

INTRALINGUAL TRANSLATION – A ROMANIAN PERSPECTIVE

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Abstract

The aim of this paper is to give a diachronic account of intralingual translation in Romania, *i.e.* the way in which writers, translators, critics and other manipulators of the (literary) text have viewed it since the beginnings of translation on our soil to present day. Thus, we will discuss the phenomenon of intralingual translation in a minor culture, as tackled in the Romanian discourse, on translation by the manipulators of a target text mentioned above; we will review appraisals, criticism, opinions, indications, guidelines for intralingual translation in two major historical periods, namely the communist and post-communist years, so as to grasp terms and concepts around intralingual translation in the Romanian cultural setting. As a case in point, we will discuss *Robinson Crusoe* and the three versions signed by Petru Cormarnescu (the 1943, 1961 and 1964 ones, respectively), which could be viewed as an instance of intralingual translation in Romania.

Keywords: concepts around intralingual translation, retranslation of English classics, Romanian intralingual translation, translation guidelines

1. INTRODUCTION

Intralingual translation, as we know it, or as the discipline of Translation Studies (TS) mainly employs, was coined by R. Jakobson in the context of linguistic aspects of translation as *rewording*, *i.e.* "an interpretation of verbal signs by means of other signs of the same language" (1959: 114) and distinguished itself from "interlingual translation or *translation proper*" which "is an interpretation of verbal signs by means of some other language" and "intersemiotic translation or *transmutation*", that "is an interpretation of verbal signs by means of signs of nonverbal sign systems" (*ibidem*). The topic has been little researched so far, despite the fact that it should have been, as Baker underlines in her preface to the *Routledge Encyclopedia of Translation Studies*: "intralingual translation is not such a minor issue as the existing literature on translation might suggest... I know of no

research that looks specifically at the phenomena of intralingual or intersemiotic translation. We do have classifications such as Jakobson's, which alert us to the possibility of such things as intersemiotic and intralingual translation, but we do not make any genuine use of such classifications in our research" (Baker 1998: xvii). Recent studies on the subject go as far as identifying norms and translation universals in intralingual translation (*cf.* Anlaug Ersland's MA thesis, defended in 2014 at The University of Bergen, Norway), displaced nationalism in the case of the American intralingual translation of Harry Potter (*cf.* Alexander Eastwood's from The University of Toronto 2010 study), or describe it through translation analyses (*cf.* Karen Korning Zethsen's 2009 analysis of five different Danish versions of a section of the Bible in *Meta*).

2. INTRALINGUAL TRANSLATION BEFORE 1989

Reflections on interlingual translation are many and date as back as the 16th century, when the first (religious) translations were carried out and the translators also reflected on their importance; thus, Coresi, in his preface to *Întrebare creștinească/The Christian Inquiry* (1559), the first translation into Romanian, argued that this task was necessary since "all people need to understand who Romanians are as Christians, as Saint Paul the apostle speaks... This is because five words in Romanian that can be understood by the people are better than ten thousand words in a foreign language that cannot" (quoted by Lungu Badea, 2005: 145). However, intralingual translation was significantly less dealt with. To our account, it was probably first mentioned in the communist period by Ioan Kohn's study,

Virtuțile compensatorii ale limbii române în traducere/ Compensatory Virtues of Romanian in Translation (1983) in the context of the (hermeneutical) importance of translation in all cultures since the beginning of times. The Romanian TS scholar brings into play Jakobson's study mentioned above and the distinction between the three types of translation, namely 'interlingual', 'intersemiotic' and 'intralingual' to support his allegations; the last of the three, *i.e.* intralingual translation, is considered to be translation in its current sense, hence the most recent one. At its beginnings, this form, that actually occurred late, incorporated the other two to a greater extent than nowadays. The aporia in the translation of *The Septuagint* is, for Saint Jerome, not so much a result of the incongruence between Greek and Latin, but particularly between the divine and human idiom which will make him utter *Sciens et prudens in flamma mitto manum* (Kohn, 1983: 23-24). If translation has the meaning of understanding in a given context, the message can thus be decoded and included in the sphere of what is known, be it intralingual or interlingual communication; this is because any act of understanding is, at the same time, deciphering and interpretation, and hermeneutical research considers expression in a different language to be only more difficult on the scale of hermeneutical interpretation. Consequently, any translation from one language into another can be regarded from the perspective of communication and understanding, as any *act of language* may also be deemed as *an act of translation*, as in the case of the interlingual one. Kohn admits that he draws on Steiner for his beliefs on translation, the interpretation of verbal signs from one language with the help of the verbal signs from another language is a special case, a higher one of the communication and reception process of any act of human speech. The main epistemological and linguistic problems pertaining to interlingual translation are vital precisely because they are already involved in any intralingual discourse. Thus, it could be said that the problems of translation are those of communication, in general, the limits of understanding corresponding to the ones of translation.

