojando una bocanada de humo (1943: 8)
They gave us comparatively little trouble. (1844: 5)	nos dio poco trabajo. (1943: 10)

Borges also omitted full sentences:

(...) Simple and odd,” said Dupin. “Why, yes; and not exactly that, either. The fact is, we have all been a good deal puzzled because the affair is so simple, and yet baffles us altogether.” (...) (1844: 1,2)

(...) Y bien, sí. El problema es simple, y sin embargo nos desconcierta. (...) (1943: 7)

The fragment from “Why, yes”; to “puzzled because” is not in the translation. The sentence “Why, yes; and not exactly that, either.” is a confusing construction of many connectors that, surely, could be simplified in order to help the comprehension of the sentence. However,

Borges did not even bother to do it because, if you read the entire fragment, you will see that the meaning of the sentence is implicit in “...and yet baffles us altogether”. Moreover, the part “...we have all been a good deal puzzled...” is a description of how the people involved in the action felt. As I mentioned before, Borges omitted many Poe’s descriptions. Therefore, it is normal to see reconstructions like this one in the translation. Other examples are the following:

Source text	Target text
“Here, then,” said Dupin to me, “you have precisely what you demand to make the ascendancy complete. (1844: 3)	—He aquí —me dijo Dupin— lo que usted requería: (1943: 8)
of that reason which is cultivated in any special form other than the abstractly logical. I dispute, in particular, the reason educated by mathematical study. The mathematics are the science of (1844: 10)	el valor de una razón que se cultiva de una manera que no sea la abstractamente lógica. Las matemáticas son (1943: 13)
“is the Minister D—, who dares all things, those unbecoming as well as those becoming a man . The method of the theft (1844: 2)	es el ministro D., que se atreve a todo. El robo (1943: 8)
all articles of furniture in which it would have been possible to make a deposit in the manner you mention. A letter may be compressed (1844: 5)	desarmado todos los muebles. Con una carta puede (1943: 10)
the fact should have escaped observation. Some five or six volumes, just from the hands of the binder, we carefully probed, longitudinally, with the needles. (1844: 5)	lo habríamos notado inmediatamente. (1943: 10)

Borges also omitted descriptions of actions, not only descriptions of thoughts or material things.

(...) “Why, I will tell you,” replied the Prefect, as he gave a long, steady and contemplative puff, and settled himself in his chair. “ (...) (1844: 2)

(...) —Se lo diré a ustedes —contestó el Prefecto—. (...) (1943: 7)

The description of what the Prefect does is not in the translation because, as I mentioned in Borges’s theory, he prefers concise writing. The descriptions that are only used to fill space in the story are not necessary. Of course, someone could argue that the descriptions Poe wrote in the source text have significance because they cause the story to be more real, and they help the readers to have a better idea of how the story unfolds. However, according to Borges, translations are interpretations of the source text; if he believed the story improved by omitting these sentences, then he did it.

It is also interesting to mention the amount of connectors that Borges omits in his translation. Borges has his particular style of writing, and from what it is considered in the translation, Borges preferred using short sentences. This is why he also made changes in the punctuation of the text: he preferred using dots and commas to separate sentences than using connectors.

Source text	Target text
“It is clear,” said I, “ as you observe , that the letter is still in possession of the minister; (1884: 3)	—Es evidente —dije— que la carta sigue en posesión del Ministro: (1943: 9)
You might have spared yourself this trouble,” said Dupin. “D—, I presume, is not altogether a fool, and, if not , must have (1844: 4)	—Usted podía haberse ahorrado ese trabajo —dijo Dupin—. Presumo que D. no es un insensato. Tiene que haber (1943: 9)
The individual who purloined it is known; this beyond a doubt ; he was seen to take it.	El individuo que lo robó es conocido; lo vieron cometer el hecho, el documento sigue

It is known, also, that it still remains in his possession (1844: 2)	en su poder. (1943: 8)
to Machiavelli, and to Campanella. (1844: 8)	Maquiavelo, Campanella. (1943: 8)

Borges went further and he even omitted full paragraphs in the target text.

(...) to anyone who could obtain me that letter. The fact is, it is becoming of more and more importance every day; (...) fifty thousand francs to anyone who would aid me in the matter.”

“In that case,” replied Dupin, opening (...) (1844: 6, 7)

(...) por cincuenta mil francos a quien me dé la carta.

