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Rhythm and blues song translation during the yé-yé period in France and Spain[1]

Abstract

Rhythm and blues song translation during the yé-yé period in France and Spain

Music is said to be a powerful, universal tool capable of taming savage beasts when skillfully wielded. During the years 1958 through 1968, known as the yé-yé period, anglophone forms of popular music made a significant impact on the southwestern corridor of Europe, inspiring a cultural revolution among teenagers. The increased demand for anglophone art and cultural productions led to a surge in the release of singable pop song translations, including a considerable amount of rhythm and blues (R&B) music. This article, which is an exploratory study, seeks to discover the discursive and sociopolitical implications of singable American R&B song translations commercially released in France and Spain during this period. The song translators' strategies, the semantic and semiotic retentions in the cover recordings, as well as the sociocultural context are discussed in four song examples that seem most representative of the manifestation of R&B in France and Spain.

Keywords: R&B, marketing, minority, yé-yé, censorship, translation

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1. Introduction

Listening to a few minutes of Franco-Italian singer/songwriter Nino Ferrer's "Je veux être noir" ('I want to be Black')[2] may leave some in shock and yet bring up feelings of nostalgia for others. In live performances of the tune, Ferrer dances intensely, belting out the lyrics with great enthusiasm: "je voudrais être noir, noir, noir, noir […] et je pourrais crier yeah yeah yeah!" His homage to African American artists who inspired him profoundly, released in 1966, hearkens to a moment where anglophone forms of music, dance, and cultural expression, captivated the hearts of teenagers in many parts of the world, particularly in Europe. Spanning approximately a decade (from 1958 to 1968), this time is often referred to as the yé-yé period. This article will focus on its manifestation in France and Spain. The term *yé-yé (*or *yéyé),* originating in France, is a borrowing of the English *yeah, yeah* – an ad lib found in anglophone pop songs – reformulated phonetically into French (Barsamian/ Jouffa 1983: 8). In Spain, the term was reformulated phonetically into Spanish as *yeyé*. In both countries, the name served as a term which described a myriad of concepts: youth-oriented styles of pop music and dance crazes of the time (i.e. rhythm and blues, rock and roll, twist, etc.); fashion trends set by yé-yé artists (many of which were influenced by anglophone artists); individuals who embody the characteristics of the yé-yé artists; and the overall cultural movement.

The yé-yé explosion took place during a dynamic moment in history, amidst major social reformations, wars, and the aftermath of the latter: the Civil Rights Movement in the United States and the Vietnam War, the Franco-Algerian War in France, and the post-Civil War Francoist dictatorship in Spain (Barsamian/ Jouffa 1983: 8). Concurrently, mass media was evolving in terms of its radio and television broadcasting capabilities, facilitating the spread of information across borders at unprecedented rates. In Europe, the commercial release of singable pop song translations was at an all-time high (Franzon 2021: 88), and many of the target text (TT) performers would go on to become some of their nations' first pop stars (Forneri 2019). Several of the translations released during this period were from the rhythm and blues (R&B) genre – still relatively in its infancy – consequently fostering the international proliferation of a cultural production of African Americans, considered a minority group in the United States. This unique set of circumstances could lead one to ask the following questions, regarding the translation of such culture-specific source texts (STs): What is retained? What is changed? Are the TTs still recognizable stylistically as R&B?

Previous studies in both singable and non-singable song translation have covered various genres, including classical music (Beavitt 2018; Apter/ Herman

2| "Je veux être noir", © Éditions Beuscher Arpège. Lyrics for this song can be found at https://genius.com/Nino-ferrer-je-voudrais-etre-noir-lyrics. All gloss translations found in this article are my own.

2012), pop music (Tinker 2005; Haapaniemi/ Laakkonen 2019), and even spirituals (Desblache 2001; Jakubiak 2011) – a genre also originated by a minority culture. However, there remains a substantial gap in research within the pop genre on singable R&B song translations. For this reason, this article seeks to investigate textual strategies, constraints and sociocultural implications involved in American R&B song translations released commercially during the yé-yé Period in France and Spain.