Reference is also given to the definition of the role of the receiver in the process of verbal communication, as I. Coteanu underlines in his 1973 edition of *Stilistica funcțională a limbii române/ Functional Stylistics of Romanian*. It is the receiver who translates the message by means of a series of equivalences resembling the ones that contributed to the creation of the message in the first place. In this context, K. Vossler is also quoted with his remark on national languages and their ability to transpose the entire universe (in Italian German, etc.), since one of the most largely spread and fascinating translation processes is the one of rendering reality by means of national languages.

There are no other accounts on intralingual translation in the major periodicals of the time (*România literară/ Literary Romania, Secolul XX/ The XXth Century*), TS studies that enjoyed book-length treatment (Levitichi 1975, Ionescu 1981) or (national) bibliographies dealing with the art of translation (Tomescu 1988, Stoica 2003).

3. INTRALINGUAL TRANSLATION DURING THE POST-COMMUNIST YEARS

3.1. Academic Views

Among the few (TS) scholars in our country that devoted studies to intralingual translation there is Bogdan Ghiu, who proposes a new (translation) paradigm: instead of interpreting, commenting or decrypting, we should translate, *i.e.* replace as a model, paradigm and mental scheme the epistemological metaphor of interpretation with the epistemological one of translation. This would be useful from an ethical, political and intellectual viewpoint, since natural languages should not be conceived as a unit, but as permanent translations in action; therefore, we can speak of translation not only between different languages, but also within the same language (intralingual translation). The cognitive process and operation that comprises reading and interpretation is actually *translation*. Interlingual micro-translation activates and triggers both intra-infra-lingual translation, and political and macro-cultural translation,

relaunching novel processes of intralingual translation.

Intralingual translation is also viewed as reading-as-translation and considered to be similar to intra-idiomatic translation (our relations are defined by translation; we only apparently speak the same language by means of a political-reductive convention and construct); apart from interlingual translation (proper translation, from one language into another), there is also inter-medial translation (work with art, art as transduction in the sense given by Jean-Baptiste Naudy), intercultural translation (the new global-immanent comparatism), and inter-religious translation (translation as science of translating, religion as horizontal and vertical translation). (Ghiu, 2014)

The issue was also tackled by Paul Cornea (2002: 57-64) against the general background of translation as one of the general forms of communication; making an overview of the seminal modern theories on translation (Roman Jakobson, George Steiner, Willard van Orman Quine, Walter Benjamin, Hans-Georg Gadamer, etc.), he compares intralingual translation (that takes the shape of paraphrase, amplification and summary) to interlingual (translation proper) and intra-semiotic translation (*e.g.*, musical interpretation, choreography, film direction, etc.).

Intralingual translation is also discussed in doctoral theses: when dealing with intralingual idiomacity in the context of translating idioms from Italian into Romanian and viceversa (Podaru, 2012); with inter- and intralinguistic translation analyses (Socoliuc-Han, 2010), or on translation as communication in the age of globalization within a Romanian context on a descriptive model of specific noun groups in Spanish and Romanian (Balas, 2013). Last but not least, intralingual translation is also mentioned in university courses. For instance, apart from intralingual translation (particularly useful for the translation of old, archaic texts into modern language for the benefit of contemporary generations), it was assessed that there were also intralingual-cultural competencies that a translator should have (besides inter- and extra-lingual cultural ones): knowledge of at least two linguistic-cultural systems is needed so as to

analyze and understand the message that will also require extra-competencies (context, situation, behaviour, gestures), in view of a correct interpretation of intention to inter-conversion (that is intra-, extra-lingual and cultural translation of a system into another intra- and extra-lingual and cultural one); also, this triple, inter- extra- and intra- correlation will require a synthetic and analytical spirit to reach communication through translation (Ungureanu, 2013: 12-16).