—En tal caso —dijo Dupin, abriendo (...) (1943: 12)

This fragment of the story is striking because there is a considerable omission of 320 tokens¹, that is, almost a page from “obtain me that letter” to “fifty thousand francs”. This part of the story explains the urgency of the Prefect to find the lost letter, and he visits Dupin to know if he has advanced in his investigations. During his visit, he mentions that he would pay a big amount of money to any person that gives him the letter. During this conversation, in the source text we can read an allusion to John Abernethy, an English surgeon. This allusion is presented in the form of a story and it is used to exemplify how, instead of following advice to solve the case, the Prefect prefers to pay other people to do his work. Moreover, according to Sarah Simpson, another purpose to explain the Abernethy story is to reassure that the Prefect will pay Dupin for his work. Borges could have omitted this fragment because he believed that Dupin did not need this reassurance (Simpson, 2019). Also, despite being a story that accurately describes the type of professional the Prefect is, Borges eliminated this fragment in the target text because he wanted the target reader to focus their attention in the explanation of the resolution of the case that followed Abernethy's story. In addition, in this omitted passage we can also find fragments of the conversation that introduces the story of Abernethy. An interesting thing that we find in the source text is the following sentence:

¹ Tokens are the words of a text (counting all the words, even the repeated ones).

(...) “*Why—puff, puff—you might—puff, puff—employ counsel in the matter, eh?—puff, puff, puff. Do you remember the story they tell of Abernethy?*” (...) (1844: 6)

Edgar Allan Poe tried to approximate his written language to the way people talk in real life by using onomatopoeias. This is not the only example, we can find several more during the extension of the story. Thanks to the analysis of Borges’s translation, we could affirm that he was against the excessive use of onomatopoeias because he omits them in the target text. The written onomatopoeias can cause a lack of fluency in the reading of the story and, since he was in favour of clear and concise texts, that could be a reason for these omissions in his translation.

Linguistic Compressions

This type of translation shift involves reducing the lexical units of a sentence without changing the meaning of it. The amount of use of this translation shift is equal to the omission translation shift, and it is used to simplify and improve the source text. Edgar Allan Poe used many convoluted phrases or expressions that can be synthesized into simpler phrases that mean the same thing. Here we have a few examples:

Source text	Target text
I asked. “Nothing more in the assassination way, I hope?” (1844: 1)	interrogué—, ¿otro asesinato? (1943: 7)
Well, I may venture so far as to say (1844: 2)	Bien, me atreveré a decir (1943: 8)
that their own ingenuity is a faithful representative of that of the mass (1844: 8)	su astucia es la del vulgo (1943: 12)
and scrutinizing with the microscope (1844: 9)	y microscópico (1943: 13)
as the world indeed imagines them to be	según la opinión de la gente (1943: 14)

(1844: 10)	
I presume you have at last made up your mind that there is no such thing as overreaching the Minister?" (1844: 6)	Se ha convencido usted de que es imposible sorprender al Ministro? (1943: 11)
Now, with a simpleton a degree above the first (1844: 8)	algo menos tonto (1943: 12)
I was mentally discussing certain topics which had formed matter for conversation between us at an earlier period (1844: 1)	estaba recordando ciertos problemas que habíamos discutido esa tarde (1943: 7)
I merely laughed (1844: 7)	Me sonreí (1943: 12)
For example, an arrant simpleton is his opponent (1844: 8)	Por ejemplo, el contrario es un imbécil. (1943: 12)
And what, after all, is the matter on hand? (1844: 2)	Y ¿Cuál es, por fin, el misterio? (1943: 7)

(...) "But this ascendancy," I interposed, "would depend upon the robber's knowledge of the loser's knowledge of the robber. (...) (1844: 2)

(...) Para ese chantaje —observé— es imprescindible que el dueño conozca el nombre del ladrón. (...) (1943: 8)

In this particular sentence, the concurrence of two possessives with structure's together that have repetition of semantic elements, does not help the reader when it comes to understanding the meaning of the sentence. In the source text, this fragment of the story is extremely confusing: many elements depend on other elements within the sentence.

(...) For three months a night has not passed, during the greater part of which I have not been engaged, (...) (1844: 3)

(...) Hace tres meses que no he dejado pasar una noche sin dirigir (...) (1943: 9)

This sentence is very verbose. What Borges did is minimize the use of verbs, omit parts of the sentence that are not needed to understand what it conveys, and solve the problem of the negatives: the source text has a double negative, using the "not" which leads to confusion. This is why Borges translated it using "not" (no) and "without" (sin).

(...) "Not altogether a fool," said G., "but then he's a poet, which I take to be only one remove from a fool." (...) (1844: 4)

(...) —No será un insensato —dijo el Prefecto—. Pero es un poeta, lo que no es muy distinto (...) (1943: 9)

This is also the case with these sentences: this fragment is also circumlocutory and Borges eliminates verbs from the source text by not repeating the same information twice (a fool).