2. The yé-yé period in France and Spain

Realizing the potential of this burgeoning movement among French teenagers and enamored by the success of *American bandstand*, Daniel Filipacchi and Frank Ténot decided to launch the radio program *Salut les copains* in 1959 (Buggy 2018: 31). Later, a magazine of the same name was launched in 1962, selling millions of copies across southwestern Europe. Once this phenomenon reached Spain, executives followed the French model with radio programs, such as *Caravana musical* (1960), and magazines, such as *Discóbolo* (1962). Print media, radio and television programs dedicated to yé-yé music provided further publicity for national artists as well as exposed consumers to teen heartthrobs from other countries, including Elvis Presley and Sylvie Vartan (Otaola 2012: 2–3). This cultural shift was responsible for turning young talents, many from humble beginnings, into superstars (Barsamian/ Jouffa 1983: 7–9). Yé-yé artists were also among the first to be sought after by brands and fashion designers for endorsements, a practice now commonplace in the entertainment industry (Forneri 2019).

3. R&B song lyrics as minority literature

The *Psalms*, one of humanity's oldest recorded forms of lyric poetry, were generally performed to music. Avant-garde and performance poetry utilize repetition, rhyme, rhythm, melody, metaphor, simile, and allusion to convey concepts and ideas much like songs. Despite the evidence of a historic synergy existing between musical and literary forms, many scholars do not hold song lyrics in high regard, inferring that they emerge because of their music (Moore 2001: 1). Fortunately, such disparaging perspectives are beginning to change, as song lyrics are becoming of increasing research interest in the fields of sociology, musicology, linguistics, among others (Valdés 2016). Further evidence of a global paradigm shift among academics is the 2016 awarding of the Nobel Prize for literature to folk artist Bob Dylan, the first songwriter to ever receive the distinction (Sisario/ Alter/ Chan 2016). For these reasons, this article holds that R&B, and all pop song lyrics should be considered literature.

Coined by *Billboard magazine* in 1949, the term R&B originally denoted "all types of secular music recorded by and for African Americans" (Maultsby 2015: 239). In its beginnings, R&B remained underground, relegated to late-night, local AM radio programs. Mainstream radio stations refused to play this music, deeming it subpar, uncouth, and undeserving of significant marketing and distribution (Maultsby 2015: 252). As the genre would later reach France in the late 1950s, elites labeled the genre, and the other forms of anglophone pop music, "the music of savages", performed by "daft, slightly idiotic sub-humans" (Barsamian/ Jouffa 1983: 7–8). While the older generation of Spanish music consumers at the time shared an equally unfavorable view of the genre, the youth-oriented releases were classified as popular music rather quickly, garnering moderate media support in the beginning stages, unlike in France. (Otaola 2012: 1–2). The initial rejection and vilification of R&B by mainstream society are reactions concomitant to minority languages and literature, often considered to "lack prestige or authority" and to be of little to no interest to the majority (Venuti 1998: 135).

4. Material and method

4.1. Multimodal translation

This study considers singable song translations to be characteristically multimodal (Kaindl 2013) and tend to underscore the sociocultural context through the retention of semiotic features (Kaindl 2013: 259). The *skopos* (Vermeer 2012) or purpose for singable pop song translations is particularly distinct, as it is often one of achieving a hit record. These types of TTs are the end product of an intricate system of *patronage* (Lefevere 1992), involving a variety of agents (managers, music executives, music publishers, record labels, songwriters, lawyers, producers, music rights organizations, music distributors, etc.), who potentially impact the nature of the commission. In the examination of the multimodal text, I draw a distinction between the semantic and semiotic features: the semantics being the song lyrics, and the semiotics the multimodal product (i.e. the recorded performance). In analyzing the sociocultural context, I conceptualize the translation product as the center of a constellation of both linguistic and extralinguistic factors, drawing general inspiration from Chesterman's causal model (2000) as well as Toury's descriptive approach (1995) and Venuti's colonial perspectives on translation (1998).