3.2. NON-ACADEMIC VIEWS

As a novelty in the Romanian TS discourse on intralingual translation after 1989, worth mentioning are the websites of translation agencies that explain the concept to their potential customers. Thus, on her website, Loredana Peter (2011) includes categories of translation according to the structuralist Roman Jakobson (1959): intralingual (interpretation of verbal signs through other signs of the same language); interlingual (interpretation of verbal signs by means of another language) and intersemiotic (interpretation of verbal signs through the systems of non-verbal signs). For instance, intralingual translation occurs when an expression or text in the same language is used to explain something we said or wrote.

Alexandru I. Laura Gabriela (2014), an Italian translator, goes as far as that, arguing that localization may be considered to be intralingual translation, *i.e.* a translation carried out within the same language; for instance, after a website is translated from Romanian into Italian, there will be a second stage, of adaptation; thus, based on the receiver of the website's content - be it Italian, or Swiss Italian - the socio-cultural references will definitely change.

4. ROBINSON CRUSOE - A CASE OF INTRALINGUAL TRANSLATION

4.1. An Overview of the Novel's Romanian Reception

There are many translations from Defoe's work into Romanian (from the 19th century to the

communist period included), and several studies devoted to his reception in our country (cf. Loghin and Perez 1968, Baciú 1996, Dimitriu 2006), some of them even marked by the ideology of the time; thus, in a Marxist vein, Loghin and Perez (1968: 73) argue that the evolution of Robinson as a character and the sense of his adventure is not given by the drama of his life, but by the inexhaustible power of his work, a symbol of human activism worldwide.

The first acknowledged translation (also indirect, *via* German) was carried out by the Cavalry Commander Vasile Drăghici in 1835, for didactic purposes (under the influence of Rousseau's *Emile*), probably motivated by the relative lack of children literature, coupled with a conservative education system focused almost entirely on the study of Greek and Latin grammar (Dimitriu, 2006: 74). After 1835, many rewritings, loosely referred to as translations (most often indirect, *via* French or German), adaptations, imitations or "retellings", increased the book's popularity in Romanian culture, "the Robinson Crusoe case" thus proving that the borderlines between "translations proper" and "adaptations" are actually fuzzier and more flexible than it is commonly acknowledged (Dimitriu, 2006: 74); such an instance is *Aventurile lui Robinson Crusoe/The Adventures of Robinson Crusoe* (1899), a rewriting that makes no mention of translator's name or source language (SL). However, as argued in the Romanian TS of translation, "the original must have been French, judging by the lexis and sentence structure, as well as by the fact that Robinson's parrot is called Jacquot" (Dimitriu, 2006: 75). Moreover, there is a 48-page adaptation (1922) that reduces the novel to an endless series of adventures that defy all logic; Robinson and the other characters are mere puppets in an excessively dynamic third-person narrative to which childish dialogues are added, Robinson speaking a geographically marked Romanian full of CSI (*idem*, p. 76).

There have been many robinsonades, as well, *i.e.* texts that kept Defoe's work only as source of inspiration (e.g. Joachim Campe's *Robinson der Jüngere* in 1779 or Johann D. Wyss's *Der schweizerische Robinson* in 1813, along with more than forty other imitations, be they French, Danish, Greek, Irish, Jewish or Italian, briefly outlined by Loghin and Perez, 1968: 74-75). Such a Romanian robinsonade is Ioan Gorun's *Robinson in Wallachia* (1904), written for didactic purposes, to educate village inhabitants to improve their humble condition. Nechifor Pădureleanu, Robinson Crusoe's Romanian counterpart and the original main character belong to the same social class, "start from a crisis between themselves and the world around them, rely on the material civilization they are carriers of, try to re-balance their lives in building up a new environment and finally come to terms with the natural environment and their inner selves" (Baciú, *apud* Dimitriu, 2006: 81-82). Last but not least, there is no shipwreck for the Romanian Robinson; opting for domestication, Gorun places his hero not in a desert island, but in a remote village.