(...) In short, I never yet encountered the mere mathematician who could be trusted out of equal roots, or one who did not clandestinely hold it as a point of his faith that x^2+px was absolutely and unconditionally equal to q . Say to one of these gentlemen, by way of experiment, if you please, that you believe occasions may occur where x^2+px is not altogether equal to q , and, having made him understand what you mean, get out of his reach as speedily as convenient, for, beyond doubt, he will endeavor to knock you down. (...) (1844: 10)

(...) En una palabra, no he conocido un algebrista que pudiera alejarse sin riesgo del mundo de las ecuaciones o que no profesara el clandestino artículo de fe de que $(a + b)^2$ es incondicionalmente igual a $a^2 + 2 a b + b^2$. Diga usted a uno de esos caballeros que, en ciertas ocasiones, $(a + b)^2$ puede no equivaler estrictamente a $a^2 + 2 a b + b^2$, y antes de acabar su explicación eche a correr para que no lo destruya. (...) (1943: 14)

This fragment also compresses different sentences in the target text. However, it is not the only thing that is simplified: the equations are different too. The purpose of reflecting on mathematics in the story is to show how irrelevant is that the thief is a mathematician. This shift cannot be considered an adaptation because both equations represent different things and

mathematics are universal. They define the same independently of the place you are using it. The equation in the source text (x^2+px) is a second degree equation (trinomial equation) which is defined like this: “Since $x^2 + px + q = 0$ has roots equal to p and q . $\Rightarrow x^2 + px + q = (x - p)(x - q) \Rightarrow x^2 + px + q = 0$ ”. The equation in the target text is a square binomial equation and it represents “ $(a+b)^2 = (a+b)(a+b) = a^2+ab+ab+b^2 = a^2+2ab+b^2$, that is to say: $(a+b)^2 = a^2+2ab+b^2$ ”. The equation in the target text is simpler because, according to Efraín Kristal, it does not have as many variables as the one in the source text and, moreover, it is considered a more universal equation (Kristal, 2002). In addition, I would say the binomial equation is more likely to be known among the readers than the trinomial equation because it is taught in schools. Therefore, it could also be a solid reason to change it in the target text.

(...) looking incredulously at my friend (...) (1844: 7)

(...) mirando fascinado a Dupin (...) (1943: 11)

These excerpts show a recurrent stylistic shift in Borge’s translations: he prefers to explicitly state who the text is referring to rather than using pronouns or words that are less specific. I consider that the main reason to do it is because he wants the reader to follow the story without effort. This is similar to the following example:

(...) the most really energetic human being now alive (...) (1844: 12)

(...) el hombre más enérgico de París (...) (1943: 15)

As I mentioned in the theory section of this paper, the story of “The Purloined Letter” takes place in Paris, France. Probably Borges translated “de París” to shorten the sentence and not baffle with the lexicography.

Semantic Shifts

It compresses all the shifts that deal with changes of vocabulary from the source text to the target text. However, these changes do not affect the content of the story. There are many stylistic reasons to make shifts of vocabulary. One of them is to avoid references that the readers do not understand. Here we have a few examples:

(...) I was enjoying the twofold luxury of meditation and a meerschaum (...) (1844: 1)

*(...) gozando de la doble fruición de la meditación taciturna y del nebuloso tabaco
(...) (1943: 7)*

Meerschaum is a German word that people use to describe a type of tobacco pipe made of a specific mineral, the sepiolite. This cultural reference is known in English, but it is not popular among Spanish speakers. Therefore, Borges has decided to adapt this term to the target cultural system through a translation technique called generalization, that is, a substitution of a specific term for a more general one (Hurtado Albir, 2001).

(...) “you are quite au fait in these investigations. (...) (1844: 3)

(...) usted es un especialista en esas tareas (...) (1943: 9)

“Au fait” is a French borrowing used in English to express familiarity or knowledge about something. It is not used in the Spanish language, this is why Borges translated it as “especialista”. In contrast, below we have the semantic shifts of this type that Borges did not adapt:

*(...) —Il y a à Parier —dijo Dupin, citando a Chamfort— que toute convention recue
est une sottise, car elle a convenu au plus grand nombre (...) (1943: 13)*

This sentence in French is written the same way in both the source and the target text. The reason can be that it is a quote of Chamfort, and, in consequence, both Poe and Borges felt that it was more appropriate to not translate it into their mother tongues. However, there are other possible explanations for the conservation of this French fragment in the Spanish version. In the first place, Poe’s original story is set in Paris, so he may have included these French borrowings to add some local color to the story. It is possible that Borges did not omit the French language instances entirely in his translation to preserve the expressive effects they produce in the original. More importantly, there is a crucial difference between the adjective “au fait” and Chamfort’s quote: as I already explained, Poe’s target readers were able to understand the meaning “au fait” since this expression is also used in English.

