

The Functional Aspect of Translations

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Abstract: Among the multiple qualifiers that the XXIst century has deserved – the century of speed, the century of computers, the century of great discoveries in various domains, it is also named the century of translations. This title is wholly justified, considering the fact that the information amount that is used nowadays by people from various spheres and activities, has increased to astronomic proportions, and translations contribute to the circulation of information overcoming linguistic and cultural obstacles. The merit of translation is that it assures to people of all countries the possibility to communicate and share precious values throughout time. Each epoch necessitates its own translations. That is whatever translation needs to be renewed from time to time. This fact is wholly explicable - it is known that periodic translations contribute substantially to the consolidation of the original literary writing, because the transposition of the original is produced by stylistic and linguistic means of the language into which the literary writing is translated that is specific to a particular period or even a certain historic moment. The problem of translations requires a further and deeper investigation, especially nowadays, when the approach, the interaction and the reciprocal enrichment of cultures take place.

Keywords: multiple qualifiers; translation; communication; original literary writing

Currently the problem of translations from a language into another is thoroughly discussed by the experts in the domain, challenging many opinions that are often contradictory. The fact is totally explicable: at the present stage, when multiple borders among peoples, that have been lately attested, daily disappear, the humankind feels the necessity to make a better acquaintance with the representatives of other peoples, to communicate with them, to enjoy the beauty of their artistic creations etc.

Within the following lines we will try to elucidate especially the functional aspect of translations from a language into another, because namely they contribute to the approach of a man to a man, of a culture to a culture, and why not, of a soul to a soul. In other words, namely by the medium of translations there are built valuable spiritual bridges over the immense emptiness of knowledge, as a result the peoples and cultures enrich each other.

Convincing in this context are the opinions of the representative of the Enlightenment Gheorghe Asachi who being totally aware of the importance of translations in our everyday life, remarks that namely due to the successful translation from a language into another “the foreign literature is collected”.

Whereas our contemporary the writer and the translator Aureliu Busuioc, in this respect, focuses his attention especially on the personality of the one who translates: “The translator as a fighter on the field of culture should be highly qualified, should be a man of creativity- not a craftsman, because translation means creation and creation the least of all can be set within certain limits, frameworks, the least of all needs a model, a sample”. (Busuioc, 1956, p. 4)

But let us return to the functional aspect of translations itself. From this point of view it is worth studying and verifying carefully those ten functions of a translated text into another language that are set into evidence by P. Chavy in an article about translations from the French language in the eve of the Renaissance, many of these functions being characteristic as well of the translations into the Romanian language of the most representative literary writings from the whole globe. So, these functions are: informative, linguistic, stylistic, literary, recuperative, of import, selective, patriotic, democratic and of association.

It is indisputable that the propagation of the literary writings of the world importance can be reached namely owing to their remaking, from a language into another. An eloquent witness in this respect is the translations realized by the great Transylvanian poet George Coșbuc. Especially his translation of the “Divine comedy” has been being kept in the field of vision by the experts in the domain still at the present stage. The poet had worked on that translation for 20 years, the best years of his life, as witnessed by his wife Elena Coșbuc.

By the way, namely this translation is considered by the admirers of Coșbuc’s literary creation to be the most serious attempt in incorporating within the Romanian expression the masterpiece of the great Florentine Dante Alighieri. Some extracts of the “Divine comedy” have been as well translated by the other great personality of the Romanian literature – Ion Heliade Rădulescu, who used to include them into his generous project “*The world library*” wishing to embrace “the most remarkable antique and modern authors whose writings contributed to the achievement of the greatest deed of a civilization, to the formation of the human heart and mind, to the man’s perfection.” (Călinescu, 1986, p. 132)

Generally speaking, a successful translation contributes substantially to the surviving of a literary writing. What is more: a successful interpretation can represent an open window to other spiritual horizons and at the same time can meet the reader's interest to discover a world that is different from his own one.

Because of the fact that there is put into discussion namely the problem of literary translations, we will focus our attention on the following suggestions: "To get familiar systematically with literature, G. Duda considers, means to dominate the immensity of certain literary writings, to strive finding out the access way to the very essence of the literary work, to avoid those writings the just seem to belong to literature. Namely the assimilation permits the penetration of a human agent into the artistic world of some literary writings that one discharges within the complex process while approaching to the significance of those literary works." (Duda, 1999, p. 10) The special form of assimilation is the success that is reached by a literary work either in the contemporaneous period or in the newer epochs. And this success is greatly owed to translators. Namely the translators, who including in their activity all the characteristic elements of any cultural crossroads, are always set in the situation to be creators, to remodel the message that they transpose from a language into another, doing their best to keep far from small inevitable changes of the context or of the form itself.

The above lines lead us to the idea that performing a comparative research of translations, a matter of special importance should be the functions that are accomplished by these translations within the system of the receptionist literature, because as it has been remarked, while being transposed from a language into another literary works can acquire new functions, sometimes different from those ones that these literary works had had within the source literature.

Remarking the multifunctional character of translations, we cannot leave in the shadows the other aspect of the problem: in which way to perform a translation so that the interpreted version achieves the set goals? Daniel- Henri Pageaux answers this question. According to his opinion, the act of translation (the translation itself) implies that a translator should transfer one text from a culture to another, from one literary system towards another one, that is to introduce a text into another realistic context.