4.2. Considerations on Petru Comarnescu's Pre-communist and Communist Versions in the Romanian Discourse on Translation

Viața și nemaipomenitele aventuri ale lui Robinson Crusoe/The Life and Surprising Adventures of Robinson Crusoe (1943) could be assessed as the first successful, direct translation of the novel into Romanian. Since the translator, Petru Comarnescu, revised it for a communist public in 1961 and 1964, respectively, we could argue that it stands as one of the best cases of intralingual translation in our country. The table below shows the main differences between the three versions (as outlined by Dimitriu, 2006: 78-81):

Table 1 - The pre-communist and communist Robinson in the Romanian discourse on translation

| Title | Viața și nemaipomenitele aventuri ale lui Robinson Crusoe | Robinson Crusoe | Robinson Crusoe |
|--------------------|---|--|---|
| Edition | 1943 | 1961 | 1964 |
| Publishing House | Editura Universul/ Universe Publishing House | Editura Tineretului/ Youth Publishing House | Editura pentru literatură Biblioteca pentru Toți/ Everybody's Library |
| Preface | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - contains translator's acknowledged observance of the style and other ST features; - also, inappropriate repetitions for ST and TT are eliminated. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - the new political discourse is mildly adopted, focusing on Robinson as a symbol of man's power to change the world and himself; the main character is also seen as dynamic, a hard worker who did not treat Friday or the other pagans too badly, he was "a missionary, spreading European civilization and Protestant religion, yet [...] not so greedy and arrogant a colonizer as some of his English compatriots". (1961: 9, Dimitriu's translation, 2006: 80) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - a comprehensive piece of literary criticism marked by Marxist grids (with long incursions into the history of England, Defoe's life, Marx's <i>vs.</i> Rousseau's interpretation of the novel, <i>i.e.</i> Robinson as a <i>homo economicus</i> rather than the natural man, an opinion to which Comarnescu rallies). |
| General strategies | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - made in order to target a young readership: <i>contraction</i>, <i>condensation</i> at the textual level (so as to eliminate Defoe's unnecessary verbosity, redundancy and repetitions without significantly reducing information in ST); - Robinson's prayers are translated non-literally and in keeping with the forms of religious address, as well as Friday's idiosyncratic language. - <i>register</i>: the general style is more formal in TT than in ST; - <i>author-reader distance</i>: increased in the translation. Robinson's conversations with or references to his audience are either eliminated or replaced by more impersonal constructions; the only long omission from the original is Robinson's return to the island, which is not translated. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - a consequence of translator's moderate commitment to the communist regime: <i>omissions</i> at textual level, (<i>i.e.</i> most of the passages referring to religious meditation, except for some that were preserved to show that the main character was a good Christian) and <i>additions</i> (deleted in the previous edition: all the offensive allusions to the Spanish colonizers in the original and the final episode of the main character's return to the island). | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - the translator unceasingly attempts at finding more expressive turns of phrase or appropriate words than before. |