4.2. Song translation theories

For the more specific song analyses, I base this study on theories by Low and Franzon. Low's pentathlon principle (2005) holds that five key, interdependent

elements must be considered when creating singable song translations: (a) singability (the TT avoids consonant clusters, ending lines on open-ended syllables, excessive amounts of plosive consonants, and placing high notes on closed front vowels); (b) sense (the TT faithfully rendered the deeper meanings of the ST); (c) rhythm (the TT has retained the rhythm of the ST); (d) rhyme (the TT has retained the rhyme pattern of the ST); and (e) naturalness (the TT possesses idiomaticity). Naturalness has been omitted from this study, since I share Low's assertion that native speakers of the TL are best suited to assess this (Low 2017: 68). I will use each category of Low's principle to assess whether semiotic (singability, rhythm, vocal approach, musical arrangement, key, tempo and instrumentation) and semantic (rhyme and sense) retentions are reflected in the TTs.

Franzon's (2021) study of singable pop song translations offers six methods on the approximation-adequation continuum, which I will use as a typological tool to describe how target language (TL) lyricists transferred meaning (akin to Low's *sense* category) from the STs:

a. *Near-enough translation* – a TT displaying the highest level of fidelity to the ST;
b. *Perspective-shift* – a TT displaying a high level of fidelity but with slight changes and additions to the narrative;
c. *Lyric hook transposition* – a TT displaying a hybrid of ST semiotic and semantic retentions as well as innovative additions;
d. *Single-phrase spinoff* – a TT displaying a low level of fidelity while retaining some *iterative* (Susam-Saraeva 2018) features of the ST;
e. *Phonetic calque* – a TT word or a phrase sharing only a phonetic link to the ST;
f. *All-new target lyric* – the TT is not based at all on the ST (Franzon 2021: 85).

4.3. Semiotic features of R&B songs

Known for its danceable and rhythmic qualities, R&B fused earlier forms of Black music, such as jazz, blues, and gospel, and differed slightly from region to region (Maultsby 2015: 239). Other semiotic features associated with this genre, commonly referred to as *Africanisms* (Baraka 1963), include a highly emotional approach to performance, a guttural or throaty vocal technique characterized by shouting, call-and-response, three-part vocal harmonies, and various forms of rhythmic and melodic extemporization (Stewart 1998: 3–8). A wide array of instrumentation was common due to its varied stylistic influences. The most rudimentary combination, known as a rhythm section, includes a drum set, bass, guitar, and piano. Horn sections were often utilized as a result of the jazz and bebop roots of the genre. By the mid-1960s, inspired by other forms of popular music, producers also began integrating string sections

and other European stylistic elements into productions to reach broader audiences (a concept known as *acculturation*, which will be discussed later in this article).

4.4. Semantic features of R&B songs

R&B narratives recount the realities of a group of people on the margins of a society whose constitution labels them as subhuman, often including themes of struggle, triumph, love, and hope. Lyrical extemporization is regularly employed in the repetitive section of the song, known as the *vamp*, which generally occurs at or near the end (Stewart 1998: 8). Its lyrics frequently use African American Vernacular English (AAVE), a distinguishing characteristic of most forms of African American cultural expression (Baldwin 2011). AAVE is widely considered by linguists as a postcolonial dialect on the creole continuum containing a series of grammatical and syntactical structures not found in conventional American English (McWhorter 1995: 355). It often exhibits a reappropriation of language, resulting in the coding of terms and expressions – initially holding negative connotations – into neologisms with positive connotations (BETNetworks 2021). Such resistance to hegemonic and linguistic norms is a common feature of minority literature (Venuti 1998: 142).

4.5. Song selection

The song selection was the result of a series of successive database searches, including the following:

1. Music rights organization databases (SACEM for France; SGAE for Spain; ASCAP and BMI for the United States);
2. Copyright databases for all three countries;
3. Online music databases (allmusic.com, whosampled.com, discogs.com, secondhandsongs.com, bide-et-musique.com, and also: wikipedia.com, google.com, youtube.com).