However, Chamfort's quote was not accessible for those readers who did not speak French. Borges may have wanted to reproduce these effects in his version; therefore, he translated the adjective "au fait" into Spanish to ensure that his public could understand the expression, but maintained the quote in French knowing, as Poe did, that a percentage of the target readers would not have access to its meaning. However, I believe that, since there are as many translations as interpretations of the source text, other translators would have translated the quoted sentence in the Spanish language because keeping a sentence that the majority of readers do not understand is useless. Despite that, Borges was protected by the fact that the meaning of this quotation is implicit in the explanation Dupin does afterwards.

(...) Es el monstrum horrendum (...) (1943: 16)

"Monstrum horrendum" is a latin expression that means "horrible monster". According to the RAE, the latinisms should be translated if it is only one word. The locutions, however, should be kept in the original form. Perhaps this was the rule used in Borges' stage of translating too. This is exactly what happens with the following sentence:

(...) el Prefecto e incurre en una non distributio medii al inferir que (...) (1943: 13)

Another reason to change the original vocabulary in the target text is because Borges wanted to eliminate the lexical detours and create a more accurate, direct and simple translation, as in the following examples:

(...) and rolled towards him a comfortable chair. (...) (1844: 1)

(...) , ofreciéndole un sillón y una pipa. (...) (1943: 7)

Here we have a semantic shift from "comfortable chair" to "sillón". The reason to change the vocabulary in the target text, apart from the one I mentioned above, is because of consistency. In previous parts of *The Purloined Letter*, the Prefect sits on a couch when he visits Dupin in his house. Borges, therefore, tried to keep that tradition.

(...) With the employment the power departs. (...) (1844: 3)

(...) Vendida la carta, el poder termina. (...) (1943: 9)

“Employment” is a word that can mean different things in the English language, and one meaning is “use”. Borges translated this generalized word as “vendido” because it is what he believes “employment” means in this sentence. If we analyze the content of the story, we will understand that Dupin here is referring to the power the thief has for having the letter. If the thief, for some reason, wants to get rid of the letter, the most logical action to do is sell it. Moreover, the word changes its grammatical category (from noun to verb).

(...) They sleep at a distance from their master’s apartment (...) (1844: 3)

(...) Duermen lejos de las piezas de su patrón (...) (1943: 9)

“Master’s apartment” refers to all the sets of different rooms that we can find in an apartment; in short, it refers to the construction of the building in general. “Las piezas”, however, is explicit to the rooms that the master uses on a regular basis, as if the workers of the house live in the same apartment, but in another section that the master does not use because it is for the exclusive use of the workers. The interpretation here changes, but it is not essential to the content of the story.

(...) He has been twice waylaid, as if by footpads, (...) (1844: 4)

(...) Ha sido atacado dos veces por salteadores falsos (...) (1943: 9)

The construction "as if" already has a connotation of doubt and falsehood. This is why Borges explicitly translated it as "falsos".

There are other semantic shifts that correspond to the use of rhetorical figures in the target text. These changes are not of such an importance that they change and affect the content of the story. Here we have some examples:

(...) After some business transactions (...) (1844: 3)

(...) Después de tratar algunas cuestiones (...) (1943: 8)

“Business transactions” is a specific term to refer to an economic activity. Borges, however, put in the target text “cuestiones”, a general term that does not convey information regarding the activity. This rhetorical figure is a metonymy, which is used when you want to generalize a concept. This is also the case in the following example:

(...) must have anticipated these waylayings (...) (1844: 4)

(...) Tiene que haber previsto esa táctica.(...) (1943: 9)

Waylayings" mean "ataques". Previously in the story it has been explained the attacks to the minister, and Borges translated this sentence keeping in mind that the readers know what "esa táctica" means.

(...) “although I have been guilty of certain doggerel myself.” (...) (1844: 4)

(...) aunque yo mismo haya cometido algunas rimas. (...) (1943: 9)

Here the translation is quite poor. The word "doggerel" means bad poetry, which is not the same as saying "rimas".

(...) Here, the address, to the Minister, diminutive and feminine; there the superscription, to a certain royal personage, was markedly bold and decided (...) (1844: 13)

(...) con diminuta letra de mujer; el de la carta original estaba dirigido a una persona de la casa reinante, con ostentosa letra de hombre (...) (1943: 15)

Here we have an interesting point to discuss. The adjectives “bold and decided” are translated as “ostentosa letra de hombre”, which jointly with “diminuta letra de mujer” creates an antithesis. If we analyze the sentence, we will know that “letra de hombre” is exactly what Poe tried to convey when he wrote the story. The style of writing of the women, according to Poe and Borges, is “diminutive”. It is curious to appreciate how even the style of writing is a decisive point to divide and stereotype men and women. It is important to emphasize the time in which these two authors have lived. Both of them were immersed in misogynistic cultures

at the time they worked on this short story, so they did not pay attention to these little details that seem to mark the social rules that both genders have to follow.