| | | | |
|---------------------------------|---|--|---|
| Sentence structure | <p>- <i>complex sentence splitting, omission</i> (of superfluous words), <i>full stops</i> (instead of semi-colons) and the <i>occasional start of a new paragraph</i> make the TT clear, with a more direct impact on the targeted category of readers, <i>flattening</i>, that is translating marked sentences by unmarked or less marked ones, thus simplifying the occasionally excessive rhetoric in ST and updating it to meet the contemporary young readers' expectations.</p> | <p>- the translation is closer to Defoe's style (more literal, sentences are longer). - updated <i>lexis</i>, more specialized vocabulary (instead of paraphrases or borrowings which were a peculiarity of the 1943 edition).</p> | - |
| Ideology and conclusions | <p>- <i>omission</i> of the comparison of Friday's ability to cut a savage's head to that of a German executioner and the two references to the cruel Spaniards towards colonized tribes. - <i>paratextual elements</i> (footnotes) are brought into play by Comarnescu to explain that not all American Indians were cannibals, and some of them had developed great civilizations, their occasional cannibalism only being practiced with members of enemy tribes; thus, the translator negotiates between Defoe's occasionally racist discourse and his own ideas about Western countries and exotic civilizations, shared by Romanian pre-Communist readers (Dimitriu, 2006: 78) - a story of survival, a religious allegory and an economic parable; Robinson is depicted as the resourceful Western man working hard, dominating nature, colonizing, making profit, an increasingly religious man with his moments of weakness, fear and despair (<i>idem</i>, p. 79)</p> | - | <p>- the complex image of Robinson as the hard working, resourceful, colonizing Western man that would be is partly lost in the communist Romanian translations that manipulate Defoe's text so as to suit the respective canon; consequently, Romanian readers remain acquainted to a Robinson Crusoe that is still hard-working and practical; the communist Robinson is not a tormented soul, but a hero who fights against nature, other discontents, and does not let himself bothered by problems of filial duty or religion (Dimitriu, 2006: 81)</p> |

5. A GLIMPSE ON DEFOE'S TEXT AND THE ROMANIAN VERSIONS

Table 2 - An excerpt of Defoe's text and the Romanian pre-communist (1943) and communist (1961) translations