I began by generating a list of R&B hit songwriters from the period: Chuck Berry, Little Richard, Stevie Wonder, Smokey Robinson, Aretha Franklin, Ashford and Simpson, Holland-Dozier-Holland, Berry Gordy, Otis Redding, Ray Charles, Hank Ballard. I then searched for all titles ascribed to them in the databases, making note of every French and Spanish entry. This first search, yielding 129 compositions, was further refined based on the following factors: (1) the release date of the TT performance must be between 1958 and 1968 (the generally accepted span of the yé-yé period); (2) the availability of biographical information for named and identifiable TL lyricists (essential for finding data on translation approaches or constraints); and (3) the presence of African American Vernacular English (AAVE) in the ST. The latter is due to the well-documented use of slang and colloquial dialects, including AAVE, in pop song lyrics

(Low 2017: 28). Moreover, AAVE is widely recognized as one of the key semantic indicators of African American cultural discourse.

5. Song analyses

It bears to mention that eight of the fourteen (57.14%) hit songwriters included in the corpus search were once contracted to Motown Records, a label whose history of fusing European cultural aesthetics with African American forms of pop music to maximize its marketability is well-documented (Early 2004). Hence, while all songs in the preliminary corpus were stylistically representative of African American R&B, 117 (90.6%) of them showed signs of semantic and semiotic acculturation to hegemonic norms. The remaining twelve songs that matched the inclusion criteria (eight French and four Spanish TTs) were further narrowed down to four, based on an equal distribution of languages (two TTs per language) and authors/translators (no ST or TT was written or translated by the same person).

5.1. Semantic innovation in Francoist Spain: Augusto Alguero's "El twist"

The international hit record and dance craze, "The twist", written by Hank Ballard (originally performed by Hank Ballard and the Midnighters) was introduced to Spanish audiences by Chico Valento, affectionately known as "the Elvis of Zaragoza". His cover version titled "El twist"[3] was released in 1962 on the La Voz de Su Amo label, and was translated by famed composer, arranger, and prolific song translator, Augusto Algueró (usually credited under the pseudonym C. Mapel). Semiotic retentions can be seen in terms of the rhythm, vocal approach, and musical arrangement. To facilitate singability, the TT performer simplifies the melismas sung in the ST, resulting in an occasional difference of one to three syllables. The vocal approaches are similar, blending gospel and lyric singing techniques with a pronounced tremolo. Since earlier metronomes were known to be inconsistent, the minor change in tempo (the ST is 78 bpm and the TT 84 bpm) is negligible. According to the renowned music producer and drummer Eric Seats, perfectly synchronized tempos were not the norm in pop music recordings until synthesizers, drum machines, and other digitized musical technologies gained widespread use in the 70s and 80s.[4] Although the keys of the arrangements differ by two whole steps (the ST is in E major and the TT in C major),

3| "El twist", © Trio Music Company, Fort Knox Music Co., Greenhorn Warner. TL lyrics for this song were transcribed by myself and proofed by a few colleagues, since I could not find the lyrics. SL lyrics can be found at: https://genius.com/Hank-ballard-and-the-midnighters-the-twist-lyrics.

4| Based on a telephonic interview on 13.02.2024.

this seems to have been a decision to further enhance TT singability by accommodating the vocal range of the performer. While the TT omits the double refrain ending, the decision to replace it with a repeat of the first verse and a vamp of its final line is in keeping with R&B stylistic norms. Semiotic retentions are also seen in terms of the chord structure, instrumentation, and three-part harmony backing vocals employing a call-and-response technique.

Table 1: Verse 1 of "The twist", lines 1–6

Line	English ST	Spanish TT	Gloss translation
1	Come on, baby	Como en sueños	Like in dreams
2	let's do the twist.	yo canto el twist.	I sing the twist.
3	Come on, baby	Como en sueños	Like in dreams
4	let's do the twist.	yo bailo el twist.	I dance the twist.
5	Take me by my little hand	A poco sólo me divierto	I really only have fun
6	and go like this.	bailando el twist.	dancing the twist.