(...) twofold luxury of meditation and a meerschaum (...) (1844: 1)

(...) la meditación taciturna y del nebuloso tabaco (...) (1943: 7)

Here we have a personification of “meditación taciturna” and “nebuloso tabaco”. These resources help embellish the writing of the story.

(...) the Minister has had her in his power. She has now him in hers (...) (1844: 14)

(...) el Ministro la ha tenido en su poder; ahora, ella lo tiene en su poder. (...) (1943: 16)

This is an example of antithesis, where two opposite concepts contrast each other. In this fragment Borges did not translate the second sentence with pronouns because he wanted to create a syntactic and semantic parallelism between both parts.

Other Stylistic Shifts

Here I will mention other stylistic shifts that are not as common as the ones I explained above, but that are relevant enough to mention:

Shifts in word order. Some lexical elements of a sentence are relocated in a different position in the target version of this sentence. The purpose is to formulate clearer sentences, or to emphasize a given component by placing it in a more superior position.

Source text	Target text
I have received personal information, from a very high quarter (1844: 2)	Un alto funcionario me ha comunicado que (1943: 8)

no more sagacious agent could, I suppose, be desired, or even imagined (1844: 3)	o siquiera imaginar, un agente más sagaz que usted? (1943: 8)
I made the re-examination, however, as Dupin suggested (1844: 6)	Seguí el consejo de Dupin, revisé la casa (1943: 11)
the felon foils them, of course (1844: 8)	por supuesto, los derroca (1943: 12)

Coined equivalent. A popular expression in the source language that has an exact equivalent in the target language (Hurtado Albir, 2001).

(...) a sort of Procrustean bed (...) (1844: 7)

(...) una especie de lecho de Procasto (...) (1943: 12)

According to the Merriam-Webster dictionary, “Procrustean bed” is an expression that means “a scheme or pattern in which someone or something is arbitrarily forced”. In the story this expression is used to describe the way the Parisian police officers are forced by the Prefect to investigate and look for clues.

Source text	Target text
it is far more easy to get up than to come down (1844: 14)	es más arduo bajar que subir (1943: 16)
did me an evil turn (1844: 14)	me jugó una mala jugada (1943: 16)

Modulation. According to Amparo Hurtado Albir, modulation is the change of point of view or perspective in the target text (Hurtado Albir, 2001). In this point, I will focus on the way Borges changes the impersonal type of writing of Poe, and creates a more personal writing:

Source text	Target text
who shall be nameless (1844: 2)	que me está vedado nombrar (1943: 8)
should have escaped observation (1844: 5)	lo habríamos notado inmediatamente (1943: 10)

Content Shifts

This type of shift is characterized by modifying the semantic content of the story. I divided these shifts of content in the same three categories: omissions, linguistic compressions and semantic shifts:

Omissions

(...) “Oh, good heavens! who ever heard of such an idea?” “A little too self-evident.” “Ha! ha! ha—ha! ha! ha!—ho! ho! ho!” roared our visiter, profoundly amused, “oh, Dupin, you will be the death of me yet!” (...) (1844: 2)

This fragment is entirely omitted in the target text. By doing that, Borges eliminates the idea that the resolution of the case is “A little too self-evident”. According to Sarah Simpson, this causes the intelligence of the detectives to be more emphasized in the target text than in the source text. This shows Borges’ interpretation of “The Purloined Letter” because it reflects what he thought was important in the story (Simpson, 2019). Efraín Kristal, in his essay “Invisible work. Borges and translation”, adds that the purpose is not only to emphasize the intelligence of the detective, but also the intelligence of the thief. What Borges wanted to convey was the intellectual battle between these two characters, who try to anticipate the movements of their respective opponent. What mattered, according to Kristal, was the ability to comprehend the mind of the opponent (Kristal, 1999). This is also the reason why Borges omitted the following fragments:

(...) You will remember, perhaps, how desperately the Prefect laughed when I suggested, upon our first interview, that it was just possible this mystery troubled him so much on account of its being so very self-evident.” (...) Again: have you ever

noticed which of the street signs, over the shop-doors, are the most attractive of attention?" (...) (1844: 11)

Here we have again the concept of the mystery being “very self-evident”, an idea that Borges wanted to eradicate to impose the interpretation of the story that I mentioned above. The same happens in the following fragment:

(...) and here the physical oversight is precisely analogous with the moral inapprehension by which the intellect suffers to pass unnoticed those considerations which are too obtrusively and too palpably self-evident. (...) within the limits of that dignitary’s ordinary search—the more satisfied I became that, (...) (1844: 12)

Linguistic Compressions

The linguistic compressions that affect the content of the story are quite rare if they are compared to the abundance of stylistic compressions. However, I found one that is worth to mention:

(...) He is well acquainted with my MS (...) (1844: 14)

(...) D. conoce mi letra (...) (1943: 16)

I searched for information about what MS can mean. It turns out that MS is the acronym of multiple sclerosis. This disease, according to the official website of multiple sclerosis in Spain, is characterized by the impairment of performing physical functions with normality. This is caused by muscle spasms, muscle paralysis, among other factors. We could intuit that, because of this disease, Dupin could have problems to write and, therefore, his handwriting would be recognizable. To reassure myself that this theory is correct, I searched when the term MS was coined in the English language. According to the RAE, the first time that this term appeared was in 1868, when the French doctor Jean-Martin Charcot officially described the disease. “The Purloined Letter” was published in 1844, when this term was not created yet. Therefore, this is not what MS means in this context. After looking for more information, I found that according to the Cambridge dictionary, the acronym MS can also mean “manuscript”. However, the acronym should be written in lowercase letter. Perhaps Poe

wrote it this way to emphasize the acronym in the sentence. Of course, “manuscript” is not the same as “letra”, but Borges interpreted that Poe meant that the Minister had read handwritten manuscripts of Dupin before and, therefore, he knew how Dupin wrote. Borges, to simplify the sentence, used the word “letra” straightaway.

Semantic Shifts

(...) The document in question —a letter, to be frank—had been received by the personage robbed while alone in the royal boudoir. During its perusal she was suddenly interrupted by the entrance of the other exalted personage from whom especially it was her wish to conceal it. After a hurried and vain endeavor to thrust it in a drawer, she was forced to place it, open as it was, upon a table. (...) (1844: 2)

(...) El documento —una carta, para ser franco— fue recibido por la víctima del posible chantaje, mientras estaba sola en la habitación real. Casi inmediatamente después entra una segunda persona, de quien deseaba especialmente ocultar la carta. Apenas tuvo tiempo para dejarla abierta como estaba, sobre una mesa (...) (1943: 8)

In this part of the story, Dupin is explaining to the other characters how the Minister stole the letter. According to the essay “Invisible work. Borges and translation” by Efraín Kristal, the gender of the victim who has suffered the theft of the letter is clear in Poe’s short story. She is a woman and, according to Kristal’s interpretation, she is the Queen of France. Borges, on the other hand, does not give information about the gender or the social status of the victim. The pronouns that indicate the gender in the source text are omitted in the translation of Borges. Moreover, Kristal also mentions that the word “boudoir” can mean “private room of a woman”, and, therefore, the gender of the victim is implicit in this word. However, as I mentioned before, Borges translated “boudoir” as “habitación”, causing the gender of the victim to be even more ambiguous. Furthermore, Kristal also centers in the word “exalted”, which is also omitted in the translation. This word can be translated as “ilustre”, and a clue of the social class of the victim is eliminated by the omission of this term.

There is also a semantic shift that should be mentioned here, and it is the introduction of “la víctima del chantaje” when in the source text the information that we receive is “the personage robbed”. According to Kristal, using the word “víctima”, whose antecedent can be

either feminine and masculine, helps to create the ambiguous effect on this character. This ambiguity, according to Kristal, is accentuated by the following construction:

(...) Its rightful owner (...) (1844: 3)

(...) El dueño legítimo (...) (1943: 8)

Here Borges uses the masculine pronoun to refer to the owner of the letter, which is the pronoun that is used when people do not know the identity of a person. The purpose of this shift, according to Kristal, is to change the focus on the victim to the relation between the detective and the thief: Borges's version focuses on how the thief hides the letter, and how the detective reaches the solution of the mystery (Kristal, 1999).

Leaving aside Kristal's opinion on this fragment, I read the following sentence in the target text: "mientras estaba sola en la habitación real". In contrast to what Kristal states, in this sentence I believe that Borges conveys information about the gender and social class of the victim. Consequently, it is not that he does not convey information about the identity of the victim; he simply does not emphasize this information.

(...) I have received personal information, from a very high quarter (...) (1844: 2)

(...) Un alto funcionario me ha comunicado que (...) (1943: 8)

Here we have a semantic shift from "very high quarter" to "alto funcionario", which, according to Kristal, refers to a male worker that is highly placed in the royal house. The use of the word "functionary" is repeated several times in the source text, when Poe refers to the Prefect. However, according to Kristal, every time that this happens in the story, Borges substitutes the word "functionary" and uses "Prefect". The reason to do it is because Borges created a character in the target text, which is the one it is mentioned in the example of the text: "un alto funcionario". The function of this character is to inform the Prefect about the theft.