| The English version | The Romanian versions |
|--|---|
| <p>I had a mind once to try if he had any inclination for his own country again; and having taught him English so well that he could answer me almost any question, I asked him whether the nation that he belonged to never conquered in battle? At which he smiled, and said – "Yes, yes, we always fight the better;" that is, he meant always get the better in fight; and so we began the following discourse: –</p> <p><i>Master.</i> – <u>You always fight the better</u>; how came you to be taken prisoner, then, Friday?</p> <p><i>Friday.</i> – My nation beat much for all that.</p> <p><i>Master.</i> – How beat? If your nation beat them, how came you to be taken?</p> <p><i>Friday.</i> – They more many than my nation, in the place where me was; they take one, two, three, and me: my nation <u>over-beat</u> them in the yonder place, where me no was; there my nation take one, two, <u>great thousand</u>.</p> <p><i>Master.</i> – But why did not your side recover you from the hands of your enemies, then?</p> <p><i>Friday.</i> – They run, one, two, three, and me, and make go in the canoe; my nation have no canoe that time.</p> <p><i>Master.</i> – Well, Friday, and what does your nation do with the men they take? Do they carry them away and eat them, as these did</p> <p><i>Friday.</i> – Yes, <u>my nation</u> eat mans too; eat all up.</p> <p><i>Master.</i> – Where do they carry them</p> <p><i>Friday.</i> – Go to other place, where they think.</p> <p><i>Master.</i> – <u>Do they come hithe</u></p> <p><i>Friday.</i> – Yes, yes, they come hither; come other else place</p> <p><i>Master.</i> – Have you been here with them</p> <p><i>Friday.</i> – Yes, I have been here (points to the NW. side of the island, which, it seems, was their side.</p> <p>By this I understood that my man Friday had formerly been among the savages who used to come <u>on shore</u> on the farther part of the island, on the same <u>man-eating</u> occasions he was now brought for; and some time after, when I took the courage to carry him to that side, being the same I formerly mentioned, he presently knew the place, and told me he was there once, when they <u>ate up</u> twenty men, two women, and one child; he <u>could not tell</u> twenty in English, but he numbered them by laying so many stones in a row, and pointing to me to tell them over. (The Life and Adventures of Robinson Crusoe, by Daniel Defoe, transcribed from the 1919 Seeley, Service & Co. edition by David Price, available on http://www.gutenberg.org/files/521/521-h/521-h.htm)</p> | <p>Am voit să-l încerc o dată și să văd dacă nu îi este dor de țara lui. Îl învățasem atât de bine englezește, încât știa să-mi răspundă la toate întrebările. L-am întrebat dacă neamul lui nu iese niciodată învingător în războaie. Mi-a răspuns surâzând: "Da, da, în luptă întotdeauna mai bun." Voia să spună că ei erau mai buni războinici decât vrăjmașii lor. Am început atunci următoarea convorbire:</p> <p>S: Dacă întotdeauna sunteți mai buni în luptă (Dacă întotdeauna luptați mai bine - 1943) <u>i-am zis</u> (i-am spus, 1943) - cum de ai fost prins?</p> <p>F: Neamul meu bătut mulți pentru asta.</p> <p>S: Cum i-ați bătut? Dacă i-ați biruit, cum de v-au prins?</p> <p>F: Ei mai mulți ca noi unde eu eram. Ei luat un, doi, trei și pe mine. Neamul <u>bătut</u> (biruit, 1943) pe ei, în altă parte unde eu nu. Acolo luat un, doi trei, <u>o mie mare</u> (multe mii -1943).</p> <p>S: Atunci de ce nu au încercat ai voștri să vă scape?</p> <p>F: Au dus fuga un, doi, trei, mine băgat în canu. Neamul meu fără canu atunci.</p> <p>S: Bine Vineri. Dar ce face neamul tău cu cei pe care îi prinde? Îi duce și-i mănâncă cum fac ceilalți?</p> <p>F: Da, <u>neamul meu</u> (meu omitted in 1943) mănâncă om, mănâncă întreg.</p> <p>S: Și unde îl duce?</p> <p>F: Duce în alte locuri, unde vor.</p> <p>S: <u>Vine și pe aici?</u> (Vin și pe aici? - 1943)</p> <p>F: Da, da, vin aici. Vin în alt loc.</p> <p>S: Ai fost și tu pe aici?</p> <p>F: Da, acolo fost (Îmi arată spre partea de n-v a insulei unde, după cât se pare era coasta lor).</p> <p>Am înțeles că și Vineri, slujitorul meu, fusese printre sălbatecii care obișnuiau să vină <u>în</u> (pe - 1943) acea parte a insulei pentru praznicele acelea <u>îngrozitoare</u> (neomenoase - 1943) la care fusese sortit acum în urmă ca pradă. Curând după aceasta l-am dus acolo și am văzut cât de bine cunoștea locurile. Mi-a povestit că a fost o dată când <u>au</u> (s'au - 1943) <u>mâncat</u> douăzeci de e bărbați, două femei și un copil. Nu putea <u>zice</u> (spune - 1943) douăzeci pe englezește dar i-a enumerat, așezând multe pietricele și arătându-le pe rând cu degetul. (Baciu, 1996: 25-26)</p> |

The two Romanian versions above were also discussed in the Romanian discourse on translation (cf. Baci, 1996: 25-27), where even solutions were provided to improve the target texts; for instance, for “vin în alt loc”, “vine alt loc” was suggested to preserve Friday’s speech (1996: 27). Moreover, in places where even the original text is ambiguous, there are suggestions to improve the respective ambiguity, namely “Ei fugit un, doi, trei, dar/ numai mine băgat canu” (*ibidem*). To our account, apart from the aforementioned considerations in the Romanian discourse on translation, there are little changes made from pre-communism to communism in the Romanian Robinson; in the table above, we underlined such changes (mainly operated in the category of *lexis*).

6. CONCLUSIONS

As compared to interlingual translation, intralingual translation in Romania has been significantly less dealt with since the communist years to present day; if, before 1989, it was only mentioned in a TS-hermeneutical related context (cf. Kohn’s 1983 study drawing on Jakobson and Steiner), in the post-communist period it can be encountered in both non-academic (websites of translation agencies) and academic contexts (doctoral dissertations included). *Robinson Crusoe* is a particular case of intralingual translation, the 1943 edition destined to young readers being (mildly) modified to suit a communist ideology (1961) and more strongly for adult readers (1964), especially at paratextual level.

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