On the semantic level, it is possible that the TL lyricist experienced translation constraints due to censorship. Foreign tourism exploded in Spain beginning in 1959 due to the government's aggressive marketing efforts to stimulate the suffering economy. As a result, R&B and other forms of pop music began to enter the country, enthralling the youth as well as the younger generation of artists (Qué me estás container? 2021). However, the path to integrating this music style into Spanish society was not an easy one. During this post-Civil War era, all press and media underwent a rigorous and unpredictable censorship process. Abellán (1980) notes that while there seemed to be basic thematic categories that were either banned or returned to their creator for editing (e.g. political opinion, religion, sexual morality, improper language), censors did not consistently apply these criteria (Abellán 1980: 87–89).

Such an unstable environment would indelibly stifle translators as well, requiring them to avoid particular subjects, submit numerous drafts, or attempt to self-censor. Early R&B lyrics, often replete with sexual innuendos and double entendres, would be a natural target for censorship. In their resourcefulness, Spanish song translators took a few different approaches in the face of these constraints: to modulate potentially censurable phrases and concepts, to write TTs completely unrelated thematically to the STs, or to simply avoid STs whose lyrics were banned or could undergo censorship.

With this in mind, this romantic ST invites the narrator's love interest to "do the twist", likely an allusion to sex. In the second verse, the narrator made plans to "tear the house down" doing the twist with the love interest since his parents were asleep. Hence, Algueró had some difficult decisions to make. He could not

risk completely replacing the ST, since "The twist" by this time had become somewhat of an emblematic song globally and would practically ensure commercial success. The sexual subtext, however, while subtle, could mean the song would either never be released or be returned for revisions. His solution was both ingenious and practical.

Algueró shifts the point of view from the second-person singular and first-person plural to only utilizing the first-person singular and eliminates the term of endearment *baby*. Consequently, he has omitted all potentially sexual double meanings embedded in the ST. This modification additionally transposes "the twist" from being an act taking place between two individuals into a desirable commodity, a dance, or a type of song. By creating a series of phonetic and rhyming parallelisms, he has retained all critical terms from the original refrain, and its verses whenever possible.

Phonemic parallelisms appear a total of 27 times in the song. Arguably, the most critical word in the ST, *twist*, appears in all the same places in the TT as well as an additional five times in lines 6, 9, 26, 31, and 40, as a phonetic calque (Franzon 2021: 85) with *this*. In Table 1 (p. 60), another phonetic calque can be seen on lines 1 and 3 with *come on* and *como en*. The rhyme pattern of the TT refrain (ABABAB) almost perfectly matches the ST (ABABCB). While retentions at both the semiotic and semantic levels abound in this translation, the minimal omissions and change of the point of view reflect the usage of Franzon's perspective shift strategy by the TL lyricist. The extra emphasis placed on the idea of *the twist* as a music and dance style to replace the ST's sexual allusions was an effective solution, which reinforced the already pervasive trend and circumvented censorship concerns.

5.2. When style matters most: Eddy Mitchell's "Pas de chance"

The iconic French singer-songwriter and actor Eddy Mitchell (née Claude Moine) launched a solo career in the early 1960s after a stint with the group Les Chaussettes Noires. Known for his affinity for African American styles of music such as R&B and its sub-genre, rock and roll, he recorded several albums with anglophone bands in hopes of achieving a more authentic sound. Considered a central figure among the first wave of yé-yé artists to introduce R&B to French audiences, primarily through French-language cover versions, Mitchell also translated most of the covers himself. "Pas de chance"[5], his translation of Berry Gordy and Janice Barrett's "Money (that's what I want)" (originally performed by Barrett Strong), was released in 1964 on the Barclay label. Using the music as a guide for new lyrics,

5| "Pas de Chance", © Jobete Music Co., EMI Music Publishing. TL lyrics can be found at: https://genius.com/Eddy-mitchell-pas-de-chance-lyrics. SL lyrics can be found at: https://genius.com/Barrett-strong-money-thats-what-i-want-lyrics.