From this point on, I will mention semantic shifts that do not affect in a profound level the content of the story, but that change some nuances of the source text:

(...) of a man with a musket (...) (1844: 13)

(...) un hombre con un fusil (...) (1943: 16)

A musket is an old weapon that was used from the sixteenth century to the nineteenth century. Borges could have translated this term with a different type of weapon to adapt the story to a more modern time or also to use a more generalized term that is familiar to the target audience and, in consequence, easier to understand.

(...) and deposited it in his pocket-book (...) (1844: 7)

(...) y lo depositó en su cartera (...) (1943: 11)

Pocket-book, according to Cambridge dictionary, is a woman's handbag. However, according to Word Reference it is a "libro de bolsillo" or "cuaderno". Borges translated it as "cartera" because it is the most obvious place to keep the check the sentence is referring to. Therefore, he chooses the solution that adapts best to its textual context.

(...) to be accounted for in every cabinet (...) (1844: 4)

(...) Cada escritorio tiene una (...) (1943: 9)

In English, the word "cabinet" in the context of furniture is used as part of a compound noun. For example, according to the Cambridge dictionary and the Word Reference, we can find the word cabinet in "bathroom cabinet", "filling cabinet", etc. The word "cabinet" alone means "armario", which is not the same as "escritorio". So maybe Poe wrote used this general term thinking that the people would understand what he meant, as well as Borges. In any case, Borges's solution confirms that he favours the lexical option that best adapts to its context.

(...) upon his own premises? (...) (1844: 4)

(...) en su propia casa (...) (1943: 9)

The word "premises" in English can mean "instalaciones", "local" and "sitio". However, from the context Borges interpreted that the narrator was referring to the minister's house.

*(...) opens it, pretends to read it, and then places it in close juxtaposition to the other.
(...) (1844: 3)*

(...) la abre, finge leerla y la coloca encima de la primera. (...) (1943: 8)

This part of the story explains how the Minister obtains the letter that does not belong to him. The two letters mentioned in this sentence are physically very similar, and one of them is the purloined letter. The Minister uses the eye deception to make the victim believe that he has grabbed his letter and not hers. Perhaps Borges translated “encima” instead of “al lado” because this way is easier to not raise suspicions.

Conclusions

To sum up, there are many more shifts of style than shifts of content in the target text, because an excessive abuse of content shifts would have created a new story. If we analyze the style of the translation, the shift that is used more frequently is the omission, but the amount of linguistic compressions do not differ much to the amount of omissions. If we focus on the content shifts, on the other hand, we have seen that there are many semantic changes. However, the semantic shifts, except for the change related to the gender and social class of the victim, do not alter the content as much as the omission shifts. In this particular case, we have seen the concept of the mystery being “too self evident”, a concept that Borges wanted to eradicate in the target text because it discredits the intelligence of the detectives. Moreover, in contrast, we have a significant difference in the amount of linguistic compressions in the style shifts and the content shifts, where it is practically null.

Once the analysis is finished, Borges’s translation theory is understood in depth because he applied it in a clear manner in his translation. On the one hand, there is the concept of creative infidelity, which consists of making shifts that do not resemble the source text due to Borges’s own interpretation of “The Purloined Letter”. For instance, I found semantic shifts that modified part of the content in the story. According to Efraín Kristal in his essay “Invisible work. Borges and Translation”, in the source text the gender and the social class of the victim is repeated several times. Borges, however, is not explicit and creates ambiguity by using the Spanish neutral pronoun, which is the one that is used when you do not know someone’s gender. This results in an emphasis, that is not perceived in the source text, on the intelligence of the detectives rather than on the situation of the victim (Kristal, 1999). Moreover, in the analysis there are examples of creative infidelity that do not correspond to content shifts, but to stylistic ones. Edgar Allan Poe created verbose sentences, and described details that are not essential to the story and that, according to Borges, limited the stylistic beauty of the work. For example, the sentence “would depend upon the robber’s knowledge of the loser’s knowledge of the robber” is translated as “es imprescindible que el dueño conozca el nombre del ladrón”. Borges does not translate literally Poe’s wording in the source text (because it is a confusing sentence), but he adapted and reformulated the sentence so the reader could understand it more easily.