In accordance with the related things, we will put into evidence a real fact that is not less important: the translation of any literary writing, providing that it is not limited on the rendering of the poetic world meaning itself, that is if it is not

intended to be just informative (in innumerable cases such interpretations lead to disastrous results, the original version becomes almost unrecognizable), whereas there is set the objective to transpose the emotion, the unique creation features and the wealth of the book's images, represents in itself a difficult examination on creation, alongside with the original creation, in the case of a translator-poet or of prose.

We will try to support by concrete examples the exposed theoretic things. So, nobody can doubt nowadays that Mihai Eminescu is a world poet, but it is necessary to assess the extent of how much he is being assimilated. We ask ourselves, first, to what extent have translations succeeded in making readable the poet about whom there has been affirmed that he does not undergo translation?

According to T. Codreanu's opinion: "The linguistic clothing still has being been an obstacle in the expression of the poet's world. The transpositions of his literary writings into other languages, though have influenced the cultural circulation of Eminescu, have not situated him, however, on the merited peaks, to which other poets have arrived much easier. The effort should have started from the interior of the geographic space from which he raised as a Hyperion. Facing Eminescu's world, the one of the unique musicality, of the language purity worked out by the poet with much effort- the multitude of the poet's versions, notes witness it- a translator should be the assimilator, the second creator, who strives to reach the very depth of the ideas and the linguistic harmony of the author, what is extremely difficult to realize." (Codreanu, 2001, p. 25)

Considering T. Codreanu's opinions regarding the importance of literary translations, we will conclude that the value of the great world writers would not has been realized as it has nowadays, unless due to the vast and polyglot interpretations of their literary writings, but what is especially important is that the one, who assumes the enormous and noble responsibility to realize this work, should penetrate deeply into the message of the literary work which undergoes translation, has to be very well familiarized with the personality of the creator.

T. Codreanu remarked in her research especially the function of import and the literary function of translations. But as it is known the linguistic function is not of a less importance. So, it is natural to consider in this case namely the opinions of a linguist. Irina Condrea states the following: "Among the multiple qualifiers that the XXth century has deserved – the century of speed, the century of computers, and the century of great discoveries in various domains, it is also named the century of

translations. This title is wholly justified, considering the fact that the information amount that is used nowadays by people from various spheres and activities, has increased to astronomic proportions, and translations contribute to the circulation of information overcoming linguistic and cultural obstacles. The merit of translation is that it makes possible the communication among people who speak different languages, and do not have another means to understand each other besides the language.” (Condrea, 1999, p. 194)

On the basis of the quoted opinions it is possible to deduce very clearly that translations keep being an essential means for the circulation of the literary values, they function not just in the quality of the agents of the literary writings, of the presentation of peoples as explorers of the civilization, but also as real laboratories for the perfection of the linguistic instrument.

On the whole, regarding the domain of translations realized in our country, translators have had the opportunity to share experience among them, arriving to the conclusion that the exchange of linguistic „ethics” is not enough for a text (a message) to be considered a translation. Anyway a translated text undergoes many grammatical-semantic and stylistic transformations. Whatever the chosen operations are in the process of the transposition from a language into another the objective, the final goal is the only one: a translation should create on the reader the same effect as the original, so it should possess the same good features as the same deficiencies. The translation text is attributed to the author of the original, not to the translator, that is why, it is considered that the translator’s „hand”, his presence should not be felt. It is possible that the reader of a translation knows the source language and the target language being able to make a comparison between the translated text and the original one. He will be inclined to see as many and complete equivalences as possible and whatever „in coincidence” could confuse and even shock him.

These suggestions have been drawn from I. Gheorghîță’s article written in the newspaper “*Literatura și Arta/Literature and Art*”: “Translation as an artistic phenomenon rejects the categories’ hardening up to lifeless dogmas, the only constant law of it being the returning of means of expression to the real quality and a deeper perception of the text’s message addressed to the reader. To all this, there is added as a necessity the vision of actuality on the translated text.” (Gheorghîță, 1987, p. 4)

One more detail that is not less important: each epoch needs its own translations. That is whatever translation necessitates to be renewed from time to time. This is natural: we know that periodic translations contribute substantially to the consolidation of the original owing to the transposition of the original that is affected by the stylistic and linguistic means of the language into which the literary work is translated, and these means belong to a particular historical period, or to a certain period of time. At certain intervals the above mentioned means “lose” their freshness and the translation becomes out of date, because every generation has not only its own color, lexis, or a particular linguistic sensitivity, as well as aesthetic values but also different demands regarding translation.

The problem of translations necessitates a broader investigation especially nowadays, when there take place the approach, the interaction and the reciprocal enrichment of cultures. Namely the literary translation keeps being one of the most efficient ways for the reciprocal understanding among the nations of the world, the understanding of their unique, original spirituality which by literature and art collaborates to the creation of the great world literature.

The great assimilation of literary writings owed to translations leads to a process of renewal of a cultural scheme. There takes place the integration of the activity of translation into the whole system of the development of the written culture and, according to great writers, the translator must get off the inertia, has to establish the language on the reality of the century, cleaning it of useless elements and enriching its potential of expressiveness.

The XXIst century is the century of cooperation in many aspects. One of these aspects, that is not at all of a minor significance, concerns translations from the artistic literature and from many other domains. This is the matter that demands much responsibility on the behalf of those who have chosen the noble activity to be translators. Their work should be properly investigated and appreciated according to the merit by scientists.

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