Mitchell appears to apply Franzon's all-new target lyrics strategy. He aimed to transfer as many original semiotic features as possible, which are equally essential to the cultural identity of R&B music as the lyrics are. The musical retentions can be seen in the harmonic structure of the arrangement, including three-part harmony backing vocals that employ a call-and-response technique. To enhance singability, the TT performer simplified the ST melismas at times, which differ from the ST by one to four syllables. The tempo is slightly faster (the ST is 132 bpm and the TT 150 bpm), which may have also influenced the previously mentioned stylistic choice. In terms of instrumentation, a horn section was added. While the vocal performances both utilize a guttural singing approach, the TT's key is dropped one and a half steps (from F major to D major) to further foster singability, accommodating the performer's baritone vocal range.

Table 2: Verse 2 (lines 7–8) and refrain (lines 9–10) of "Money (that's what I want)"

Line	English ST	French TT	Gloss translation
7	Your love gives me such a thrill	Elle est vilaine, elle est très moche	She is mean, she is very ugly
8	But your love don't pay my bills	Tu devais avoir tes yeux dans tes poches	You must've been blind
9	I need money	Pas de chance	You're out of luck
10	That's what I want	Qu'est-ce qui t'a pris	What's gotten into you?

The sole semantic retentions are reflected in rhyming parallelisms in the verses (AA), the use of lyrical extemporization in the vamp, and the TL lyricist's attempt to match the ST register with the use of slang expressions and terms. Verse two contains the expressions "avoir tes yeux dans tes poches" (line 8), and "qu'est qui t'a pris" in the refrain (lines 9 and 10), with the latter appearing six times in the song. In terms of the narrative, both the ST and the TT involve a female love interest but with different perspectives. While the ST narrator is an active participant in the relationship he finds to be exciting, the TT narrator is only an observer of the relationship, and he mocks the woman using terms like *vilaine* and *moche* (line 7). This addition could reflect an association of such pejorative concepts, and their negative connotations, with the genre by the TL lyricist.

5.3. Translating for an emerging star: Vline Buggy's "J'attendrai"

Released in 1966 on the Phillips label, "J'attendrai"[6] is Claude François's performance of famed Motown songwriting team Holland-Dozier-Holland's classic,

6| "J'attendrai", © Jobete Music Co., Inc. TL lyrics can be found at: https://genius.com/Claude-francois-jattendrai-lyrics. SL lyrics can be found at: https://genius.com/The-four-tops-reach-out-ill-be-there-lyrics.

"Reach out (I'll be there)", originated by the Four Tops. Its translator, Vline Buggy, considered one of France's most treasured songwriters, became an in-demand lyricist during the yé-yé period thanks to her success penning one of François's earliest hits, "Belles! Belles! Belles!" (a French-language cover of the Everly Brothers "Made to love"). Most French composers at the time considered yé-yé music decadent and refused to work with the artists who recorded it. Fortunately, Buggy was more open-minded than her contemporaries and began amassing so much songwriting work that she had to quit her permanent job (Buggy 2018: 50).

At the semiotic level, the TT rhythm only differs from the ST occasionally by one or two syllables, warranting singability. The TT lyrics also follow Low's criteria for singability and the TT performer occasionally matches many of the melismas and guttural vocal approach found in the original. In terms of the arrangement, both performances were recorded with similar instrumentation and tempos (the TT is 124 bpm and the ST 120 bpm), including three-part harmony backing vocals that employ a call-and-response technique. They are also in the same key (D sharp major). However, some lines were omitted. The first and second verses of the ST each contain five lines, and the third verse contains six lines. The equivalent TT verses are consistently four lines in length, with a total of four lines omitted. (Since each line of the verses is identical in its rhythmic and harmonic structure, it would be difficult to notice this omission if casually listening to the TT performance.) This change of arrangement is possibly the indication that Buggy experienced translation constraints due to intervention by the artist-producer.