On the other hand, in the theory section I explained one sentence that represents what Borges thought about translation, and is the following: “translation for him was a combination of omissions and emphasis”. Of course, after the analysis of Borges’s

translation, we could say that omissions form a great part of his translations. In this text in particular, we do not find only omissions of words or sentences, but also of full fragments. A good example is the story of Abernethy that I explained in the analysis. However, although the omissions are the most popular shift in this translation, Borges also emphasized some elements in Poe's story. Good examples of emphasis are the references that Poe used to exemplify concepts in the story. For instance, we have “ —Il y a à Parier —dijo Dupin, citando a Chamfort— que toute convention recue est une sottise, car elle a convenu au plus grand nombre”, where Borges left the citation of Chamfort. Another example is the use of the mathematical equation that, despite simplifying it, Borges did not omit in the target text.

As I mentioned in the theory section, all these shifts that Borges made in his translation are directly aimed at the reader. These changes can be justified by mentioning the fact that, what matters at the end of the day, is that the reader has the facility to understand the text. If the reader does not understand the story, it is feasible that they find it unpleasant or even that they decide to abandon the reading altogether.

References

Savater, F. (2008). Vidas Literarias: Jorge Luis Borges. *Revista Literaria Katharsis*.
https://revistaliterariakatharsis.org/Savater_Borges.pdf

Benin, N. (2020). *Edgar Allan Poe (1809-1849)*. ResearchGate.
https://www.researchgate.net/publication/339241502_Edgar_Allan_Poe_1809-1849

Kopley, R. (2008). *Edgar Allan Poe and the Dupin Mysteries*. (1st ed.). Palgrave Macmillan.
<http://detective.gumer.info/txt/kopley.pdf>

Marinero, I. (2020, February 15). El verdadero origen de los primeros detectives. *El Mundo*.
<https://www.elmundo.es/cultura/literatura/2020/02/15/5e46d149fc6c836c568b46c9.html>

Hugh Holman, C. (1936). *A Handbook to Literature*. (3rd ed.). The Bobbs-Merrill Company, Inc; Publishers.
<https://mseffie.com/assignments/sherlock/Characteristics%20of%20a%20Detective%20Story.pdf>

Conan Doyle, A. (1902). *Adventures of Sherlock Holmes*. (1st ed.). Appleton and Company.
<https://sherlockholmesquotes.com/c-auguste-dupin-and-sherlock-holmes/>

Real Academia Española. (2021, May 28). *La vida de las palabras “esclerosis”*.
<https://www.rae.es/noticia/la-vida-de-las-palabras-esclerosis>

Newborn, S. (2000). *The First Detective*. (1st ed.). Bandanna Books.
https://www.academia.edu/8314875/The_First_Detective_Three_Stories_by_Edgar_Allan_Poe

Simpson, S. (2019, December 13). *Borges as Translator: A Preliminary Examination*.
FORUM: University of Edinburgh Postgraduate Journal of Culture & the Arts. Issue 29.
<https://forumjournal.org/article/view/4153>

Alí Serdar, H. (2021, December). Dupin, the Purloiner of the Purloined Letter: A Hero? Or A Plagiarist?. *Söylem*. 6(3): 619-630.

https://www.researchgate.net/publication/357449620_Dupin_the_Purloiner_of_the_Purloined_Letter_A_Hero_Or_A_Plagiarist

Edgar Allan, P. (1844). *The Purloined Letter*. <file:///C:/Users/Nerea%20Uni/Downloads/the-works-of-edgar-allan-poe-081-the-purloined-letter.pdf>

Borges, J. (1943). *La Carta Robada*.

<http://www.ataun.eus/BIBLIOTECAGRATUITA/Ci%C3%A1sicos%20en%20Espa%C3%B1ol/Edgar%20Allan%20Poe/La%20carta%20robada.pdf>

Levine Jill, S. (2012). *Borges sobre la traducción*. Teoría de la Educación. Educación y Cultura en la Sociedad de la Información, vol. 13, núm. 1.

https://www.academia.edu/20990208/Borges_sobre_la_traducci%C3%B3n

Kristal, E. (1999). *Borges y la traducción*. Lexis XXIII. 1 (1999): 3-23.

<file:///C:/Users/Nerea%20Uni/Downloads/7255-Texto%20del%20art%C3%ADculo-28376-1-10-20130827.pdf>

Borges, J. (1926). Las dos maneras de traducir. *La Prensa*.

<https://www.cervantesvirtual.com/obra/las-dos-maneras-de-traducir/>

Borges, J. (1932). *Las versiones homéricas*.

https://www.researchgate.net/publication/49617783_Las_versiones_homericas_Las_versiones_homericas

Borges, J. (1936). *Los traductores de las 1001 noches*.

<https://borgestodoelanio.blogspot.com/2015/03/jorge-luis-borges-los-traductores-de.html>