Table 3: Verse 2 of "Reach out (I'll be there)", lines 11–15

Line	English ST	French TT	Gloss translation
11	When you feel lost and about to give up	Oui et si un jour tout n'est que confusion	Yes and if one day everything is only confusion
12	Cause your best just ain't good enough	Que ce nouvel amour n'était qu'illusion	That this new love was only an illusion
13	And you feel the world has grown cold	Qu'à la dérive tu te laisse aller	That you let yourself drift away
14	And you're drifting out all on your own	Que tu cherches une main pour te rattraper	That you look for a hand to catch you
15	And you need a hand to hold	[omitted]	[omitted]

While one may assume that pop song translators work under conditions similar to those of other types of conventional translators, the additional external

agents involved in the creation of commercial music can occasionally impact the TTs. It is common for pop song translations to be tailored to fit the niche style and persona of the artist, even in terms of the musical arrangement's structure (Cintrão 2009: 818). Such lyrical and musical adjustments are usually made by the producer, the lyricist, the artist, or a combination of the three. Buggy makes it clear that François selected the hit songs he wanted to cover, and always had a clear vision for how he wanted the songs arranged and translated. At times, he even insisted on the use of specific terms that he thought would resonate best with the public (Buggy 2018: 51). Although not officially listed as a rights holder for this cover, he is credited on the liner notes as a co-writer. Hence, it is possible that the decision to shorten each verse was made by François or even the producer. Regardless of whose decision it was, it is clear that the shortened arrangement forced Buggy to omit semantic units that were either repetitive or non-essential to the main theme. Such a strategy would still facilitate the transfer of all primary semantic units to the TT.

The ST features semantic fields of hopelessness (line 11), low self-worth (line 12), pessimism (line 13), drifting and being alone (line 14), and holding a hand (line 15). Most of these semantic fields were approximated in the TT: a hand (catching instead of holding) and hopelessness (confusion instead of feeling lost). The semantic fields of pessimism and low self-worth are transferred as rejection in line 12 of the TT, which is a close semantic link. Additionally, the words "reach out", found in the title of the ST, appear in the backing vocals at the end of each verse as loanwords. The decision to retain them is quite possibly a marketing-based decision made by the artist to give the cover a more authentic flair. In each ST refrain, the phrase "I'll" appears twice, always on the downbeat and heavily accentuated, further emphasizing its importance to the narrative and the iterability of the composition. A phonemic parallelism can be noted in the TT on these prominent syllables with the phrase "j'attendrai", as it also begins with the open front unrounded vowel /a/. The lyrical extemporization technique employed in the ST's vamp was transferred, and the TT matches and surpasses the ST's rhymes. Although described with slightly different terms, the main theme is retained and places the TT narrator in a situation identical to that of the ST. Such characteristics point to Franzon's near-enough translation strategy.

5.4. Adequation against the odds: José Carreras Moysi's "Tráeme tu amor"

After a year of minimal public appearances, Chico Valento would reemerge in 1966 to promote his fifth release, a four-song extended play (EP). This project, which would be his final recording, included the tune, "Trámeme tu amor",

a Spanish-language cover of "Bring it on home to me" (written and originally performed by Sam Cooke). This standout performance, translated by José Carreras Moysi, is another example of the near-enough translation strategy. There are several semiotic parallelisms in terms of rhythm, vocal approach, instrumentation, and arrangement. The rhythm of the TT usually differs from the ST by one to four syllables, and at times matches perfectly, contributing to singability. The TT performer, like the ST performer, employs a throatier vocal approach. Despite the slightly increased appearance of the closed front vowel /i/ in the TT, an inescapable norm for Spanish, the TT remains singable as this vowel does not appear on sustained high notes. To further enhance singability, melismas are used to elongate TT vocal lines in an attempt to create a prosodic match with the ST. This vocal technique, semiotically linked to R&B, and the ST performance in particular, was both pragmatic and emotionally compelling. The call-and-response motif in the ST was transferred to the TT's musical arrangement but was sung an octave higher in falsetto by the backing vocalists, perhaps to add more fun and youthful aesthetics to the overall production. Although the first verse of the TT performance includes only piano and vocals compared to the full rhythm section and vocals found in the original, their instrumentation is identical for the remainder of the performance. Both performances share the same chord structure, key (C major), and are close in tempo (the ST is 71 bpm and the TT 78 bpm).

On the semantic level, the TL lyricist retains key semantic units by the use of adequation strategies.

Table 4: Refrain of "Bring it on home to me", lines 3–6

Line	English ST	Spanish TT	Gloss translation
3	Baby, bring it to me	Uao oh, tráeme tu amor	Wow oh, bring me your love
4	Bring your sweet loving	Tráemelo de nuevo sí	Bring it to me again, yes
5	Bring it on home to me	Tu dulce amor a mí	Your sweet love to me
6	Yeah (yeah), yeah (yeah), yeah (yeah)	Yeah (yeah), yeah (yeah), yeah (yeah)	Yeah (yeah), yeah (yeah), yeah (yeah)

The main themes of the ST refrain are transferred: "bring" (lines 3, 4 and 5) appears twice in the TT (lines 3 and 4); "sweet loving" (line 4) appears once in the TT (line 5), as well as an additional "love" (line 3). A phonemic parallelism was created by borrowing from the English "yeah yeah…" (line 6) in the call-and-response section. (This was perhaps to retain the iterability of the original performance, as well as to capitalize on the popularity of the phrase that marked the cultural movement.) Although the surface meaning of the recurring phrase,

"bring it", is conveyed in the TT, its deeper meaning was not transferred. In AAVE, the expression *bring it (on)* can also imply sex, possibly omitted from the TT due to censorship concerns. The TT also perfectly matches the original rhyme pattern (AA in the verses and ABA in the refrain). Additionally, the TT performer's lyrical extemporization and banter in the source language (SL) evinces an occasional use of foreignization as a strategy to reinforce semantic features of the ST. The retention of key ST semiotic and semantic items reflected by this TT is in keeping with the characteristics of the near-enough translation strategy.

6. Discussion

In all of the compositions, several key semiotic features of the R&B genre were retained: guttural singing, call-and-response, vocal and rhythmic extemporization, and the fundamental musical arrangement. At the semantic level, both the deeper meanings of the STs as well as the lyrical extemporization technique were retained in three of the four compositions (the ST for "El twist" contained no lyrical extemporizations). The TTs showed signs of omissions, transpositions, and additions due to possible external agents including censorship and artist-producer intervention. As the yé-yé period occurred during the Francoist dictatorship, it is not surprising that both Spanish TTs transposed sexually suggestive semantic items. With Buggy's "J'attendrai", there is a possibility of external constraints to the creative process resulting in the removal of several measures of the original musical arrangement. While noted key modifications were a consequence of the physiology of the performers for "El twist" and "Pas de chance", the additions to the musical arrangement of these compositions (a vamp and a horn section) were pragmatic choices semiotically linked to R&B. The pejorative reference to a woman embedded in the all-new lyrics strategy of "Pas de chance" potentially links the concept of undesirableness to R&B, a prevailing viewpoint of the music style at the time.

The strategies utilized by the translators ensured that a number of the vital characteristics of the genre were reflected in the TTs. Showing a consistent prioritization of body-sense feel through the replication of features including rhythm, vocal approach, musical arrangement, extemporization, and SL phonetic elements (through phonetic calques and loanwords). Although the motivations for Mitchell's strategy are unclear, censorship appears to be the most recognizable influence impacting semantic shifts as noted in the TTs. The strategies employed by the translators reflect the continual mitigation of innumerable musical, textual, and sociopolitical constraints while exhibiting impressive creative facility and innovation, typical characteristics seen in minority translation.

7. Conclusion

R&B is an African American form of cultural resistance, rich in allusions, dialect, and dynamic musical structures. The singable *interlingual covers* (Susam-Saraeva 2018) of this genre released during the yé-yé period created an aperture through which the culture of a people – labeled as three-fifths of a person by their constitution – could expand beyond small clubs and late-night radio programs and conquer the hearts of teenagers worldwide. While there were economic and artistic motivations for the creation of singable R&B song translations, their distribution concurrently facilitated a fortuitous transcultural collaboration between R&B composers, producers, artists, and translators, forever revolutionizing the global pop culture lexicon. Future studies of R&B song translations involving a larger sample (with fewer criteria of exclusion) could potentially provide more insight into translation norms and other translation constraints from the period. A comprehensive study of the importance of the transfer of semiotics in singable minority song translation could also be very promising.

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